

INTERNATIONAL STYLE

Robert Couturier's Home/Office in SoHo, New York

FRENCH DESIGNER ROBERT COUTURIER has always done “big.” One of his first projects was the huge, 60,000-square-foot Cuixmala estate for Sir Jimmy Goldsmith in Mexico—and that was just the main house. By contrast, the elegantly dressed decorator’s own apartment in New York’s fashionable SoHo district is a pied-à-terre, which has morphed into his business office. There is a gradual transition past the entrance and through the double doors, from home to office, where distant assistants can be seen hunched over computers, surrounded by piles of fabric swatches.

Couturier’s personal work area is located in the middle of the apartment, which during the day functions as a glamorous head-of-the-company space, with Jacques Adnet furniture and Léger tapestries. The bedroom, bathroom, and dressing room are hidden from view behind discrete curved walls, hand-painted by artist Paulin Pâris.

A pair of overscale white statues of Roman muses, bought from the Andy Warhol estate, dramatically flanks the elevator doors, which open directly onto the apartment. No space is wasted: the entry can double as a dining room, with its elegant Savin and Adnet table, or provide space for occasional client meetings. Suede upholstered Jansen dining chairs outlined in red paint add to the sophistication of the setting. When the doors to the office are closed, this room has a different rhythm and ceases to be just a passageway.

In the living room, apart from the large

photograph of Couturier by Gerald Incandela and a pair of chrome armchairs from the 1970s, you could easily be transported to 1940s Paris—much of the furniture is by Adnet. This famous French furniture designer is known for his luxurious take on modernism. His pieces are used today by designers to give a touch of glamour to modern interiors.

Couturier’s desk is set into an alcove with a view of the main living space, where a flat-screen television doubles as a client presentation tool. What sets this space apart from the typical home office is its appointments—no printers set on packing cases here. As the French designers of the 1940s revolutionized office furniture, all the important design houses decorated the interiors of commercial buildings, as well as residential spaces—the elegance of their desks, cabinets, and chairs remains unmatched.

The staff departs at the end of the day, leaving behind Kugel, the office cat, who loves all the activity. Weekends are really quiet here for the rather overfed black cat, as Couturier departs for his large country house in Connecticut, on sixteen acres, complete with an octagonal library, which overlooks a peaceful lake. Here the designer has a chance to step back from the office in the city and think about the future—which includes projects in New York, a large Lutyens house in England, an apartment in Paris’s 7th arrondissement, and a house in the Caribbean.

A tapestry by Fernand Léger hangs above a pair of elegant French chairs from the 1970s in the central sitting room. The walls were painted by Paulin Pâris.





A Gerald Incandela portrait of Couturier hangs above the living room sofa by Adnet. It is flanked by a pair of eighteenth-century Chinese bookcases.



ABOVE: Perfect for a pied-à-terre, behind a curved wall is a small but luxurious bed, backed by a Jean-Michel Frank-style screen.
 RIGHT: Couturier's desk, by Adnet, is tucked into an alcove with a view of the main living room. The TV can double as a client presentation screen.





*ABOVE: A ceramic sculpture by Jean René Gauguin, son of the famous painter.
RIGHT: The bathroom features glass tile from Bisazza and a useful zebra-skin ottoman.*

