



**Living area** An 'Eames Lounge Chair' by Charles and Ray Eames for Vitra is placed by the staircase. The curtains are made of fabric from Kvadrat  
**Exterior** The house was designed in the Modernist style, with clean lines and a flat roof  
**Stockist details on p215 ►**



# MODERNIST REVIVAL

*A sensitive reworking of this 1930s villa outside Antwerp transformed the neglected gem into a contemporary home that honours its heritage*

Words **TESSA PEARSON** Photography **JAN VERLINDE/LIVING INSIDE**





**Living room** 'Togo' sofas and chairs by Michel Ducaroy for Ligne Roset sit on a carpet from Zozan Rugs. The round coffee table is a 1960s piece, the circular wooden side table is from the 'Eames Lifetime' series by Charles and Ray Eames for Herman Miller, and the lamps are the 'AJ' by Arne Jacobsen for Louis Poulsen. An artwork by photographer Caroline McCarthy hangs on the wall. **Stockist details on p215**



When Polish architect Nachman Kaplansky moved to Antwerp from Tel Aviv in 1925, the city was a creative hub for artists and architects, including the likes of Russian-born artist and sculptor Ossip Zadkine and master Modernist Le Corbusier. Flat roofs, sharp angles and clean lines were becoming the architectural order of the day, a trend that can clearly be seen in this country home on the outskirts of the city, built by Kaplansky in 1936.

By the time current owner Olga Perez, an interior designer, purchased the property, it had already been remodelled twice – once in the 1950s and again in the 70s. She brought in friend and architect Dirk Engelen, of Antwerp-based firm B-architecten, to restore the villa to its former 1930s glory. 'The first time it was modified it was extended by a third, which worked quite well. The 1970s remodel was less successful,' laments Dirk. 'After that, the property really lost its character.'

After consulting Kaplansky's original plans, the duo realised that little of the house's intended structure was left, and set about stripping it back to be more in line with his design. The

drawings revealed an Art Deco interior inspired by grand ocean liners, complete with a curved staircase – the starting point for the striking new Le Corbusier-style replacement – and a large porthole window, which Dirk has reinstated near the entrance.

'We opened up the house and integrated the hallway into the living room so that the staircase became a central feature,' says Dirk. The interior is deliberately sparse, allowing the sculptural elements to shine, while the material palette nods knowingly to the tastes of the 1930s – American walnut, travertine, cherry wood and, of course, terrazzo, which has been used to great effect in the kitchen. 'I've been in love with terrazzo since my childhood in Tenerife,' says Olga. 'It was used a lot in homes and public buildings there. In terms of combining colours, it's a very flexible material. I think it adds intimacy and cosiness to a space.'

'The house's form is pre-war in style,' says Dirk, 'but the interior hints at a totally different space, full of contemporary inspiration.' It is this melding of the modern, the Modernist and the minimal that allows carefully chosen vintage designs by Charles and Ray Eames, Harry Bertoia and Michel Ducaroy to look so at home in this newly-renovated villa. [b-architecten.be](http://b-architecten.be) ►





