102 Vincent Van Duysen

1962–

"I will always create balance and never overdo it."

That clean, pared-down look that has largely characterized contemporary design since the turn of this century? Vincent Van Duysen had a hand in it. **The unofficial front man of "warm minimalism" since the late 1990s,** the Belgian architect and designer helped to popularize the style with his stripped-down yet unusually inviting interiors that are known for their lack of flash—an attribute likely shaped by his early professional experience working for the founders of the Memphis movement, whose colorful, attention-seeking designs had short shelf lives.

Although "monastic" is a term frequently used to describe his work, "Zen-like" might be more appropriate given Van Duysen's commitment to transcendental meditation. In a Van Duysen-designed interior, colors are unequivocally muted, ranging from bone to buff, with the occasional black counterpoint. Wood, stone, and sometimes brick are as far as it goes for architectural adornment. Even the large upholstered sofas that almost always anchor the spaces he designs follow a similar pattern: clean-lined and just shy of being plain. If the entire package sounds reminiscent of Jean-Michel Frank's work, there is good reason, since Van Duysen cites the French designer as his hero.

In addition to his architectural and interior design proficiency, the Belgian hyphenate is also a talented furniture designer, for which he is better known outside of design-centric circles. Associated with such European luxury brands as Flos, B&B Italia, and Molteni&C, Van Duysen has in recent years reached an even broader audience through his home furnishings collections for Zara Home. Despite his low-key ways, he has a glitzy clientele, including perhaps his biggest fan, actress Julianne Moore.





Opposite Vincent Van Duysen is the most high-profile exponent of warm minimalism.

Above Frills and unnecessary flourishes are never to be found in a Van Duysen-designed interior. **Overleaf** The Belgian designer transformed the attic of his Antwerp residence, which long ago served as a notary's house, into a soothing retreat wrapped in aged oak.

