

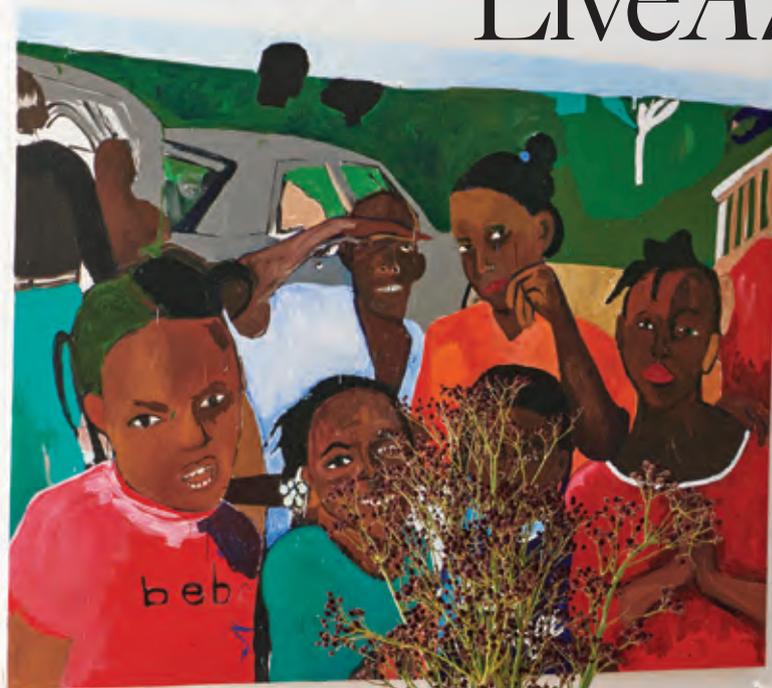
# Galerie

*LiveArtfully*

**Annabelle Selldorf  
Creates an Art-Filled  
Masterpiece for  
Avid Collectors**

**Secrets to Designing  
the Perfect  
Outdoor Escape**

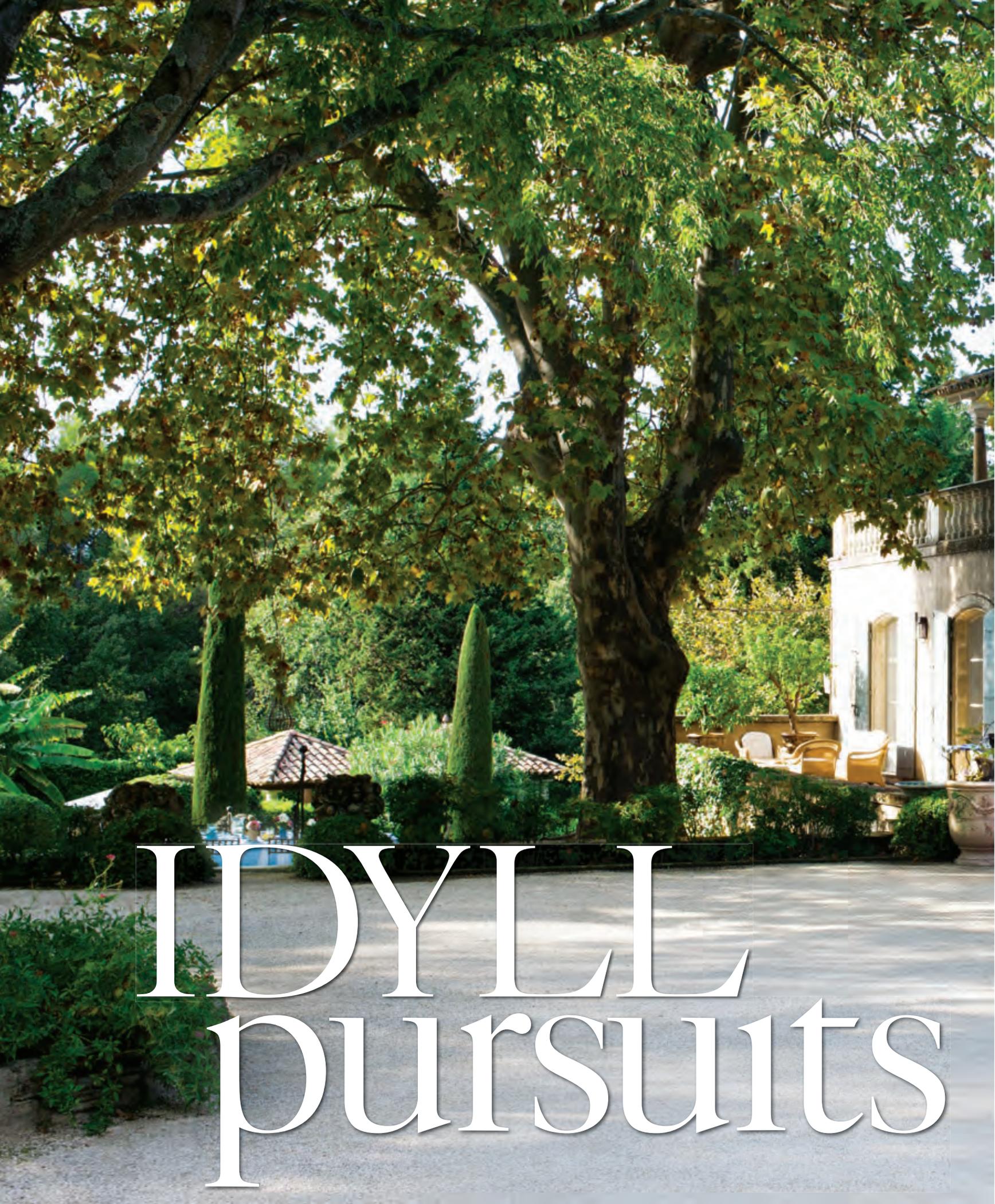
**Private Getaways  
in Bordeaux, Umbria,  
and San Miguel  
de Allende**



