



Clockwise from left
Fabric from Rue Héroid
has been used to cover
cushions on the Ghost
modular lounge chairs;
the sweeping staircase
and stuffed flamingos;
the Danish rocking-chair
was found at a fleamarket

Mise en Seine

A film-school graduate turned cloth merchant, the owner of this teeny flat on the Left Bank of Paris artfully packs in enough material to tell a very captivating story. By *Dinah Hall*

Photographs by **Lykke Foged**

If you have set your heart on living among the ghosts of Hemingway, Henry Miller and Anaïs Nin on the romantic Left Bank in Paris, and you want high ceilings, herringbone-parquet floors and cornices – but you don't have the funds to match your ambition – something has to give. And in Charlotte de la Grandière's case that something is space. Her apartment is a mere 320sq ft – hardly big enough to contain her fabulously grand name, let alone her life.

But there was no question the place was perfect for her. Daughter of the textile designer Dominique Kieffer and herself the owner of Rue Héroid, the coolest fabric shop in town, de la Grandière, 39, has always been visually led. "It's very important for me to be surrounded by beautiful buildings and gardens. I prefer a small space if it means when I go outside I see nice things."

She may only be renting a small space, but she also gets a palatial entrance hall

complete with a sweeping staircase and a case of flamboyant stuffed flamingos. The flat is in an *hôtel particulier* that has been in the same family for generations: the flamingos were acquired by the owner's great-grandfather on his travels.

Up on the second floor de la Grandière has a bedroom, living-room, tiny kitchen and bathroom. Her solution to living in a small space may seem counterintuitive but it works. Instead of several small pieces of furniture she uses one large



Clockwise from left Shoes form a display around the skirting-board in the bedroom; the gilt overmantel mirror in the living-room came with the flat, and the black desk lamp is by Conran



To remedy this she opened Rue Hérold, a large, uncluttered space where cottons, silks and wools are clinically displayed on white lacquer tables. Inevitably some of them find their way to the apartment, though not in great quantity. A couple of black and white cushions or a ribbon dissecting a white tablecloth are enough to focus the eye in this small but perfectly formed nest of creativity. ● rueherold.fr

one. So in the living-room a big table that serves several functions – display, work and entertaining – and in the bedroom a high bed almost fills the space. And she has had to look with forensic attention for potential storage. A canvas curtain creates a wardrobe for her clothes out of a corridor between bedroom and living-room. Bags, jewellery and belts hang from hooks and become part of the decoration. Shelves around the front door house shoes in cardboard archive boxes, stamped with shoe silhouettes, while the rest of her collection is lined up along the skirting-board.

Obviously de la Grandière has to be strict with herself when it comes to furniture and decoration – no easy thing for an inveterate hunter of flea markets. But she had always admired Japanese minimalism and loves hotels. “What is nice about them is that you only have things that you absolutely need. I wanted it to be a mix of hotel room and Japanese-style apartment. But of course I love

objects, so more and more things are finding their way here.” Like, for example, a beautiful Danish rocking-chair, found in a flea market, whose skeletal structure hardly impinges on the space. Similarly, a Maison Jansen-style nest of glass and faux-bamboo gilt-metal tables offers display and storage with a lightness of touch. Anything more solid would be intrusive. The walls are covered with shelves and artfully placed mirrors, which make the rooms seem bigger.

De la Grandière studied at film school, so telling stories has always been part of her work, something that served her well as a magazine stylist. Indeed, it was as a stylist that she first noticed the lack of good fabric shops. “With fabrics for decorating there is nothing moderately priced, not like in my grandmother’s day in Paris, when there were lots of good shops where you could see and touch beautiful fabrics. Today it is difficult for people to know what is available, so that something like curtains becomes an afterthought in the design process.”



Ci contre, la grande table carrée, encadrée de chaises chinoises et nappée d'un lin gansé d'un ruban graphique, sert autant pour la lecture que pour les dîners entre amis.



Suisse, mais surtout pas froids et vides, avec du linge synthétique ! Charlotte s’installe alors rive gauche et commence à penser ses rangements. L’entrée sera vestiaire pour les manteaux, les autres vêtements seront dans la chambre, chaque penderie cachée par une portière en tissu. Les paires de chaussures se glissent dans des boîtes en carton, empilées dans un coin du couloir. Au salon, les livres, “*beaux comme des tableaux*” et les magazines, pour l’inspiration, s’exposent sur des étagères, sont mixés avec les objets chéris et tissent un mélange personnel, surfilé d’humour et de sensibilité. Pièce maîtresse, la table carrée est d’une échelle volontairement grande. Nappée de lin blanc, elle est à la fois table de lecture, de dîner pour huit personnes et rangement supplémentaire en dessous ! Dans la petite chambre, là encore Charlotte joue avec les proportions et érige un lit de palace, astuces en plus : pour prendre de la hauteur, des tiroirs sont dissimulés sous le tour de sommier en lin, complété avec le moelleux du matelas, de l’édredon et des oreillers. Une chambre tout en nuances de blancs et association de matières, dont les uniques motifs sont des impressions *block print* indien. En écho à ces faux unis, les coussins du salon, sérigraphies en série limitée d’Angelica Steudel, habillent les fauteuils immaculés. Répétition à l’unisson autour des fenêtres, les rideaux d’épais lin chocolat doublé de voile blanc sont un échantillon de plus dans cet appartement témoin du petit monde de Charlotte. 8, rue Hérold, 75001. Tél. 01 42 33 66 56 et rueherold.com Du 6 au 18 septembre, Charlotte de La Grandière et le pâtissier Jacques Genin se rencontrent autour d’une “messe gourmande” chez Rue Hérold et au 133, rue de Turenne, 75003.