



# Secret hideaway

*Featuring hidden storage, sliding walls and flip-down tables, this wonderfully innovative Paris home pays tribute to one couple's ability to think outside the box*

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**Sunken lounge** In order to maximise space, the architect owners constructed a raised wooden floor with storage underneath, which is accessed via flip-up trap doors. This gives the living area with its 'Plastics' sofa by Piero Lissoni for Kartell (available from Selfridges) and Nani Marquina rug a cosy, conversation-pit feel ➡

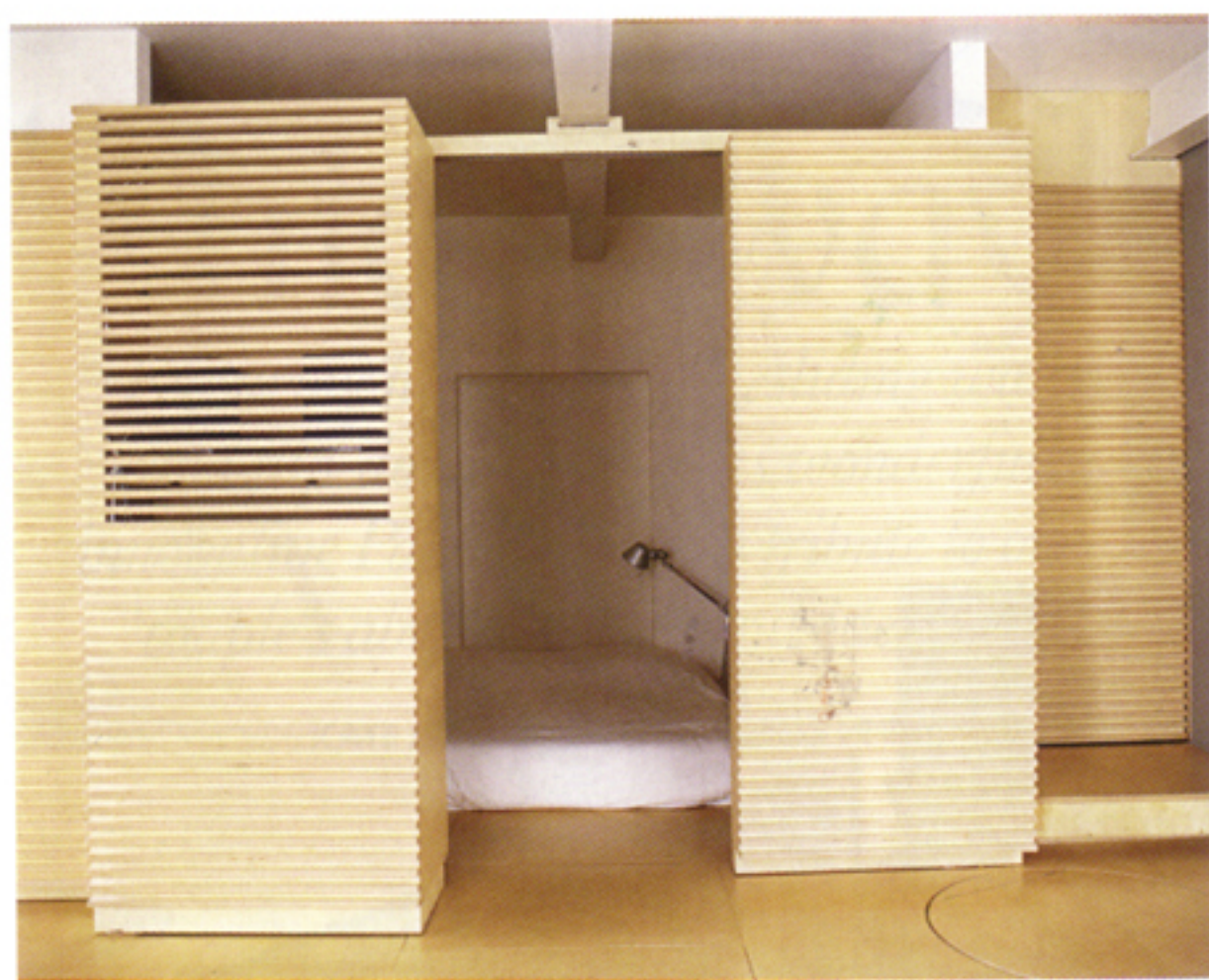






**Bedroom** To keep light bouncing around the apartment yet retain the option of closing off their bedroom, the couple installed a system of sliding and pivoting wall panels. These contain more 'secret' storage with space for everything from books to hi-fi equipment and can be arranged in numerous configurations according to the family's needs

**Office** The wall folds out to form an instant work station in combination with a 'Selene' chair by Vico Magistretti for Heller



## Who lives here?

*It's no surprise to learn that the couple who own this apartment are both architects – a breed who tend to be most experimental when it comes to their own homes. Nicola and Adelaïde Marchi (he's Italian, she's French) bought this apartment, in the Bastille district of Paris, when they found out that they were expecting their first child. Any cosy nesting impulse, however, was quickly overtaken by a desire to do things differently ➡*





## Why do this?

The century-old apartment had been stripped back to a light, bright shell by its previous owner, leaving the couple two obvious choices: live with it like that – but open-plan spaces and babies aren't generally the happiest of combinations (plus, where would they put all their stuff?) – or, revert to a series of conventional rooms, full of wardrobes and drawers (sensible but dull). As Nicola says, 'The objective was to take the light everywhere.' So instead they opted for a middle way, creating a changeable set-up where light can still bounce around unhindered, but where there's privacy and quiet to be had when required

**Trap door** Sections of the specially constructed raised floor lift up to provide access to the storage space beneath

**Dining area** The couple covered one wall with an 'Octopus Pop' digital wallpaper panel in anthracite, by Time To Go Home. For a similar shade of grey paint try Fired Earth's 'Plumbago'

## How did they do it?

*By thinking laterally. The pair built an internal structure of plywood, which raises up the floor level and banishes clutter to the spaces created below. Plus, instead of conventional walls they opted for sliding and pivoting panels. These panels contain more storage space and fold-out tables that can be rearranged in endless combinations. 'It never gets boring,' says Adelaide ➡*



# What is it like to live here?

Today, Nicola and Adelaide enjoy the simple life knowing that everything from books to baby stuff is out of sight but close at hand, accessed via numerous trap doors. Now light (and people) can move between the spacious kitchen/dining room and the cosy sunken lounge with ease, while the bedroom can be open plan or snugly enclosed as the couple's mood takes them. The pair have reaped the rewards of their bold scheme and turned an ordinary apartment into something that delivers all the light, space and flexibility they craved

**Kitchen/dining room** A rough-hewn beamed ceiling contrasts with modern, minimal plywood kitchen units, a solid antique dining table and the 'GlassGlass' pendant light by Paolo Rizzatto for Luceplan (available from London Lighting). The kitchen units are angled to avoid obstructing the doors that lead to the balcony beyond. Circles in the units indicate, among other things, a built-in bin and a fold-down child's table. For a similar basin mixer tap try online store Alaris

## CONTACTS

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[www.kitchen-sinks.co.uk](http://www.kitchen-sinks.co.uk))  
**Fired Earth** (0845 366 0400;  
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**Heller** ([www.helleronline.com](http://www.helleronline.com))  
**Kartell at Selfridges** (08708 377377;  
[www.kartell.it](http://www.kartell.it))  
**London Lighting** (0207589 3612;  
[www.londonlighting.co.uk](http://www.londonlighting.co.uk))  
**Luceplan** ([www.luceplan.com](http://www.luceplan.com))  
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