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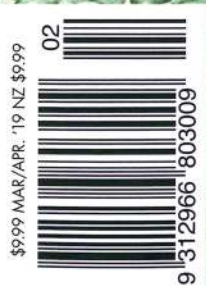
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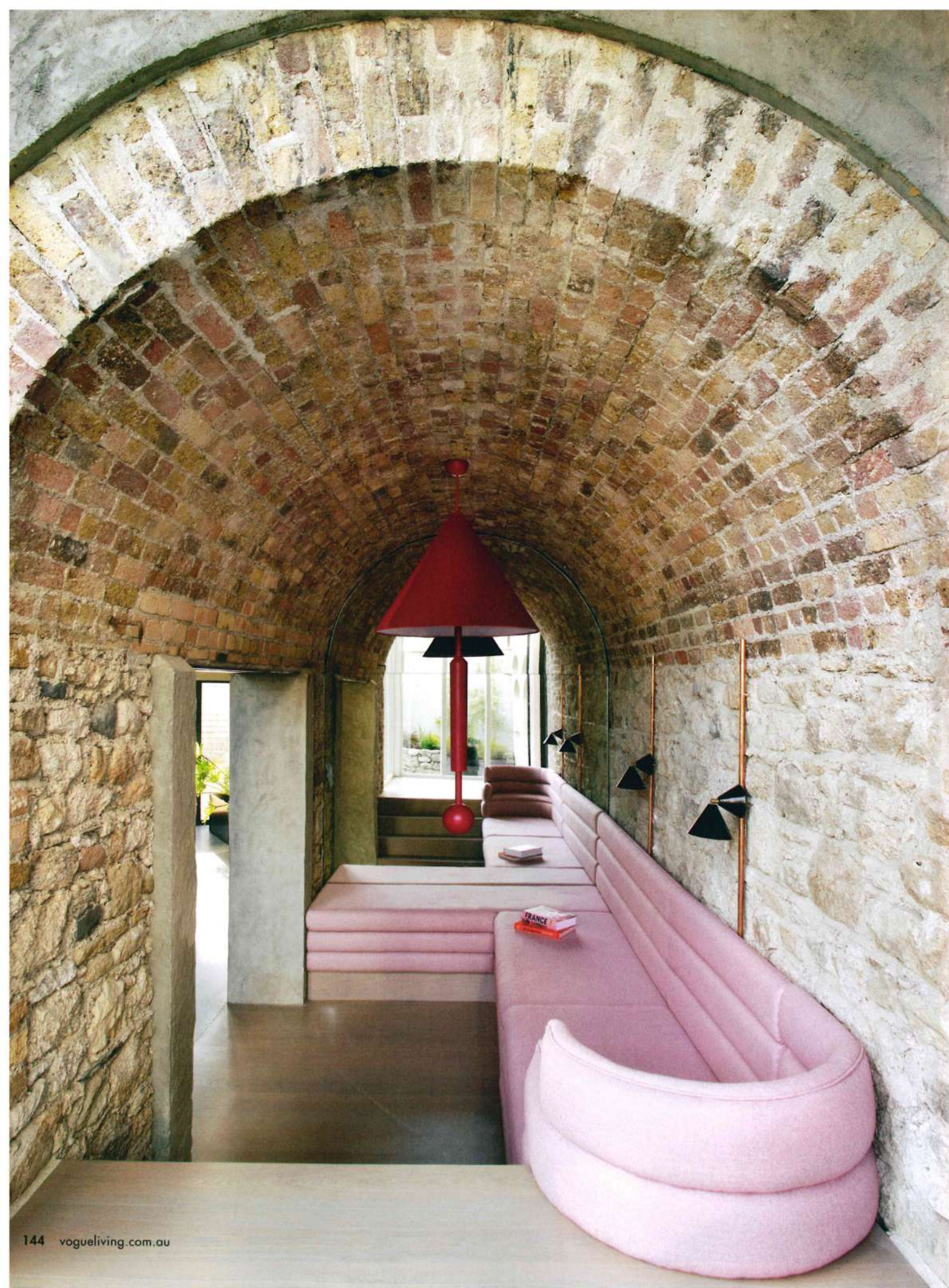
**EXCLUSIVE** Inside the world of Axel Vervoordt

French chic

A fashion designer's glamorous home







# For the ages

An 18<sup>th</sup>-century dwelling serves as a *designer's OPPORTUNITY* to indulge in playful COLOUR and contrasting MATERIALS.

