

*British artist and designer  
Carolyn Quartermaine uses her  
French home as an inspiring  
three-dimensional sketchbook*

# Delicate touch

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**Dining area** The Twenties chairs, reproductions of a classic 19<sup>th</sup>-century shape, were found in Nice and covered by the homeowner with a hand-printed modern toile on white linen. Their classic form creates a contrast with the vintage Eero Saarinen 'Tulip' table for Knoll (try Twentytwentyone). The gilded wood and crystal chandelier (sourced from an antiques market in Nice) is hung low, making it part of the overall composition of the room. The floor is white cement, which is waxed rather than varnished for a softer, pretty finish ➡

**For full address details,  
turn to page 263**





**Sitting room** Vintage 'Bertoia' white wire chairs by Harry Bertoia for Knoll (re-issues available from Aram Store) are a favourite of the homeowner (right), who prefers furniture that's light and transparent and appears to float in the space. Cushions are covered in lace and gold printed silk dupion from the homeowner's Flowers collection. The coffee table is a small Eero Saarinen 'Tulip' side table for Knoll

(try Twentytwentyone). The large canvas is one of the homeowner's paintings. She prefers to lean these panels, preferably with light shining through a section of them, rather than hang them in a formal way. The 19<sup>th</sup>-century chandelier hails from the antiques market in Nice (try Valerie Wade for similar)

**For full address details, turn to page 263**



Carolyn Quartermaine's work is hard to define. Just as there are 'noses' in the fragrance industry, Carolyn is an 'eye' in interiors. With a career spanning nearly three decades, she launched her first textiles range after graduating from London's Royal College of Art, has worked with luxury brands like French crystal house Baccarat and is now designing a house for fashion supremo Joseph and a new fabric collection. With such an eclectic mix of projects, it's no surprise that Carolyn's own studio and living space in the south of France resemble an artist's sketchbook.

We love this home's pretty, feminine mix of whites and acid brights, pattern and plainness, texture and transparency. It's trad-modern with a rustic indoor-outdoor vibe, yet encapsulates a delicate, simple glamour that feels very now. The house is not 'finished' or slickly pristine, though, because that's not how Carolyn works. Her artistic restlessness translates itself into an elegantly nomadic interior that is in a permanent and yet composed state of flux. Canvases are propped up against a wall rather than hung; scraps of fabric are pinned, draped or thrown. The space has the informal beauty of an artist's studio. 'I truly care about every little thing,' she admits. 'Nothing in this house is chosen at random.' She sorts furniture by shape rather than colour, which results in sensuous, light pieces that float and give the house a different energy to a more obviously polished interior. 'I love things that look as if they're just a line drawing on a page – I like that ephemeral quality,' she explains. 'It keeps you looking. I see different things here every day.' [www.carolynquartermaine.com](http://www.carolynquartermaine.com) ♦♦

'I always have white floors and walls. That way everything else floats in a white space'



I really like my colours  
to be modern and fresh.  
That's why I'll suddenly want  
the energy of a pink fluoro  
or a twist of acid lime

**Studio** Simple tables contrast with colourful swatches of fabrics in the homeowner's studio, which takes up half of the top floor of the house. The tables were designed by the homeowner and made by a local blacksmith (try Habitat's 'Nic' single trestle bases in white powder-coated steel with

'Manali' high-gloss melamine table tops for similar). The floor is painted with white gloss and regularly re-painted to achieve a reflective surface ♦♦

**For full address details, turn to page 263**







**Artwork** The metal flower  
sconce, picked up from an antiques  
market in Nice, and mercury glass  
candlesticks (try Graham & Green)  
sit alongside the homeowner's  
brightly coloured toile fabric.  
The panels of 'French Abstract  
Glitter' on white cotton and the  
blue and white 'Giant Lace' (both  
pictured right) suggest both the  
patina of mercury glass and the  
ironwork that the homeowner  
favours in her designs ♦♦

**For full address details,  
turn to page 263**



'I love the idea of veils  
and mystery. Things  
glimpsed through  
something else are always  
more magical'



**Bedroom** A hand-printed turquoise silk velvet throw sits on a bed made up with vintage French bedlinen found at local antiques markets. Lime-green cushions add contrast. Unique pieces add further personality, including the daisy-shaped table, which was

bought from a bar in St Tropez, a selection of vintage glass, and a pair of chandeliers sourced from an antiques market in Nice (try Bombay Duck for similar) **DECO**

**For full address details, turn to page 263**

‘It’s best to want less but more refined, more beautiful. You have to be serious about beauty’

