



MORF

EDITION 2025 — ISSUE 3



Composed

A composition is more than arrangement; it is the interplay of space, light, texture, and color, the careful choreography of objects and moments to evoke *feeling*. It balances discipline with intuition, structure with freedom, knowing what to emphasize, what to subdue, and what to let breathe. Each element has its place, contributing to a harmonious whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

In this issue, my collaborators exemplify these ideas as composers in their own right. At Mamie Brougitte, through Marion Attal's eyes, tiny edible flowers are shaped and placed with meticulous care atop towers of flour, egg, and sugar. At Airelle Pan Deï in Saint-Tropez, Christophe Tollemer transforms restoration into art, achieving perfection in every detail. In the warehouse of Chez Pluie, Susannah and Hugh Cameron hand-select rare finds, curating collections that reflect their exacting taste and vision. And with Ana Popescu, imagination itself becomes tangible, translated into vivid, stylized representations of life around her.

Each of my collaborator's approach to composition is instinctual yet refined, disciplined yet inspired—an extraordinary balance of artistry and intention. Step inside their worlds, and experience the symphony of vision, craft, and beauty they create.

Kim Duval.

Founding Principal

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A Minute With...

Cover Artist Ana Popescu

The cover art for this issue came from an idea I had after seeing a very specific Ana Popescu piece: a commission for the Ottmanngut Hotel in South Tyrol, Italy. I was drawn to the structure, the colors, and the graphic, stylized shadows. I reached out and was thrilled she took on the commission.

Here's what she had to say about her journey as an artist.

KD: How did you find your style? It's so graphic and colorful, and architectural to a strong degree.

AP: *It is a hard question. I think it grew and changed over time. When I was at university I was drawing mainly black and white, but after I graduated, I was fed up with it and wanted to experiment with colors. That's how I started incorporating them and since then, they play a huge role in my work! As for architecture, I was drawn to it around the time of my diploma, while I was working on the theme of space. Like with colors, it just stuck, and I get drawn to it again and again.*

What brought you to art, of all pursuits you could have chosen?

I was always drawing since I can remember, during school hours, in the evening at home. I somehow wanted to continue drawing after finishing school and was drawn to printmaking

and drawing studies. I didn't really think of alternatives or plan B back when I was 18, and maybe that was a good idea!

How do you develop your paintings—both the concept and technique?

I work in different media, digital and analog (pastels, collages, acrylic paint). I think in the end I want to express the same things but in different ways. I take a lot of photos with my phone and have a good archive of images that I want to draw or paint. Usually they're representing moments of daily life, details of buildings, light and shade etc.

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go? Or have you already been there?

I think if I have to choose one that would be Japan. Since having had an exchange during my university studies there, I always want to go back (and I always go back)!

What inspires you?

The way light falls, geometric shapes, summertime, shadows on buildings and on grass fields, architecture, water, documentaries, paintings, Old Masters, other fellow artists. The list is very long!

Ana is represented by Atelier 22.



Photo by Mihnea Popescu.



SUGAR

Mamie Brougitte's Art as Cake

There's a light on in the front room of a small shop in downtown Lenox, Massachusetts, below a sign painted with Mamie Brougitte Cakes' logo—a delicate vintage font, adorned with an illustration of a pear and a small sprig of violets.

Inside the front room is a picture book on a stand. And in the center of the space is a table, on top of which sits a bell jar preserving a delicate bouquet of pastel sugar flowers.

Marion Attal, the woman behind Mamie Brougitte Cakes, has over the past decade gained a cult following for her remarkable pastry talents, with notable fans like Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat, Pray, Love*. But she is rarely photographed alongside her pieces, preferring to stay out of the limelight as she quietly sets about her craft, on her own terms.

Marion and I sat down to chat about her experience as an *artist* in the very tricky medium of pastry, although she would not necessarily describe herself in that way.

But her commissioned cakes are not simply pastry; they are *works of art*.

Although she had been baking for years, Marion's years in South Africa and Paris were influential chapters in the journey that brought her to becoming the much sought-after cake artist she is today.

"My travels have guided me in every way," she says. "I have been an international kid since I was three years old. My immediate family lives on four different continents, and we see each other multiple times a year. So the experience of travel is ingrained in every part of me, and it's one of the biggest joys in my life."

