

VOGUE

DEC

AND JUST LIKE THAT...
SJP IS

BACK!

ICONIC
JOHN GALLIANO'S FAIRY-TALE HOME
IMAN'S LOVE LETTER TO DAVID BOWIE
KARL LAGERFELD'S LIFE IN OBJECTS
DENIM'S ETERNAL APPEAL
PLUS: DAZZLING GIFTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

VOGUE

December 2021



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Happy Returns

Sarah Jessica Parker wears a Dolce & Gabbana Alta Moda gown. Dior bracelets. Harwell Godfrey ring. Hair, Chris McMillan; makeup, Elaine Offers. Details, see In This Issue.

Photographer:
Dan Jackson.
Fashion Editor:
Tabitha Simmons.

MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE

THE SALON JAUNE IN JOHN GALLIANO'S COUNTRY HOME IN NORTHERN FRANCE.
PHOTOGRAPHED BY FRANÇOIS HALARD.

LIGHT WORK

The 18th-century house that Galliano shares with his partner, Alexis Roche, sits in Gerberoy, a quaint village some 50 miles northwest of Paris. "It's like you stopped time," says Roche.

Sittings Editor:
Hamish Bowles.

Let the Sunshine In

In Northern France, John Galliano has created a home befitting the idiosyncratic beauty of his tenure at Maison Margiela. Hamish Bowles pays a call to the treasure-filled hideaway.

Photographed by François Halard.



DREAM CATCHER

Galliano—seen with his Brussels Griffon terriers Coco and Gypsy—worked with the landscape designer Camille Muller on the house's English-inspired garden, which is punctuated by a small lily pond.

“I can't miss a market or a *brocante*,” says Maison Margiela's creative director, John Galliano. “I'm very curious; I love hunting, and then the find—the excitement of the unknown, that one key in a door that opens the door and another door and another door.”

“You have to pull him back,” admits Alexis Roche, Galliano's partner and collaborator. “Otherwise, he doesn't stop!”

Galliano, however, cherishes “things that I've found in a flea market, or traveling geographically, or historically—they come imbued with a story, an energy,” he explains, “and they start deep emotions. And when those emotions start, I'm able to create.”

Many of those treasures are showcased in Galliano and Roche's Paris apartment in the Marais, and in their modest stone farmhouse in the Auvergne, one of the most unspoiled but remote parts of *la France profonde*, where Roche's grandmother was born. That house proved to be the perfect refuge at a moment when Galliano's professional life was unraveling a decade ago, but as he conquered his demons through rigorous recovery programs and brought his creative genius to reshape Maison Margiela—which he has helmed since late 2014—the couple began to yearn for a country retreat that would be more accessible to Paris.

An antique-dealer friend suggested they look at a house in the almost absurdly picturesque Gerberoy, in Picardy, a village of cobbled lanes and half-timbered houses framed by roses and hollyhocks in Northern France.

“It's like you stopped time,” says Roche. “We felt there was a soul to the village.” (The proximity to the fabled antique shops of nearby Rouen was an additional incentive.) Gerberoy is famed for the gardens created at the turn of the century by the Postimpressionist artist Henri Le Sidaner in the ramparts of a ruined country house, which served as endless subjects for Le Sidaner's shimmering, evocative paintings. He even painted the very house that Messrs. Galliano and Roche had gone to see: an 18th-century gentleman's residence that might, as Galliano suggests, have been a setting for Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. The couple were smitten by both the house and the town's beauty and storied history, and could not resist.

The house, though, was in a parlous state, and Galliano embarked on an ambitious restoration plan that would preserve its romantic patina: The roof tiles were each carefully numbered and removed and, once the structure was stabilized, replaced to rise and dip as they always had. The reconfiguration of the rooms, meanwhile, was largely determined by the light and the views. The main bathroom, for example—crowded with antique perfume







HIDDEN GEMS

LEFT: Roche walks the stone garden path. ABOVE: Delft tiles designed by artist Eloïse d'Argent cover the fireplace wall in the Salon Jaune.

bottles, etched Venetian mirrors, and Baron von Gloeden's photographs of winsome Sicilian youths—serves as an anteroom to the bedroom itself. Now, sitting in the antique tub or standing at the sink, Galliano and Roche have the best vantage points from which to admire the landscape below the window.

While staying at Claridge's in London, Galliano always took time to admire the antiques and the iconic chintzes at the decorating firm of Colefax & Fowler, then seductively arranged in an 18th-century town house that once belonged to the legendary Nancy Lancaster and was famed for the high-ceilinged drawing room that she painted "buttah-yellah." Galliano clearly admired that room, as well as the exacting haute couture standards of the firm's custom work—"finding craftspeople," as Galliano notes, "is like gold"—and collaborated with the decorators on the curtains for his Paris apartment. In Gerberoy he worked with Daniel Slowik, formerly at Colefax & Fowler. "It was a very collaborative process," Slowik recalls, "and it was fun to work with a fashion designer who understands the feel and idea of couture. He's always going for the most exciting options."

