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HOME TREND

GREY MATTERS

It's a fact: grey is here to stay. But, this year, it's all about adding depth and texture to this decorating staple

Words **CLAUDIA BAILLIE** Photography **MICHEL FIGUET**



Dining room The table was custom-made by Arnold Devincq, the chairs are by Paola Navone for Gervasoni and the spherical pendant lights overhead are by Coralie Beauchamp. Stockist details on p167 ▶



THE TREND

Calming, elegant and the ideal foil for more colourful furniture and accessories, greys have long been a go-to backdrop for many designers and architects. But in Arnaud Masson's Brussels-based home, dark, dramatic shades and a wealth of contrasting textures take this hue to an exciting new level. Natural materials, simplicity and wellbeing are at the root of this property's grey interior. 'I was tired of modern design and perfect objects,' says Arnaud. 'My aim was to get rid of non-essentials, to find something more modest. I wanted to explore a way to reveal the beauty of imperfect things.' With this in mind, Arnaud worked with architectural firm K2A to devise a design that would completely avoid the use of synthetic materials. 'We used clay, wood, steel and tadelakt, all of which have unique colours that reflect the hues of the earth: monochrome and minimalist, dark, simple and without any pretension. I love the energy that they create, and the feeling of wellness that brings.' k2a.be

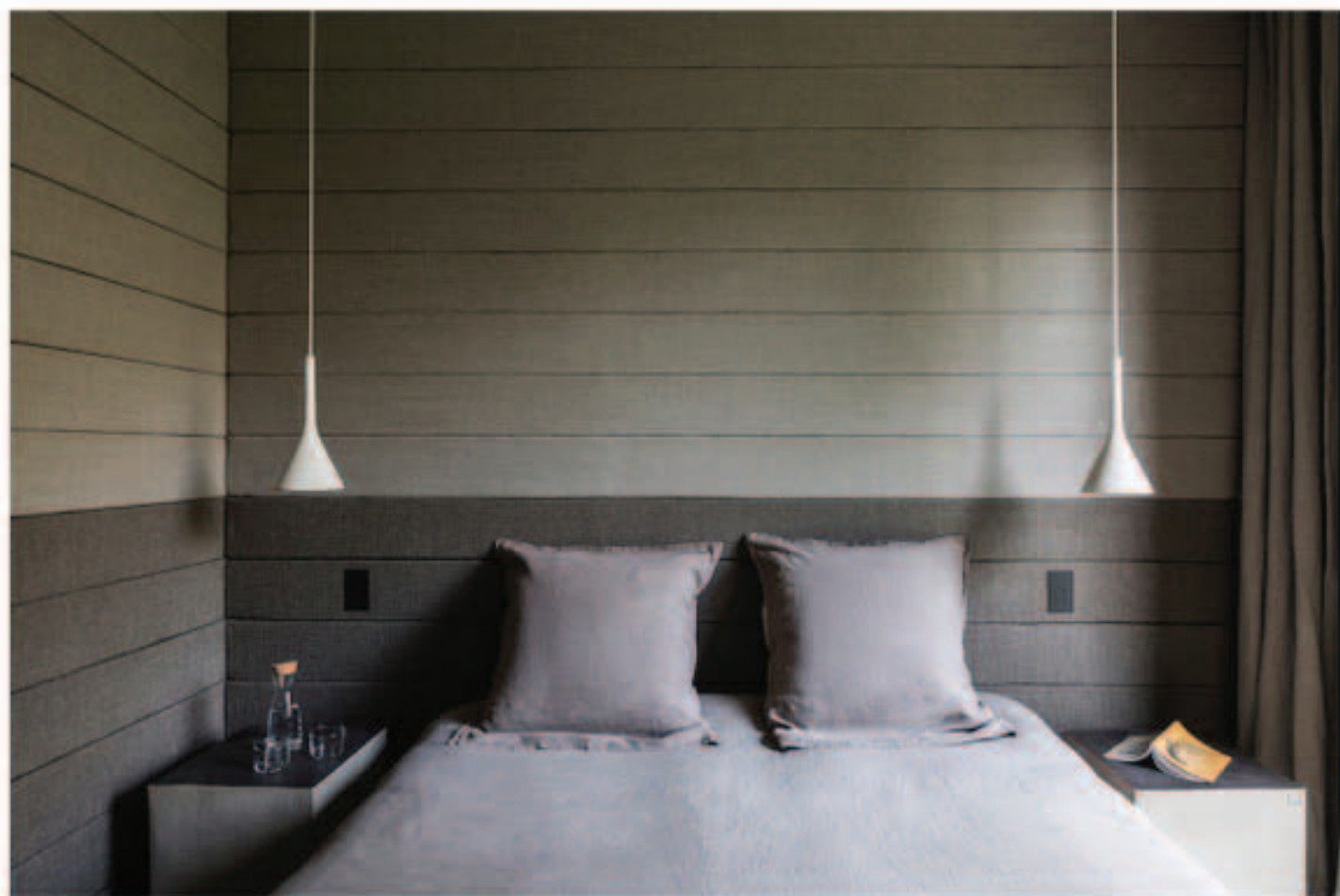
THE HOUSE

Located in the lively and sought-after district of Châtelain in Brussels, this property was once two terraced houses, which Arnaud, the head of real estate company Permis de Construire, bought three years ago. Collaborating with K2A, he worked hard to fuse the adjacent buildings, while still maintaining respect for the traditional architecture. 'The original houses were tall and narrow,' he says. 'We used the entire space, creating a six-storey, 750-square-metre home with four large bedrooms, two offices and a very spacious living area that includes a kitchen, dining room, lounge and bar.'

Kitchen Area—steel light fitting by Caravane hangs over the island. Custom oak stools were made by a Belgian woodcutter. The ceramics are by Atelier Dulo and La Forêt by Lucia Esteves. **Stockist details on p107** ▶



I WAS THE ONLY FURNITURE
I COULD AFFORD TO BUY.
I WANTED TO EXPLORE
A WAY TO REVEAL THE BEAUTY
OF IMPERFECT THINGS.



TREND IN DETAIL
TEXTURED GREY

Arnaud's tips for making this hue work harmoniously in your home

Don't hesitate. Grey might seem intimidating, but a darker palette can help to make rooms feel cosy and smart.

Picking moody shades in a house has the same effect as if they were added to the back of a painting, enhancing other colours and materials, making them more interesting.


Texture is key when it comes to bringing life to a dark, grey space. Layer up tactile materials, such as grain-rich woods, rough linens and smooth, textured plaster.

