AMAZING grace

Once a church, this elegant Rotterdam home combines classic architecture and modern design in the most divine way

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DINING AREA

Interior architect Judith van Mourik built a custom bench. 'We upholstered it in a deep aubergine to emphasise the depth of the space,' she says.

Custom **bench** in Alpaca Alto in Bordeaux, Dedar; and Natté de Soie KS 134, Karin Sajo. **Cushions**, Lissoy. **Candleholder**, Polspotten. **Vases**, 's Zomers Bloemen (Rotterdam). **Stool**, Zieta





LIVING ROOM

'Circular shapes introduce a certain cosiness that contrasts with the formal architecture of the building,' says Judith.

Snake **sofa**, de Sede. **Coffee table**, Nerone and Patuzzi. **Chairs**, Afra & Tobia Scarpa at Fundamente. Wooden **side table** by Andrea Cascella. Cobra **lamp**, Angelo Lelii for Arredoluce at Fundamente. King & Queen **ornaments** (on mantel) by Elio Schiavon. Giuliette **side table**, Jonathan Adler. **Vase**, Dirk van der Kooij. Lisboa **rug**, Dusty Deco. **Column**, 's Zomers Bloemen

‘It felt like a building with both a story and a future,’ say the owners of this expansive home set amid a leafy garden overlooking Rotterdam’s harbour.

Walking through its first-floor enfilade of living spaces, where gracious proportions and original features meet confident, contemporary furniture, that pleasing tension between tradition and modernity seems perfectly expressed. ‘We were drawn to the building’s scale, its classical layout and its strong architectural presence,’ say the owners, who both work in food manufacturing. ‘We’ve lived in Rotterdam for many years and we love this part of the city for its historic elegance – but finding a space that could function as both a home and a workplace is no small task.’

The space that fitted the bill turned out to have had a chequered history: originally built as a grand townhouse in the 1920s, it was later transformed into a church, before being adapted for office and commercial use. ‘Each of these phases left traces – from stained glass to wood panelling – that informed the way the building would be reimagined,’ say the owners. ‘We knew the key was to clearly zone the interiors into areas for living, working and entertaining, while keeping strong visual connections between them.’

The couple asked Judith van Mourik to unlock their home’s potential. The interior architect, who formerly ran her own fashion styling agency, is known for her ability to contemporise historic spaces. ‘The house has so much natural allure, such as mouldings, high ceilings, marble fireplaces and wainscotting,’ she reflects. ‘I wanted to preserve that stateliness, but counter it with something warmer, more inviting, more modern.’

Those humanising touches come in the form of aged brass, deep-pile rugs, circular shapes, wood and natural stone. They are incorporated both for impact and cosiness – a tightrope not always easy to walk. ‘Those materials add warmth, while contrasting with the formal architecture,’ says Judith. ‘Plus, I like to combine opposites. Elegance with rawness, classic with modern, luxury with vintage. That’s what makes an interior interesting.’ Design-led furniture pieces, often upholstered in a pop of colour, allow for a space that straddles the gap between warm and architectural. ‘The building itself guided the shapes, while colour was used to emphasise depth and rhythm in the rooms,’ shares Judith.

In much the same way that this home reflects the owners’ multifaceted lifestyle, so its many personalities have now been reconciled into one cohesive whole. ‘Being bolder with colour and materials and not shying away from the grandeur of the building has really paid off,’ say the owners.

judithvanmourik.nl

STUDY

The former church hall became the study, a space that expresses Judith’s signature combination of heritage and modernity. ‘We installed brass-framed doors that lead to the living room to allow for separation and flow,’ she says.

Aluminium EA 108 **chairs**, Vitra. **Light installation**, Dirk van der Kooij at ’s Zomers Bloemen (Rotterdam). Wood and leather **desk**, MMdrie. **Doors**, designed by Judith van Mourik; made by MMdrie





BAR/ COFFEE AREA

At one end of the study, a counter and cabinetry create a bar and coffee-making station. 'This room needed to function as a calm domestic setting, while also supporting a more formal working atmosphere,' says Judith.

Custom **bar** with 3D brass panelling, designed by Judith van Mourik; made by MMdrie. **Bar stools**, Dirk van der Kooij. **Light fitting**, Nightworks Studio. **Artwork** by Alisa Lim A Po. Silver pedestal **bowl**, Salon Poisson

The download

THE DESIGNER

Interior architect Judith van Mourik renovated this former chapel, located on the banks of the Maas river in Rotterdam, for an entrepreneurial couple who both work in food manufacturing.

THE PROPERTY

A three-floor home within a four-storey, double-fronted former chapel, built in 1925. The ground floor features a garden room, bar and two en-suite guest rooms. On the first floor there's a dining room, living room, study-cum-kitchen bar, kitchen and cloakroom. There's a main bedroom, bathroom and dressing room, laundry, sitting room, second kitchen and en-suite guest room on the second floor.





KITCHEN

Aged metal, wood, marble and smoked glass combine to add a textural feel to this space. 'We blended strong architectural gestures with soft, layered details for a domestic feel,' says Judith.

Custom brass and quarter-sawn oak **kitchen**, designed by Judith van Mourik; built by MMdrie. High Stool **bar chairs**, Space Copenhagen for Mater. **Worktop in** Rosso Levanto marble. Voltero travertine **bowl** by Egidio Di Rosa and Pier Alessandro Giusti for Up&Up

GARDEN ROOM

'This sculptural space with its bespoke ebonised cabinetry reads almost like an artwork,' says Judith.

Bespoke **cabinetry**, designed by Judith van Mourik; made by MMdrie. **Sculpture** by Andrea Cascella. Paint on steel **artwork** by Nerone and Patuzzi



SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

'The herringbone parquet flooring and brass-framed doors are examples of the robust yet tactile materials we used throughout,' says Judith.

Vintage 1970s Carrara marble **table**; find similar at Pamono. **Vessel**, Fornasetti



BATHROOM

Judith made the most of this airy space with a statement rug by cc-tapis. 'My work always carries an elegant, slightly quirky touch,' says the designer.

Flora porcelain **wall tiles**, Botteganove. **Taps**, Dornbracht. 14s **wall lamps**, Bocci. **Bath**, Antonio Lupi. Rotazioni **rug**, Patricia Urquiola for cc-tapis





A HERITAGE BUILDING DEMANDS RESPECT, BUT IT SHOULD ALSO SUPPORT MODERN LIFE – AND THE BALANCE OF SUBTLE BUT BOLD HERE IS WHAT MAKES THIS HOME TRULY SPECIAL

BEDROOM

Judith designed the free-standing headboard, which is like a work of art.

Headboard, upholstered in Élitis mohair; made by MMdrie. **Bedside table**, Lema. Vintage **chandelier**, Piet Jonker Architectural Antiques. **Vase**, L'Objet. **Throw**, Maison de Vacances. **Linen sheets** and **cushions**, Am.Pm at La Redoute

BATHROOM

A large round mirror is suspended over a chunky traonyx stone vanity. 'We repositioned all the bathrooms and the kitchen – practically every surface was reworked,' says Judith.

Mirror and **vanity unit**, designed by Judith van Mourik. Glo-Ball **lights** (seen in mirror), Flos. **Curtains in** Sparks fabric, Dedar. **Taps**, Dornbracht. Antique **coral** via Salon Poisson