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ON THE SEARCH FOR EL DORADO

The final report in a series on Chinese businesses in Mexico

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NEW VENUE FOR WATER SPLASHING

Portion of Songkran festival moved to basketball courts after last year's arrests

> PAGE A3



PREPARED TO GO TO GREAT LENGTHS

Siobhan Haughey on how she became one of HK's most decorated athletes

> POST MAGAZINE



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NEWLY ACCESSIBLE
GUREZ, IN KASHMIR, INDIA,
IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

THE MERMAIDS
OF MOZAMBIQUE'S
BAZARUTO ARCHIPELAGO

MAKING A SPLASH

Hong Kong swimming
ace Siobhán Haughey

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"I'm the biggest peacenik, I don't like fighting wars that I don't think can be won."
- General David Richards



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POST MAGAZINE
EDITOR CHRIS WOOD
CHIEF PRODUCTION EDITOR MEERA GANESAN
LONG-READS EDITOR DAVE BESELING

ART
ART DIRECTOR HUY TRUONG
PHOTO EDITOR ANTONY DICKSON
SENIOR DESIGNERS MARIO RIVERA AND KEVIN WONG

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
TRAVEL MARK FOOTER
DESIGN CHARMINE CHAN
FOOD CHARMINE MOK
FILM EDMUND LEE
ARTS ENID TSUI

General email: postmag@scmp.com
For advertising inquiries, contact Belinda Tse on 2565 2438 or belinda.tse@scmp.com
Address: 21/F, Tower One, Times Square, 1 Matheson Street, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong.

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DESIGN

LIVING ROOM

The antique burgundy armchair has been in the client's family for years and details have been forgotten. The AML stool came from Framac (framacph.com). The Fly SC5 coffee table was sourced from &Tradition (andtradition.com) and the Oyster bowl was by Ephelis from Studio Wool (woolstudio.co). The other ceramics came directly from Ephelis (ephelis.studio). The perforated walnut television cabinet was designed and made by Studio Ella (studioella.co).



INTERIORS

Snapshot of a city

An outdated 1,100 sq ft Mid-Levels apartment has been transformed into a microcosm of Hong Kong, with its balance of energy and serenity capturing the duality of the Fragrant Harbour.

BY **ADELE BRUNNER**
PHOTOGRAPHY **STEVEN KO**

Hong Kong's split personality – so urban and yet so close to nature – is one of the things that make the city special. These contrasts, and the balance between them, inspired the design concept for British designer Ella Bridgland's latest project: transforming a 1,100 sq ft apartment in Mid-Levels from outdated to outstanding. Her client, a young professional, wanted a tranquil home environment to offset his busy lifestyle and a welcoming space for entertaining friends. Although the property had been in his family for years, he had never lived there and wanted to make it his own.

Unchanged since the 1990s, the apartment featured overpowering brown marble bathrooms and a claustrophobic, old-fashioned kitchen. The layout was determined by structural walls, drainage locations and the requirement to retain the three original bedrooms for future resale value. Although Bridgland stripped the interior down to its bare bones, she worked with the restraints and replanned the division, function and arrangement of the spaces rather than change the entire floor plan.

“High-rise, residential-tower typologies are ubiquitous in Hong



DINING ROOM

The artwork, *Such* (2019), by Tomo Campbell, came from Cob Gallery (cobgallery.com) and the Tube pendant light was from Giffin Design (giffindesign.com). The Elliott dining table was by Jason Miller Studio (jasonmiller.us) and the Cesca dining chairs with cane seats were from Knoll (knoll.com). Studio Ella designed and made the velvet banquette.



ENTRANCE LEADING TO LIVING AREA

A geometric wooden room divider and shoe cabinet separates the small entrance from the living room. These two pieces, along with the rug, were designed and made by Studio Ella. The Plum planter was by Tom Dixon (tomdixon.net), the Develius sofa from &Tradition and Branch Bubble pendant light by Giffin Design.