## CREATIVE MINDS

**30 Incredible Talents Using Their  
Genius to Change the World**

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# IDYLL pursuits



Louisa Guinness and Ben Brown's home, located outside Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, features sun-dappled terraces and lush gardens. The house was originally renovated by local architect Bruno Lafourcade, and his son, Alexandre, further updated it to suit the family of five, while Guinness oversaw the furnishings. For details see Sources.

For London gallerists Louisa Guinness and Ben Brown, a Provençal farmhouse is the perfect refuge for relaxing with family, friends, and some of their favorite art

BY ELENA BOWES PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM BEDDOW

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# FIVE YEARS AGO, London contemporary art dealer



Ben Brown and his wife, Louisa Guinness, a collector and gallerist herself specializing in artists' jewelry, decided it would be fun to look for a house in Provence. They had several friends with homes near Arles, Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, and Avignon, a region famous for its seductive light, which attracted artists like Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, and Pablo Picasso, as well as for its standout cuisine and culture. "You come to this area because you either want good food, good wine, or good art," says Guinness. "We happen to like all three."

The couple thought their search would take years, but in fact, it took only a few days. Love is like that. They fell for the second property they saw, a Provençal farmhouse known as a *mas*, just a ten-minute drive from Saint-Rémy.

"It has really good bones," Guinness says of the structure, which sits on 15 acres surrounded by old stone walls, with mature cypress and plane trees, cobblestone paths, a fountain, a rose garden, a vegetable garden, and an olive grove the couple uses to make their own olive oil. "There's something incredibly magical about the house," says Brown.

The mas was first restored in 2002 by the esteemed late Provençal architect Bruno Lafourcade, whose wife, Dominique, was the mastermind behind the majestic gardens. The home's well-proportioned rooms, offering plenty of wall space for Guinness and Brown to hang their art, had been smartly decorated and maintained by a fashion-designing Belgian couple. This was a big plus for Guinness, who oversaw the interiors. "We had just done up our places in London and the country," she recounts. "I didn't want another big project."

There was one hitch: The house had only a single large bedroom for the couple and their three children; the rest of the upper level was occupied by a laundry room and a fashion studio. When Brown first saw the studio space, with its soaring ceilings, he imagined an amazing gallery for displaying art. But that would have required the family of five to sleep in the same bedroom and reason prevailed. The couple hired Alexandre Lafourcade, who had taken over the family firm after his father's death, to divide the studio and laundry room into four additional bedrooms and baths.

When it came to selecting the art, Guinness suggested focusing on works by young, less-established artists. "Yeah, that would be a good idea," she recalls her husband saying. →



A table draped with a Summerill & Bishop tablecloth and set with Pichon d'Uzès plates and John Jenkins glassware overlooks the pool area and gardens. **Opposite:** An Alexander Calder work on paper and a bar in the form of a grasshopper by François-Xavier Lalanne enliven the main staircase.

In the living room, which retains its original fireplace, Guinness grouped a cream-colored Liaigre sofa with a bluish gray sofa, armchairs, and an ottoman by Gervasoni; the sculpture in the corner is by Gavin Turk, the painting is by Miquel Barceló, and the table lamps are by Vaughan.







“And then he completely ignored me and filled the house with works by his favorite artists.” Most of them are represented by or have been exhibited at his Mayfair gallery, Ben Brown Fine Arts, including Miquel Barceló, Ena Swansea, Gavin Turk, Thomas Struth, Les Lalanne, and Alighiero Boetti.

In the dining room, Brown commissioned a mural from Swansea, whose husband works for Maja Hoffmann’s Luma Foundation in nearby Arles. The artist painted the mural in her studio there, even including in the wintry landscape an image of Brown and his daughter, Tatiana, walking the family cocker spaniel, Oakey.

