

LIFESTYLE

# We Ditched Our Corporate Lives to Flip Historic Apartments in Paris

Here's how we discovered our dream—and made it a reality.

BY KELLY ALLEN | PUBLISHED: OCT 24, 2024

SAVE ARTICLE



COURTESY OF KASHA PARIS

Alon and Betsy Kasha never thought they'd leave New York. "Alon was in banking at the time, and I was in public relations at Cartier," Betsy says. "We were classic, young New Yorkers, thinking there was no other place that we would ever live in the world except New York."

When Alon was offered a job in London, they conceded there might be one other place they could live, and made the move in 2001. By then, the Eurostar had well-established daily service from London to Paris, and they would take weekend trips to the French capital, staying in a friend's vacant apartment. "She had said, 'I have this apartment. It's empty most of the time. If you ever want to go over for a weekend, be my guest,'" Betsy remembers.

They fell for the City of Love; New York and London had been mere infatuations. "I said to Alon, wait a minute. Why aren't we doing this more often? This is great," says Betsy. "We should come here more often, which means I think we need our own apartment."

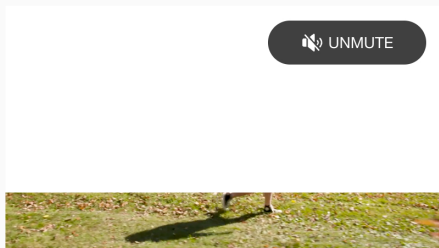


COURTESY OF KASHA PARIS

Alon and Betsy Kasha

MORE FROM HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

Tour This Off-the-Grid Cabin in Bovina Center



Alon was immediately onboard, though their visions for a Parisian *pied-à-terre* weren't exactly the same. He pictured a studio near the train station, something that wouldn't cost too much. "And she said, 'No, we need to be in the Left Bank. We need a nice two-bedroom apartment,'" he remembers. "And I said, 'Yeah, that's never going to happen.'"

The first thing they learned during

their search was that Parisians

their search was that Parisian apartments were “very tired,” Betsy says. It was not uncommon to find kitchens in bad shape and there were many sad toilet rooms “It’s just not in their culture to do a lot of work,” she explains. “They don’t have the tax advantages to do work. You can’t deduct it.”

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below



### IT'S TIME TO BELIEVE IN MAGIC AGAIN

Prepare for a mind-blowing race through time, spectacular spells, and an epic battle, all brought to life with the most astonishing theatri...

Sponsored By [HARRY POTTER ON BROADWAY](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)



COURTESY OF KASHA PARIS

To get a decent place, the Kashas knew they’d have to renovate. “It’s something that we weren’t afraid of because we had done that for ourselves in New York,” Betsy says. “We also had a couple of houses in Bellport, New York, on Long Island. So it was just something we always liked to do. And we did it for ourselves.”

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below





They weren't house flippers exactly—remember those corporate jobs?—but they'd established a pattern: They'd buy a place, renovate it, and furnish it. Then friends would inquire about taking it off their hands if they ever sold—with all of the furniture included. They'd live in it for a little while, before taking their friend up on the offer. "Then we'd just do another place," Alon says.



COURTESY OF KASHA PARIS

The living area of an apartment on Rue de Pré aux Clercs before the transformation.



COURTESY OF KASHA PARIS

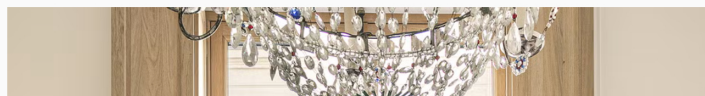
The same living area after the transformation.

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

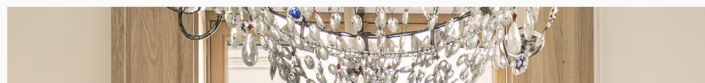
Eventually, they found an apartment to buy and transform in Paris. At that time, it was the height of the market and people advised them against it, but they didn't care. "When you're ready, you have to just do it," Betsy says. Alon adds, "There's no right time to buy."

