

VOGUE

CONCIERGE

Furnishings at La Forêt Noire, designed by Claude Cartier, include 'Bodystuhl' chairs by Nigel Coates for Gebrüder Thonet Vienna; 'Suspension 01' ceiling fixture from Magic Circus Editions; and 'Midsummer Night' wallpaper by Lorenzo De Grandis for Wall & Decò.

Piece of cake

THE INSPIRATION FOR FRENCH DESIGNER CLAUDE CARTIER'S FIRST-EVER RESTAURANT PROJECT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN SWEETER.

By IAN PHILLIPS

CONCIERGE



LEFT: in the restaurant entry, Gubi 'TS Console' by Gamfratesi and 'Lustre 05' chandelier from Magic Circus Editions. BELOW: designer Claude Cartier and her associate, Fabien Louvier. 'Gala' chairs from Sièges Perrouin; 'Palm' carpet by Dimore Studio for Bracquenié.

FRENCH DESIGNER Claude Cartier's favourite dessert as a child was black forest cake. It's also her 87-year-old father's pudding of choice. So it seems fitting that her first-ever restaurant project bears the French name for the chocolate, whipped cream and black cherry confection — La Forêt Noire. The location for such a sleekly designed eatery seems a little improbable — an industrial park on the outskirts of the village of Chaponost to the west of France's second largest city, Lyon. But it is there that the owners Isabelle and Charles Darnault already had their catering firm, C Gastronomie.

The brief they provided was clear. "It had to be a chic brasserie that was neither too trendy nor boringly traditional," Cartier recalls. The Darnaults were also intent on working with a designer who had never done a restaurant before. "That way, we could give it a distinct identity," notes Isabelle.

To date, the majority of Cartier's work has been purely residential. She has completed numerous houses and apartments mostly in and around Lyon as well as the odd office project. An image of the headquarters she created for the branding firm Wark Design was recently chosen by the Italian furniture manufacturer Moroso for its international advertising campaign. The use of black is one of her signature touches, as is a love of contemporary design (she also runs two showrooms in Lyon that represents brands including Classicon, Flexform and Christophe Delcourt).

The starting point for La Forêt Noire, on which she collaborated with her associate Fabien Louvier, was however a little more traditional — an atmospheric black wallpaper called 'Midsummer Night', which reminds Cartier of 18th-century *grisailles*. "It adds a historic touch; I like it a lot," she says. It also references the nearby forests, as do several other allusions to vegetation such as Dimore Studio's 'Palm' carpet and a bark-like motif on the back of the custom pivoting mirrors.

One of Cartier's main aims for the 350-square-

"It had to be a chic brasserie that was neither too trendy nor boringly traditional"

— CLAUDE CARTIER



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: 'Gala' chair from Sièges Perrouin; Gubi table. Custom banquette upholstered in Avalon' Trevira CS velour from Sabco Hesselein; 'Mewoma' tables by Jonah Takagi for La Chance. Custom pivoting mirrors backed with 'Coupole' wallpaper from Pierre Frey.

metre, 120-seat space was to create a number of very distinct zones. "When I'm in a restaurant, I don't like being in a big open space. It makes me feel ill-at-ease," she says. Dominated by a green serpentine sofa, a brass bar and a black-and-white checkerboard floor, the main section has more than a touch of New York to it. Another area to the right is reminiscent of turn-of-the-century Vienna with its caned Thonet chairs and globe-shaped ceiling fixtures.

Throughout, Cartier played on a contrast between sophisticated elements and more industrial notes. One constant however is the incorporation of contemporary design. Items include Erwan and Ronan Bouroullec's Palanco mirror and Thonet's quirky sculptural 'Waltz' clothes rack in the bathroom.

Once you've admired the design, you can get down to the serious business of enjoying the food. It goes without saying that black forest cake is a menu staple. "We tried to keep it as close as possible to the traditional recipe", says Isabelle Darnault. For Cartier, it's mission accomplished: "It tastes exactly like in my childhood memories." VL

Visit claud-cartier.com.