



There is something mysteriously immanent about the work of Belgian interior architect Peter Ivens. It's as if his transformations had never taken place, as if the places had always looked like that and were meant to look like that. Whether renovating an existing space or conceiving an entirely new one, Ivens' work is present in a most natural way. This may tend to sound rather neutral and featureless, yet it is not, and that is the beauty of it. Ivens' work is full of character and richness, in materiality as well as in detail, and his great talent is revealed in the way he incorporates and conceives everything with subtlety and delicateness.

Peter Ivens defines his work as 'the bigger picture'. As an architect and a creator of spaces this self-portrait makes sense—someone who envisages volumes, plans structures and oversees the extensive construction process. However, there is a level of detail and thoroughness across his vast portfolio of projects that must also be mentioned. Born into a family of bespoke tailors and dressmakers, spanning five generations, Ivens has learned from an early age what it means to work with precision and attentiveness. A sound amount of perfectionism is helpful in this type of work and Ivens admits to carrying this trait with him. He prefers tidy interiors and smooth procedures, and in order to obtain that kind of excellence one must be well organised and in control.

Ivens' first interior projects emerged at a young age when he was working for the family tailoring business and asked to manage the restoration of their retail spaces. Ivens embraced those initial experiences and built up his own interior architecture office; first based in a former bank in his hometown, Sint-Niklaas, and later around the city of Antwerp, where his studio is still based today. He gets great satisfaction from restoration projects and finds joy in looking for the challenge in a space, analysing and defining the problem and figuring out how to improve it. This type of discernment comes to him very intuitively. Many interior projects later, Ivens' team now also completes full architectural commissions, from a brief and plan drawings to construction and interior styling.

For Ivens, it is the build-up of new relations and the cultural and intellectual exchange with people that feeds his motivation and keeps offering new ideas. The interactions with clients bring fresh energy and spark creativity, with his clients often knowing exactly what they are looking for. Working closely together, he observes, acquires new knowledge and designs original solutions that fit their visions. Other people's passion nourishes Ivens' own eagerness to create aesthetic and soulful homes.

Ivens lives and works in several places across Belgium: by the seaside in Knokke, in the vibrant capital of Brussels, with his team in Antwerp and in his recently finished villa project in Itegem, his current headquarters as he calls it. The dynamic and shifting lifestyle that comes with having several bases keeps Ivens open-eyed and curious—beneficent for someone who doesn't like sitting still for too long. The sailor in him needs to discover new places and new potential, a drive that also comes out in his projects, always searching for original ideas and custom solutions. As well as enjoying living in different locations, he also likes creating distinctive places, composing dissimilar atmospheres every time.

Specifically, atmosphere is at the heart of Ivens' work. It is a certain feeling that his clients are requesting when coming to him; not a formal expression or style but a particular soul, one that brings warmth and comfort while at the same time evoking curiosity and marvel. To realise such settings, Ivens works with long-term collaborator, decorator and designer, Bea Mombaers. For three decades the duo have formed a strong alliance, a steady and resourceful partnership, greater than the sum of its parts. Compatible in taste and with an equal thirst for new discoveries, Ivens and Mombaers design interiors based on strong intuition and profound trust. Ivens takes care of the space and structure, Mombaers of the objects and styling, yet their work often overlaps, making it invisible where one has ended and the other taken over.



