



GALLIQUE, C'EST CHIC

In the decade since Paris design fair PAD launched in London, the French home interiors aesthetic has captivated the cognoscenti. Now new galleries in the capital are spreading the word. **Emma Crichton-Miller** reports

Ten years ago, a new art fair opened in London's Berkeley Square. It was held in the same month as the flamboyantly successful Frieze, then in its fifth year, which had made London in October the global centre of the contemporary art world. Far from a copycat, however, PAD, or, as its older sister fair in Paris is named, the Pavilion of Art and Design, announced its own separate identity from the start. Founded by two French dealers with legendary client lists – Patrick Perrin (based in Paris) and Stéphane Custot (then based in London) – the fair brought post-industrial design and decorative arts from 1860 to the present day, mostly French, right into the heart of Mayfair. Where Frieze was brash and

glamorous, all champagne and eye-popping art against white walls, PAD was chic, with tasteful room sets displaying sought-after French modernist furniture or international contemporary design juxtaposed with Scandinavian ceramics or artist-crafted jewellery. Put another way, Frieze presented contemporary art collecting as a fashionable activity for the wealthy, whereas PAD suggested collecting of all kinds is as much a part of civilised living as fine dining or frequenting a tailor. It was as if our suave continental older cousin had just turned up in an immaculate suit, Picasso etchings under one arm, putting to shame Anglo-Saxon untamed vigour.

The inspiration for Perrin and Custot was the number of American and British collectors making the trip to Paris to seek out French art, design and decorative objects. Individuals like the pioneering design gallerist David Gill had been coming for years, introducing his British clients, reared on a diet of antique furniture, to





such baroque fantasies as consoles by Mattia Bonetti, the rigorous metal furniture of Jean Prouvé or the witty, animate lights of Serge Mouille. London-based furniture and interior designer Francis Sultana says, "[Elizabeth] Garouste and Bonetti were my idols, they were all about that continental spirit," and cites Galerie Néotù, founded in 1984 by Pierre Staudenmeyer and Gérard Dalmon, which closed in 2001, as a key influence on a generation of British designers. He still has all his curtains made in Paris and weaves tapestries in Aubusson. Sultana points out that great British interior designers such as Veere Grenney, Emily Todhunter and Jonathan Reed all have French style as part of their armoury: "[Jean] Royère, Prouvé, art deco – it's all there."

Increasing numbers of collectors too had been waking to the growing market for one-off or editioned pieces by great French modernist designers such as Le Corbusier's colleague Charlotte Perriand, the poetic Royère or postwar figures like François-Xavier Lalanne and his wife Claude (whose *Les Grandes Berces* Bench, edition of eight, was the star lot in Christie's New York December 2015 design sale, fetching \$425,000). These original, exquisitely made pieces fitted neatly with the rising interest in commissioned work by international contemporary designers such as Marc Newson, Ron Arad and the Dutchmen Maarten Baas and Jürgen Bey.

It was this idea, that design and decorative arts could matter as much as paintings and sculpture, and that the ensemble could matter as much as each individual work, that PAD introduced to London, along with a commitment to modernity. As Perriand said in an interview in 1999, towards the end of her life: "The most important thing to realise is that what drives the modern movement is a spirit of enquiry, it's a process of analysis and not a style. We worked with ideals." The ideals may have changed since then, but the appeal of furniture driven by ideas rather than inherited from tradition has only grown.

In the years since PAD launched to satisfy the design desires of Londoners travelling to Paris, the tide has turned. London hosts swelling numbers of French people, here for work or study (figures vary wildly from



From left: Hervé Langlais brass and Drop Paper chandelier, price on request, commissioned by Kelly Hoppen through Galerie Negropontes. Langlais and Sophie Negropontes with Langlais brass, ebony and sycamore marquetry Op Art commode, €24,000, from

Galerie Negropontes. Jean Royère oak and velvet Elephantau armchair, £190,000, from Galerie Patrick Seguin. Patrick Seguin with Jean Prouvé panels in Mayfair's Gagosian Gallery. Solenne de la Fouchardière with Ochre metal Scorpion double-head lamp, £1,614

66,000 to 300,000), or in flight from French taxes. Art and design graduates relish the creative exuberance of the city; in the dense enclave of South Kensington, around the Institut Français, French financiers have fallen in love with our green parks and uniformed prep schools.