Remember that some greys are colder, and others are warmer. Take time to figure out which tone of grey works best with the natural light in your room.

Using dark colours throughout a home can make walls seem to disappear, and can help to create a more open-plan feel.

'WE USED CLAY, WOOD, STEEL AND TADELAKT, ALL OF WHICH HAVE UNIQUE, DARK COLOURS THAT REFLECT THE EARTH'

This page The bedside tables in the guest bedroom are by Atelier Vierkant. Above them hang elegant 'Aplomb' lamps by Lucidi Pevere for Foscarini.

Opposite The main bedroom includes a pendant light by Secto Design and bedside table by Arnaud Maillon. The Maison de Vacances blanket was bought at Lucie Esteves. **Stockist details on p167** 





THE MATERIALS

'Homes naturally tend to deteriorate, but, with this project, we wanted to create a space that gets more beautiful as time passes,' says Arnaud. 'The house has a very primitive feel.' Its walls are coated in dark pigmented clay that has been fed with linseed oil and installed by Brussels-based firm Odilon Creations. The lower floors and staircases are crafted from Pastellone, a natural product made with lime and marble powder, while Moroccan tadelakt plaster is used to create the worksurfaces in the kitchen and bar area. More tadelakt features in the bathroom, where it has been used to mould the washbasins and a generous freestanding bathtub. Upstairs, the floors are made of smooth smoked oak, as is the joinery throughout the home, designed by Arnaud and architecture firm K2A and made to measure by Belgian carpentry company Recob. 'The idea was to use a limited palette of materials and to create an energy from their strength,' says Arnaud.

THE FURNISHINGS

Much of the furniture is bespoke and fitted to the space, which helps to create a seamless, uncluttered look. The curtains and upholstery all feature a tasteful mixture of smooth and slubby linens in neutral shades. The same casual colour scheme is used for the 'Ghost' sofa and dining chairs by Paola Navone for Gervasoni. 'We wanted everything to look informal, elegant and relaxed,' explains Arnaud. In the main bedroom, custom-made architectural wall panelling has been painted black, and within it sits an integrated headboard covered in grey linen. The guest bedroom has a cocoon-like feel, thanks to the grey linen panelling lining the walls, the softness of which creates a pleasing contrast with the concrete pendant lamps and bedside tables. Art also features in many of the rooms. 'I source pieces from Paris and London,' says Arnaud. 'I especially like street art - it's imperfect and authentic, so it fits in with the spirit of this house.'

Living room The 'Ghost' sofa is by Paola Navone for Gervasoni, and the oak coffee table was custom-made by Arnold Destinoq. Gideon Rubin created the artwork, and the glass 'Balloons' lamp is by Brokis. **Stockist details on p167** ▶