

# SENSUAL MINIMALISM





*Beautiful homes lead to beautiful lives. Interior architect Valérie Chomarat has a similar opinion, because in her work she strives for creating beauty in which architecture and surroundings meet. For over twenty years she has been developing a personal philosophy with her sensual minimalism that invariably translates the foundations of her visions to wonderful projects.*



**T**he portfolio of Valérie Chomarat tells us that the interior architect is a multifaceted source of inspiration. Even though her designs vary from villas and fincas to chalets and yachts, each and every one carries her characterising touch. In her work, she prioritises the function of the environment in the design process. An important influence, because Chomarat's work area stretches out over several countries. That is to say, she is active in Geneva, her hometown, but also in Menorca and Warsaw she has transformed her designs into reality. At the same time, various buildings of the interior architect proudly stand in France, for example in Megève and Combloux. By means of her skilled handling of lines, form as well as colour and material palettes, she assures her clients of a harmonious result that immortalises the uniqueness of the location in the design.

#### JOURNEY AND VISION

Her childhood in the Ardèche, France played an essential part in Chomarat's artistic development. Next to the beautiful nature, she was influenced early on by the fluid border between indoor and outdoor spaces of the family home. Moreover, she grew up there amidst Japanese inspired architecture, which her own work clearly resonated with later. She studied in Lyon, Milan and Paris. She graduated in 2002, after which she decided to move to London. There she met her mentor for the following years: British interior architect John Pawson, renowned for his powerful and confident minimalism. Under his guidance, Chomarat contributed to some significant projects that helped launch her career.





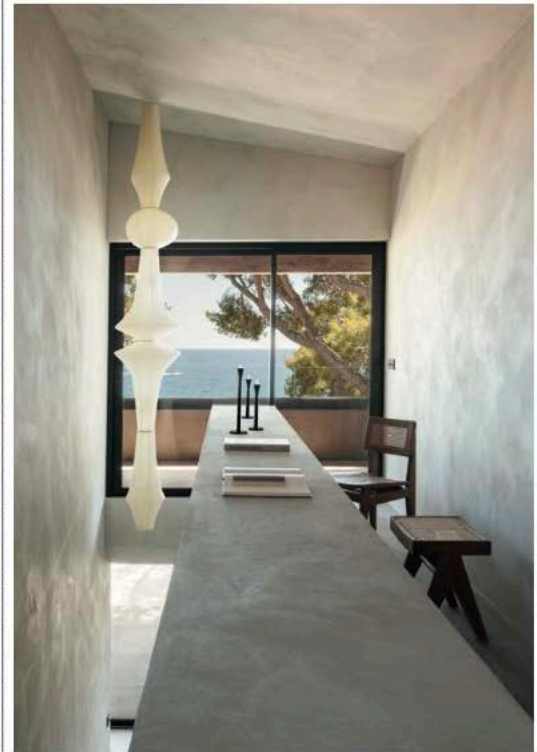




Whether the view is the sea or the mountains, Chomarat always chooses for authentic materials that are as close to nature as possible

After working in the Pawson studio for almost ten years, she exchanged London for Switzerland. Here, she took the step to start her own business and worked for Hermès. As a creative designer for the brand, Chomarat engaged in several projects, such as a hotel in Doha and a luxurious yacht in collaboration with Perini Navi. During this period, the interior architect divided her time between Geneva and Paris. Subsequently, she received various commissions for private homes and interior architecture, and rather quickly Chomarat found herself in Saint-Kéan-Cap-Ferrat, Geneva, Zakopane and Megève. Since then, she has mainly continued to spend her time on private residences.

The foundation always remains the same for Chomarat: nature, geography, climate, history and purpose. For her, these components are the building stones of every project and, therefore, should always be delineated in the early stages of the design process. By highlighting these aspects, she succeeds in consistently keeping the focus on the essence. Furthermore, the interior architect aims to only design considerate openings in a space. Since she incessantly returns to the question of what we see and how, she maintains the importance of perspective and connection in every design. Whether the view is the sea or the mountains, Chomarat always chooses for authentic materials that are as close to nature as possible. Every plan is repeatedly reappraised and reworked to, on the one hand, maximally guarantee the simplicity and the coherence and, on the other, to continue refining the dynamic between interior and exterior. Next to this, you can recognise Chomarat's work by some of her favourite furniture and interior elements. Stairs, for example, are often one of the focal points of her design language and are a poetic expression of movement. Although staircases can often be a striking and dominant part of a home, Chomarat is able to add a subtle modesty in this case. You can also see the preference for modesty in her incorporation of benches, stools and candleholders. Namely, these objects exude the tranquillity and the appreciation of silence that are consistently and extensively echoed in her projects.



#### HOME IN BANDOL

More specifically, we are highlighting a project of Chomarat in Bandol, France. This family home is located in a cove not far from the house where the interior architect herself spend holidays as a child. The sea view was one of her most prominent inspirations, because the endless horizon could easily be transformed into an architectural panorama. Naturally, the result is nothing but sublime. The elongated openings and stretched

out volumes strengthen the presence of the azure blue water. Loyal to her parents' home, Chomarat also developed a composition here in which the house, the garden, the sea and nature complement and overlap each other. Next to her childhood, the work of architect Tadao Ando functioned as a fruitful source of inspiration. The two central strengths that Chomarat further develops here are simplicity and singularity. The clarity of the lines tirelessly enters in a dialogue with the continuing materiality; a dynamic that culminates in a visually silent and soft whole.

All elements were selected in function of the natural colour palette. On the exterior, the ochre of the facades mixes in with the

surrounding landscape, whereas the tobacco-coloured tiles and the earthy tones of the masonry benches continue to set the tone inside. Moreover, the value of simplicity is proven here in the consistent use of the same local stone for the floors, the washbasins and the worktops. The grain of the walnut doors and kitchen cabinets creates the desired tactility. The furniture includes several design classics, such as a Pierre Jeanneret sofa and a vintage Magistretti lamp. These valuable pieces were joined by African shields and burned wooden tables. In this project Chomarat not only proved the quality of her services as interior designer, but also a sophisticated curator. More precisely, she expressed her love for art by providing the home of several works that she carefully selected. For example, she added ceramics of Bénédicte Vallet to the rooms, as well as sculptures of Robert Courtright and Julia Atlas. She picked out beautiful paintings by Sadaharu Horio and Yun Hyong-Keun; finally, she honoured her former mentor John Pawson with a couple of photographs by him.

In her work, Valérie Chomarat utilises every opportunity to appreciate simplicity and nearby nature. With her sensual minimalism she forms creations that manifest tranquillity and serenity. Imagicasa hopes that she will remain loyal to her characterising vision in her future work, because it has already proven to find a lot of resonance with the international public. From her project in Bandol, we mainly remember her focus on singularity, as well as the unique touch that the nearby beautiful water adds to the whole. Both on the outside and the inside the house enters in an honest dialogue with the surrounding nature. Moreover, Chomarat strengthened her design with her loving eye for art and, consequently, created a project that in every corner embodies her love for interior as an organic entity. Therefore, this interior is of the kind where anyone would feel at home, enjoying everything that beauty and nature have to offer. (Text: Cara Jacobs)



KASBAH  
DAVID LOPEZ QUINCOES

AGENT FOR BELGIUM & LUXEMBURG:

BESIDE DESIGN AGENCIES  
T. +32 9 282 6422  
E. INFO@BESIDE.BE

LIVING  
DIYANI