



THE A-Z OF NOW



'I truly think the white cube is so démodé,' says Luis Laplace. 'If you look at old museums, the decorative and architectural elements are very present, and everything integrates with the work. It's about creating an environment that connects people rather than isolating them from the art. The colours, the volumes, the detailing; for me it all adds up.' It's this alternative way of thinking that has made Laplace the go-to architect for a host of art world A-listers, including the inimitable Cindy Sherman, French gallerist Emmanuel Perrotin and prominent collector Mick Flick, who have all commissioned him to design elegant, art-filled residences.

Also on his client list are renowned Swiss gallery owners Manuela Hauser and Iwan Wirth, aka Hauser & Wirth. Friends and collaborators for more than 20 years, the partnership began when Argentinian-born Laplace was working at Annabelle Selldorf's eponymous architectural practice in New York City in the late 1990s, and since then they have masterminded residential properties and a string of innovative gallery spaces in Somerset, Gstaad and St Moritz.

This success story is set to continue with the sensitive restoration of a decommissioned 18th-century naval hospital on Menorca's Isla del Rey. 'The intention wasn't to just make another gallery,' says Laplace. 'Iwan and Manuela have a house there, as do we, so it was about bringing something more to a place we love.' Due for completion in 2021, the new arts hub will accommodate an exhibition space, a gallery shop and a restaurant, as well as gardens by acclaimed Dutch garden designer Piet Oudolf, who also takes credit for the wild, meadow-like landscaping at Hauser & Wirth's Bruton outpost. With its rustic, vaulted galleries, rentable farmhouse, shop and restaurant all housed in a series of sympathetically

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Portrait Christophe Comoy and Luis Laplace (seated)
Garden Guests and clients enter the building via the garden,
in which lies a White Snow, Asleep bronze sculpture by
American artist Paul McCarthy