In their wake have come a new generation of French pâtissiers and chefs (Hélène Darroze, Veuve Clicquot World's Best Female Chef 2015, presides over her two-Michelin-starred eponymous restaurant at The Connaught), while French-style brasseries and French is spoken from Brixton to Dalston. As well as catering to the French, this cosmopolitanism appeals to the growing international community who choose London as their base – whether originally from Russia, Lebanon, India, the Gulf or Japan. Finally, as an acknowledgement of the shift in the centre of gravity of their market, the designers and gallerists themselves have arrived.

The frontrunner, in truth, was Carpenters Workshop Gallery, founded in London in 2005 by two Frenchmen, Loïc Le Gaillard and Julien Lombrail, but it was a lonely sentinel, offering contemporary pieces commissioned from leading Dutch, American, British and French designers. In those days, Le Gaillard says, "what was not Anglo-Saxon was not fashionable". Since then Vincent Dubourg has become one of the gallery's stars, with his witty reworkings of the whole French tradition of cabinetmaking, and his dramatic fragmented aluminium sideboard, Bhaïnga Alu (price on request, also in bronze), was a sensation at the launch of its New York space in November 2015. Earlier last year, Le Gaillard and Lombrail opened a 86,000sq ft artisanal workshop near the Paris Charles de Gaulle airport in Roissy-en-France specifically to foster the kind of collaboration between gallery artists and in-house skilled craftsmen that had traditionally been a feature of French design, and has become so sought-after by collectors.

Back in London, other French galleries have opened – many that have a history of exhibiting at PAD. In 2014, Galerie Kreo arrived in Hay Hill, Mayfair. As Clémence Krzentowski (pictured right), one half of the husband and wife business, explains: "We always had many English clients, but then in the past five or six years several of our Lebanese, Russian and Italian clients also moved to London." She adds: "Nobody really does what we do in London: working with the best living designers" – such as the renowned Bouroullec brothers (oak Stool set pictured below, price on request), the Brazilian Campana Brothers, the English-trained Konstantin Grcic, the Dutch Studio Wieki Somers and London-based Jasper Morrison – who straddle industrial production and the more personal research projects they undertake with Galerie Kreo. Krzentowski continues: "It is in the balance of the two activities that something extraordinary can happen." They wanted to bring to London not just the

From top right: Dutko Gallery, on Mayfair's Davies Street. Eric Schmitt brass and steel Sugegasa lamp, €9,500, and bronze and glass Stromboli table, €19,500, from Dutko Gallery. Didier and Clémence Krzentowski of Galerie Kreo. Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec oak Stool set, price on request, from Galerie Kreo



They bring to London not just the furniture, but the scenario in which pieces from different eras and designers are combined



covered in python skin. More recently, however, he has worked with younger French designers – Eric Schmitt (Sugegasa lamp, €9,500, and Stromboli table, €19,500, pictured above left), Philippe Anthonioz – and the Italian Bruno Romeda to create classic designs in beautiful materials. "Over the past few years I realised that a big part of this market is in London," he says.

Hot on Dutko's heels came Patrick Seguin (pictured on previous pages), a renowned specialist in the modernist quintet of Prouvé, Perriand, Royère (Elephantau armchair pictured on previous pages, £190,000), Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret. His gallery, in Brook Street, is next door to Claridge's, owned by one of his most dedicated clients, Patrick McKillen. Seguin opened in October with an exhibition of Prouvé's Petites Machines d'Architecture featuring two demountable buildings – once an inspired, low-cost response to the postwar housing emergency but now fetching high prices at auction (a 1944-1945 original 6x9 house sold for £602,500 at Phillips London in April 2015). Seguin's London space is much smaller than the soaring gallery designed for him by Jean Nouvel in Paris, but it offers him access not just to the UK, "but to India, China, South America... Britain is 75 per cent of the European market." He suggests that Prouvé's work "has an amazing dialogue with contemporary art" – an assertion borne out by the fact that 90 per cent of his collectors are primarily buyers of contemporary art.

