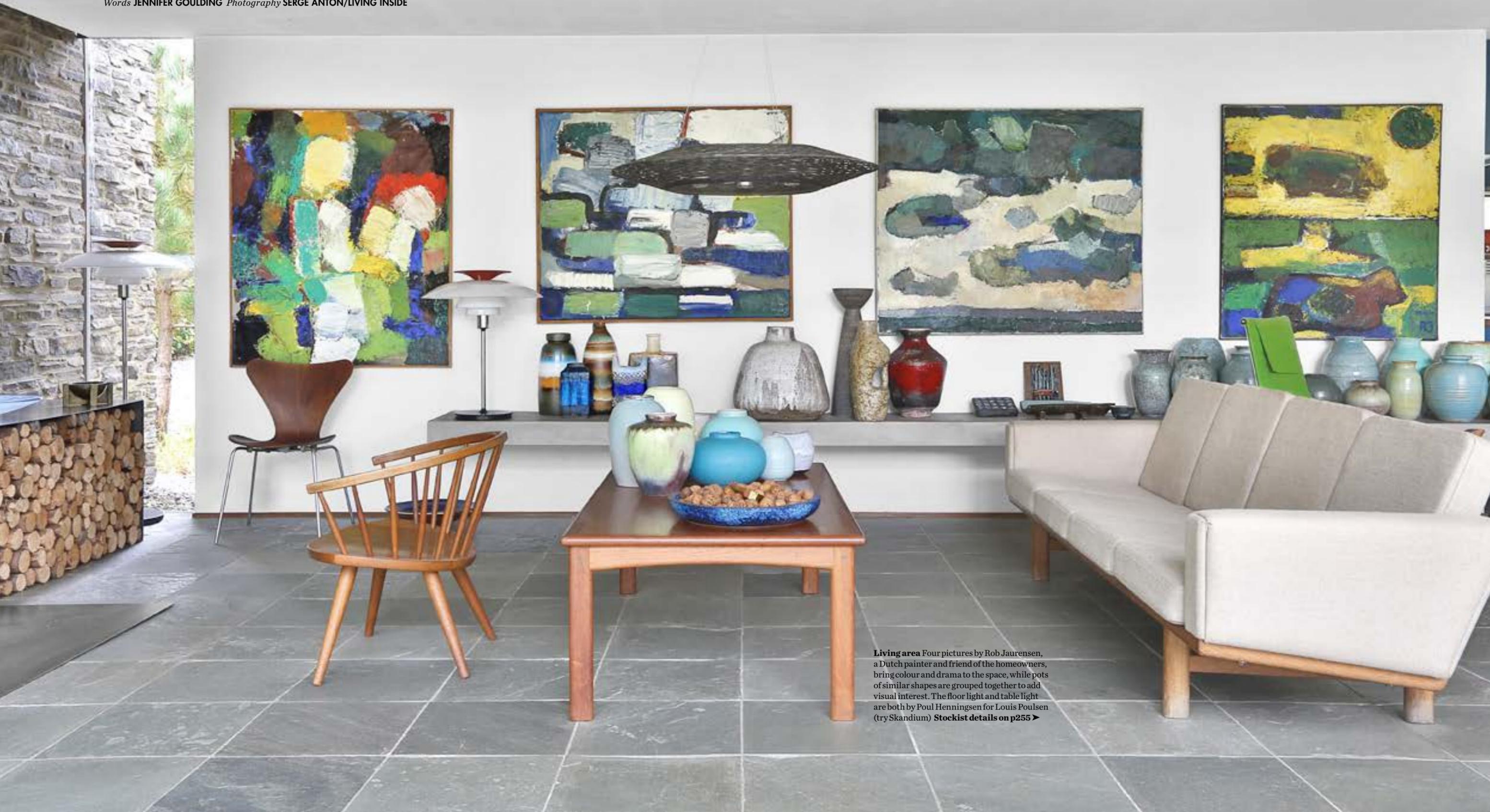


ART HOUSE

Built to display an ever-expanding array of mid-century collector's items, this Belgian home brings life to its owners' passion for furniture, art and design