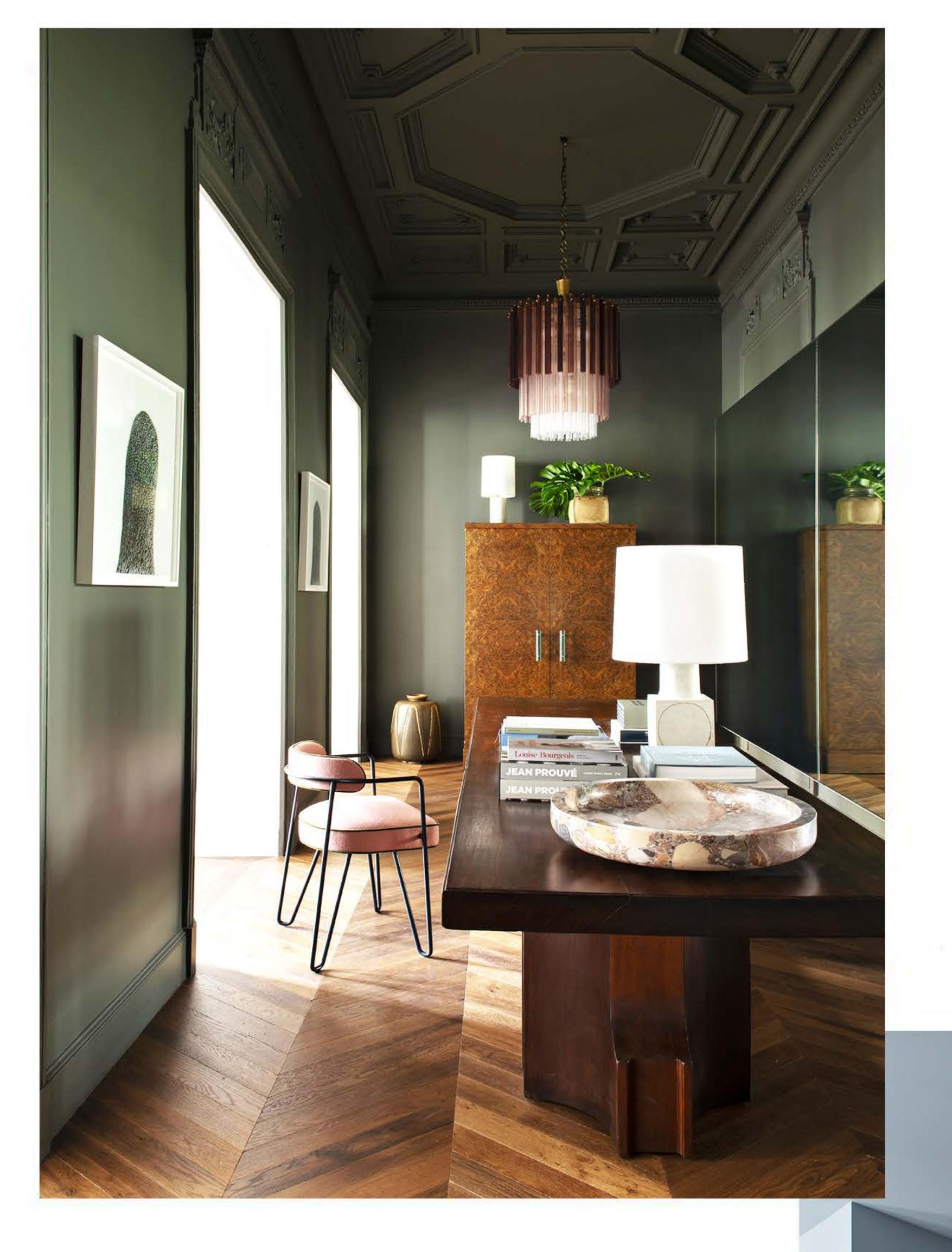
Living room A 1950s Jean-Pierre Vincent floor lamp illuminates a 1940s games table and chairs. On the wall is Paul McCarthy's Mad House Drawing 3, 2011 ➤ adapted, Grade II-listed farm buildings, the Somerset site, which has since been credited with spearheading Bruton's renaissance, can in many ways be viewed as a precursor to the Menorcan project. 'Somerset was my first gallery, and it was a big challenge,' admits Laplace. 'We spent a lot of time thinking about what it could become. It went from studios to restaurants to galleries, and after hours of discussion we decided that there had to be a little bit of everything. We spoke to the local community and listened to people's needs. It was very experimental. Currently, we're developing a farm shop, so even now it's still evolving.'

Laplace is as global as his clients. Born and educated in Buenos Aires, he graduated from the Universidad de Belgrano with a master's in Architecture and Urbanism in 1995. After a stint working in Argentina, he moved to New York in 1999, then briefly to Spain before he and his partner, Christophe Comoy, relocated to Paris in 2004. 'Immediately we knew this was where we should be,' he says. 'It's an incredible place to source furniture, and I spent hours talking with antiques dealers; guys who are so passionate and knowledgeable. They were my mentors, and extremely generous with their time.'

