

ARCHITECTURE

Surrealist townhouse Villa Junot lights up Montmartre – and it's for rent

We go inside Montmartre's Villa Junot, a former composer's home reimaged by interior design studio Claves, where surrealism meets art deco splendour

By Katherine McGrath | Published June 19, 2025 In [Features](#)



(Image credit: Alice Mesguich)



In the heights of Montmartre, a hilly village in the 18th arrondissement of [Paris](#) with a strong artistic past that counts Max Ernst, André Bréton, Pablo Picasso, and Jean Cocteau among its past inhabitants, sits Villa Junot, a grand *hôtel particulier*-turned-private villa rental by [Iconic House](#). The art deco residence was built in the 1920s for French operatic composer André Mauprey, and was recently acquired by brothers Robin Michel and Thibaud Elzière, co-founders of Iconic House, to serve as the brand's first Parisian outpost.

Villa JUNOT

WALLPAPER



Explore this somewhat surrealist Montmartre townhouse

The Iconic House team wanted the space to reflect Mauprey's musical past and pay homage to the spectacles of the surrealist movement's close ties to Montmartre, as well as the art deco era in which the home was built and is evidenced in its stately façade. To balance reverence and reinvention, the company enlisted the firm Claves, a rapidly rising star in the design world founded by Laure Gravier and Soizic Fougeront, who met while working under [Pierre Yovanovitch](#). The team set to work, poring over the Paris archives to pull original blueprints and historical details, then set about reimagining the home with modern comforts including an elevator, a gym, a chef's kitchen, and a spa complete with a pool, a hammam, and a sauna.

In collaboration with Michel and Elzière, Claves dreamed up a surrealist fantasy that's high on drama and intrigue, with playful architectural interventions and ornamentation, including plasterwork arches, wrought iron emblems, painted frescos, tiled mosaics, delicate embroidery, and other bespoke touches that masterfully work in tandem to bring the story of the villa to life and blend the visual language of art deco with the absurdism of surrealism and the theatricality of its previous owner. 'We don't work step-by-step,' Fougeront adds. 'Laure sees each space globally. She's drawing the plan while imagining the symmetry, volumes, arches, and colours, as if designing a stage set.'



The grand salon alone is a marvel of majestic proportions with its double-height cathedral ceiling, interior Juliet balconies, original plaster relief above the fireplace, dramatic drapery, and custom burgundy carpeting, which Claves designed to feature bars of music scores composed by Mauprey, and whose deep red anchors the space in the visual codes of its art deco era.



Throughout the house are custom designs by Claves, including cushions, blinds, carpets, sofas, and a three-piece angular dining table in the dining room. The team relied on a bevy of local artists and skilled artisans, who lent their talents to the project, among them Sophie Toporkoff of Atelier Toporkoff (previously of Hermès and [Maison Margiela](#)), for her delicate stained-glass panels; Galatee Martin, who painted a fresco in the entry alcove depicting Eloi de la Plume, a mythical muse of the house; and Montmartre-based artist Gaultier Rimbault, who contributed a mirror painting for the primary bedroom.



(Image credit: Alice Mesguich)

'We want to share our vision of Paris: a city that's creative, inspired, bucolic, romantic, and rich with character. Montmartre brims with secrets, between its artists' studios and galleries, hillside vineyard, timeless cafés, and hidden gardens tucked behind stone walls,' explains Michel. 'This house tells the story of that other Paris.'