Words JENNIFER GOULDING Photography SERGE ANTON/LIVING INSIDE



Living area Four pictures by Rob Jaurensen, a Dutch painter and friend of the homeowners, bring colour and drama to the space, while pots of similar shapes are grouped together to add visual interest. The floor light and table light are both by Poul Henningsen for Louis Poulsen (try Skandium) **Stockist details on p255** ►



Nestled in the lush, ancient forests of Ardennes, where you might expect to find simple farm buildings, lies the strikingly modern home of retired couple Tony and Therese Tilly, who designed it to house not only themselves, but their collection of mid-century furniture, artwork and pottery, too. 'I bought my first painting in 1966, when I was 16,' says Tony of what would become a life-long passion that has taken the couple around the world. In 1999, when they were ready to settle down, they bought this 3,500-square-metre plot in Theux, Belgium. As Tony explains, the house has given them a space large enough to accommodate all their treasured possessions.

How did you find this plot? Therese had a shop in Maastricht selling vintage furniture, lighting and clothes, and we used to visit dealers in Theux, so we got to know the area. We liked the plot because it was large and quite remote. We have neighbours, but they're not close by, and the nearest village is eight kilometres away. I suppose it's secluded, but we don't feel isolated; we feel free.

What inspired the design of the house? We wanted it to fit into the landscape, so we decided to make it from natural materials,

such as locally sourced stone – which we used on the exposed wall in the living room – and wood. It had to be a house that wouldn't take much maintenance, partly because we keep animals. We also wanted lots of light and a place for our cacti. Most of all, it needed to be large enough to accommodate all our furniture – we didn't want to be too cramped or to lose anything.

How did you develop your interiors style? It grew organically. Over the years, we bought things we liked from flea markets and dealers. If they fitted in, we kept them. If not, we sold them on. Things gradually came together and we developed a certain style. Most of our pieces date from between 1947 and 1979 – in particular, we have a lot of 1960s Scandinavian furniture by designers such as Hans J Wegner, Arne Jacobsen, Poul Henningsen and Børge Mogensen. I don't chase names, though. I ask myself two things before buying a piece: do I like it and does it fit our style?

Describe a typical day at the house. We spend a lot of time outdoors: I collect timber in the forest for our wood-burning stove, I walk the dog, and sometimes my wife rides one of the horses while I cycle alongside her. Sometimes I get up very early so that I can get to the flea markets in the cities. I don't like routine, so each day is different.

Exterior 'We wanted the house to blend in to its surroundings,' says Tony. This alfresco spot, with its concrete table and chairs, links the indoor and outdoor spaces
Dining area A set of 'Wishbone' chairs by Hans J Wegner (try The Lollipop Shoppe) sit around a generous oak table. Hanging above it are 'AJ Royal' pendant lights by Arne Jacobsen for Louis Poulsen, which can be bought at online store Nest **Stockist details on p255** ▶



'WE WANTED THE HOUSE TO FIT INTO THE LANDSCAPE,
SO WE DECIDED TO MAKE IT FROM NATURAL MATERIALS'

Living area The homeowners designed this space to house their cacti, one of which was a wedding present. Pots in blue and neutral tones are teamed with vintage wooden furniture, including a pair of 'Spanish' chairs by Borge Mogensen ▶





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Living area The homeowners sourced stone from the local area and collected timber for the wood-burning stove from the surrounding forest. The rustic base of stone and brick is offset by pops of bright colour and the homeowners' collections of artwork and pottery

Bedroom Tony has painted the walls blue to complement the upholstery on the 'Cone' chair by Verner Panton for Vitra (try Aram Store). 'Blue is our favourite colour, perhaps because it reminds us of our travels in North Africa and California,' he says **Stockist details on p255 ED**