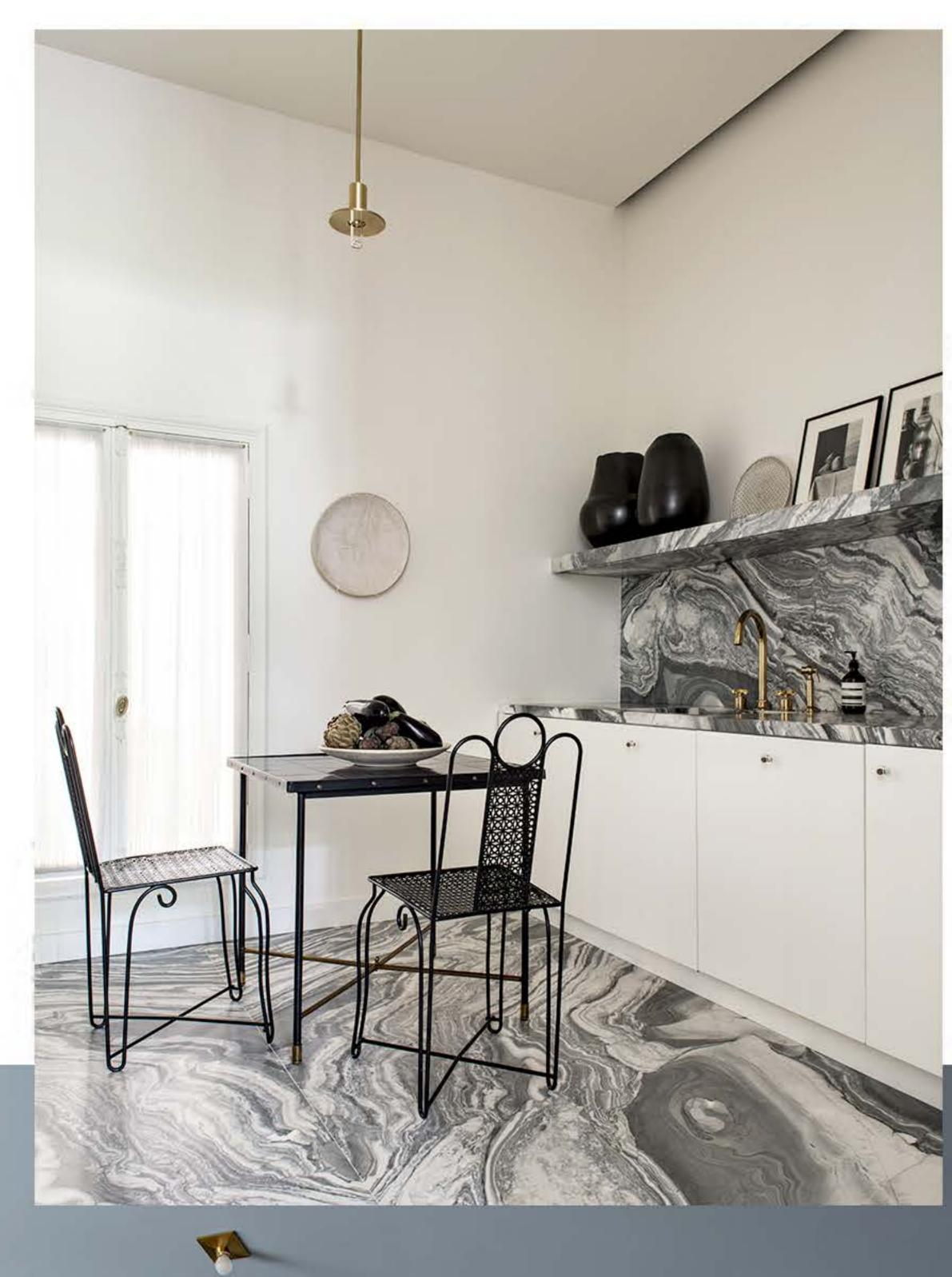
It's here, in a Haussmannian building on the Place Saint-Georges, that they run the business from their recently developed atelier. An entire apartment that sits in the same building as their offices and home, the 150-square-metre space is a showcase for the full Laplace offering, including a large stock of antique pieces and bespoke furniture designs. 'It was Christophe's idea. At the beginning I was sceptical, as it was a huge commitment,' says Laplace. 'The space became available, and we did a massive renovation. Now, we hold our meetings and events in an environment that's more like a home, so I have to give Christophe credit. He's the strategic brain and has a wider vision, whereas I'm purely creative. I focus on design, while he manages the studio and clients. It's a good combination.'

