

house style

Paris chic meets West London glamour at Caroline Sciamma-Massenet's Holland Park townhouse, where the designer and stylist mixes heirlooms, Hirsts and Hermès to create a fashion-forward home, finds Sophie Goodwin

Photographed by KATE MARTIN

BEAU MONDE
*An Yves Klein sculpture, white hydrangeas
and a starburst chandelier are among
the statement details in the sitting room*

Cotton and silk dress, £3,950, by
MIU MIU. Jewellery, Caroline's own

Caroline Sciamma-Massenet is a glamorous French ex-model, stylist and founder of leather clothing brand SKIIM. At 42, she looks 30, has lustrous long hair, endless legs

and the air of perfect effortlessness that all French women seem to exude: the 'I just woke up like this' effect. As Parisian as you like, minus the snobbery. She lives in a grand and beautiful Victorian seven-bedroom townhouse in Holland Park with her husband, the financier Arnaud Massenet (52, 'but 40 in his mind,' she laughs), who was married to Dame Natalie Massenet for 15 years. Arnaud and Natalie have two daughters, Isabella, 18, and Ava, 12, and together created the online fashion juggernaut Net-a-Porter before splitting in 2011. Then Caroline whirled into Arnaud's life when they were set up by a mutual friend.

At the time, Caroline had no idea who Arnaud was and thought they were meeting purely for business: 'I turned up at the Park Hyatt in a gold lamé swimsuit and leather trousers, straight off the set of a fashion shoot,' she says. However, her friend, former *Vogue* writer Pippa Holt, had warned her that Arnaud was 'the bachelor everyone wanted'. Caroline wasn't impressed. 'In France, "bachelor" isn't a good thing. It has a different meaning – more man about town.' Arnaud, for his part, was soon smitten and they courted for a few months – 'I was not easy to win over,' she insists, smiling. They married in 2016 in Tuscany, celebrating with a four-day party with their closest friends (for which she wore Alexandre Vauthier Couture). Now they have a two-year-old son, Leonardo, who pads about during our shoot, quietly singing his ABC.

Caroline brims with energy – when she talks, a torrent of words streams out, and she barely pauses for breath between sentences: 'I love life. I love food. I love design. The only thing I don't really love is drinking. I'm a cheap date.' She doesn't walk but half-skips everywhere, racing up and down stairs. When she answers the door to greet me she is in wide-leg jeans, hot-pink Stella McCartney shoes and a black lace camisole (no bra – the French don't do bras), and even though her wardrobe is impressive, she can't wait to be 'styled' and constantly asks my opinion as we work through outfits, from a feathered Miu Miu creation to a Louis Vuitton minidress.

The house has been decked out by her great friend the interior designer Peter Mikic, whom she met four years ago at a dinner party after he mistook her for Kate Moss. Together they >



PARIS MISMATCH
The Peter Mikic-designed dining room; (below left) Hermès fabric in the kitchen nook; (below right) a Rolling Stones book becomes a piece of art



Leather cape, £530; leather skirt, £1,270, both by SKIIM. Yellow-gold and white-diamond earrings, £5,700; white-gold and diamond pendant, £4,250; yellow-gold, black-opal, blue-topaz and diamond ring, £5,700; yellow-gold and diamond bracelet, £7,700, all by STEPHEN WEBSTER. Bracelet, rings and shoes, Caroline's own



Caroline met her interior designer at a dinner party after he mistook her for Kate Moss

WARM WELCOME
Bold art and pink velvet make the hallway of Caroline's Holland Park townhouse pop



NATIONAL VELVET
A Brentano Gem sofa in Jet fills the bay windows, hung with 'Cesari' silk-velvet curtains from Colony

À LA MODE
A bell jar of butterflies tops an antique piece in the sitting room; (below) a Paul Evans cabinet houses a collection of Caroline's designer bags



