

the life.



PAUL RAESIDE

FINE DINING
The London home of
Dsquared² designers—twin
brothers Dean and Dan
Caten—mixes luxe furnishings
alongside vintage finds,
with breathtaking results



The downstairs living room is an eclectic mix of vintage furnishings, including a floor lamp flanked by a custom-made Rosa Perlino marble mantelpiece, and boiserie (wood panelling) wall panels
 OPPOSITE: Dean (left) and Dan Caten surrounded by framed family photographs



AN OPULENT OASIS

DSQUARED² DESIGNERS **DEAN** AND **DAN CATEN** MIGHT BE FAMOUS FOR POP-ROCK AESTHETICS AND ELABORATE RUNWAY SHOWS, BUT THEIR LONDON ABODE IS ALL CALM AND CLASSIC ELEGANCE

by **RACHEL SHARP** photographed by **PAUL RAESIDE**



The basement living room features additional custom-made boiserie (hand-painted with integrated mirrors); a Charles and Ray Eames stool; Gianfranco Frattini vintage lamp; and a Dimore Studio Table Console 021

Charming, charismatic and famously creative as they are, twins Dean and Dan Caten weren't taking any chances with the neighbours when they finally moved into their long-awaited London home. "We sent everyone a bottle of champagne to let them know we were having a party and we had so many nice responses," they recall over the phone from Milan where their global fashion empire is based, punctuating the sentiment with a laugh. "We were nervous they'd be hating us."

That was last year during England's unusually balmy summer, so the pair threw open the glass doors to their enormous sunken garden and encouraged guests—including long-time friend Madonna—to enjoy every facet of the house they'd taken more than four years to transform.

For the Canadian-born brothers (to an English mother and Italian father), the unveiling of their West London dwelling in a corner of affluent residential enclave Maida Vale—nicknamed Little Venice thanks to the picturesque houseboats that dot its canals—was far too long in the making.

They bought the Victorian-era mansion almost six years ago, then spent three years getting their renovation plans through council. It took a further 18 months to complete the renovations and interior detailing with the help of high-profile Italian firm Dimore Studio. "We didn't really change the original concept [over that time]," they claim of their

elegantly opulent abode, probably more aptly described a mansion. "We chose the furniture we liked, then incorporated our own things and it all kind of mashed-up quite well. There's a lot of really good energy in the house. We love it. We love her."

Unsurprisingly, there are parallels between the Catens' fashion and interiors creative processes. "We love the idea of adding things that don't belong," say the designers, who founded their company with menswear almost a quarter-century ago, followed by womenswear in 2003 and successful brand extensions such as footwear, fragrance and cosmetics. "Elements that are disturbing or that are not understood immediately make it interesting...like that 1970s rust-coloured sofa in the middle of the Asian [downstairs living] room. The first time we saw its picture [we were] like, 'Ugh, it's kinda hideous,' but then, all together, it looks really good because it gives it that twist." That surprise-and-delight philosophy runs throughout their home in a multitude of ways, from the classic movie-inspired blue walls and emerald velvet carpet in the stairwell, to the absence of any inset lights on their smooth, moulded ceilings. Vintage furnishings feature heavily too, from Dan's wooden bed to the metallic bathroom mirror, to the tastefully minimal desk in the garden-facing home office where they spend much of their time and, most notably, the magnificent dining table surrounded by '70s-era padded chairs.



It's a dramatic and fashionable entrance into the Victorian home with Jean-Michel Basquiat artwork; custom-made doors, shelf and mirror; and a white sponge stool from Dimore Studio's Alicudi Progetto Verande collection



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Dan Caten's bedroom features striking jungle-weave wall panels by Dimore Studio and a Serge Mouille lamp over the bed, while a vintage mirror hangs above a bedside table by Luigi Caccia Dominioni for Azucena

“We actually made that dining table for another house,” they explain. “It started as a vintage piece but then we put a bigger top on, so it’s a bit of a mash-up. Then the high-back chairs came from some lady’s [home]. At first we were like, ‘Oh my God, we’ve [probably] seen that palm-type print in some aunty’s dining room.’ There were areas on the padded cushions we had to patch with fabric from the back side...but in the end they looked amazing.”

While hardly vintage, much of their framed artwork boasts a rich history, too. “We added the two Basquiats [by late American neo-expressionist painter Jean-Michel Basquiat] in the entry because we went through a bit of a pop [culture] moment and they had the right colour.” The central stairwell gets the signature Caten twist from iconic, modern-kitsch pieces that clash magnificently with authentic wrought-iron railing. “We were waiting a long time for that Liz Taylor [an Andy Warhol original] and then we had this picture of David Bowie [who inspired their Spring/Summer 2017 menswear collection] by John Dove and Molly White which was screen-printed in the ‘80s.” Black and white family photos in gilded frames rest against the boiserie walls of their downstairs living room, purposefully reclining in seeming disarray. “That’s something we do a lot, having stuff on the floor, because somehow it feels like it’s ready, but not ready. When things are hung all the time, it’s a bit expected. We like unexpected. And everything else is quite low anyway because it makes the room look taller.”

Not every element of the home is a nod to the past, though. “We have a sound system hidden in all the walls that is amazing. You can have the same music go from the top floor to the basement. It’s great for parties.”

Despite DSquared² headquarters having been based in Italy for decades, the founders now spend considerable time working from their London home office. “That’s our creative area where we sit down and really figure out where we want to go...kind of like our energy powwow room. We don’t like being creative in an office—it’s different at home in a tranquil atmosphere.”

The 54-year-old identical brothers are famously close, so the process of working and living together is surprisingly drama-free. “The trick is to not get on each other’s nerves—and we really don’t. We are so used to it now [that] it’s almost harder to be alone. We’re kind of like one, so when the two of us are not together, we’re not even one, which sounds weird, but that’s how we describe it.”

The Catens might be amongst the most famous folk to occupy “Little Venice”, but they’re certainly not alone. “It’s a cool neighbourhood with lots of interesting people, very quiet and very green. Lady Diana’s brother was our neighbour and then one of the guys from The Rolling Stones lives up the street.” Actor Daisy Ridley is reportedly a resident there, too, as was Joan Collins for many years in her youth. As buzzing as the local vibe is, though, it’s the Catens’ tranquil rear garden that feeds their souls.

“This is going to sound weird, but I love to go into the backyard and hose down the house, hose down the patio, water the lawn,” says Dan. “I remember watering the grass when I was four years old because I had to, but for me now, it’s a reminder we have a home.” ■



A vintage desk, with artwork by Fausto Melotti, in Dan Caten's bedroom. BELOW: Dimore Studio's Lampada 047 kitchen pendant lights suspend over a custom-made bench constructed of brushed, chrome-plated steel and paired with upholstered velvet stools