Family is everything for Marion. Her French grandmother, Mamie Brougitte, taught her to bake as a young child, and later became the namesake of Marion's studio.

All of the baking and decorating is done at Mamie Brougitte's commercial kitchen in West Stockbridge. The Lenox shop is a showcase space where Marion hosts tastings and events. People mostly find Marion through word of mouth, often from gushing event planners who send clients her way.

While it would be easy to lean into the mystique of the 'mastermind behind the curtain', Marion is more interested in pushing her own limits.

"I always think the last cake I made is the most interesting," she says. "I suppose it's the one I feel closest to."

The creation in question is an ink-dark cake that blurred the boundaries between deep sea and dark night sky, with moons, stars, a floating whale with her calf, and saturated periwinkle leaves with gilt edges.

Images by Mamie Brougitte







Sugar flowers photographed by Jamie Beck.



"I had a need to make this cake. I don't know why, I just did it," Marion recalls.

When she feels like an artist, it's because she's baking a cake without a wish list, instead creating something as the ideas flow from her head to her hands. When she is working on a commission, she is grateful that her audience already knows and wants her distinct style.

Even still, she says, "The selection of flowers and fruits and other items depends completely on the feel of the cake I am trying to achieve. If I'm going for a romantic whimsical feel, I steer towards lush blooms that have a lot of petals and imperfections, like peonies, cottage roses, ranunculus. Gardenias, orchids, and calla lilies have crispier edges, with more structure and precision. These blooms achieve a more edited, contemporary feel."

Baking the flowers is the more technical part. They don't feel artistic until she begins to color and sculpt them. Up until that point, the medium is just edible playdough made from egg wash, among other ingredients.

When she works on the flowers, Marion switches on a a podcast or TV series—what she calls "background entertainment." But once the different decorative elements are ready and the cake has been baked, she enters her artistic zone. "That's when I put on music and try to isolate and just basically, like, get into a very connected space with the energy and the feeling that I want to evoke through the design of the cake," she explains.

The process starts with a homemade gum paste. Sometimes Marion adds a base color with food coloring. She then sculpts the flowers, using her hands and a set of small tools, similar to a ceramicist, and lets them dry overnight. Once dry, she adds more color with an edible pigment powder, known as petal dust. Artistic

elements are then mounted onto floral wire. The flowers are incredibly fragile, but the fruits and denser items quickly become rock hard and indestructible.

Although Marion is not religious, she sometimes feels like she's almost at the mercy of something more powerful when she's creating. "Creative decisions in the moment—where am I going to put shading? How aged am I going to make that flower look? Do I want a loose arrangement? [These are] all artistic choices."

The process, Marion tells me, is pure creativity. "There is so much that goes into designing a fine art cake that I would not have imagined before getting into this profession."

I ask her what's next for Mamie Brougitte. Although having a lot of specific ideas helped her move ahead and quickly build a brand, she says, "Career goals started messing with my mind. My focus was so external that I lost touch with what really fulfills me. So now I'm trying a more relaxed approach, where I do what feels right, when it feels right. We'll see how that works out."

This summer, Marion started baking almond cobbler crumbles from her grandmother's recipe. "This is the dessert where I had to impose a hiatus, because my family requested it so often. It's the most delicious crumble I've ever had." She makes it on a weekly basis for local pick-up only. The fruit base changes often, and so far it's been a huge hit.

The traditional summer wedding season is the busiest time for Mamie Brougitte, but sugar flowers can remain preserved for years. I think she also has a future in pure sugar sculptures. We shall see.





A portrait on the wall at Pan-Dei.

True Love

Memoirs from Airelles Pan Deï

We arrived in Saint-Tropez in May, eager to experience one of the jewels of the Côte d'Azur, and after having spent four blissful days in Cap Ferrat, just two hours east. This was a design research trip; each location scouted for the discoveries I knew would be lurking behind every door and every corner.

After nearly two weeks of travel, Saint-Tropez was our penultimate stop, and perhaps the most rewarding.

Our car pulled up to a large but otherwise unassuming set of wooden entry doors, tucked along a row of European storefronts. A small bronze plaque bearing an embossed olive branch and the words Pan Deï Palais was the only indication that we were in the right place.

