

IT'S THE WEEK TO...

DECORATE

TAKE IT TO THE MAX!

THE HOME OF LA DOUBLE J DESIGNER JJ MARTIN IS FABULOUSLY EXUBERANT BUT ISN'T UNACHIEVABLE IN YOUR OWN HOME, SHE ARGUES – IT'S ALL ABOUT SMART EDITING...

WORDS LAURA ANTONIA JORDAN

TRUE LOVE IS worth waiting for. At least it was for the designer JJ Martin, who spent three years viewing 93 properties before she found "The One", a 1950s penthouse apartment in the centre of Milan. The clincher was the sweeping, wraparound terrace, which she uses for everything from evening entertaining – where she serves plump mozzarella and figs from the local deli with Aperol spritzes – to morning yoga.

A California girl by birth, JJ has spent almost two decades in Milan. "I had my





Bright & beautiful

In the living room, rich colour and layered prints give a sense of joy. The armchairs are custom-made with fabric from an early 2000s Prada collection; the cushions are from the Goddess Collection. The lamp is vintage.



Cool room

A micro-cement wall is the backdrop to the dining area, which, unlike the rest of the apartment, is pared back both in colour and pattern. The relief is 19th-century Sicilian and the chairs are 1950s Italian, which JJ had tinted black.



design education here. I learned a lot from the Italians about clean, beautiful mid-century design,' she says. 'And then I put my own stamp on it, which is very personal – more quirky, playful and free.'

Certainly JJ's home reflects her eclectic aesthetic. You may already be familiar with her spirited style thanks to La Double J, the label she founded in 2016, which has become known for its exuberant prints, zingy colours and Made In Italy craftsmanship. Starting with dresses, the label expanded to include homewares, and in her apartment, rainbow Murano glasses, floral patterned vases and embroidered velvet cushions from her just-launched Goddess Collection – which features Picasso-style illustrations of classical Greek goddesses, an homage to female empowerment – all jostle for space.

The maximal, mix-and-match mood ▶



Table setting from La Double J Wild-bird collection

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Cardinals, £200
Lunches, €100

Decorative plates, €250 for a set of six

Panama Pavilion 2007

Meal with a view

On the terrace, the chairs are covered in an outdoor fabric by pierrefrey.com. The table is custom-made with geometric Gio Ponti tiles.

Cheap chic

The urns in the hearth were a 'cheap and cheerful find' from cargomilano.it. The striking mirror is vintage and the fashion books complement the collection of vases below.

continues throughout the apartment. 'It comes from the heart,' explains JJ. 'I've always been attracted to print and embellishment since I was a child and gravitated towards strong patterns and very forceful colour combinations.' Preferably all at once.

However, although JJ jokes she feels 'really sad in an all-white room', she makes a distinction between more-is-more and anything-goes. Smart editing prevents the apartment feeling overwhelming or chaotic. 'There are rooms that are less busy than others. You can't just gorge on print or colour all the time, just like you can't gorge on chocolate cake all the time,' she says. 'My dining room is super minimal. Then you've got these hot points of colour and pattern in other rooms. It peaks and flows.' (She talks a lot about good energy. The best compliment a guest can pay her is to say 'it feels good in here').

The apartment might appear deliciously opulent, but being a seasoned vintage shopper - 'I'm a super bargain hunter' - pays dividends. 'You have to know where to go,' she says. 'I wouldn't go to a gallery to buy vintage furniture.' She's picked up Murano lamps at a church charity shop

and 1940s German botanical posters from eBay. And she's not afraid to customise: a set of 12 Osvaldo Borsani chairs were reupholstered in black and white velvet jacquard fabric given to her by her friend, Costume National founder Ennio Capasa. The decorative wrought-iron chairs on the terrace - a junk shop score - were spray-painted by her local car bodyshop to match the same red as her car.

As for budding maximalists who aren't sure where to begin, JJ advises you start with items that you can easily change: try clashing your napkins and tablecloth or give some colourful printed bed sheets a go.

'I like to say La Double J is about gradations of maximalism,' says JJ. 'So you can come in at the low end - pillowcases, napkins etc - or go the whole hog.' She also urges that you try blue and white as a foundation palette. 'I love it with a shot of red or yellow.' And above all, have fun with it; modern maximalism is all about joy.

JJ's biggest luxury, however, is something we'd all struggle to recreate. 'I have a bathtub overlooking the Duomo,' she smiles. 'That's pretty luxurious.'



Be my guest

JJ covered the bedroom walls with upholstery fabric designed in the 1940s by Swedish artist Stig Lindberg. She purchased the rug from therugcompany.com and the artworks are by JJ's great grandmother who painted them in the 1920s.



Dark materials

The deep blue walls of the hallway, a custom-made colour, make the yellow of the console table pop and also highlight the 1970s wall sconce. The armchair is 1950s Italian with fabric by davidhicks.com.



Plastic, £111

Cups, £100 for a set of eight

La Double J Homeware is available from mutedfashion.com

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