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One of the great things about Paris is that the city has retained a human scale. Only last June did the city unveil plans for its first skyscraper since the Tour Montparnasse, built in 1973. Thanks to Baron Haussmann, who engineered Paris’ architectural transformation in the 1850s, the city boasts low buildings and leafy avenues dotted with squares and regal plazas. If Paris were a geometrical form, it would be a poetic circle.

The Boulevard Saint Germain draws an arc on the left bank on the river Seine. It is here, in the 7th arrondissement, that designer Gérard Faivre recently renovated a 280 square metre second-storey apartment premised on this concept of the circle and suffused by a sense of delicate poetry. Faivre, who only undertakes works he “has fallen in love with” engineered a perfect mix of conservation and careful transformation. He retains most of the apartment’s core features - parquet flooring, doors, windows with interior shutters, marble fireplaces and mouldings, door locks and handles in brass but also wall frescos and stained-glass windows - and harnesses the grand Haussmanien energy of these elements to a contemporary vision of home-as-enclave. The result is a space of rounded edges that echo each other in an endless invitation to a softer living, exuding light and effortless beauty.

Described by the artist as the “reflection of the spirit of the apartment”, the entrance is devoid of any hard boundaries. Custom-made pivoting panels by Renaissance et Restauration and a matching rug by EGE conceal the straight angles of the original walls and create a welcoming sphere, underscoring the significance of the reception area as port of entry into the overall living experience created by Faivre. Stunning at first sight, the wallpaper by Lorenzo De Grandis for Wall & Deco and depicting a woman’s facial profile, seems to embody the calm whisper of an invitation to step inside.

Into the living room, where the invitation continues. The herringbone parquet restored to its balmy beige glory is gently offset by the shimmery silks of a round rug from Secret du Luxe and the low gleam of the “Ovilia” hand-made wall appliques by Guillaume Arnoux for Art et Floritude. Majestic and flirtatious, the light suspension by Karim Rashid for Purho adds a resolutely playful touch to the mineral tones of the flooring and walls. Silky black and dull gold - a colour juxtaposition common in the Second Empire - play off each other throughout the apartment, from the upholstery on the sofas by Antonio Cittero for Flexform and the armchairs by Jaime Hayon, to the electric sockets in the kitchen and the carefully -selected artwork by Caroline Dantheny, reaffirming Faivre’s unique skill for period restoration. Throughout, airy Kvadrat curtains allow the natural light to pour in from the 11 windows, while decorative objects bearing the name “Ame Messagère”, “Jumelles” and “Rosette” guide and support the curvaceous thread.

The three bedrooms and two dressing rooms demonstrate an ingenious re-design of structure and space to meet contemporary needs of practicality and comfort. Faivre himself designed much of the bedroom features and furniture to ensure continuity of look. In the guest bathrooms, wallpaper by Wall & Deco portraying here a fractured sky, there oversized exotic leaves provide a earthy feel. And from inside the bathtub by Jaime Hayon for Bisazza, set imposingly at the centre of the master bathroom, one indeed cannot find a single sharp edge to mar the overall sense of “luxe, calme et volupté”, beautifully conveyed by Faivre’s ballet of curvatures. Lofty, soft, and ethereal, in the spirit of the City of Lights.