The door opened, seemingly by coincidence, but the doorman grinned and exclaimed, "Bonjour, Mr. and Mrs. Duval." Our car was whisked away, and we were escorted inside the magical entry of this remarkable place, part of the luxury Airelles Collection hotel group.

Although the wood doors and the streetscape were in shadow, the entire interior was bathed in light. Another pair of doors flanking the entry opened to the interior courtyard and pool,

gleaming in the Mediterranean sun. Voices and music wafted in. Beyond, the smell of Pan Deï's signature fragrance, an Indian spice blend, lifted the sensory experience.

According to Airelles, "the Pan Deï Palais was a gift in 1835 from General Jean-François Allard to his beloved wife, the Indian Princess Bannu Pan Deï. General Jean-François Allard, a celebrated military figure who served in both the Napoleonic army and alongside Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab, fell in love with Princess Bannu Pan Deï during his time serving in India... [and they eventually] made their home in the heart of Saint-Tropez."

The entire property has been lovingly restored, with its architecture and interiors directed by Christophe Tollemer, whose team is based in Paris and who has provided design direction for each of Airelles' six properties, five of which are in France and one in Italy.

Like Airelles' and Christophe Tollemer's 2021 restoration of Le Grand Contrôle, originally built by Louis XIV on the grounds of Château de Versailles, Pan Deï has been restored to its original character.

The details that gave me the most joy subtly blended old and new. Alongside the restored





The library and dining room at Pan Deï. Photo by Aïrelles.





*Above: A scene from the dining room. Photo by Airelles.
At Left: Sketching, poolside.*

marble staircase were freshly plastered white walls, with enormous and more modestly proportioned portraits, some remnants of the original home.

Tucked onto each floor, subtly integrated but also fully visible as part of the architecture, are the access points for staff. From the corridor on each floor, room entrances are set apart by dark wooden paneling and doors heavily ornamented with Clavos nails.

Through the punctuation of deep wood tones, the stair halls and circulation of the floors retain a sense of lightness.

The juxtaposition of light floor and wall surfaces with deep, richly toned ornament and art likewise creates a romantic, grand effect.

The hotel has twelve rooms, each entirely unique. Pan Deï still reads like a home in so many ways, with every detail of the guest experience thoughtfully curated, down to bespoke acoutrements like sun hats and terry cloth beach bags coordinated with the hotel's color palette, fresh tea cakes presented each morning, and folded, clean laundry that was set in a little wicker basket inside our suite's door each night.

Towards the end of our five-day stay, we discovered a grand epicurean festival being held in the town square, just at the end of the street. The most talented chefs in Provence were tasting and judging a variety of regional dishes as part of the event, and several of the top chefs were staying in the hotel.

On the day before we departed, a private party was held in Pan Deï's inner courtyard to celebrate the event. Despite the overcast skies of the day, the splendor of French hospitality and style shone through.

The fashion and foods of Saint-Tropez were set against the vibrant hues of the courtyard, with Pan Deï's striking saffron façade playing off the deep orange caviar and softly pale, golden champagne. It was as if the patrons' fashion of muted tones - black, navy, white and greige - had been organized as a perfect backdrop to meet the moment of this place, but it could not have been planned.

Some time into the affair, the sky broke, the sun came piercing through, and the beauty of the place and its design at once became radiant and glowing.

Teak paired with deep fuchsia fabrics. Small stamped trinkets hung from the linen sun lounge umbrellas and jingled in the Mediterranean breeze. Shades of ivory, deep orange, and cream felt like summer.

The glimmer of cut crystal danced in perfect harmony with the clear blue of the pool's water. Deep green and shadow emphasized the tall hedges bounding one side. The sway of palms met the steadiness of the marble steps.

I breathed deeply and exhaled as if intoxicated by the incredible design. Because I was, and this is.

Airelles' Pan Deï is not a secret, yet remains among France's most exclusive properties. For the hospitality alone, Airelles is worth it. But the impeccable design moves are what make this place so special.

It's not novel, the idea of lovingly restoring something into a grander version of itself.

Honoring tradition, showing off good things, while perhaps these are quintessentially French philosophies, the strength in this way of thinking can be applied to just about everything.