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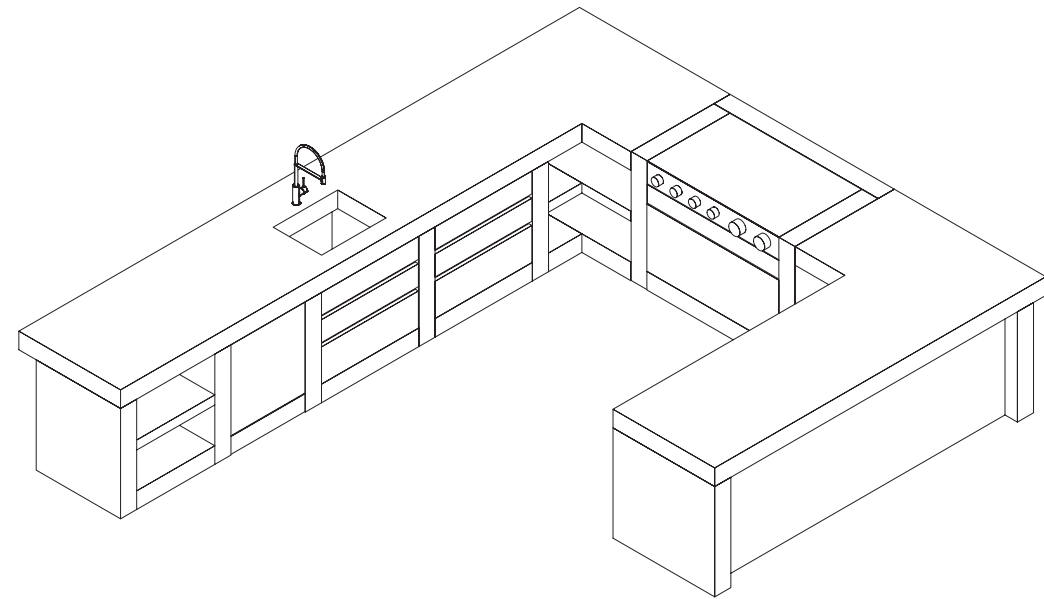








A 17th-century granary with authentic oak trusses was re-purposed as a contemporary home, giving the building a new lease of life. The past was given the space to shape the present, figuratively but also literally, as the wooden structure was used as a divider to create different functional spaces. The open wooden staircase to the upper floor was redesigned. The robust yet sheltering character of the old barn, meanwhile, along with its artisanal qualities, proved perfect for creating generous seating and living spaces around large fireplaces. Those are all connected, forming a central, unifying element, perfectly in sync with the custom-made caramel-tiled kitchen and its terracotta floor.



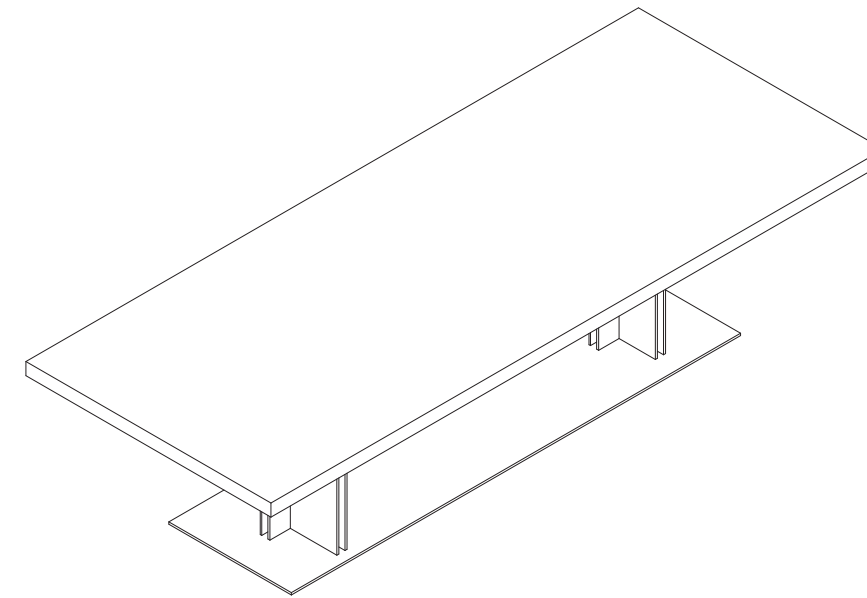
Interior architecture

Peter Ivens  
Dorine Berckmoes

Interior decoration

Bea Mombaers

The architectural design started from a floor plan with a primary form, with the next step consisting of developing both the exterior and the interior in more detail: not an obvious undertaking. The clients' wishes came first, culminating in an interaction with almost no need for compromises. All the spaces give out onto a central patio, making the house easy to navigate. The interior architecture is inspired by the colonial style, but in a more pared-down, purer version. The design throughout the house is uniform, the tone clear, with several purposefully selected, strong details. Antique plank floors and walnut panelling bring soul into the interior, and accents such as custom-made bronze handles and doors with cane webbing impart a high-quality finish.



Interior architecture

Peter Ivens  
Bart Moortgat  
Sien Wittevrongel

Interior decoration

Bea Mombaers

Architect

Steves & Borsum Architekten