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*the magazine*

# MY FRENCH COUNTRY HOME

AUTHENTIC FRENCH LIVING

*The Interior Designer's Secret Weapon*

*Discover Paris's Rooftop Gardens*



*Versailles  
Beyond  
The Château*

## THE TRIUMPH OF BAROQUE DESIGN



# The Interior Designer's Secret Weapon

Interview by Alice Walker

When it launched in 2016, **The Invisible Collection** offered something new: access to the coveted addresses of some of the world's most notable interior designers and architects via an inimitable, luxury online experience. The company's founders, Isabelle Dubern-Malleveys and Anna Zaoui spoke to us about how this unique concept came to fruition.

The Invisible Collection was sparked by the love of the French designer, Pierre Yovanovitch. What is it about his aesthetic that attracted you?

Pierre is the embodiment of harmony, culture and craftsmanship — the guiding threads of our choices for the collection. We loved his designs and we wanted to be able to share this kind of aesthetic with a wider audience. His "Papa Bear Armchair" was a dream item for both of us and remains a firm favorite on the site.

A singular plaster light suspension, the "Eole Ceiling Lamp" is part of the new La Salle à Manger collection by Pierre Augustin Rose.



"Diner en Ville," a series of tableware collections exclusive to site.

You were famously the first to gain access to the exclusive **Rolodexes** of French interior designers, architects and craftsmen who agreed to be on the website. How did you achieve this?

The designers featured on **The Invisible Collection** have been in our personal network for years. We first reached out to them when we had the idea for the project to see if they would be a part of the adventure — passion and friendship did the rest. We remain absolute fans of each of our brands!

Isabelle, you're a former journalist and luxury consultant for brands like Dior; and Anna, you're on the acquisition committee and supporter of the Hayward Gallery, as well as a member of the International Design Museum Circle. How did your different backgrounds help launch **The Invisible Collection**?

When you add Isabelle's experience working with many artists (like Hubert Le Gall for Dior Home) to Anna's collaborations with various renowned French and international craftsmen, much of the industry is covered. The combined history equates to over 20 years of experience.



Beyond our diverse backgrounds, we have identical passions for design and interiors. The art and luxury worlds often collide. Having the same values in life also makes working together extremely enjoyable!

You have been friends for a long time. What does your personal relationship bring to your working relationship?

We share a great love for beautiful objects and a similar approach to operating a business, which is key! We are also both obsessed with collecting beautiful tables, which inspired our latest project, "Diner en Ville."



A selection of plates from the **Déjeuner Décoration X Laboratoire Porvickini**, exclusive to **The Invisible Collection**.



The "Doo Bench" by **Le Berre Vézud**. Handmade in France, the seat cushion is covered with **Pierre Frey** fabric.

Isabelle Dubern-Malleveys



The "Papa Bear Armchair" by **Pierre Yovanovitch** — a favorite of both Anna and Isabelle.



Anna Zaoui



Interior design is often a slow and meticulous process that requires tangible, in-person choices. How do you negotiate these factors with an e-commerce site where this is not possible?

Selling custom-made and bespoke furniture online was never really done before we launched **The Invisible Collection**. We knew the most important thing was to create a unique framework where the clients' desires and needs were taken into account from start to finish. We work with designers and craftsmen to customize colors, fabrics, lacquers, materials and dimensions so that every piece is truly unique and impeccably manufactured. Despite the



"Little Boy Armchair" by Elliott Barnes, "North-South Trestle" by Le Bern Wood and interiors by designer Irina Moldov.

fact that you're not physically in front of the item, we have a one-of-a-kind process for exceptionally special pieces.

**Could you explain how a bespoke creation is carried out by your team?**

Our teams are there to help our clients customize a piece from A to Z. The luxury aspect of bespoke design is

essential. In most cases, our pieces are custom-made to accommodate all of the buyer's needs, which allows for very close work with the artisans on every little detail.

We guarantee authenticity and quality, and each item comes with a certificate, should the receiver wish to consign it to auction in the future.

**While your showroom is based in Belgravia, London, you have had pop-up shops in Paris, Miami, Milan, London and New York. What do each of these cities represent for you, design-wise?**

Paris remains the capital of creation. London is very international. New York has a long-standing taste for European decoration and craftsmanship. Milan is the capital of the furniture industry. Each of them has their own sensibilities and continues to inspire us throughout the seasons.

**Where do you go to find potential collaborations?**

The vast majority of the site's designers are acquired through our personal networks. It's a tight-knit family! However,

we often find new talent through designers who recommend them to us.

**"Like any other art form, design is a mirror of its time." Which brands/designers do you feel reflect our current moment?**

For us, the names that will always stand the test of time will be the brands and designers with an eco-friendly approach: the ones who prioritize special, durable materials. We're proud to be working with sustainable design brands such as ETEL and Maison Intègre for The Invisible Collection.

**What particular pieces or aesthetics are you seeing buyers searching for now?**

We're seeing a lot of people loving the "Diner en Ville" boxes, the "Asymetric Armchair" by Pierre Yovanovitch, Osanna Visconti's "Fiore Table," Charles Zana's "Nomad Stool" and the "Baba Chair" by Emmanuelle Simon. These beautiful pieces with exceptional craftsmanship will last, be admired and be passed down for generations.

For more information, visit [www.theinvisiblecollection.com](http://www.theinvisiblecollection.com)



Pierre Yovanovitch, the designer that inspired Anna and Subelle to launch The Invisible Collection.