Closet doors in our suite at Pan Deï.





The scene of the private party at Pan Deï, before the sun broke through.







The rear facade of Pan Dei. Photo by Airelles.



Provençal

Enter the World of Chez Pluie

Susannah and Hugh Cameron are carefully inspecting a tiny trumpeting cherub surrounded by what can only be described as small gilded pockets. The figurine is adorned at its base with blue and white pearls, and each of the three pockets has a rough-patterned outer surface. The object dates from the nineteenth century and is one of hundreds of unique finds available on the couple's website: Chez Pluie, the definitive source for Provençal antiques. So far, Susannah, Hugh, and their small team of curators have not been able to identify this piece's function, but, fortunately, in Provence, nearly everyone is a potential antiquarian expert.

Sure enough, their next door neighbor knows exactly what it is: a matchstick holder. Such precise detail in such a miniature functional object is just one of the reasons antiques are amazing. Objects like this just *do not* exist in the modern age.

We could spend hours talking about every one of Chez Pluie's finds, but I wanted to know how Susannah and Hugh came to be in this business, with such an impeccable reputation for finding exactly what their clients are searching for.

Originally from Australia, Susannah built her career from an academic and professional background in architecture and construction. She is one of the most bubbly, cheerful, and sincere people I have ever met, with an easygoing, friendly demeanor that is apparent from the first moments of conversation. Her charisma seems perfectly suited to her work as a treasure hunter.

Hugh worked in technology and finance. He developed the logistics app that allows Chez Pluie to ship its finds seamlessly across the globe.

The Camerons first came to the region in 2011 for a friend's wedding, and fell head over heels for Provence. As Susannah describes it, "We left gray Melbourne and arrived to full summer: blue skies, butterflies, lavender in bloom. We were captivated."

In 2014, they purchased a summer home in Villedieu. An awakening brought on by the death of Susannah's father spurred the move to make life in Provence permanent. "Once we settled in and became part of the community, we couldn't imagine leaving. We had no plan, and everyone back home thought we were completely mad. If we had known how difficult





it would be to relocate, learn the language, make friends, and start a business from nothing, with no clients, no suppliers, and no network, I'm not sure we would have had the gumption."

During a dinner in 2015, they listened to the fascinating lives of their neighbors: artists, winemakers, chefs, set designers, and other creatives, all gathered around the table. The Camerons realized it was their destiny to bring to the world all the beauty Provençal antiques have to offer.

"Over the past ten years, we've built strong friendships with dealers and collectors across France, starting locally here in the south and stretching up to Paris, Normandy, Lyon, and the Savoie," Susannah says.

The couple especially loves working with semiretired dealers and devoted collectors. Susannah explains, "They often come to us with pieces they've held onto for years—ones they saved because they couldn't bear to part with them. Some are clearing space; others are still out treasure hunting. Their knowledge is extraordinary. They can tell immediately what century something is from, what wood was used, or how a chair was built."

Susannah, Hugh and their ten-person team personally find, photograph, measure, research, and write about every single piece that is in their collection.

Chez Pluie also leans on experts like art historians, canvas restorers, master gilders, specialists in Provençal furniture, and ebonists to restore and correctly identify pieces. "Thanks to them, what you see on our site is ready to enjoy the moment it arrives—and has been restored with the same skill and care with which it was originally made," Susannah says.

I love hearing Susannah talk about the home they've made in Provence. The pair has transformed their 1970s cottage into a tranquil, treasure-filled set of spaces that spill out onto beautiful gardens. Susannah loves antique herbariums, still life paintings, and old pottery. The interiors and landscape have become perfect nests for all her beautiful treasures. A Cameron garden party is not complete without a curated tablescape of unique finds.

"[Our] garden is full of greenery; box hedges, big flowering hydrangeas, roses where the sun hits, and little pockets of climbing jasmine," Susannah says. "There is a huge tilleul tree that gives plenty of shade. We've filled the garden with Biot jars, Anduze planters, cast iron Medici urns, and wrought iron garden furniture. And we have a little bird house that welcomes the same family of *mésanges* every spring. We love watching them raise their chicks."

I circle around to how Chez Pluie landed on antiques, of anything it could have sourced from Provence, a region bursting with exceptional artisanry.

