

Le Bon Marché Unveils Edgar Jayet's VIC Space

- The legacy department store tapped the young Van Cleef & Arpels design prize winner to revamp its private appointment Salon Aristide.

BY RHONDA RICHFORD

PARIS — Legacy department store Le Bon Marché has turned one of its most storied rooms into a collectible design retail experience, bringing 28-year-old French designer Edgar Jayet into Salon Aristide to create a new VIC space that occupies the former office of founder Aristide Boucicaut.

Jayet's furniture is integrated into the salon and all the pieces are available to buy. Clients can purchase the objects, or work with Jayet's studio to customize dimensions, materials and typologies.

"We wanted it to feel like an apartment, like a collector's home," Jayet told WWD. "And I think when you have the private, personalized experience at Le Bon Marché you want to feel somehow at home."

That homey quality is central to Le Bon Marché's Salons Particuliers, which opened in 2019 as a series of private Parisian apartment-like spaces for VIC service.

Salon Aristide is the jewel in its crown, as it retains the mahogany paneling, gold-leaf details, engraved glass and alabaster lighting of what legend has it was Boucicaut's former office.

Le Bon Marché did not want Jayet to turn it into a period reconstruction. Instead, the designer was asked to create a dialogue between the existing architecture and his own work, alongside selected pieces by other designers.

"What was important was that it should never feel like a display," said Le Bon Marché director of client relations and services Raphaël Lipszyc. "We wanted the pieces to be encountered in context, within a fully realized interior, so that clients could experience them as part of a way of living rather than as objects presented in isolation."

Jayet's collection brings together furniture and lighting rooted in French craftsmanship and 20th-century decorative arts. A cashmere-covered daybed has a handmade wooden structure produced by a Parisian seat-maker, with its hardware also made by hand in Paris. A series of trunks and wardrobes is covered in moiré

traditionally used for yachting and features original handles cast from designs by Jean-Michel Frank, while the structures use a Napoleon III black stain and sycamore wood inside.

Jayet designed the pieces to evoke the first-class cabins of the old White Star Line ships.

The collection was first presented at Design Miami last year as an homage to the century of Art Deco. At Le Bon Marché, however, Jayet has expanded the proposition beyond individual furniture pieces to create an entire interior.

"I love assembling interiors, especially within a strong existing condition," he said of the room. "And here we have the most beautiful millwork."

The room's existing Art Deco bones built the foundation for a selection of additional pieces. A constellation motif carpet designed by Andrée Putman, handwoven in Burgundy, mimics designs in the room's ceiling. Jayet said the piece was added as a tribute to Putman's work for Le Bon Marché, particularly its grand escalators. A sculpture by Maïon, loaned by the artist's gallery, was intended to bring what Jayet called an "institutional" aspect.

"It's a piece that could be in a museum," he said.

Lighting comes from Delisle, in a handmade Parisian collection inspired by traditional 19th-century chandeliers.

The result reflects Jayet's studio philosophy, merging furniture and interior design of small-scale production and specialist craftsmanship. The young designer established his studio at 23 after winning the Van Cleef & Arpels Prize and has since worked on residential, institutional and cultural projects in France, Italy and the U.S.

At Le Bon Marché, that small-scale approach is integral to one of Paris' largest luxury stores. Jayet sees a natural connection between the two. The department store, he noted, was itself an innovation in modern retail



immortalized by Emilie Zola's novel "Au Bonheur des Dames." While the department store introduced things like consistent pricing as a luxury of its day, today it is adapting to modern retail and luxury. Much of today's notion is making available handcrafted objects produced in very limited quantities and adapted to individual clients.

"They care about this little scale, and they know that their clients research this

scale," he said. "They're not interested in mass productions and flashy things, but more like a timeless, institutional, super-crafted experience."

For Le Bon Marché, the salon offers a way to bring collectible design into the client experience. "We are interested in creating environments where commerce, culture and emotion come together seamlessly," Lipszyc added.