Trying to pin down the appeal of French design, Sophie Negroptes, of the Paris-based Galerie Negroptes, who collaborates with designer Hervé Langlais (both pictured on previous pages) to produce one collection of furniture (€1,800-€60,000) in very limited editions each year, acknowledges the lasting influence of "les arts décoratifs à la française" of the 1930s, '40s and '50s. "They made incredible things, with incredible taste, for one person. That was also our main idea when we founded this gallery in 2013." Half Greek and half Romanian but brought up in France from the age of 12, she shares the love of her English and American clients for "the finesse and sophistication of French design", but also credits the French craftsmen with whom she collaborates. Hervé Van der Straeten (pictured overleaf), a PAD regular with many clients in



pieces themselves – which can be seen at fairs like PAD – but the scenario in which pieces from different eras and different designers are combined. As Krzentowski explains: "To be sure, there is a tradition in France of stimulating the best in decorative arts, but also of mixing objects from different countries and times – think of the Rothschilds." It is not just the contemporary gallerists who have arrived. The other side of Berkeley Square, on Davies Street, Jean-Jacques Dutko opened an elegant space (pictured top right) just opposite Gagosian's Mayfair gallery last October, hoping, no doubt, to catch the passing trade. His primary specialism is in art deco furniture traditionally loved by the Americans – including the work of Eugène Printz, whom he has championed, and Marcel Coard, of whom he has a most elegant ebony and bronze desk

London, agrees that the fact his pieces (Console Cristalloïde pictured below right, price on request) are handmade by skilled cabinetmakers out of luxurious materials such as bronze, marble, ebony, black lacquer and parchment, is a strong factor in their appeal: "It is easy to mix quality. We French have learnt to make our own cocktail in a smooth and elegant way."

One admirer is British interior designer Kelly Hoppen. "French design is understated and incredibly well pulled together," she says. "Whether it is mixing George V with a piece from Christian Liaigre and baroque mirrors while using the simplicity of wooden floors and marble features, it just works." Among other influences on her own style, she names Liaigre and India Mahdavi. "Gilles & Boissier and François Champsaur are for me 'the new French elegance.'" Hoppen has commissioned a chandelier (pictured on opening pages) by Langlais through Galerie Negropontes. "It is such a great addition to my new home. It draws some vertical lines to emphasise the height of the ceiling, while the soft curves of the metal around the delicate round paper shades are for me the perfect balance." She also has a bedside table in lacquer (similar designs from about £1,500), sourced from the stylish French antiques dealer Dorian Caffot de Favas based on London's Lillie Road in a nest of French antiques dealers.

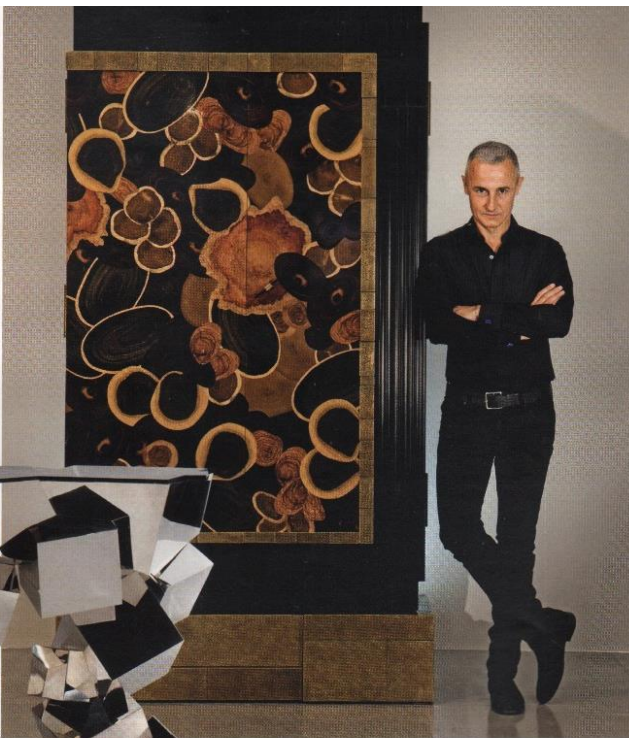
Solenne de la Fouchardière (pictured on opening pages) is another long-term observer of the impact of French design on English taste. She is one third of the upmarket design brand Ochre, with its muted colour schemes and subtle feeling for materials. De la Fouchardière came here originally 20 years ago to study, but has stayed ever since. Today, she says, "people in London pay much more attention to their environment, and to design". She ascribes her own taste to a mix of family inheritance – generations-old furniture, simple linens – and a flea-market habit picked up very young: "We went every week with my best friend. Everything I have in my home is not new." She claims the flea-market aesthetic is part of the DNA of Ochre, shared by her English partners.

