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Limited edition cover
by Ron Arad

Against the grain

Dior Maison branches out from its exquisitely patterned fare with a new collection of pared-back solid wood accessories by Pierre Yovanovitch

WRITER: TF CHAN

Pierre Yovanovitch's desk accessories collection marks a radical departure for Dior Maison, a brand renowned for its fine porcelain, toile de Jouy patterns and cannage-patterned crystalware. 'Midi', as the new 15-piece collection is called, is characterised by sculptural lines and a pared-back material palette. Despite the typically exquisite craftsmanship, there is a refreshing groundedness to the pieces, which the brand describes as 'an invitation to indulge in the sweetness of life'.

This is Yovanovitch's second collaboration with Dior, following on from the 'Monsieur and Madame Dior' chairs, which were a standout attraction of the brand's 'Chaise Medallion' group show at Milan Design Week 2021. Yovanovitch benefits from long-standing partnerships with leading French and Swiss craftspeople, and launched his namesake furniture label in 2021 to critical acclaim (see W*266). So 'Midi' comes not out of a desire for a platform or prestige, but rather from Yovanovitch's affinity for Monsieur Christian Dior.

'Christian Dior's shared love of and history with Provence was a big influence for me, as a native of this region, and it's something I reference often in my own work,' says Yovanovitch. While Monsieur Dior is usually associated with the cosmopolitan Paris where he found his fame, he had a yearning for southern France (colloquially known in French as 'le Midi', hence the title of Yovanovitch's collection), where, in 1950, he bought the Château de la Colle Noire. 'Its serenity suits the period of life that I will have to tackle in a few years [...] that is where I can finally live quietly, forgetting Christian Dior to just become Christian again,' Monsieur Dior wrote of the property.

Yovanovitch continues the story: 'I find the same solace in my own property, Château de Fabrègues, 65km away from La Colle Noire. In this way, the collection is an homage to these two emblems of creative solace and rejuvenation.' With the 'Midi' collection, Yovanovitch aspires to create objects that live up to Monsieur Dior's description of La Colle Noire: 'simple, solid and noble'.

Hence the use of solid oak and hornbeam, left unpainted so the user can admire their sinuous

grain, and the visible box joinery to highlight the enduring appeal of craft (Yovanovitch worked with specialised craftspeople from the Vosges, a region in eastern France known for woodworking). And hence the choice of objects, which includes some old typologies brought into a contemporary context: a table lamp, a mirror, a cigar box, a trinket tray, four serving trays, two tissue boxes, a pencil container, two picture frames and two candleholders.

'In the age of at-home work and virtual meetings, there is something very romantic about juxtaposing modern work life with well-crafted desk accessories,' says the designer. 'It brings something thoughtful and special to an otherwise uninspiring setting.'

While the pencil container and picture frames sport geometric lines, the tissue boxes are gently flared towards the bottom, showing a dash of whimsy that is characteristically Yovanovitch. The serving trays are lined with Italian leather, gently embossed with the Dior monogram, while the cigar box has a tented top whose contours one cannot help but caress. The table lamp, with its curved conical oak base topped with a glass orb, is subtly anthropomorphic. The stars of the collection are, no doubt, the candleholders, whose tactile forms look hand-chiselled, and the hornbeam mirror, with an oval frame that seems to emerge from the necks of a pair of swans.

'Working with a team with a shared commitment to craft and quality is crucial, and Dior Maison were uncompromising in this way,' recalls Yovanovitch of the fruitful collaboration. The launch of the 'Midi' collection coincided with 'New Alpine', a showcase by Yovanovitch's namesake label at the Nomad St Moritz fair in early March, including old and new furniture pieces inspired by the Swedish 'Sportstugermöbler' movement created by Axel Einar Hjorth. 'By doing these launches simultaneously, I wanted to create a through-line with the two works,' concludes Yovanovitch. 'The two collections tell a shared story of celebrating craft and materiality.'★

dior.com/maison, pierre-yovanovitch.com. To read about Dior's newly reopened global flagship at 30 Avenue Montaigne, Paris, turn to page 082

Opposite, clockwise from left, 'Miroir aux Oiseaux' mirror, £2,600; 'Ballon' table lamp, £3,500; serving trays, from £700; large candleholder, £320; cigar box, £1,700, all part of the 'Midi' collection, by Pierre Yovanovitch, for Dior Maison

