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ELEGANT ENSEMBLE



DESIGNER
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A luxurious blue-grey palette sets the tone for this inviting seating area with its exquisite sense of balance and intimacy

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE SPACE? This is the sitting room of my apartment, which occupies the first floor of a lateral conversion of two 18th-century Grade II-listed buildings in Marylebone, west London. The interiors were in a terrible state, so I had to start from scratch, re-plastering and reinstating the floor, joinery and cornicing. Even the ceiling had to be replaced.

WHAT WAS THE STARTING POINT FOR THE SCHEME? We already owned various pieces of art, including the Sandra Blow painting above the fireplace, and I think these subliminally informed the decoration. Wherever possible in my projects, I like to cover the walls in fabric to add another layer of luxury and texture, and here I used cotton in a greyish blue that appears to throw the artwork into relief. The palette of greys, blues and greens developed from this colour; it includes the teal-hued silk velvet on the sofa and bespoke woven blue silk and wool bouclé used for the armchairs.

HOW DID YOU DEVISE THE LAYOUT? This room is also used for dining, so the table naturally divided the space, while the adjacent perpendicular windows dictated the position of the desk. When designing a seating area, it's important to create a sense of intimacy, even within a large space – having the furniture set too far apart can make guests feel uncomfortable. In this arrangement, I've combined larger pieces with smaller ones, including a pair of Twenties Belgian tortoiseshell chairs, which can easily be moved around for different social occasions.

WHAT INFLUENCED THE CHOICE OF FURNITURE AND ACCESSORIES? I gravitate towards pieces that are rare and offer purity of form, and rely on intuition to bring them together. It's important that they balance each other and that there are not too many things shouting for attention. While I love the best of 20th-century design, I am very open-minded. I look for pieces that are beautiful and out of the ordinary, and that could equally be a Louis XVI chair or a Fifties one. Quality of design and workmanship are paramount.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL LIGHTING FEATURES? When the ceiling was replaced, I installed a track system that combines spotlights and framing projectors that provide focused pools of light for artworks. I added table lamps for ambient lighting and reading lamps, while the contemporary chandelier with smoked glass globes helps to define the dining area.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE FLOORING? The seating area is centred on a Moroccan rug, which was custom made to fit the space. I've always been drawn to Berber rugs, for their simplicity and the way their pale hues reflect the light. This rug sits on a bubble-weave sisal carpet, which is a good, unobtrusive foil for everything else in the room.

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