

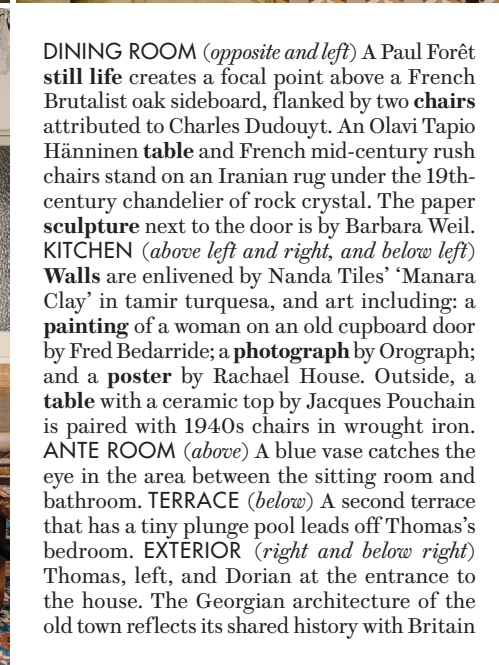
# THIS *must* be the PLACE

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Holidaying on Menorca, antique dealer Dorian Caffot de Fawes and his interior designer husband Thomas Daviet felt an immediate affinity for the capital Mahón and its burgeoning art scene. It led them to make the unexpected decision to create a beautiful home for themselves, and a base for their business, on the Spanish island

**SITTING ROOM** The tones of the Victorian floor tiles are picked up by 1970s armchairs in a Romo fabric, a coffee table created by shortening the legs on a dining table, and a Dutch mid-century oak and seagrass chair. Marbled trompe l'oeil walls showcase Cubist **paintings** – one by Hassan Atia above the sofa, and another, after Picasso, by the windows – and an Italian brass mirror over an Art Deco draper's table. The pendant light is 1940s Swedish





**DINING ROOM** (*opposite and left*) A Paul Forêt **still life** creates a focal point above a French Brutalist oak sideboard, flanked by two **chairs** attributed to Charles Dudouyt. An Olavi Tapio Hänninen **table** and French mid-century rush chairs stand on an Iranian rug under the 19th-century chandelier of rock crystal. The paper **sculpture** next to the door is by Barbara Weil. **KITCHEN** (*above left and right, and below left*) **Walls** are enlivened by Nanda Tiles' 'Manara Clay' in tamir turquesa, and art including: a **painting** of a woman on an old cupboard door by Fred Bedarride; a **photograph** by Orogaph; and a **poster** by Rachael House. Outside, a **table** with a ceramic top by Jacques Pouchain is paired with 1940s chairs in wrought iron. **ANTE ROOM** (*above*) A blue vase catches the eye in the area between the sitting room and bathroom. **TERRACE** (*below*) A second terrace that has a tiny plunge pool leads off Thomas's bedroom. **EXTERIOR** (*right and below right*) Thomas, left, and Dorian at the entrance to the house. The Georgian architecture of the old town reflects its shared history with Britain



DORIAN'S ROOM A mix of antique furniture includes an 18th-century Provençal armoire, a French Art Deco armchair and an 18th-century console from Spain. The plaster **lamps** on the 1920s English barley-twist bedside tables are by Dorian. **Paintings** by his grandmother are part of the arrangement above the bed, alongside works by artists such as David Parsén and Nils G Stenqvist, and a **photograph** by Nan Goldin







‘There was a voice in my head saying, “You have to be a part of this,”’ says the London-based French antique dealer Dorian Caffot de Fawes, describing his first visit to Menorca with his husband, Thomas Daviet, an interior designer. They had just arrived in Mahón, the capital of the Spanish island, for a week’s break. ‘It was an immediate attraction, like

an energy rising up from the tectonic plates,’ says Dorian.

It did not take long for the couple to figure out what ‘this’ was. Sure, the pristine beaches and turquoise waters were lovely, as was the rugged and unspoilt landscape. The very laid-back attitude of both the locals and a large, full-time international community was appealing, too. But that energy, that ‘this’, was the burgeoning contemporary art scene, at the centre of which was the promised arrival of Hauser & Wirth’s Balearic outpost.

