Home profile

THE OWNERS Interior designer Patricia Bustos de la Torre, her husband Nacho García-Altozano, who works in private finance, and their children Maya, six, Isabella, three, and Nacho, two.

THE PROPERTY A sixth-floor apartment in central Madrid. There’s a living room, formal dining room, kitchen-diner, studio, playroom, plus three bedrooms, four bathrooms, a dressing room and terrace.

Miami comes to Madrid in Patricia and Nacho’s sun-saturated apartment, where colour and pattern are given space to shine.

Pump up the Pink

“Miami comes to Madrid in Patricia and Nacho’s sun-saturated apartment, where colour and pattern are given space to shine,” says Patricia. “This is my favourite room in the house, says Patricia. ‘I wanted it to feel like it had movement and wasn’t too static, but I was also inspired by the mint-blue vintage Ico Parisi sofa.’ She had her own designs for the table lamps custom-made from crystal rock, as well as the pendant, left, ‘which is a copy, but I wanted it in two colours’. She also designed the white sofa and the crystal and brass tables. ‘They complete it for me,’ she says.

GET THE LOOK Source Ico Parisi furniture at 1stdibs. This is the Wet Kiss artwork by Marilyn Minter. The white Diamond chair is by Harry Bertoia for Knoll. The Maison Jansen palm tree lamp and fur stools are from LA Studio in Madrid.

Photography – Montse Garriga Grau
Styling – Bea Aparicio
Words – Lola Borg
Soft shades of mint, blue and yellow

run throughout the Madrid apartment of Patricia Bustos de la Torre and her husband Nacho García-Altozano, but one colour seems to really hit the eyes and that’s pink.

‘Yes, I’ve always loved pink!’ says Patricia in her beautifully accented English, which she speaks very quickly. ‘I love what it symbolises – it’s always positive and uplifting, which is why I especially love it in interiors.’

Splashes of pink run throughout the apartment, where lush, elegant furniture sits with vintage items and Patricia’s own inventive pieces. She designs furniture and lighting, as well as creating her own paintings, murals and art. And she recycles vintage pieces too, such as the dining-room chairs (she upholstered them in Christian Lacroix for Designers Guild fabric). But then this space isn’t just a home to a family of five, but a showcase for Patricia’s own inventive pieces. She designs furniture and interiors company. In a previous life, she worked as a fashion designer for Zara before setting up an interiors business with associates called Living Pink eight years ago, which roughly is equivalent to a Spanish Bond Street. ‘But it’s good for the children too, because there are parks for them,’ Patricia adds.

What drew her to the apartment was its open-plan design and the Parisian style of the interiors – the doors, mouldings and fireplaces, plus the light, which streams throughout the series of interconnected main rooms. When she first saw the place, it was painted yellow and all the floors were dark brown. That changed immediately – she’s clearly not a woman to muck about – but as a rented space, there was a limit to what she could do. ‘I couldn’t make a big performance of it,’ she says. So she knocked down only one wall. Colours and designs were chosen to maximise the natural light and Patricia set about adding her personality to the space.

There is a heavy dose of Miami-style in the saturated colours and a kitsch line of objets; it’s no surprise designer Kelly Wearstler is an influence. For all that, the space has a distinctly European feel, but still some Spanish references, such as the rattan furniture and plants. ‘The typical Spanish style with the trend of combining colours and fabrics is a little bit too boring for me,’ Patricia says. ‘I’d say I’m more eclectic.’

This Spanish apartment is anything but boring, yet it’s sometimes easy to forget it’s a family space and that two males live here. Does hubby Nacho ever get a say in what she does? ‘I know it’s very feminine, but Nacho understands it’s my work. All my friends say, “How does your husband live here?” But he knows I love to be surrounded by inspiring things. If he lived alone, he wouldn’t live like this,’ she says, laughing. ‘He sounds remarkably tolerant and Patricia insists they never disagree about the interiors of their family home. ‘He is respectful of what I like,’ she adds.

The children are similarly well trained. They not only accompany Patricia on her vintage shopping expeditions at the weekends without a grumble, but also understand that some areas of the apartment – those white sofas, for example – are off limits. ‘They know that Mummy cares about some spaces and they’re gladly respectful,’ says Patricia. ‘They’re very proud of Mummy and they enjoy having this “excite house”.’ They have their own areas where they can express themselves, such as a “playground room”, where they can paint the walls, draw and make as much mess as they like, says Patricia. They are clearly creative, but she’s not sure they will follow her into interior design. ‘I say to them all the time – but as a rented space, there was a limit to what she could do. I couldn’t make a big performance of it,’ she says. So she knocked down only one wall. Colours and designs were chosen to maximise the natural light and Patricia set about adding her personality to the space.

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Home truths

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT MADRID?
It's grown so much over the past five years – there's more talent, more designers and loads of new restaurants and cool places have opened up. There's a lot to visit and to inspire. Compared to other cities I visit, there is so much to do here.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE SHADE OF PINK?
A soft pastel.

DO YOU WEAR PINK?
It's not my favourite for clothes or accessories. It works in interiors much better.

CITY OR COUNTRY?
I love cities. But I also adore jungles – Costa Rica, Mexico and Africa for their savage nature.

WHO'S YOUR FAVOURITE DESIGNER?
Kelly Wearstler and India Mahdavi. Their styles are totally inspiring.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE DESIGN PERIOD?
Art Deco and mid-century.

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LIVING ROOM
'I designed the marble and brass table,' says Patricia. 'I wanted it to look as though it was floating in the middle of the room. I design items, then have artisans in Spain and Portugal make them.'

GET THE LOOK
This is the A811 floor lamp by Alvar Aalto for Vitra. The wall lights and pink chair are by LA Studio. The ceiling light is from El Octo. This is the Ombré rug by Kelly Wearstler at BSB and the white armchairs are by Franco Albini for Naharro, both in Madrid.

DINING ROOM
'I love, love, love the jungle and nature,' says Patricia. 'That was the inspiration here. With the plants too.'

GET THE LOOK
The vintage wicker chairs are from LA Studio. The dining chairs are from La Recova in Madrid, covered in fabric by Christian Lacroix for Designers Guild. Patricia made the table, but the base was bought in Madrid's Mestizo Store. Patricia designed the large light and the rug, which was woven by Spanish artisans.

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GUEST BATHROOM

The jungle theme emerges again in the guest bathroom, with exotic wallpaper combined with Patricia’s collection of vintage mirrors.

GET THE LOOK

The wallpaper is from Nobilis. The mirrors are from Etxeko Deco.

MASTER BEDROOM

Patricia designed and executed all the hand painting of the geometric shapes on the wall and ceiling — it took her a week. She found the rug after she had painted the walls. ‘It was sooo lucky,’ she says.

GET THE LOOK

This is the Cosmopol chair by George Nelson for Vitra. The Cubes rug is by Paul Smith for The Rug Company. The leopard-print cushion is from Zara Home. The bedspread is from Coco-mat and the gold-leaf table lamp is by Tommaso Ratti from Mr Vintage, both in Madrid.

The blueprint...