Satin jacket, £1,595; satin trousers, £595, both by **PETER PILOTTO**. Jewellery, as before. Shoes, Caroline's own

For stockists, see Address Book. Make-up: Carol Brown at Terri Manduca. Hair: Andreas Wild. Photo assistant: Luke Brown. Fashion assistant: Holly Chapman. Production: Poppy Evans



PHOTOGRAPHS: DAVID M BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES



From left, Arnaud and Caroline Sciamma-Massenet, 2018; with Carine Roitfeld in 2017; with Arizona Muse, 2018

◀ have created a unique space for the family. It is outrageously chic but surprisingly cosy at the same time. Evidence of Caroline's flair, panache and devotion to fashion can be seen in every corner. Her study, for example, has an enormous shoe shelf instead of a bookshelf, and there's a Paul Evans patchwork chrome cabinet stuffed with Chanel and Balenciaga bags.

Caroline is adamant that she doesn't want a show home. 'Comfort comes first. You have to want to sit in the chair and not find it uncomfortable.' The cream bedroom carpet feels like cashmere to walk on and the bathroom is a riot of animal print and marble. It's all very Grand Dame, but there's a soft femininity at the same time: lots of reflective surfaces and Hermès fabrics. She and Arnaud entertain a lot so the space has to be functional, not to mention child-friendly. Highlights include the Fifties art deco Gio Ponti mini-bar and waist-height gold ice bucket on chicken legs.

'I like to mix things that aren't perfect,' she tells me. Different eras of furniture gloriously clash, massive vases of hydrangeas adorn the dining table. 'I learned this from Carine.' She means Roitfeld, the ex-French *Vogue* Editor who hired Caroline in 2010 and later asked her to be the UK Correspondent of *CR Fashion Book* when she moved to London with Arnaud. The legendary fashion force has been a huge influence and the pair remain close – Carine's daughter, Julia, often wears Caroline's label SKIIM on the fashion circuit.

SKIIM was set up after a 'light-bulb moment' when, at the age of 40, Caroline found out she was pregnant. 'I wanted to create something of my own. All the clothing is made from sustainable leather. The name is a combination of the word "skin" and my surname. Also, I lived off skimmed milk when I was a model,' she smiles. In addition, she

works as one half of Radcliffe & Sciamma, styling celebrities and private clients with her business partner, Angela Radcliffe.

Fashion-wise, Caroline has seen it all, modelling for over 20 years. She must know she is astonishingly beautiful, but if she does, it hasn't gone to her head; instead of being remote, she is generous and unentitled. It's testament to her personality, too, that she and Arnaud are on good terms with Natalie and her new husband, Erik Torstensson (founder of the Wednesday Agency Group and label Frame, and Creative Director of *Industrie*), who have a baby boy together. Caroline, in turn, was previously married to Olivier Marois, a French singer and producer, with whom she had her first child, Joshua, 10. 'We're the definition of a modern family. Oddly, I can see us all going on holiday together in the future.' Caroline is particularly close to Arnaud's eldest daughter, Isabella, and counts herself 'very lucky' with the whole arrangement.

In Holland Park, they have created a vibrant family home where Warhols and Hirsts mix with Lara Bohinc bespoke lamps and a mirrored chandelier by Stuart Haygarth. There are personal touches, too: a Napoleon III bedroom cabinet that's been in the family for generations, and Caroline brings a lot back from the Marché aux Puces in Paris. 'Design makes me feel more alive. Clashing colours and fabrics, I sort of throw it all together.' It's the same for her clothes. Caroline buys Peter Pilotto, Givenchy, Isabel Marant; she gets dressed-up for fun and doesn't over-think it.

At one point during the shoot she is in an electric blue silk suit and chucks off the trousers mid-shot, so she is standing like a pro in nothing but Valentino stilettos and a tuxedo jacket. 'I think it is better like this,' she says in her divine Parisian accent. 'Looser, you know? More comfortable.' □