

# VOCALIVE

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RHYTHM AND BLUES Built on Istanbul's Bosphorus Strait, the contemporary home of a young bachelor is ENSOULED by *Pierre Yovanovitch*, who gives *vivid expression* to the littoral location and art collection within.

By LINDYL ZANBAKA Photographed by GIULIO GHIRARDI



*These pages* in the living area of this Istanbul home, **sofas**, green enamelled ceramic top **side tables**, leather **bar stools** and brass **suspension light**, all by Pierre Yovanovitch; custom **coffee tables** by Matthias Kohn for Pierre Yovanovitch; custom **rug** by Galerie Diurne for Pierre Yovanovitch; Thala **wall sconce** by Garnier & Linker (on bar wall); **sculpture** by Antony Gormley; mirror **artwork** by Anish Kapoor. *Previous page* in another view of the living area, **staircase** and **wall sconces** by Pierre Yovanovitch; Wave **console** from Pierre Yovanovitch Mobilier; **curtains** by Rogers & Goffigon; **artwork** by Anselm Kiefer; **artwork** by Fahrelnissa Zeid. *Details, last pages.*



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ierre Yovanovitch's latest residential opus is a total solar eclipse: every room is seismic in scope and naturally breathtaking. The house, a contemporary-style structure in Istanbul, basks along the Bosphorus Strait, a passage that both connects seas and charts a boundary between Europe and Asia.

"Being on the Bosphorus inspired the aesthetic of the home," the designer confirms, and indeed all that separates the interior from the blue beyond are walls of glass. At first, the water outside appears on the periphery as a shimmering, blurry-edged dream, but stand still and the view coalesces into something lifelike and vivid.

Yovanovitch, whose interior architecture and design studio is based in the velvety elegance of Paris, "deeply connects" with Istanbul "through its water, light and cultural layers". It was a connection renewed the first time he arrived at the house by boat — "moving through the city as much by water as by land felt poetic and vital to shaping the residence's mood."

Lucid in its limpid minimalism, the house was commissioned by a young bachelor "whose parents own a classical wooden home nearby". Traditional houses like theirs are quite common on the Bosphorus, Yovanovitch explains, "some very grand, some more modest but sharing similar craftsmanship and organisation". Though this new build departs from the domestic vernacular, it assumes the dimensions of the 1960s apartment block that previously occupied the site "which itself was inspired by traditional shapes".

Completed by a Turkish architecture firm, the exterior "embraces contemporary form and discreet elegance" via expansive glass surfaces. Combined with extensive contextual wood cladding, the house appears thoroughly at ease with its neighbours.

Conceiving interiors that would adapt just as gracefully defined the designer's role. Yovanovitch describes a "deeply cosmopolitan owner with art-collecting interests" who needed a home to host friends in now, and to raise a family in the future. "My focus was wholly on interior transformation — introducing sculptural elements, making the interior architecture more rigorous, fluid and less angular, and layering natural materiality and textural warmth."

Yovanovitch's instinct for authoring narrative-driven spaces unfurls over four floors; his strategically zoned layout "prioritises open living — there's ample space for entertaining, but with nooks for introspection". The entrance is located on the living room level, where the home's finely composed dramatic arc crescendos in the form of a rippling double-height wood ceiling. "Its curvature and rhythm mimic the motion of the watery waves and soften the volume, visually and acoustically," he explains.

"The constant presence of water — from veranda levels to moving vessels — inspired fluid lines, reflective finishes and layered materials," says Yovanovitch, pointing to a console in the entrance that mirrors the swell of the ceiling, and the pattern in the warm-grey Ceppo stone floor, which "evokes the region's ever-changing sky" through its imperfections, unpredictability and expressiveness.

Across the living area, the designer's crescent-shaped banquettes, ceramic-top side tables and Asymmetry armchairs are arranged in sumptuous sighs on a custom continent-sized rug. Their placement encourages fluid lounging and gathering, "yet can easily transition into more private family modes or social sub-zones". Because natural light refurbishes the room every morning, the direction of the sun also informed where the designer decided furniture should go, as well as the material selection. On the outskirts of the central living space is a patinated metal and textured glass bar with a wall of Oregon pine joinery behind it, the wood chosen "for its veins and warm colour".

Whirlpools of cobalt blue, paintings saturated with colour and the teetering ice cream-scoops of an Annie Morris sculpture burst forth from the living area's off-white plaster walls. "I needed a bright colour to liven up the architecture, and blue seemed right because of the sea," Yovanovitch says simply. "Once I had used it on the steel columns, which are necessitated by the architecture, it spread to other areas — the Kapoor mirror came later." He is referring to a reflective artwork by Anish Kapoor, hung at the head of a long Pierre Yovanovitch-designed dining table that can be separated into two or three smaller settings. The mirror's gravitational pull draws guests towards the dining area, where female figures (painted by Alex Katz) are poised to sit in one of Yovanovitch's blue Mr. Oops chairs.

