

A revival  
L'Atelier Pomone by Le Bon Marché Rive Gauche

This is an occasion for anyone who loves beautiful things made well. Le Bon Marché Rive Gauche is giving a new lease of life to its art studio, L'Atelier Pomone. Founded in 1923 and managed over the years by iconic figures in French decorative arts, L'Atelier Pomone aimed to give customers “everything that constitutes or embellishes the framework of modern life” as well as bespoke services for special projects. It was an initiative in keeping with the times more than ever that deserves to be brought back into the spotlight.

“Reopen the workshop, somewhat as if the keys had been found, but with a modern feel by calling on young designers” was the wish and ambition of the teams from Le Bon Marché Rive Gauche Home and Gilbert Kann, specialists in furniture of 20th and 21st century decorative arts, which has been working closely with the department store for almost twelve years. They worked together to orchestrate this great revival and asked Julie Richoz to co-design the first collection guided by a question:

"What is a table in 2024?".

The French-Swiss designer set out to find answers to this question by talking to figures from the artistic professions, furniture makers, etc. Incredible contemporary forms resulted from this conversation, all imbued with this exceptional expertise yet affordable, signed by L'Atelier Pomone – Le Bon Marché Rive Gauche, Julie Richoz and manufacturers. They will be presented in a dedicated space on the first floor of the store within the Le Bon Marché Home department from September 2024.

Box: Julie Richoz, what is beautiful and useful

Julie Richoz is talented, elegant, takes time to reflect, attentive to form and function, and immediately grasped the challenges of reviving L'Atelier Pomone. She is a Franco-Swiss designer who graduated from the prestigious ECAL, the Art and Design university in Lausanne, and was able to capture the DNA of the set-up, which wanted to make beautiful objects available to people from the outset of its creation in 1923. Resolutely modern, she captured the essence of tableware in 2024 to craft it into a collection that is practical, surprising and timeless. Without nostalgia, she applied the expertise of French manufacturers and companies to create objects we will want to treasure for a long time. The designer who started out working with Pierre Charpin and collaborated with prestigious brands such as Vitra, Louis Vuitton, Alessi, Tectona... has imbued her energy and contemporary spirit into this revival without betraying the workshop's historical values: to make everyday life more beautiful while being within reach.

Once upon a time there was L'Atelier Pomone...  
A pioneering workshop that deserved to be re-awakened!

There are significant years: 1923 is one of them. Le Bon Marché, part of which was destroyed by a severe fire in 1915, was given a complete new lease of life after the war in a brand new building that was more in line with the times and the Art Deco style. L'Atelier Pomone, the Le Bon Marché art studio, came into being on the second floor of 38 rue de Sèvres in Paris, the building of the current Grande Epicerie de Paris.

Paul Follot, what is beautiful and within reach

Although the department store had long offered its customers made-to-measure curtains and furniture or “style” furniture (taking inspiration from the Louis XVI, Directoire, Empire styles

and so on from bygone times), it wanted to bring beauty into interiors, that was within reach and above all “modern”. Originally managed by Paul Follot, decorator and master of Art Deco, L'Atelier Pomone focused on proposing furniture and lighting that brought harmony into the home so that it provided protection from outside noise. Simple lines, wood... were responses to this need. As objects being well-made was important to him, he entrusted production of part of the collections to the most renowned manufacturers such as Saint-Louis, but also art artisans who were the most daring in their creative field (certain ceramics were made in the Longwy workshops, for example). This approach, combining practical, pleasant, and well-made aspects in items, was exhibited at the International Exposition of Decorative Arts in Paris in 1925 as a feature of the Pomone du Bon Marché pavilion built by the architect Louis-Hippolyte Boileau, the interior of which was designed by Paul Follot of course. This exhibition marked a pivotal point, a break with the Art Nouveau movement and the birth, alongside exceptional designers, of a movement aimed at democratising truly modernist furniture produced in small series and sold with more reasonable prices by department stores.