They created a Parisian apartment they loved, only to have history repeat itself. Friends became enamored with their work and wanted to find something just like it to call their own. Then came an epiphany: Their hearts were in Paris. The walkable city, with its café culture and leisurely lunches, was more compatible with the way they lived than London. "We'd get off the train [in Paris,] and I would breathe," Betsy says. "It would be the same kind of feeling I had when I lived in New York. Just like, okay, I'm home."

Betsy's 40th birthday was fast approaching, and when Alon asked her what she wanted to mark the milestone, the answer was to move to Paris. The only question was what to do: Alon didn't think being a banker in Paris was ideal, and Betsy wasn't working at the time after having two children. They needed to find a new path. After writing "everything down that we could possibly do under the sun" on a transatlantic work flight, Alon called Betsy with a clear idea: "I said, 'You know what, Betsy? We did that apartment that everybody wants to buy. Let's just do that. Let's buy apartments, renovate them, and sell them.'"



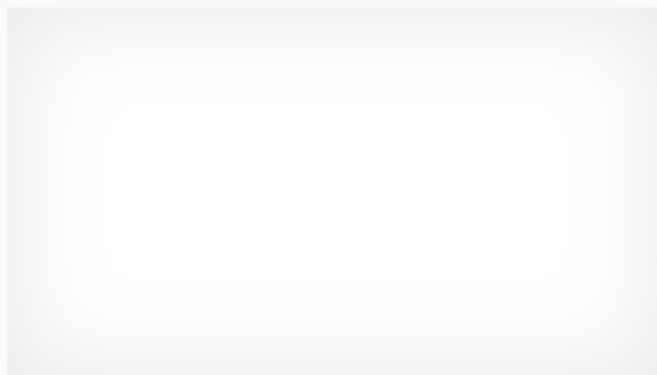
idea: "I said, 'You know what, Betsy? We did that apartment that everybody wants to buy. Let's just do that. Let's buy apartments, renovate them, and sell them.'"





COURTESY OF KASHA PARIS

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below



Betsy instantly knew it made perfect sense. “In a way, it’s better not to overthink things when you make a big decision,” Betsy says.

“

*In a way, it's better not to overthink things when you make a big decision.*

They’re now celebrating the 20th anniversary of their interiors, architecture, and real estate firm **Kasha Paris**. They specialize in designing apartments in the Saint-Germain-des-Prés quarter of the city, which Alon notes is likely the most expensive neighborhood in Paris today. “In a nutshell, we create



beautiful second homes, pied-a-terres in Paris, for incredible clients from all over the world who not only appreciate what we do but love the service that we give,” Alon says.



COURTESY OF KASHA PARIS

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below



**What Most Travelers to Central America Forget To Pack**

From medical emergencies to travel disruptions, Global Rescue is a lifeline when plans take a wrong turn.

In a country like France that isn’t as service-driven as the U.S., what the Kashas offer is unusual, says Alon. They’re entrepreneurs who come from the luxury corporate world and have the ability to blend American and French sensibilities. (Alon is actually half French and lived in the country for a part of grade school.) “We know how to make suite bathrooms with great, big showers, which are American showers, while keeping that old French charm,” Alon says.

But their real secret is that they design every apartment for themselves. “We always think, what would we want if we were moving into this apartment? How would we do it? And we do not skimp on anything, and we don’t think about cost. They’re our babies,” says Betsy.

After finishing an apartment, they mark it up to a price they feel is fair. Since

the apartments practically sell themselves, they know there will always be a buyer. Case in point: They were still selling apartments during the pandemic—sight unseen. “If we feel somebody is trying to put a size seven foot into a size six shoe, we really discourage them from buying it because we’re going to have a long-term relationship with these clients,” Alon says. “Or if they don’t appreciate it, we really dissuade them. Of course, the more we say don’t buy it, the more they want to buy it. But we really do discourage people.”



COURTESY OF KASHA PARIS

The kitchen in a Paris apartment before the renovation.