At the time, the gallery was under construction on Illa del Rei, a tiny island in the middle of the enormous harbour upon which Mahón sits. The year before, established Madrid-based Galería Cayón had opened its own satellite space in Mahón. Things were happening. ‘We were having dinner on our first night and I looked at Thomas and asked him, “Are you thinking what I am thinking?”’ Thomas nodded; he could feel it, too. Their lives were about to change.

Within 18 months, they had bought and restored a house. Six months later, they opened a Menorcan outpost of the antiques business that Dorian has been running in London since 2015. This one is different, because although his name is above the door, as Dorian explains, ‘we wanted this gallery to be a family adventure – a collaboration between me, Thomas and my sister Ysolde’.

Dorian and Thomas now spend at least one week a month in Mahón and three months during the summer. (Their main home is in Brixton and Dorian’s UK gallery is in Marylebone.) Ysolde now lives in Mahón full time. ‘It’s incredible to me that this has happened,’ says Dorian. ‘At no point had Thomas and I ever discussed having a second home, or buying somewhere abroad.’

The British occupation of Menorca during the 18th century left an indelible mark, not least in the Georgian architecture in Mahón’s old town, which is where Dorian and Thomas found this handsome terraced house. ‘It’s a bourgeois townhouse, but it has certain codes of grandeur,’ Dorian explains. Like most buildings on the island, it is constructed from *marés*, a local sandstone – the only type quarried on the island – which has a lovely texture and a warm ochre hue. ‘It’s also porous and prone to humidity. But that’s part of the charm,’ Dorian says dryly.

An entrance at street level leads directly up a wide, stone staircase to two floors for living. At the front of the first of these is a large sitting room with old (yet very modern-feeling) tiles on the floor, and trompe l’oeil panelling and marbleised walls – decorative flourishes probably added in the early 20th century. Removing suspended ceilings throughout revealed joists and beams that were then painted white, completely transforming the space. The sitting room is hard to pin down in terms of time or geography: a remix of 18th, 19th and 20th centuries; in a city, but with a slightly rustic feel. It is a bit British (the original sash windows are now restored), a bit French, a bit Spanish. The same could be said for Menorca, an island whose fortunes, not to mention overlords, have changed many times over the centuries.

Towards the back of the house on this level is the dining room and the kitchen, which leads out to one of two terraces (this one being the perfect spot for breakfast). ‘But the dining

room is probably my favourite room and the one we use the most,’ says Dorian. They entertain a lot here: ‘Maybe twice a week, as opposed to twice a year in London.’ A rock-crystal chandelier hangs over a chunky table surrounded by oak and rush chairs. When laptops are stashed away, it is a wonderful place to eat with friends.

Upstairs there are four bedrooms: Dorian’s at the front and Thomas’s at the back, with two small spare rooms in between. Although the two main bedrooms are by no means minimalist – there are rugs on the floor, art on the walls, collected bits and bobs on surfaces – there is a feeling of restraint and serenity to them. They have an airiness and simplicity, like a chic monastic cell, if such a thing exists, conjured by the high sloping ceilings, white walls and simple tiled floors.

Leading from Thomas’s bedroom is the second terrace, which overlooks the mosaic of terracotta-tiled roofs and white walls of the old town. ‘It could be Tangier,’ Dorian says. They can see Mahón’s three main churches, the harbour and the countryside of

Sa Mesquida beyond. There is room for a little table and chairs – somewhere to have a drink while watching the sunset.

Opposite a bakery called Pigalle (‘The only place to buy French bread on the island,’ explains Dorian), the new gallery is doing remarkably well. Meanwhile, Thomas, once a senior designer at Christian Liaigre, has been taking on interior design projects locally, including a large house on the island’s south coast. ‘That has been one of the lovely things about the gallery being a shared project,’ Dorian says. ‘It has meant we can also offer an interior design service. Thomas and I have been together for 17 years, but it’s this adventure that has been an opportunity to work hand in hand in a way we haven’t before’ □

Dorian Caffot de Fawes: [dorian-menorca.com](http://dorian-menorca.com)  
Thomas Daviet Interiors: [thomasdaviet.com](http://thomasdaviet.com)



THOMAS’S ROOM (opposite and above) Marcel Breuer’s ‘B34’ chair adds a mid-century accent to this earthy scheme with a Turkish kilim. The Joseph Cantave painting and the Kota reliquary figure on the Brutalist sideboard enhance the eclectic look