

BAIRRO AZUL APARTMENT  
LISBON, PORTUGAL  
2010

Bespoke renovation and furnishings  
of a small apartment in Lisbon's 1940 district

As a neighbourhood, Bairro Azul is a reference of Lisbon, corresponding to a particularly active period of urbanism determined by the economic growth of the regime (*Estado Novo*) and the emergence of an affluent class of civil servants. Master planned by leading modernist architect Cristino da Silva, this extensive urbanization, which began in the 1930s, was to crown the extension of Avenida da Liberdade.

Full-fledged on the Art Deco period, it was influenced by the British modernist ethos of the likes of Wells Coates, Sir Frederick Gibberd and Berthold Lubetkin, to name a few. Locally, it involved some of the finest Portuguese architects in the design of each specific plot of the three large perimeter blocks that constitute the majority of Bairro Azul, notably, Cassiano Branco, Nicola Bigaglia, Ventura Terra and Norte Júnior. Many of these buildings have elegant and well-crafted Deco details in their hallways and public areas.

The interiors of this residential quarter are sound, and provide well built and proportioned apartments with a hierarchical structure clearly separating social and private areas alongside service areas and maid's quarters, in accordance with the lifestyle paradigms of the rising bourgeoisie.

The physical changes to the apartment layout were minimal, insofar as it barely had any changes to partitions. However, the logic of the apartment was inverted, *i.e.* living- and dining room vs. bedrooms, so that it became possible to isolate a 'daughters quarter' and make the best use of daylight. One of the key assumptions was the intention of preserving the character of the space with all its moldings, flooring, doors frames, etc. In terms of objects, there was the opportunity to carefully select a series of vintage furniture pieces from auctions and modern antique dealers that echoed the *Zeitgeist* of the Bairro, namely, Hans Wegner's ch 25 Easy Chair, Charles Eames plastic chairs, or Kai Kristiansen's rosewood and leather chairs. In addition, a series of tables in bronze and walnut with marble and cork tops were custom-designed.



Location: Bairro Azul, Lisbon, Portugal

Client: Private

Scope of services: Interior design

Project brief: Refurbishment of a 3-bedroom apartment

Gross built area: 150 sq. m

Project status: 2010 (design and completion)