Brown brought in some of his best pieces by Barceló, a Majorcan artist who has a strong affinity for the area and had a big show in Avignon 11 years ago that Brown loved. Claude and François-Xavier Lalanne, the late French couple Brown first met in the early 1990s, when they made a bed for his mother, are represented by Claude’s sculpture of a cabbage with chicken feet and a grasshopper-shaped bar by François-Xavier—both at the foot of the staircase. (The bar is one of two made, the other residing in the collection

of the Queen of England, a present from French president Georges Pompidou.)

The house is imbued with an eclectic, sophisticated spirit that radiates from diverse acquisitions assembled over the years. A Ron Arad chaise longue in the drawing room was a wedding present from Brown’s parents. An Alexander Calder work on paper that hangs above the staircase, originally a gift from Brown to his parents, was returned to him upon the death of his father, an architect who designed the sofa in the hallway.

To fill out the furnishings Guinness—who understatedly says, “I love finding little things”—scoured local markets in France, country auctions in England, and small London design boutiques. “It gave me an excuse to shop,” she says. “I’m slightly obsessed with plates, glasses, tablecloths, and baskets.”

The charismatic couple loves to entertain, but Guinness and Brown also relish relaxing at home, enjoying informal lunches and dinners with family and friends on the terrace. Shaded by a leafy plane tree, surrounded by the idyllic gardens, it’s a magical spot to savor the long, lazy days of the Provençal summer. □

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“IT GAVE ME AN EXCUSE TO SHOP”



Brown commissioned one of his gallery artists, Ena Swansea, who has a studio in nearby Arles, to paint a mural around the fireplace in the dining room, where vintage chairs by Børge Mogensen surround a dining table by Guillerme et Chambron, who also designed the 1970s chairs and table next to the fireplace. **Opposite:** Cypress trees punctuate the gardens bordering the swimming pool.



When it came to selecting the art, Guinness recounts how her husband “COMPLETELY IGNORED” her idea of focusing on less-established artists “AND FILLED THE HOUSE WITH WORKS BY HIS FAVORITES”

A 2008 work by Dutch painter Jan Worst overlooks the tub in the en suite bath. **Below:** The serene guest room features a chromogenic color print by Thomas Ruff. **Opposite:** A painting by Ena Swansea creates a snowy backdrop for a corner rocker by Ron Arad that is accompanied by a lounge chair and an ottoman by Charles and Ray Eames.





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1 A dynamic canvas by American abstractionist **Caio Fonseca** animates the primary bedroom. “This is one of my favorite small Fonseca paintings,” says Ben Brown. “It’s so delicious and contains all of the musical forms and harmonious tones that one associates with his work.” [caiofonseca.com](http://caiofonseca.com)

2 In addition to the commissioned dining room mural and the painting of a snowy scene in a living area by artist **Ena Swansea**, who is on Brown’s gallery roster, the couple owns this 2019 piece, entitled *Child in the Ocean*. “It’s colorful, lyrical, exquisite Ena Swansea at her best,” says Brown. [benbrownfinearts.com](http://benbrownfinearts.com)

3 “Given that I cannot own the original masterpiece by Ed Ruscha, I must be

content with **Vik Muniz’s** amusing remake,” says Brown of this 2008 digital chromogenic print by the Brazilian artist. “It’s pure California.” Earlier this year Brown also displayed a selection of Muniz’s most iconic works at his gallery’s Hong Kong outpost in an exhibition called “Grand Tour.” [vikmuniz.net](http://vikmuniz.net)

4 “This necklace reminds me of my long friendship and working relationship with **Claude Lalanne**, as well as all of the great jewelry we have sold through my gallery,” says Louisa Guinness, who hosted Lalanne’s first-ever solo jewelry show in London, in 2016. Lalanne’s imaginative pieces are renowned for incorporating actual flora into the design process. [louisaguinnessgallery.com](http://louisaguinnessgallery.com)

(1, 5) TIM BEDDOW; (2, 3, 6) COURTESY BEN BROWN FINE ARTS, LONDON; (4) COURTESY LOUISA GUINNESS GALLERY



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“This Caio Fonseca painting contains all of the MUSICAL FORMS and HARMONIOUS TONES that one associates with his work,” says Ben Brown



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5 Surmounting a writing desk in the guest room is a small grid by **Alighiero Boetti**, a leading figure in the Arte Povera movement. “It’s a perfect gem of a Boetti, who was one of the greatest postwar Italian artists,” says Brown. Although Boetti utilized a variety of mediums, he became famous for his mosaiclike embroideries crafted by Afghan weavers. Many of those multicolored works, like the one shown, consist of individual letters that

the viewer must decipher and arrange into words.

6 The couple also has a radiant mixed-media canvas by Spanish artist **Miquel Barceló**, whose oeuvre includes works on paper, ceramics, and sculptures. “This piece exemplifies Barceló’s Majorcan origins and use of color while depending on the simple forms of his subject matter,” says Brown. “Plus, it’s ideal for a warm climate!”

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