By Fiona McCarthy  
Photographed by  
Barbara Corsico

**THIS PAGE** in the dining area of this home just outside Dublin, Ireland, designed by Róisín Lafferty, Eero Saarinen Tulip dining table with marble top; Edizioni Design 46 suspension lamps, from Artemest; custom-made steel-framed ribbed glass partitions. **OPPOSITE PAGE** in the sitting nook, bespoke sofa upholstered in pink felt designed by Róisín Lafferty; Object of Discussion pendant lights by Maison Dada; Cone wall lights from Areti. *Details, last pages.*





“When *people* first walk in, they feel slightly *giddy* with *exploring* the space, each in *their* own different way” RÓISÍN LAFFERTY

Wandering through what was once an 18th-century coach-house and paper mill — and is now a contemporary family home — it’s hard to believe the interior isn’t some fabulous downtown Manhattan loft or ancient southern Italian farmhouse.

Rather, this four-bedroom residence, where Irish designer Róisín Lafferty has married an industrial mix of glass, steel and brass with the rough-hewn comforting tactility of old stone and exposed brick, sits right on the verdant outskirts of Dublin on a former grand Georgian country estate. And although the city itself is known for its slightly grey pallor, Lafferty has somehow magicked up striking spaces drenched with light and uncluttered airiness, imbued with a strong, sharp contrast between old and new.

“I like to design spaces that take people on a journey,” Lafferty says. (Case in point: the way she has transformed the

ground floor into a multi-level space with sunken pockets and an effortless fusion of the outdoors with the interiors.) “We deliberately created interesting nooks and crannies to contrast the openness of the house after it was first converted a few years ago. Spatial layout to me is the most important thing about interior design because it impacts how you feel at home and therefore how you see the world and all aspects of your life.”

A sense of seamlessness was key for maximising the flow of light, colour and calm throughout the house. The design cleverly conceals powder rooms and storage so that wall finishes, flooring and high-quality detailing discreetly merge from one space to the next. Mild steel portals also help to connect the different zones, framing the view as you walk around the space. »

**THIS PAGE** in the dining area, vintage teak **dining chairs** with seat cushions upholstered with Harlequin Cellini fabric. **OPPOSITE PAGE** in another dining area, concrete **stools** from Habitat; AS 1391004 KEA 250 exterior **wall lights** from Hicken Lighting; zellige wall and table **tiles** from Morocco.





« Customisation has always played a vital role in the way Lafferty designs. From the sofas and beds to the long elliptical mirrors trimmed in brass that line the entrance hallway, almost every detail here is unique. “We also design as much as possible ourselves because it ensures we get the proportions right, so each piece works better in the space,” she says. The design of the freestanding bed in the main bedroom, for example, lined in bespoke tiles from Spain — “designed to look old and worn” — somehow makes the generous proportions of the room more intimate.

Far from shying away from the old mill’s preserved stone barrel vaults, Lafferty has boldly married them with new three-metre-high ceilings. Instead of walls, she has used elements such as a marble kitchen island and customised ribbed glass and steel-framed doors (their shapes echoing the vaulted ceilings) to help divide the large open-plan areas into specific zones.

**THIS PAGE** in the kitchen, By Lassen ML42 stools in Brown Oiled Oak from Skandium; Nero Marquina marble **kitchen island**; polished concrete floor. **OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM LEFT** in the main bedroom, headboard made from custom Moroccan tiles; Chinese paper lanterns. In the hallway, custom-made brass-rimmed mirrors and skirting; Arrangements Round and Line suspension lights by Michael Anastassiades for Flos; custom-made Spanish floor tiles. Details, last pages.

Details such as furniture and lighting have been otherwise kept to an absolute minimum and further demarcate each zone. “I wanted as little as possible to detract from the elegant simplicity of the space,” the designer says.

To soften the steel, marble and polished plaster elements, Lafferty has opted for the sensual curves of classic mid-century furniture pieces, such as Eero Saarinen’s Tulip table, as well as playful and sculptural lighting with the bright red Maison Dada ceiling lamps in the sitting nook. “I also love the large scale of the Edizioni Design circular pendants hanging above the dining table,” Lafferty says. “They’re still fine enough so as not to block the eyeline when looking through the space from, say, the dining room to the garden.”

There are other clever touches, too. Brass skirting unexpectedly frames the entrance hall, and Lafferty has cleverly transitioned one room to the next through the use of different floor finishes, from

smoked oak and geometric tile to concrete. The use of mirrors throughout the house also helps “to trick the eye so it’s not quite sure what it’s seeing”. A cantilevered table, magically merging the inside of the house to the outside terrace, is lined with the same deep blue zellige tiles as the walls and a long bench, creating the sense of a cohesive whole. “I wanted the space to read as one colour, as if all growing up and out of the same thing.”

The result is a harmonious balance of gutsy, masculine textures with sculptural, sensual sophistication. “I wanted to challenge how to showcase the traditional character and charm of the original architecture against a memorable modern backdrop,” says Lafferty. “When people first walk in, they feel slightly giddy with exploring the space, each in their own different way — for kids, the pink nook is always their first stop — but there’s a wonderful sense of serenity being here. It’s such a beautiful space to be in.” **VL** [kingstonlaffertydesign.com](http://kingstonlaffertydesign.com) @roisinlaffertykld