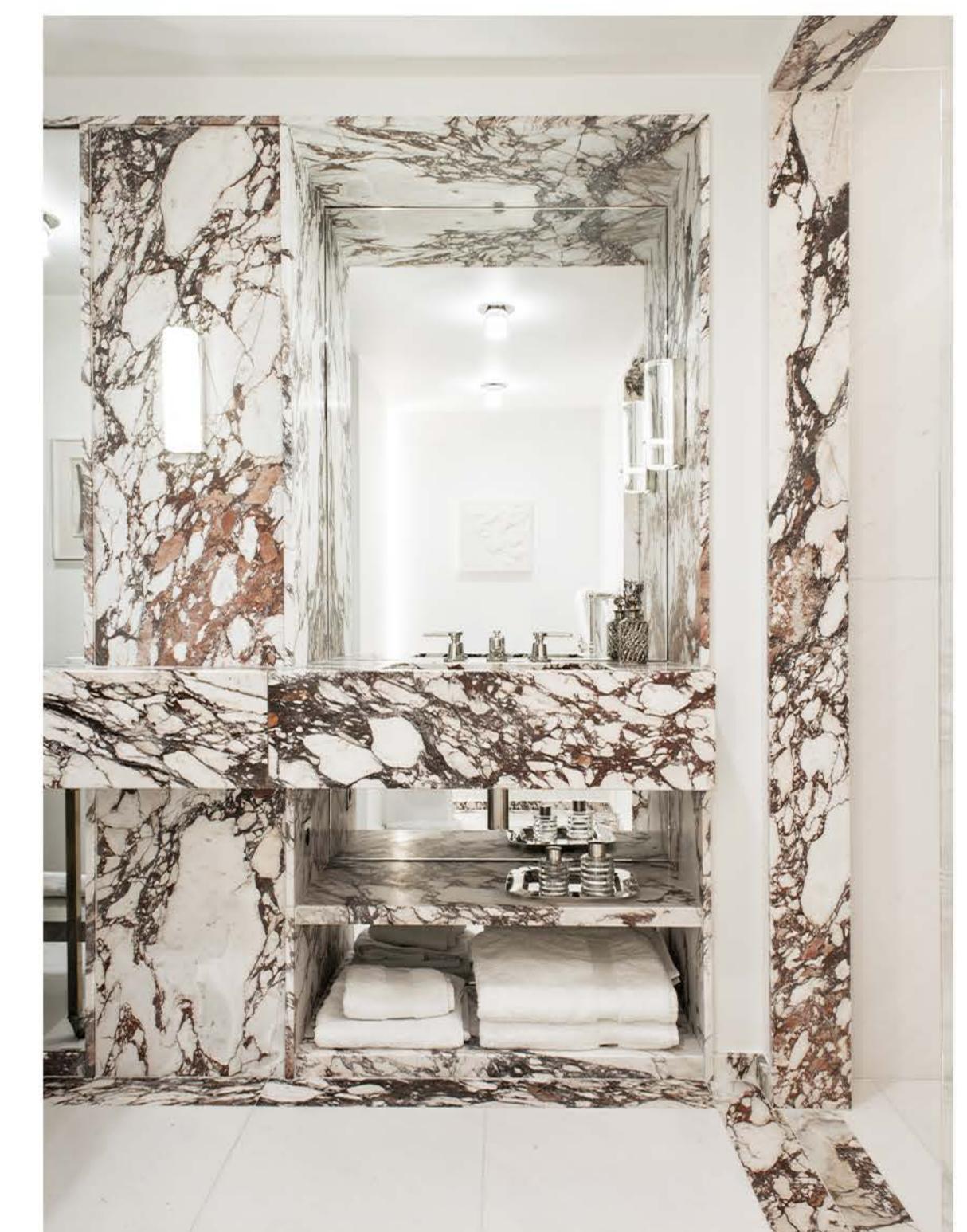
Current work includes commercial and residential projects in Peru, Mexico, the UK, Hong Kong, South Korea, Paris and, of course, Menorca. Many jobs are for return customers. 'It's rare that we do a single project,' says Laplace. 'I'm privileged in that my clients are smart and open to ideas, and it's always a dialogue between them, the location and the building itself. I create environments that push boundaries, but also spaces that they understand and feel comfortable in. At the end of the day it's not a product of mine, it's something we've created together.' luislaplace.com>





Clockwise from left A chair upholstered in Kvadrat fabric by Laplace Bespoke complements a 1960s Venini chandelier in the alcove **Kitchen** Dramatic grey swirling marble is paired with a 1950s table by Jacques Adnet **Snug** An 'FL146' corian coffee table by Laplace Bespoke sits in front of a 1940s Jean-Charles Moreux daybed upholstered in Pierre Frey fabric **Bathroom** Marble is used to opulent effect **D**







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