#### René Prou, doing and showing

René Prou took over from Paul Follot in 1928. He continued the latter's work and focused even more on meeting the needs of modern living. This great interior designer had decorated cruise ships, fitted out the Orient Express or the Mitsukoshi stores in Tokyo, and was an ambassador of Modern Art who was not afraid of mechanisation and new materials that he sought to use in new ways. He applied this innovative spirit to developing a complete range of products for the home for L'Atelier Pomone: furniture textiles, rugs, dinner services and more. He also continued collaborating with the Longwy workshops for ceramics. Some of these pieces and fittings were presented at the Salon des Artistes Décorateurs in 1928, such as a Small Ladies' Lounge in a Luxury Hotel where synthetic lacquer was combined with granite in a way that had not been seen before, and a mobile hunting pavilion, remarkable for its woodwork, and how light and comfortable it was. In 1929, the Galliera Museum exhibited a chandelier and two silver candlesticks as part of the “Modern Religious Art and Furniture” exhibition. L'Atelier Pomone also garnered attention at the 1930 Salon d'Automne with an exceptional chest of drawers in blue Chinese lacquer with a silver metal base, placed in a mirrored niche, illustrating pioneering artisanry and creative spirit. The incredible production of the Atelier directed by René Prou was regularly showcased at various events and in the press until 1932. That was the year that René Prou, who wanted to devote himself to his personal studio, handed over to Albert Guénot, who was very familiar with Pomone: he joined the Atelier when it was established under the direction of Paul Follot.

#### Albert Guénot, function and revolution

"The time of false prosperity was over. I had to abandon creating luxury and move towards more rational design and manufacturing resorting to the use of machines more. Which I did not find unpleasant, by the way". This was what Albert Guénot said in 1950 about his work at L'Atelier Pomone. An observation expressed through his style with a dominance of understated solid oak, enriched with some artistic effects. It was a style consistent with the objectives of a new generation of decorators who favoured simple, inexpensive furniture that still looked pleasant and was appealing. The modern rationalism Albert Guénot brought to L'Atelier Pomone was fully expressed in the design of a studio covered in flexwood, cushions in shades ranging from straw yellow to orangy red, contrasting with a dark divan, light blonde ceruse-finished walnut furniture with darkened steel legs, red leather upholstered chairs... which could be admired in the pages of *La Mode Illustree* magazine in 1933. After the war, mindsets and needs changed rapidly. It was necessary to meet the constraints of reconstruction, the housing crisis and new ways of “living” with certain rooms being opened up: the communal room now

included the living room and dining room, and sometimes even the kitchen. Until Albert Guénot left in 1955, he approached this turning point perfectly by offering all the equipment these new, more open spaces required, but also designed doctor's offices and waiting rooms with timeless modernism. After him, the history of L'Atelier Pomone petered out. It gradually took its last breaths, quietly, as a result of industrialisation, standardisation, new economic challenges, changes in consumption, and so on. However many examples of what it achieved remain, sets of furniture exclusively designed in France dedicated to all aspects of the home and its participation in special projects. As such the soul of the workshop has never really been extinguished, its name, taken from the nymph, goddess of fruit, has never really been forgotten. All it needed was a spark, an eruption of interest in artisanry, for L'Atelier Pomone to open its eyes again...

### What is a table in 2024? L'Atelier Pomone answers with 12 collaborations

Artisan ceramics, fine porcelain, bold patterns, off-beat classics, a new take on tradition... For Julie Richoz, 2024 marks "the celebration of an incongruous table, a joyful collection of pieces made by both small pottery artisans and major jacquard manufacturers, by historic designer houses and young talents." Unveiled for the occasion of Paris Design Week, which opens on 5 September 2024, these collaborations are of course set to last, so enjoy cooking, getting together and relishing objects that are well made.

#### A tea and coffee set with the Bernardaud factory

Drinking tea, enjoying coffee is always a moment to delight in. For these services, Julie Richoz therefore designed a decor that emphasises the pleasure associated with times spent taking a break. Her folded and unfolded trompe l'œil scarves in different colours applied to the white porcelain add a quirky, joyful note while retaining an elegant look. Bernardaud, the porcelain reference in Limoges since 1863, was entrusted with making this set. The exemplary house has always succeeded in combining tradition with innovation to enhance tableware.

