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Husband-and-wife design dealers Patrick (left) and Laurence Seguin stand in their Paris living room, among some of their best-loved possessions. Under the Richard Prince nurse painting, an Alexander Calder mobile rests on a Charlotte Perriand/Ateliers Jean Prouvé table. The silkscreen (far left) is by Andy Warhol, and a Jean-Michel Basquiat pastel is displayed on the far right. The settee and chairs are by Pierre Jeanneret, and the cocktail table is another Perriand/Prouvé creation. For details see Sources.

PLAYING FAVORITES

For close to 25 years, decorative-arts dealers Laurence and Patrick Seguin have championed the work of a handful of French modernists. The couple's apartment in Paris's Marais district is a tribute to their shared passion

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A

tour of the spare but beautifully appointed apartment Patrick Seguin shares with his wife/business partner, Laurence, in the Marais district of Paris is a physical affair—especially for him. It involves one of the world's leading dealers of top-

flight 20th-century design leaping onto a wood cube by Le Corbusier to show how it comes in handy when changing lightbulbs, then sinking to his knees in front of a 1954 table by Jean Prouvé. "What's important is to always look at the underside," Patrick says in a whisper. Banging loudly on one of the table's slender legs, he adds excitedly, "That's only one millimeter of folded sheet metal. It's absolutely incredible!"

That combination of enthusiasm and expertise has drawn collectors such as Azzedine Alaïa, Peter Brant, and Ronald Lauder to Galerie Patrick Seguin. Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, who renovated the gallery, a former warehouse in the nearby Bastille district, calls Seguin "the ultimate perfectionist and a man of passion." Notes New York gallerist Stellan Holm, "He has done more for French design and architecture than any other dealer of the past 50 years."

Every passion starts somewhere, and for Patrick the spark can be traced to the late '80s, when he was in the hospitality industry. At Paris's Saint-Ouen flea market, he spotted one of Prouvé's Standard school chairs in Philippe Jousse's booth; bitten by the modernist bug and weary of working late nights in clubs and restaurants, he decided to change careers and go into business with Jousse. Postwar furniture wasn't exactly trendy at the time. "Back then," Patrick says, "we had difficulty selling a Standard for \$600." Today originals can bring 20 times as much. After the colleagues split about a decade later, Patrick and his wife began focusing on five modern masters: Prouvé, Pierre Jeanneret, Le Corbusier, Charlotte Perriand, and Jean Royère.

That scope may be limited, but the Seguins' commitment is not. With fellow Paris gallerist Jacques Lacoste, the couple co-owns the Royère archives—thousands of drawings, blueprints, and photos, many of which were published in a catalogue raisonné earlier this year. The Seguins also possess the world's largest collection of Prouvé structures, 17 in total, all stored in two huge warehouses in the northeastern French city of Nancy. Twice a month Patrick takes a morning train there to oversee the ongoing restorations. "Each time it's very moving," he says, adding, "Prouvé was a visionary genius, using technologies that were previously used exclusively to build airplanes." To experience that pioneering brilliance firsthand, head to the Giovanni e Marella Agnelli museum in Turin, Italy, where selections from the Seguins' Prouvé furniture and architecture collection are on view through September 8. The couple also plans to exhibit the only known prototype of the 1956 *Maison des Jours Meilleurs* (House of Better Days) at Design Miami/Basel in June. And design aficionados in the vicinity of Aix-en-Provence should stop by Château la Coste winery, where



two '40s Prouvé pavilions sold by the Seguins now stand in the company of new structures by Tadao Ando and Frank Gehry.

Given their focus on the 20th century, one might expect the Seguins to occupy a gem of modernism. Instead they live on the ground floor of a 1620s redbrick mansion, in a 2,700-square-foot apartment with 15-foot ceilings and 18th-century parquet floors—major attractions when the couple moved in four years ago with their daughter, Pauline. Patrick was especially taken with how the living room opens to a courtyard garden, where an immense magnolia tree reaches for the sky. "It gives this place the feel of a country house," he says.

In adapting the apartment to their clean-lined tastes, the Seguins removed most of the moldings. "It's really quite sober now," Laurence notes. "We prefer less-fancy walls." Painted white, those walls host contemporary art that's as formidable as the furniture, from works by Mark Grotjahn and Judy Linn in Patrick's study to a construction by Liam Gillick in the master bedroom. An Alexander Calder mobile, which the artist gave Prouvé, is displayed in the living room, not far from an Andy Warhol silkscreen of photographer Tina Freeman. "I do not want to live with certain portraits," Patrick says, "but this one is absolutely beautiful, with its blue profile and green eyebrow." Curiosities fill Perriand/Prouvé bookshelves, including an antique shadow box of neatly arranged insects. Quips Patrick, "That is my 18th-century Damien Hirst!"

Though the quality of the Seguins' collection is heady, nothing is sacred. "I work at a Perriand/Jeanerret desk, we sit on a Royère sofa, and we eat at a Jeanneret table," Patrick asserts. That's been the case since Pauline—now 23 and on her own—was a youngster. "She had a habit of climbing through the gaps in our Mexique bookcase by Perriand and Prouvé," he recalls, adding that he and his wife came up with an easygoing solution for ensuring the safety of both their child and her impromptu jungle gym: "We simply secured it to the floor." □



From top: A Jeff Koons mirrored flower blooms between the doors to Laurence's study (left) and the entrance hall; the Perriand low bench hosts colorful ceramic vessels by Georges Jouve and a sculpture of stainless-steel utensils by Subodh Gupta. Over the living room's stone mantel is a silk-screen portrait by Warhol; the stools are by Perriand. Custom-made bookshelves span a wall in Patrick's study; the floor lamp is by Serge Mouille, the armchairs are by Jeanneret, and the table is by Prouvé. **Opposite:** The Seguins' apartment is on the ground floor of a 17th-century mansion in the Marais district.



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From top: A chewing-gum-on-canvas work by Adam McEwen hangs above a Hans-Peter Feldmann house sculpture in the dining room. Basquiat sketches in the living room surmount a Prouvé table graced with, from left, a sculpture and dish by Alexandre Noll, a taxidermy creation by Thomas Grünfeld, and a lamp by Mouille. **Opposite:** Prouvé Standard school chairs surround the dining room's Jeanneret conference table; the shelves are by Perriand/Prouvé, and the parquet de Versailles floor is 18th century.





Clockwise from left: In Patrick's study, a Mark Grotjahn work on paper is paired with a Prince multimedia table sculpture. The room also features a wall of artworks by Richard Kern, David Noonan, Sam Durant, Carol Bove, and others; Jeanneret and Perriand designed the desk and swivel chair, while the lounge chair is by Prouvé. A bath is enlivened by a framed album cover by Christian Marclay and a papier-mâché head of Shiva. **Opposite:** A Hästens bed faces Jasper Morrison marble tables from Galerie Kreo in the master bedroom; suspended from the ceiling is a panel by Liam Gillick, and above the headboard is an ink-jet-on-canvas work by Prince.