Dining area 'DCM' chairs by Charles and Ray Eames for Vitra surround a vintage table, which sits beneath a brass pendant light by German designer Florian Schulz. A chess table is placed on the other side of the room  
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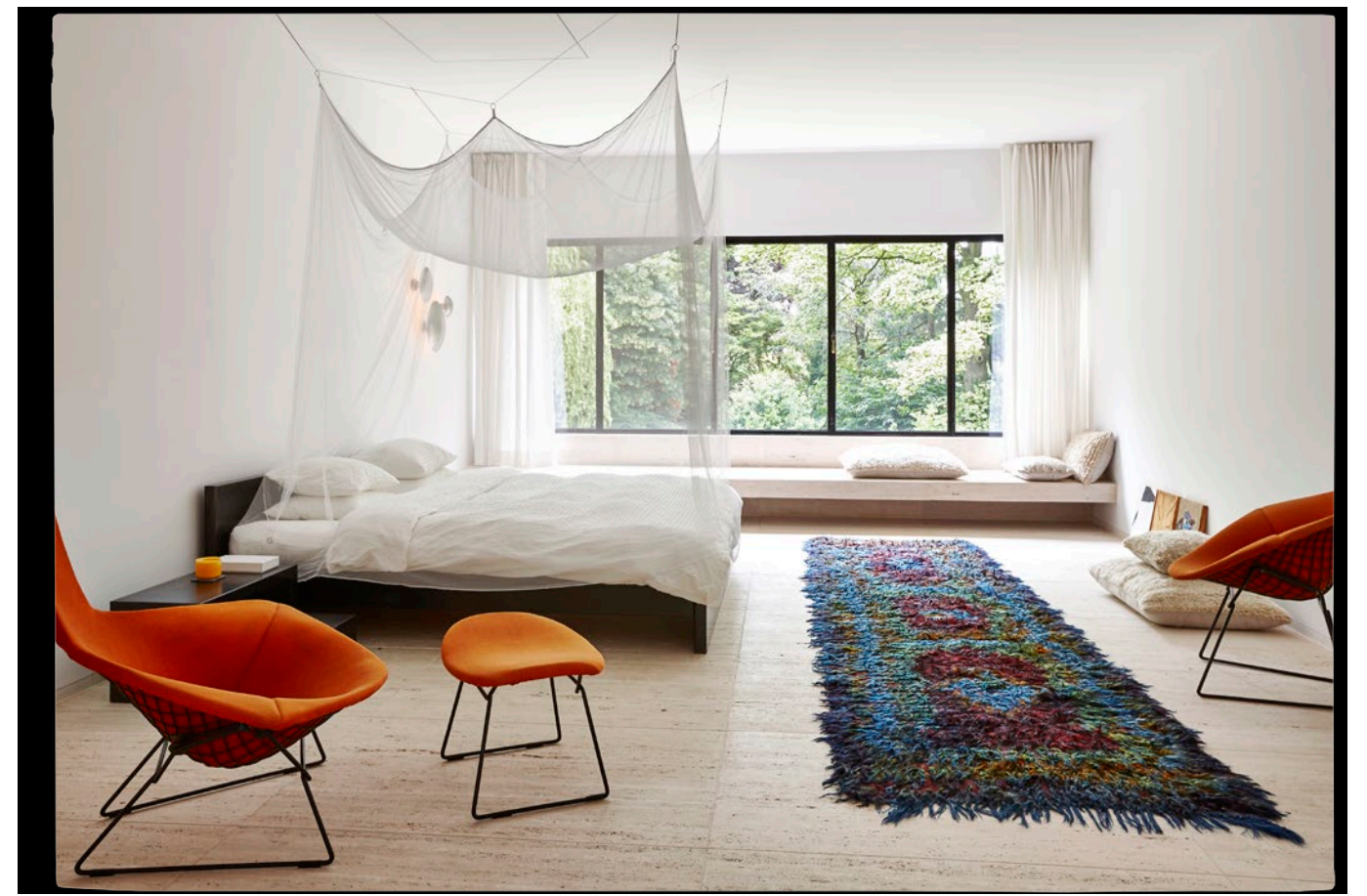
**Dining area** This open-plan area leads through into the kitchen. On the wall there's a photo of Le Corbusier's Unite d'Habitation residential building in Berlin by Marianne Karssing ►





**Kitchen** The floors and island in this dramatic space are made from dark terrazzo, with fluted lacquered wood cupboards filling one whole wall. The taps are by Vola  
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**Dressing room** A bespoke vanity unit with revolving mirrors takes centre stage. The wardrobe doors are clad in fabric from Kvadrat

**Bedroom** Two 'Bird' armchairs and a footstool by Harry Bertoia for Knoll are placed near the Japanese-designed bed, with its diaphanous canopy. A colourful rug by Zozan Rugs adds warmth to the travertine floors **Stockist details on p215** **ED**