COURTESY OF KASHA PARIS

The kitchen—outfitted with new appliances, paint, and moldings—after the renovation.

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

Typically, the couple and their team work on about 10 apartments per year, a mix of developments and private client projects. With each, they respect the original spirit of the apartment while maximizing the layout and installing updated appliances and technology for modern living. What other developers in the area get wrong, they say, is over modernization. Potential buyers want air conditioning and big bathrooms, but the apartment still needs to look and feel like a historic Paris residence with classical interiors.

The French expression *parquet moulure cheminée* roughly translates to *floors, moldings, and fireplaces*, and sums up the essential elements of a Paris apartment. From an exquisite marble fireplace to intricate plaster moldings, Kasha Paris restores or recreates those timeless features as if they were in every apartment all along.





COURTESY OF KASHA PARIS

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

When it comes to interior design, they mix modern and old—like contemporary art with antique furniture—and always exercise restraint to avoid overdoing it. A friend once told Betsy she’s the “queen of quiet bling,” and that title rings true. “Betsy and I always say our own interior design looks like it hasn’t been designed,” Alon says.

“

*We always think, what would we want if we were moving into this apartment?*

The couple often becomes friends with their clients, most of whom are from the U.S.—they’ll even introduce clients to each other. So not only are clients getting a new part-time residence to call home, but they inherit a community along with it. “A lot of clients call it the Kasha Club,” Betsy says.

The couple has even invited clients out to their house in Normandy, where they go for relaxing weekends in the French countryside. And there, the cycle has continued. “We’ve done about four or five houses for clients who have second homes in Paris who have a country house for their pied-à-terre,” Alon says.

While the Kashas’s career pivot has meant a lot of hard work, it’s also rewarding. Every day, the couple gets to wake up and do what they love in the very same neighborhood they call home. “Sometimes, I feel like one of these clichés where I’m walking the dogs with a baguette under my arm and a bottle of wine on the way back from an apartment we’re working on,” Alon admits.

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

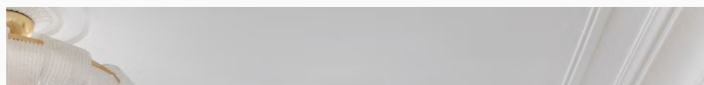
**Don't miss the  
IKEA sleep event!**

1/22-2/18

**15% off all mattresses, pillows and bedding for IKEA Family members!**

[Shop now](#)

Cliché or not, they have no regrets. “We really love what we do,” Betsy says. “I feel so, so lucky.”







COURTESY OF KASHA PARIS

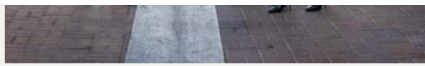
Follow *House Beautiful* on [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#).

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below



# LIFESTYLE





This Is the Grand Prize for "The Flip Off" Winner



Should You Go "Bare" With Home Insurance?



Christina Haack Says This ONE Room "Sells Homes"



What You Should Know About Fireproof Landscaping



Meet Christina Haack's "The Flip Off" Dream Team



Where Was 'You're Cordially Invited' Filmed?



Jenny Marrs Reveals Her Biggest Kitchen Reno Rule



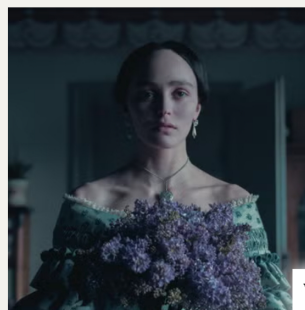
"The Flip Off" Stars Share Their Top Flipping Tips



40 Clever Pantry Organizing Ideas to Save Space



Inside Christina and Tarek's Co-Parenting Style



2025 Oscar Nominees for Production Design, Ranked



WATCH: Tour This Off-the-Grid Cabin in Bovina Center



Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

2025 State of Enterprise

H&R BLOCK 75 YEARS

UNMUTE

Second Look™ is included at no additional cost with the purchase of tax preparation. Taxable only. All tax situations are different. Please apply if you have an H&R Block tax situation.