#### Plates with the Faïencerie de Gien

A little thing can change everything. A little thing that nevertheless required much time spent drawing, in-depth reflection, and trying different things with the colour. Because it's a fact, it's the detail, a flower in this case, that makes all the difference. And this flower, which seems bound in the hollow of a plate, in a light blue like the sky faded by rain, with a line running under it, which could be its shadow and seems to make it take to the air, gives these plates a delectable precious aspect. Depending on the model, the pattern varies slightly, giving tempo to the service. Placed on white plates, it is like a gift. A surprise. And it is thanks to the Faïencerie de Gien that this flower has bloomed. Founded two hundred years ago, this legendary factory in the Loire Valley has the French Living Heritage Company label. The proof of its force, energy, but also its ability to preserve techniques and knowledge. Gien is also a company bound to memories and good times with family and friends. The Millefleurs service sprinkled with pansies, roses, camellias...; the Pont-aux-Choux, with relief in the style of grains of rice, are mythical in the French art of living. But that didn't stop Gien from continuing to create new designs. As such Jean-Charles de Castelbajac recently developed a Sentimental Archipelago for the factory, applying his poems and drawings and the primary colours that he uses with so much talent to many pieces. He was able to create a world that was both coherent with the home

and completely unexpected. It was this openness, this ability to take a step in another direction, to adjust its expertise to make it contemporary, apply it to new forms, that Julie Richoz sought at Gien.

#### Knives with Perceval

The cutting edge of French artisan cutlery! Perceval, a French Living Heritage Company based in Thiers, the capital of French cutlery, has been sharpening its expertise since... 1996. It is no king among its customers. But the company's passion and expertise have generated its renown in just a few years. It started when Emmanuel Chavassieux, a Thiers-based artisan knife maker who makes unique knives, met Eric Perceval, an entrepreneur who appreciates beautiful things. They decided to revolutionise the world of knives with great success. The workshop was taken over in 2022 by Félix Poché, who is committed to ensuring this rare craft lasts all while giving it a new lease of life. Foldable knives, kitchen knives, table knives... Perceval fashions all styles. And its star 9.47 knife has even been laid on the most beautiful tablecloths. It was designed at the request of Yves Charles, a Parisian Michelin-starred chef who wanted a special knife for his establishment, and is named after a sulphur-free wine produced by Stéphane Majeune that is titrated at 9.47°. Its perfect line, the blade that is one with the handle, quickly made the 9.47 a cult object that did not escape Julie Richoz's sharp eye. It is therefore being laid on L'Atelier Pomone's 2024 table, in green and white pearl versions. In the same vein, Julie has also redesigned a sommelier knife made by L'Atelier Perceval in a brand-new material.

#### Table linen with Le Jacquard Français

The bandana is back! But not around the neck. On the table. Taking inspiration from the square that was so popular in the 1980s and marked the history of fashion, which stars on the rock, rap and sports scenes made theirs and which has never really disappeared, Julie Richoz came up with a brand-new pattern for napkins. It is a pattern that is an excellent match for the more organic pattern of the tablecloth and tea towel. Playing with contrasts of beige, blue, green, yellow... The unique associations Julie Richoz chooses never cease to amaze. She entrusted the production of this linen to a flagship of the French textile industry, Le Jacquard Français. Established in 1861 in Gerardmer, eastern France, the company was originally a retailer of fabrics woven by farmers working from home. In 1902 a mechanical weaving workshop was built to support the company's growth, which was joined by a bleaching workshop in 1928. Unfortunately, the war meant it would grind to a halt... Nevertheless, the weaving activity got back up and running fast and white linens made of cotton, linen and a cotton-linen blend was produced in rebuilt workshops again. The name Jacquard Français only appeared in 1974 when the Elis group acquired the flourishing company. And the astonishing saga continued. In 1978, the famous stylist Primrose Bordier created a revolution for the brand image, and even for the world of household linen more broadly. While white dominated, she introduced colour and patterns. To bring her slightly off-the-cuff ideas to life, the Jacquard Français started looking for shades. It was the start of a large-scale innovation phase that has never stopped...

#### Egg cups with Florence Girod

Their silhouette is reminiscent of a small bowl and their shades pick up on all the earthy tones, immediately catching the eye. There's no doubt that egg cups that we set on the table in 2024 are not mundane objects. They are small works of art created by Florence Girod. This ceramicist based in the Cévennes region is an expert in mixed clay or marbled clay. She started using this complex technique in the 1980s and made it her trademark, which is now one of the signatures of L'Atelier Pomone.

#### Wine glasses with Sydonios

Who hasn't spilled their glass of wine during a heated discussion around the table? So this kind of accident doesn't happen, Julie Richoz has designed a wine glass that enables wine to be enjoyed as it should be, but with a lower foot so agitated hands don't knock it over... A wonderful idea that attracted Sydonios, which produces hand-blown glasses with incredible finesse and wonderful lightness. Its objective? Offer the highest level of oenological precision. To achieve this level of perfection, Sydonios consulted numerous wine experts to analyse all the variables in a glass that could have an impact on tasting. It then designed 7 models that were tested by 100 professional tasters. Only two were retained, named Esthète and Universel for their optimum qualities. The first is ideal for capturing the subtleties of powerful wines, while the second one is intended for a wider array. Sydonios' level of demand and attention to every detail is therefore exceptional, and this aspiration for perfection is reflected in these glasses from L'Atelier Pomone.

