

Catalan casual

A Barcelona warehouse made
into a soothing, inviting home

*Words / Karine Monié
Images / Elton Rocha*





When he was a child, interior designer Noé Prades was fascinated by his father's work in construction, often going along to building sites where he drew and made small furniture and objects, imagining the possibilities in each space. Born in Spain and based in Barcelona, Prades went on to study art and interior design, gaining experience working for renowned design studios and furniture brands before going on to launch his eponymous practice. Since then, he has crafted a singular aesthetic that combines a sense of minimalism with an eclectic essence reflected through emotional spaces. Using contrasting styles – such as classic with modern or exotic with geometric – is something that Prades particularly likes. That approach is exemplified in his latest project.

When the homeowner, a young doctor, purchased this space in a quiet neighbourhood of Barcelona, it had never been in residential use. Built in 1930, the building had previously been a mechanical workshop and an old boutique, but it was a warehouse when Prades and his team were finally tasked with completely reimagining and transforming it into a home. Some of the existing walls were removed to start from scratch.

“We needed to change everything,” says the interior designer. “One of the most interesting structural changes was to lower the floors to increase the height in some of the rooms while complying with regulations to do the change of use from commercial to residential. To achieve this, we had to install reinforced concrete in all the perimeters of the floor that supported the walls, then excavate and remove the existing floor to create a new one.”

During the conceptualisation process, the homeowner also asked the interior designer to preserve existing architectural elements. These included stone and brick walls, *volta Catalana* ceilings (typical of the area, with timber beams separated by a run of brick barrel vaults), steel details and large windows, which together give an industrial yet warm feel.

“He wanted a unique and different home,” says Prades. “The original state of the space was very dark and compartmentalised, so one of the challenges during the remodelling was to open it up and fill it with natural light.”

The starting point to create the new layout – spread over 93 sqm, plus a charming 16sqm private patio to the rear – was to design a large

Facing page
The living room features one of Noé Prades' own rugs for Dac Rugs, and shelving that is also made to his own design

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The industrial space has lent itself beautifully to residential conversion, with original vaulted ceilings and raw brickwork



LOVING
TALKING



Facing page
In the dining area, the homeowner bought the vintage cabinet from his previous house, while the photograph is by Anna Malagrida

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The kitchen, with an island clad in terracotta tiles, was the starting point for reworking the warehouse's layout

kitchen in the heart of the apartment where functionality and aesthetics meet. In this key room for the homeowner (who loves to cook and host guests), Prades opted for a macaúbas granite worktop because of its natural and durable characteristics, while the huge island is clad in handcrafted terracotta bricks to give a warm, organic feel. The island separates the space between the kitchen and the dining room, where a vintage cabinet – a piece that the homeowner already had – complements chairs from the 1970s and a bespoke oak table. A sliding wooden door leads to the bedroom where one of the walls is in original stone and the headboard was customised by Prades; beyond, a brick-lined bathroom connects to the patio for an outdoor/indoor atmosphere.

In the living room, the large oak bookshelf on the main wall was custom designed by Prades, and he also created the jute and wool rug for Barcelona-based Dac Rugs. Two small African tables by another native brand, Azul Tierra, add an eclectic touch.

“We worked in shaping a bright space that creates a dialogue between inside and out, as well as a sensation of amplitude and connection between the different ambiances,” says Prades. For an authentic result, he drew inspiration

from traditional Mediterranean architecture while adding a sophisticated and contemporary twist, introducing raw and local materials. Throughout this home, neutral and earthy tones prevail, conveying a calm feeling. “We chose the name Elisi for this project, which means a place of peacefulness and tranquillity in Catalan,” says Prades. “It was a reference for the whole project and it helped us develop the concept; the homeowner wanted the interior to be an oasis in the middle of the city – somewhere to disconnect.”

While Prades custom-designed much of the furniture for the project, there are also pieces by Menu, Gervasoni and Barcelona-based mid-century modern dealer 177 Kensington, among others. Artwork from Galeria Senda further brings the spaces to life: there are photographs by Anna Malagrida (in the dining room) and Gemma Miralda (in the bedroom), a painting by Yago Hortal (next to the kitchen) and a dog sculpture by Miguel Ángel Madrigal (in the dining room).

Responding to the homeowner's wish to live in an inviting and relaxing environment focused on wellness, this serene project allowed all the existing elements to get along in harmony with the new ones in a seamless flow.

“We worked in shaping a bright space that creates a dialogue between inside and out, as well as a sensation of amplitude and connection”



Above
Left to right: sliding doors divide the bedroom from the kitchen, with polished concrete floors running throughout; an open-plan shower leads on to the private patio

Next page
The designer picks up the warm tones of the exposed brick and stone in his earthy colour palette



