



PARIS

OBJET TROUVÉ

HERBERT YPMA

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YPMA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
RENÉ AND BARBARA STOELTIE



THAMES AND HUDSON

PAGES 2-3

'A French room begins with the fireplace,' says antiquarian André de Cacqueray. Fireplace surrounds in Parisian homes are traditionally deeper than those in London because they were designed to hold an impressive artifact such as a bust or a family heirloom. In line with tradition but not bound by it, Florence Dostal uses her Louis XV mantelpiece to display her Tin Tin busts, found at a local flea market, against walls painted Prussian blue.

PAGES 4-5

After dark the only sources of light, even in the most splendid 18th-century Paris interiors were candles and the fireplace. Ledgers and accounts for interior decoration at the time show that far more money was spent proportionately on candlesticks than on any other aspect of an interior's decoration. An entire apartment could be panelled and furnished for the price of one pair of candlesticks or a fancy candelabra. Little wonder

then that there is still such a wide choice of these 18th-century 'utilities' available today.

PAGES 6-7

Until the Napoleonic Wars, no education was considered complete without the Grand Tour, which often included a visit to the ancient ruins of the Roman Empire. And no tour was complete without the ubiquitous busts, urns, statues and drawings that returned as architectural souvenirs. This was the start of a tradition in French interior decoration that is still going strong. Irrespective of style, taste and preferences, no self-respecting Parisian's home is complete without some sculpted reference to antiquity.

PAGE 8

The French are, perhaps more than any other nation, 'indefatigable foragers'. A detail from the completely eclectic but beautiful collection of *objets* in the apartment of Gilles Dufour, Karl Lagerfeld's assistant, is a fine example. There are no

rules. His home is like a shell - a setting for one's memories and discoveries. Pink paper, casually bunched around a Sèvres porcelain lamp base, a *bâteau* of crystal beads and a layer of fabric textures and patterns follow nothing but the inhabitant's moods and impulses.

PAGE 12

Toile de Jouy (meaning simply 'cloth from Jouy'), printed with scenes of everyday French life, is still covetously collected almost 230 years after its origins in the little village of Jouy, close to Versailles. Made by an incredibly complex process, developed by Christophe-Philippe Oberkampf, these rose madder cottons were a source of tremendous pride to the Emperor Napoleon who was dedicated to nurturing and supporting French industry and craft. Upon meeting Oberkampf, Napoleon exclaimed that they were both, in their own way, 'fighting the good fight' against the English, but that he (Oberkampf) appeared to be having greater success.

*To my parents, Carla and Peter, who have given me a more interesting
and adventurous life than anyone could possibly hope for.*

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"Whoever does not visit Paris regularly will never really be elegant."

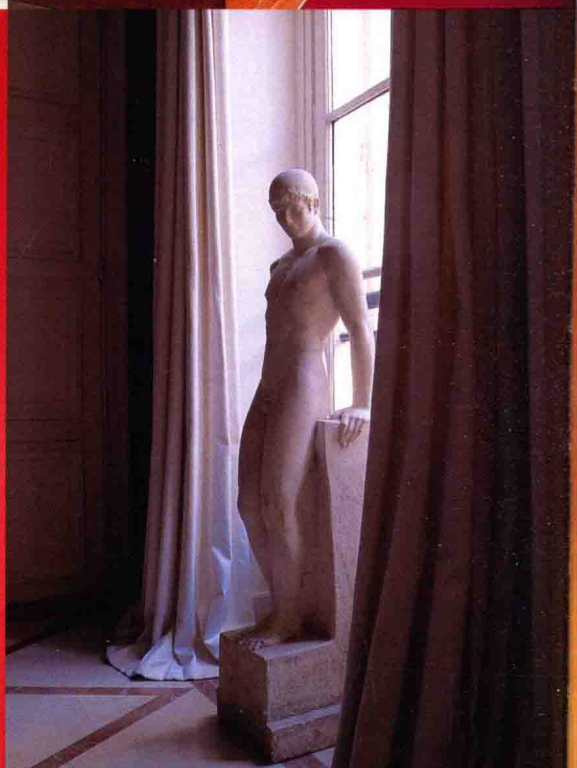
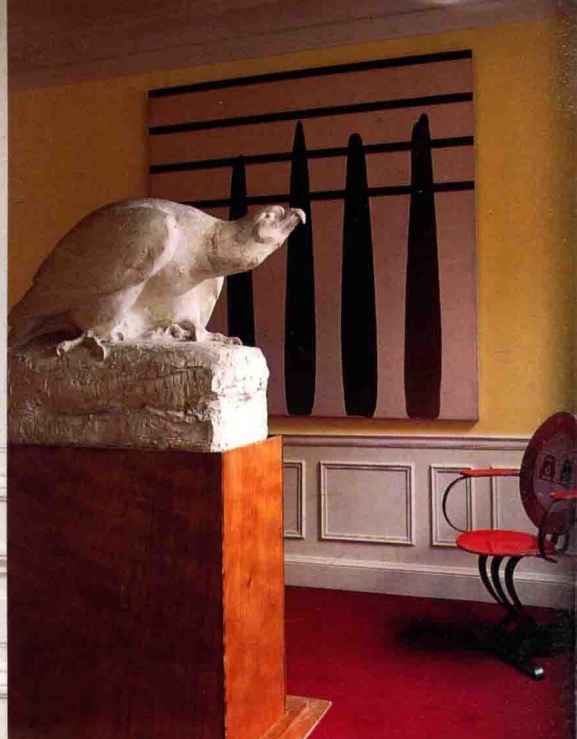
Balzac, 1815

