

NEW HOMES+ CONDOS



Q & A
We chat to real estate developer
Yann Lapointe **E3**

ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT MONTREAL GAZETTE SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2021

SECTION E



DESIGNING FROM A DISTANCE

A sea of colours for this eclectic dining room, care of Roche Bobois. - PHOTO: KATIE CHARLOTTE DESIGN

How Montreal-based interior designer Katie Bridgman created a Californian dream home

URSULA LEONOWICZ
Special to Postmedia Network

There's a famous beauty YouTuber who bought a six-bedroom, \$7-million home in

2020, in Los Angeles, and had the house redesigned by an Ottawa-based interior design firm, which is surprising because not only are the cities quite far apart, geographically, but they also

have very different esthetics (and weather, obviously).

Turns out, these days, interior designers don't need to be tied to a specific city, or even country, to work their magic.

They can pretty much provide design services to any client independent of their location thanks to the marvels of modern technology and the rise of remote work, a lesson Katie Bridgman learned shortly after taking on a mega project for a client with a house in California.

"I went there in February last year with my client when they had just bought the house, and

the initial plan was to change the bathrooms, kitchen and floor; that was it. Then I came home and the pandemic started," says the Montreal-based interior designer and owner of Katie Charlotte Design.

"As we started renovating, the contractor alerted me that the wiring wasn't up to code so we started having a look at everything, including the fireplaces, AC and heating, and it turned into a major project. At first, I thought it was going to be very manageable, going there a few times, but once the project scope changed it became a bit more challenging."

Bridgman, who had previously worked with the same clients to transform their home in Vancouver, had some experience designing from a distance but nothing like the transformation of the multi-million-dollar home in Rancho Mirage.

The house, which had been built in the early '90s and owned by an eccentric couple that used to throw lavish parties, was covered in wallpaper and carpeting and had a very distinct colour palette: it was gold from top to bottom.

Knowing that the clients were

SEE DESIGNING ON **E2**



Colourful desert-inspired living and dining areas with lights by Déca Lighting. - ALL PHOTOS: KATIE CHARLOTTE DESIGN



Art Deco-style chairs with old Hollywood vibes.

Designing from a distance

CONTINUED FROM E1

particularly fond of blue and grey, Bridgman started there, with the kitchen range, specifically, but she also let herself be inspired by the sights and sounds of the California desert.

"The colourful chairs in the dining room aren't something they'd go for in their Vancouver

home but it's perfect in the desert, where they go on vacation," says Bridgman. "Having seen the house in the flesh now, finished, it's clear that it's how it should have looked from Day 1."

In addition to having worked together previously, Bridgman says that what made the virtual design project so smooth, despite the unexpected challenges, was having complete faith in the contractor she was working with.

"I couldn't have done it without the contractor, VIP Construction. We would literally speak multiple times a day, and he was my lifeline



The master bedroom, which used to be very gold, now has grey wall and floor tiling as well as a teak slatted privacy wall and shower floor.

throughout the 18 months," says Bridgman, who had to coordinate between Canadian, American and European furnishing and appliance suppliers for the project, making it a global operation.

"This project was dependent on FedEx, FaceTime and Google Drive; that's what made it roll, and having the privilege of going down there just the other week, to install everything, was pretty amazing."

Bridgman, who travelled to California twice, in February 2020 and then again in May 2021, stored everything she sourced for the project until she was able to go in person to give it the finishing touches, over the course of five days.

She found some of the furnishings in Montreal at Roche Bobois, and collaborated with Déca Lighting in Laval, Crescendo Wallcovering & Fabrics in Westmount and Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, among others, to stimulate the local economy as much as she could as well.

"The project was meant to be finished last November but California got hit really hard so everything was shut down for a while and we had to make changes along the way, because it kept evolving," says Bridgman.

"It was a big deal and I don't know how we did it, but we're working on the exterior now, which includes an outdoor kitchen, lounge, rock climbing wall, zip line and gym."

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT THE REMOTE DESIGN PROCESS

Whether or not you're located in the same city as your interior



The kitchen's focal point is a premium Lacanche range made in France.

designer, Bridgman has a couple of tips to help with the design process in general, but especially if it's remote:

- Look for a design team with a clear process and the technology, and willingness, to keep you

- updated on a daily basis
- Have a solid project plan but don't be too surprised if there are surprises along the way
- Use renderings to visualize everything that's changing or going into the space



This previously beige and gold bathroom was transformed into a modern black and white space with a California vibe.