

Over an 18th-century console regilded by a local ébéniste hangs *Nu sur une canapé Louis XVI* by Xavier Bricard.

OPPOSITE: The apartment is part of Château de Saintines, a 16th-century estate north of Paris.



# Collector in



In France's Oise department, David Jimenez fills a centuries-old manor house apartment with antiques and art gathered across the countryside.

# Residence

INTERIOR DESIGN BY DAVID JIMENEZ • PHOTOGRAPHY BY XAVIER BÉJOT  
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Jimenez looks out from one of four tall windows in the salon (opposite), where an 18th-century silk-and-linen Aubusson tapestry hangs on the back wall. The room is arranged to easily accommodate guests, with light weight drinks tables and footstools close at hand.

**F**ROM THE START, I was swept away by this romantic apartment in the country," recalls interior designer David Jimenez. "When I first walked up the driveway toward the manor house, with its towers and classical harmony of design, I fell in love with France all over again."

After moving to Paris six years ago, the New York City native began looking for a stylish country house for weekend getaways. The criteria: a generations-old residence with handsome architecture that was no more than an hour from the city. Lovely private grounds with fields and forests for long walks accompanied by birdsong were also a must. He searched for two years and triumphed when he found his dream retreat—an expansive eight-room private apartment in a centuries-old manor house on the grounds of a dramatic 16th-century château. This glamorous bolt-hole is located near the charming village of Saintines, an hour north of Paris by train and 30 minutes from Chantilly. The house is surrounded by ancient oaks, fragrant pines, and open fields. Sparrows and larks greet the dawn.

There's a certain stillness here. The region is surrounded by the medieval Compiègne forest, where the king and his

court hunted and where pilgrims made their way from Paris to the holy springs in Saintines. The past is indeed inherent, whispering along the river that winds through the property and into Jimenez's vision for the rooms. "Designing the apartment I was inspired by classic French decorators," he says. "I looked at the work of Henri Samuel and how he entertained. I studied his floor plans, how he made rooms versatile and elegant. That was my goal."

The second-floor space is blessed with graceful symmetry and parquet floors. One room leads elegantly to the next in a logical and graceful enfilade, a flow Jimenez emphasized by painting the apartment a warm off-white *Mane cassé*. Once the painting was done, he moved in and quickly began scouting the lively local art and culinary worlds, discovering excellent antiquaries, art galleries, and farmers' markets. "My intention from the outset was to create spaces that feel comfortable but that also feel tied to the beauty of France, these villages, to the French *joie de vivre*."

And the countryside is ripe with it. Saturdays found him speeding along remote roads on his scooter to find dealers of both art and antiques. He found them in the neighboring villages of Verberie and Pierrefonds, in shops "that made my heart race, where there wasn't a direction I could look





The cobalt blue Louis XVI-style chairs and mahogany bookcase are finds from nearby Pierrefonds Antiquités.

OPPOSITE: The ceramic black-and-white tilework in the kitchen is original.



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—INTERIOR DESIGNER AND HOMEOWNER DAVID JIMENEZ

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where there wasn't something that touched me,” he recalls. In came bronze chandeliers and beveled mirrors spotted in an estate sale antiques shop and a draper table and a set of cobalt blue leather chairs from a corner shop that sits at the foot of Château de Pierrefonds. “The shop owners could see my curiosity and they appreciated this, and many of these conversations turned into strong friendships.” The camaraderie of the region also led Jimenez to relationships with local craftspeople. An astute antiques dealer recommended an upholsterer; a couture-level curtain maker suggested the best electrician; his tech expert knew of an artist who did exquisite gilding.

The apartment reflects a similar conviviality, particularly in the salon, where Jimenez placed a ticking-upholstered recamier in the center in front of the fire. “I could have easily done two chairs, but the backs would be to the fireplace—I love using daybeds because they invite conversation without blocking anything,” says the designer, who dotted the room with stools as extra cocktail seating. “The pair of Louis XVI-style chairs near the tapestry have a strong presence. They can be pulled into any conversation group.”

From the tall windows of the salon, Jimenez can gaze out at apple orchards and fern-filled forest glades. He can hear the far-off sounds of horses on the château's grounds and a beautiful symphony of birds. “It's so well positioned in nature,” Jimenez says. “There's a sense of calm and joy and well-being that comes from being here in the country.” ♦



**ABOVE:** Off the primary bedroom, a small sitting room occupies a turret. Yellow velvet chauffeuse, Maison James at Marché Paul Bert Serpette

**LEFT:** A custom alabaster pendant light (Pierrefonds Antiquités), custom toile de jute draperies, and a vintage Villeroy & Boch pedestal sink

**OPPOSITE:** Jimenez's nine-foot, ebony-finish canopy bed is a custom design. Brass sconces (Galerie des Lampes) are fitted with green pleated-silk shades.



Find more of Jimenez's projects in his new book, *Parisian by Design* (Rizzoli, 2022) by Diane Dorrans Saeks.