### Serving dishes with Ravel

One of Julie Richoz's signatures? Looking for the mark of artisanry in all objects. This "touch" can be particularly found in these serving dishes, with the Poterie Ravel entrusted to make them. Whether flat or slightly hollow, they are all enamelled in a beautiful range of colours that do not hide marks in the ceramic. These pieces reveal their artisanry, but also how much the artisans, potters, moulders and kiln-firers enjoyed making them. Because it's one of Ravel's characteristics: in the workshops, which resemble a small village, everyone has a smile on their face! Located in Aubagne, this French Living Heritage Company is committed to keeping alive, transmitting and exhibiting expertise that it has been perfecting for 180 years. Here, terracotta is the star, available in pots of all sizes, from the smallest to the most majestic, for gardens and balconies, products that have given the house its renown. But it is also crafted into jugs, plates, and crockery... real little gems in shades that often allude to nature and the light in Provence. The serving dishes reflect the sensuality of the shapes Ravel adores, combined with small twists such as lips that edge a salad bowl, which are both decorative and functional, or this amazing palette developed for L'Atelier Pomone.

### A carafe and water glasses with Verrerie de Biot

Julie Richoz also sought specific expertise again in Provence, this time with regards glass. Verrerie de Biot has in fact chosen to make a "flaw" a quality since 1956. The air bubble, which glass makers usually keep an eye out for and consider an impurity, is elevated here, giving the glass a unique, immediately recognisable identity. A Biot glass can therefore be recognised instantly from its bubbles imprisoned in the glass, which give each piece delicate lightness. This French Living Heritage company has developed incredibly unique know-how. It takes ten years for each glassware artisan to master their art and use fire, their breath, colours, volumes, and so on to fashion their pieces. For L'Atelier Pomone, Verrerie de Biot has combined its bubbles with light "petals" that come to rest on the carafe and glasses. Poetic details that enhance the simple yet unexpected line of these pieces designed to bring finesse to everyday life.

### Cutlery with Claude Dozorme

Using cutlery to style is never easy. How can these accessories be made to look different while respecting the length inherent to their function. Julie Richoz chose to work on their handle. While retaining a comfortable shape – easy to pick up, comfortable to hold – she dotted elegant, joyful gold glints on the silver handles. To develop this set of forks, knives, soup and dessert spoons, she worked with Claude Dozorme, a master knifemaker in Thiers since 1902, who takes his motto from Henry Miller: "Tradition can only really be expressed through a spirit of courage and challenge." A formula that also corresponds well to the approach L'Atelier Pomone takes.

### A cutting board with Brut

It's a staple of the 2024 table. A cutting board is a must-have, as it can be used as a cheese tray, presentation dish, and more. And giving a modern edge to this accessory, which must be wooden of course, is no mean feat. And yet, by recrafting its shape in a completely unique way, Julie Richoz has made it immediately look impressive, ready to take pride of place on the table with lots of character. The family-owned company Brut, which specialises in this wooden object, manufactures this naturally beautiful, unique geometric board guaranteed to be without glue, metal, or chemical treatment.

### Candlestick with 13 Desserts

This is the object that 'finishes' off a beautiful table, provides light and outlines the attention given to detail. If a candlestick is essential, and provides a unique ambience, it should not outshine the linen and tableware... That's why Julie Richoz crafted it in a simple fashion based on a cone with a discreet yet elegant, slender silhouette, in three sizes to play with putting together different arrangements. To develop these objects, she collaborated with 13 Desserts, a company that produces furniture and objects based in Hyères that, like her, likes to combine industrial processes with artisan expertise to offer abundant and original collections of accessories, lights and furniture.

What is the connection between these beautiful, fun, practical and pragmatic objects that invite us to share and spend time together? For Julie Richoz, "integrity in the expression of their own craft". Collaborations that will be added to over time and new themes, because it is not only L'Atelier Pomone coming back into being, but a great revival, an integration, a real desire to establish the creative, bold spirit attentive to French expertise in a manner set to last.