Fleur de Galard (pictured below right), a Frenchwoman based in London for three years, invites me into her home to see how French style has transformed her rather beige rented surroundings. In the drawing room, a beautiful 1960s textured table (similar tables cost £8,000-£24,000 at auction) designed by the veteran Belgian designer Ado Chale is placed beside a luxurious large sofa by the US-based designer Bertha Schaefer, who worked with Italy's Giò Ponti. "I am very out of order," de Galard says. "I like to mix a Regency commode and a pair of 1970s lamps or an art deco sideboard with a 1960s sculptural armchair."

Her grandmother was an interior designer and encouraged her to collect from an early age. Then

Clockwise from below: Hervé Van der Straeten stainless steel and marble Console Cristalloïde, price on request. Van der Straeten with his wood, bronze and ebony Saturation armoire, price on request. Fleur de Galard. Philippe Hiquily brass and Altuglas lamp, €30,000, and brass and aluminium and cowhide Coque armchair, €40,000, both designed for Henri Samuel, from Gallery Yves Gastou

"French design is incredibly well pulled together. François Champsaur and Gilles & Boissier are, for me, 'the new French elegance'"



she and her husband, who met while still young, developed a mutual love of art and design. "In France, art and culture are very important, we are raised that way," she adds. "We started collecting small pieces when we were very young." She says of the dramatic hand-beaten brass and aluminium chairs (example pictured far left, €40,000) by Philippe Hiquily, designed for the legendary French decorator Henri Samuel, "My husband particularly loves the shape of these from behind." They were sourced from dealer Yves Gastou, another major influence: "He taught me how to mix." Downstairs, meanwhile, an art-deco 1940s dining table by Gilbert Poillerat is flanked by neoclassical chairs from the same era by André Arbus, a play of elegant lines, while, by complete contrast, on the side stands a dramatic fractal resin table top, translucent and delicate, possibly created by Marie-Claude de Fouquières in the 1970s.

Upstairs in the bedroom, de Galard has mixed a wrought-iron bed she herself designed (she has just launched her own design business) with side tables by Lalanne. The overall effect is lighthearted, joyful even, comfortable, supremely elegant but also stimulating. However unexpected in this staid corner of Victorian London, such flair and imagination is now ever easier to emulate in this cosmopolitan city. ♦

FRENCH ACCENT

Carpenters Workshop Gallery, 3 Albemarle Street, London W1 (020-3051 5939; www.carpentersworkshopgallery.com) and branches. **Christie's**, 85 Old Brompton Road, London SW7 (020-7930 6074; www.christies.com) and branches. **Dutko Galerie**, 18 Davies Street, London W1 (020-7495 4666; www.dutko.com). **Fleur de Galard**, +336-8403 5323; www.fleurdegaldard.com. **Francis Sultana**, 2-4 King Street, London SW1 (020-7589 5946; www.francissultana.com). **Galerie Kreo**, 14A Hay Hill, London W1 (020-7499 4611; www.galeriekreo.com). **Galerie Negropontes**, 60 Rue de Vermeuil, 75007 Paris (+331-7118 1951; www.negropontes-galerie.com). **Galerie Patrick Seguin**, 45-47 Brook Street, London W1 (020-7499 7766; www.patrickseguin.com) and branch. **Kelly Hoppen Interiors**, 020-3701 9333; www.kellyhoppen.com. **Ochre**, 46-47 Britton Street, London EC1 (020-7096 7372; www.ochre.net) and branches. **PAD London**, 5-9 October 2016, Berkeley Square, London W1 (+331-5330 8520; www.pad-fairs.com).