Ancient kilim carpets, for instance, were carefully reassembled into a patchwork runner for the staircase, which is adorned with racy drawings and photographs, while antique Moroccan wedding coverlets, their purple silk floss embroidery long faded to raspberry pink, were hung unlined in the upstairs pink drawing room to filter the daylight. "He's so interested in where the light falls and catches," says Slowik, who drew color inspiration from paintings and objects in Galliano's collection. (Galliano also put amber glass panes in the door to the kitchen so that at teatime the dining room is bathed in light.)

The dining room, with wide, tapestry-seated Louis Quinze chairs drawn up to the circular table and portraits of toucans and parrots (and earnest early-19th-century children) on the cool blue walls, has taffeta curtains in an antique pale yellow and blue stripe tied back with rosettes scrunched from the same fabric, all based on examples in 18th-century upholsterers' manuals—along with those in Pauline de Rothschild's fabled London apartment, which was designed with John Fowler himself. The yellow drawing-room windows, meanwhile, are hung with a silver and buff African-inspired glazed cotton that Galliano worked on with Fortuny, and



The 18th-century gentleman's residence is a place that might, as Galliano suggests, have been a setting for Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*.



FRAMES OF REFERENCE

LEFT: Also in the Salon Jaune, a Louis XV chair is surrounded by Indian miniature paintings. ABOVE: In the guest bedroom, a Directoire bed sits below artworks including, at top center, a fashion study by Howard Tangye, Galliano's tutor at Central Saint Martins.

the main bedroom is hung and curtained with a chintz from Antoinette Poisson that evokes the blue-and-white *azulejos* tiles that Galliano admired in Portuguese gardens and houses. (He was so obsessed with them, in fact, that he commissioned the trompe l'oeil artist Eloïse d'Argent to create a narrative sequence of Delft tiles that now spins its tale on the Salon Jaune's fireplace wall, and brings even more light into the room when the fireplace is roaring.)

The property is protected by a 1779 gatehouse—now crowned with a banner, crafted by the Margiela atelier, depicting two roosters (*galli* in Spanish, for Galliano)—that once served as monks' quarters. Galliano created a brace of guest rooms and a soaring atelier in the space, complete with a library of his favorite reference books. (His beloved first-edition Dickens novels, with the illustrations that so inspired him as a child and as a fashion student, are kept closer to his bedside table.)



After the atelier's terra-cotta *tomette* tiles underfoot were carefully restored and laid with antique Turkish rugs, Galliano had small squares of the different colors that he was considering painted around the room to determine the changing effect of the light. "The ultimate test with me is always candles," says Galliano. "The glow, and how the color reacts: That's when the color really sings. I spend a lot of time in candlelight." He settled on a rich terra-cotta, a color that he describes as "almost like a deep breath in the evening." That singing pink is painted eight layers deep, ceiling and all. "I wanted this kind of cocooning effect—the idea was that the light would reverberate and bounce off each wall and the roof," he continues. "And it works: It's super relaxing in here. I come to pull out my favorite Vionnet book and dream."

Through the centuries, artisans—tile makers, glassblowers, and, of course, the tapestry workshops of nearby Beauvais—have flourished in this region of France. In homage to their work, Galliano began sleuthing the artworks originally created to serve as templates for those weavers at the local antique fairs. "I kind of live, breathe

RURAL SPRAWL

"We felt there was a soul to the village," says Roche of charming Gerberoy. ABOVE: The upstairs sitting room. OPPOSITE: Galliano's robust reference library (and some very impressive flower arrangements) presides over the atelier, painted a cozy terra-cotta.





my work,” Galliano avers, “so, being at Maison Margiela, this idea just came very naturally to find these wonderful cartoons and recycle them, upcycle them.” He cut them up into a collage of imaginary landscapes that now cover one wall. “I love the trompe l’oeil effect of real trees swaying and refracting in their light,” Galliano explains. “I was playing with the idea of the outside in and the inside out. I’ve saved some,” he adds, “and when the fancy takes me, I’ll do another little collage.”

The atelier’s mystery is further enhanced by the window shades. “They’re from a Japanese monastery,” Galliano says, and were assembled by Lilou Marquand, a friend and collaborator of Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel. Galliano, who describes the nonagenarian Marquand as “an artist, a poet,” was bidden for tea at her Parisian home to see if he passed muster as a client. “You could feel the energy zooming around her,” Galliano says. He was enraptured by her atelier, “an Aladdin’s cave of wonderment, of Japanese fabrics, Indian sari fabrics from the ’30s, pom-poms, trims, tassels—I was gagging on the Chanel ribbons!” At one point during the visit, Madame Marquand “trod on something—I don’t know whether it had fallen out of her very elegant trouser suit, or if it was already on the floor,” Galliano recalls. “She picked it up, and it was like this little elephant: a pincushion, CONTINUED ON PAGE 177

THE LONG HAUL

ABOVE: In the entrance hall of the main house, handsome terra-cotta tiles and Turkish rugs lie underfoot while an eclectic mix of drawings and photography hangs on the staircase walls. RIGHT: Trailed by Coco, Roche and Galliano head off into town.