"Moving from Australia, we were completely enchanted by the *brocantes* [a French term for a market or shop selling secondhand and antique goods, including furniture, home decor, and vintage items]. We'd never seen anything like them. As we started furnishing our home, we realized the quality, the history, the craftsmanship—it just does not exist back home in the same way."

Many of Chez Pluie's clients are American, and a significant number have been loyal patrons for years. Susannah and Hugh source for clients ranging from interior designers and architects to landscape designers and homeowners, Francophiles who return again and again, oftentimes weekly.



Above: Hugh and Susannah Cameron and their fur babies.



Carved detail on an ornate wood serving tray.



The oil painting of the village of Tignes, by Lucien Poignant.



Susannah cherishes the bonds she has made with clients, and loves seeing the pieces she and her team have sourced in their final homes. “It’s so wonderful to see how clients style the pieces. A birdcage on a shelf with 19th-century books, old glazed pottery in every shade of ochre and green, Medici urns in gardens, and sometimes a vintage flamingo or turtle joining the party,” she tells me.

“I used to feel a bit self-conscious about the weirder, quirkier pieces. But our clients love them. I don’t take myself too seriously, and I like rooms that surprise you.”

I ask her about the most fabulous piece she’s sold. Of the many, she recalls an oil painting of the village of Tignes, before it was flooded in 1952 to create Lac du Chevril. “The artist, Lucien Poignant [1905–1941], painted it on wood before he died, young. The painting captures a place that no longer exists, by an artist who never saw what it became, and that makes it incredibly moving,” Susannah says.

When you receive an antique from Chez Pluie, you don’t just receive an object of art, you receive a story. Susannah sends little notes and trinkets with each shipment. In fact, while in Provence this spring, I purchased some lighting from an antiques dealer in Lisle-Sur-La-Sorgue. It just so happened to ship through Chez Pluie.

I actually spoke to Hugh on the phone when we were going through the logistics of transporting the pieces to our home in Massachusetts. When the meticulously packed crate arrived, inside was Susannah’s handwritten note, a small key, and a bundle of lavender. I was floored by the sincere and genuine love conveyed with this package and will be a loyal client forever.

I asked Susannah about this relationship-building gesture. “Our clients are buying a piece of Provence, and I want them to open their box and be met with the gorgeous scent of lavender,” she explains. “The key is a metaphor. It’s your key to Provence: we open the door for you, and once you have discovered us, you have unlocked something very special, personal, and very human.”

While Susannah and Hugh love everything about Provençal antiques, there are some items Susannah always gravitates toward. “It depends entirely on the piece, but I love eighteenth-century mirrors with superb foxing to the glass, openwork frames and leafy scrolls, often topped with angels, birds or trophies.”

When it comes to pottery, she leans toward the nineteenth century. “And I’d always choose an eighteenth-century copper watering can over a modern one, especially the ones with those big round pomme heads that give a gentle, even shower. They make watering the plants feel like a little ceremony,” she offers.

Chez Pluie adds about a hundred products to its site per week, and there is so much joy in discovering one-of-a-kind objects of beauty and utility. Even more refreshing, Chez Pluie has built a community devoted to making sure old things are forever seen and *loved*.



Above: Cherub matchstick holder.

At right: Breakfast in Suzannah and Hugh's garden.





Photo by Nick Shetterly.

Until Next Time...

When I think about the perfect composition, its beauty lies in how each detail comes together to form something bigger and more alluring than any single part. Take the cover art for this issue: for the commission with Ana Popescu, I shared four images—my favorite Mamie Brougitte cake, two antiques from Chez Pluie, and a photo of Airelle Pan Deï—and asked her to create a scene that amplifies the beauty of each. Like Susannah and Hugh, Marion, and Christophe, Ana is a composer, translating seemingly disparate objects into a symphony.

I think of MORE the same way. I gather the creators and pieces I love and connect their work through stories and pictures. As always, I hope you enjoy what you read and see, and I look forward to sharing more.

Composition, at left:

Black patent leather pumps, Rugantino

*Vintage polka dot skirt and black top, **Cavalli e Nostri***

*Navy wool blazer, **Blaze Milano***

*Gold necklace and earrings, **APM Monaco***



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