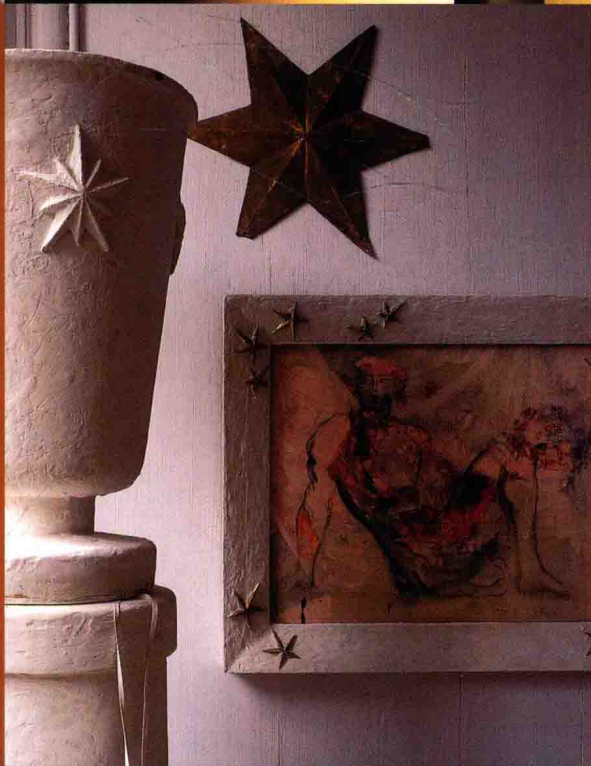














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INTRODUCTION

Paris. A city of great art and dazzling architecture. How many books and poems and songs have been dedicated to this city of romance and glamour ... The centre of its nation's life, Paris is admired, envied and imitated by half the world.

And always the style of Paris has been crucial to this hive of intellectual and artistic activity. As David McFadden writes in *L'Art de Vivre*: 'In France, the "arts" of living cannot be separated from "the art of living".'

From an extraordinary heritage of finery in the decorative arts, a veritable legend of man-made beauty, Parisians have absorbed an acute awareness and appreciation of the beauty of *objets* and the manner in which they can enrich one's life. This is at the very core of what can be described as French taste. A frequent American visitor to Paris once explained it in remarkably lucid terms: 'This is an urban French sensibility. Beautiful apartments in Paris are rarely "decorated": there are simply objects and pieces of furniture that someone loves, treated like works of art.'

The objects she refers to are *objets trouvés*, the personal treasures that can be found in the atelier of a celebrated or an unknown *artiste*, at the famous *marchés aux puces* (the Paris flea markets), in the window of an expensive Left Bank *antiquaire*, on one of the massive merchandise floors of a *grand magasin* or lying abandoned in a cobbled alley or on a busy streetcorner. The rule, as quoted by the flamboyant Duc de Choiseul more than two centuries ago, is 'there are no rules.' Everything goes, as long as it is freewheeling, nostalgic and ephemeral – and all to excess!

If indeed the home is a shell – 'a setting for one's memories and discoveries, the place one comes back to when one finds them' – then Paris must be the most beautiful of all shells.