Working with art on such a vast scale, Yovanovitch says, "lets the narrative breathe and transforms interiors into curated, contextual worlds that feel lived-in yet gallery-like — simultaneously personal and powerful". Most pieces are from the client's collection, a few more were selected during the design process, and all have been placed to punctuate the architecture — works by Anselm Kiefer, Chantal Joffe and Jack Pierson surface "near staircases, atop consoles, along glass-framed views and settled within conversational zones".

The home's office and four bedrooms, each with an adjoining bathroom, "are intimate refuges within the larger structure", says Yovanovitch, who employs quieter detailing and gentler materials as instruments of slowness and calm. Here, views reattune one's attention to the day's unfolding and interiors are oriented towards life on the Bosphorus. >

This page in the living area with a view to the dining area, cushions by Bruder and Perrine Rousseau; dining table and suspension light by Pierre Yovanovitch; Mr. Oops dining chairs from Pierre Yovanovitch Mobilier; word sculpture by Jack Pierson; stack sculpture by Annie Morris; artwork by Alex Katz.

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*This page* in the main bedroom, **sofa, ottoman** and **rug** all by Pierre Yovanovitch; **MAD armchair** and **Gaia rug** from Pierre Yovanovitch Mobilier; **cup** by Jolain Mado from Galerie Alexandre Guillemain; **wall sconce** from Kolkhoze; *Tree but in Tremblay n°48* (2020) **artwork** by Tadashi Kawamata from Mennour. *Opposite page* in the entry, **bench** by Kwangho Lee; **wall sconces** and **Ceppo stone floor** by Pierre Yovanovitch; **artwork** (left) by Chantal Joffe; **artwork** by Leilah Babirye.





*These pages* in another view of the living area, Asymmetry **armchairs** and James **floor lamp** from Pierre Yovanovitch Mobilier; **stools** by Pierre Yovanovitch; Nicea **bowl** by Fran Aniorte (on coffee table, background); **bowl** by Emil Uwe Bläse (on coffee table, foreground); Tenmoku zoomorphic sandstone **vase** (on side table); **artwork** (on wall above) by Anselm Kiefer; **sculpture** by Server Demirtaş; **artwork** by Erol Akyavaş.





< On the top floor, the main bedroom and office sit directly beneath multifaceted ceilings. An “interesting roof shape” informed the smooth, angular planes, which the designer hoped would both maximise spatial volumes and retain a sense of intimacy. He further ensouls the bedrooms with his more comforting designs, including Flare floor lamps, Ball cushions and the just-right Mama Bear armchair.

In the bathrooms, Yovanovitch reframes light “as living art” — the heavens spill through a skylight above the main bathroom’s Verde Santa Lucia stone shower. In the guest ensuite, art presents in a more literal sense — Yovanovitch co-designed its mosaic floor with contemporary mosaic artist Delphine Messmer, drawing on Turkish tile motifs “in an abstracted, modern form”. The sunburst-like strokes, he says, “reference Iznik tradition while offering a fresh, rhythmic pattern that aligns with the water’s movement”.

Staircases are the “backbone” of Yovanovitch’s multi-storey projects, and in this one, a steel spiral links all four levels in one sweeping kinetic gesture; an oculus-style skylight at the summit steers the eye upward. The design looks a bit like a double helix, though when asked if the stairs are part of the home’s DNA, Yovanovitch demurs. “It’s the house’s ‘colonne vertébrale,’” he counters.

The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard’s belief that “it is better to live in a state of impermanence than in one of finality” finds full expression in this home for all seasons, and these days Yovanovitch, too, seems more open to change. “Over time, I’ve shifted from stricter minimalism toward more textured, playful storytelling — embracing material richness, colour interplay and dynamic forms,” he says. Is this what building a legacy looks like? “Perhaps,” he says in answer. “I build for clients, and for myself. Through interiors, art, scenography and furniture, I’m weaving stories that, hopefully, endure.” ■ [pierreyovanovitch.com](http://pierreyovanovitch.com)



*This page* in the office, Otto desk from Pierre Yovanovitch Mobilier; chair by Pierre Jeanneret from Galerie Patrick Seguin; silk and natural aloe rug by S2G Atelier; 1013 desk lamp by Pierre Disderot from Demisch Danant; Flare floor lamp from Pierre Yovanovitch Mobilier; artwork by Alaettin Aksoy. *Opposite page* in the main bathroom, basin in Rosso Positano marble, mirror and wall sconces, all by Pierre Yovanovitch; Tara tapware by Dornbracht; brass door handle designed by Pierre Yovanovitch and produced by Carole Serny.

*These pages in the guest bedroom, headboard and bedside table by Pierre Yovanovitch; Mama Bear armchair, Pebble side table, MAD bench and Flare floor lamp, all from Pierre Yovanovitch Mobilier; custom sconce by Paola Napoleone; ceiling lamps from Atelier de Troupe; rug by S2G Atelier; curtains by Rogers & Goffigon; artwork by Zemba Luzamba. Details, last pages.*

