



A floating house

designed by the Bouroullec brothers has moored up on the island of Chatou – also known as “Impressionists’ Island” – a picturesque landscape in the river Seine that inspired Renoir’s 1881 painting *Déjeuner des Canotiers*.

Above: The boat’s interior is made from red cedar
Below: The aluminium frame is covered in a timber trellis for ivy

The 24m-long houseboat was built following a competition by the French national centre for printed art (CNEAI) to provide a home for its artists in residence. Conservation laws prohibited the construction of a building on the island, so a houseboat seemed like the next best thing.

“We thought there had been a casting error,” says Ronan Bouroullec, referring to when the

brothers and their team, comprising architect Denis Daversin and boat-builder Jean-Marie Finot, were chosen to build the house. But CNEAI was keen to work with product designers rather than architects, as it was seeking an affordable residence rather than a singular piece of architecture or a unique object.

“It is clear that this house was not conceived as a one-off object and that is what they wanted,” adds Bouroullec. “Throughout the engineering and design, we thought about how we would be able to repeat the process – to vary the size of the elements.”

The building is clad in aluminium overlaid with a timber trellis, which will be covered in ivy. The inside is simple, featuring warm red cedar and two large windows close to the water’s surface – a key design feature for Bouroullec. He says, “It is really something to be open to the river on your sofa and have this link with the water.”

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