CORRIDOR LEADING TO MAIN BEDROOM

As you walk down the corridor leading to the main bedroom, the eye is drawn to a sculpture by Hatch Area (hatcharea.com) and an AML stool from Frama.



Kong and the challenge is how to work with the often standardised modular framework to create a level of personality, striking the right balance between aesthetics and functionality,” says Bridgland, who worked for design mavens Tom Dixon, Sophie Ashby and Joyce Wang before setting up Studio Ella in Hong Kong in 2022.

Establishing a clear design language was crucial. While the flat bears all the hallmarks of a chic urban pad, with an energetic feel that communicates her client’s lifestyle, it is also comfortable and inviting. The use of mixed textures and tactility expresses an earthy, calming aesthetic, a connection to nature that makes the apartment feel like a retreat, despite having the city on its doorstep.

“A thoughtful use of materials plays a key role in all of our projects,” says Bridgland. “We used raw silk wallpaper on walls and wardrobes alongside slick nickel accents as one way of reflecting the contrast between the city and nature. Gouged timber drawer fronts to the bedside tables also add tactility and the feeling that the surface has weathered over time, which is complemented with more luxurious velvet soft furnishings and rugs.”

Bridgland also worked with her client’s feng shui master and incorporated various principles into her design. Among other things, the perforated screen near the entrance ensures positive energy is not blocked and the softened corners in the main bedroom avoid energy drain. “We also established a refined material palette for a feeling of continuity throughout, focusing on texture against a muted backdrop to achieve a timelessness and apparent simplicity,” she says.

Quality was the driving factor behind the design. To make the apartment look and feel more special, a sizeable chunk of the budget was directed towards the architectural finishes and luxurious fixtures, such as the phoenix marble in the main bathroom, whose patterned veins suggest the movement of wind.

“My client is very informed about aesthetics and it was important to him to have an international feel,” says Bridgland. “As the flat has high ceilings, I was able to celebrate that by installing oversized cornices – a subtle, elegant take on a European reference that elevates and frames the space, giving it a sense of grandeur.”

Also paramount was the need for decor that would stand the test of time,



MAIN BATHROOM

In the main en suite bathroom, Studio Ella designed and made the mirror and the phoenix marble sink unit, which has a lip around its edge to prevent toiletries rolling off. The Femme II Murex vase was from Ephelis.

MAIN BEDROOM

The velvet-covered bed, bedside table (which extends across to the window seat), daybed, rug and blinds were all designed and made by Studio Ella. The antique silver vase was from Hatch Area and the tall cylindrical Stance vases were designed by Colin King for Audo Copenhagen (audoceph.com). The Crown sconce was by Giffin Design.





KITCHEN

The kitchen was designed and installed by Studio Ella. The Etruscan Pitcher H33 was from Audo Copenhagen and the blinds were from Hunter Douglas (hdgallery.com.hk).

so Bridgland used a soft, neutral palette with soothing colour accents, notably a rich burgundy in the living room and understated blues and greens elsewhere. In response to the client's lifestyle and current requirements, she turned one of the smaller bedrooms into a study and repurposed the other as a dressing room that can also accommodate guests. In the latter, she built a day bed over a deep bay window ledge, with storage beneath it to maximise the usage of space and to optimise views.

"It was important that the apartment would remain relevant and evolve with my client as he reached different life stages rather than needing to be re-renovated," explains Bridgland, who took 10 months to complete the project.

"For example, the muted backdrop allows for bolder colour and patterns to be introduced through soft furnishings and artwork to refresh the space if and when desired; the study and dressing areas can be easily transformed back into bedrooms."

For now, her client, who moved in earlier this year, has a place to relax and unwind after long hours in the office and can also entertain his friends in style.

"This apartment is a microcosm of Hong Kong itself – a place where energy and serenity coexist, where the frenetic pace of business is balanced by the tranquillity of natural beauty," says Bridgland.

The result is a home that elegantly frames this duality. ■



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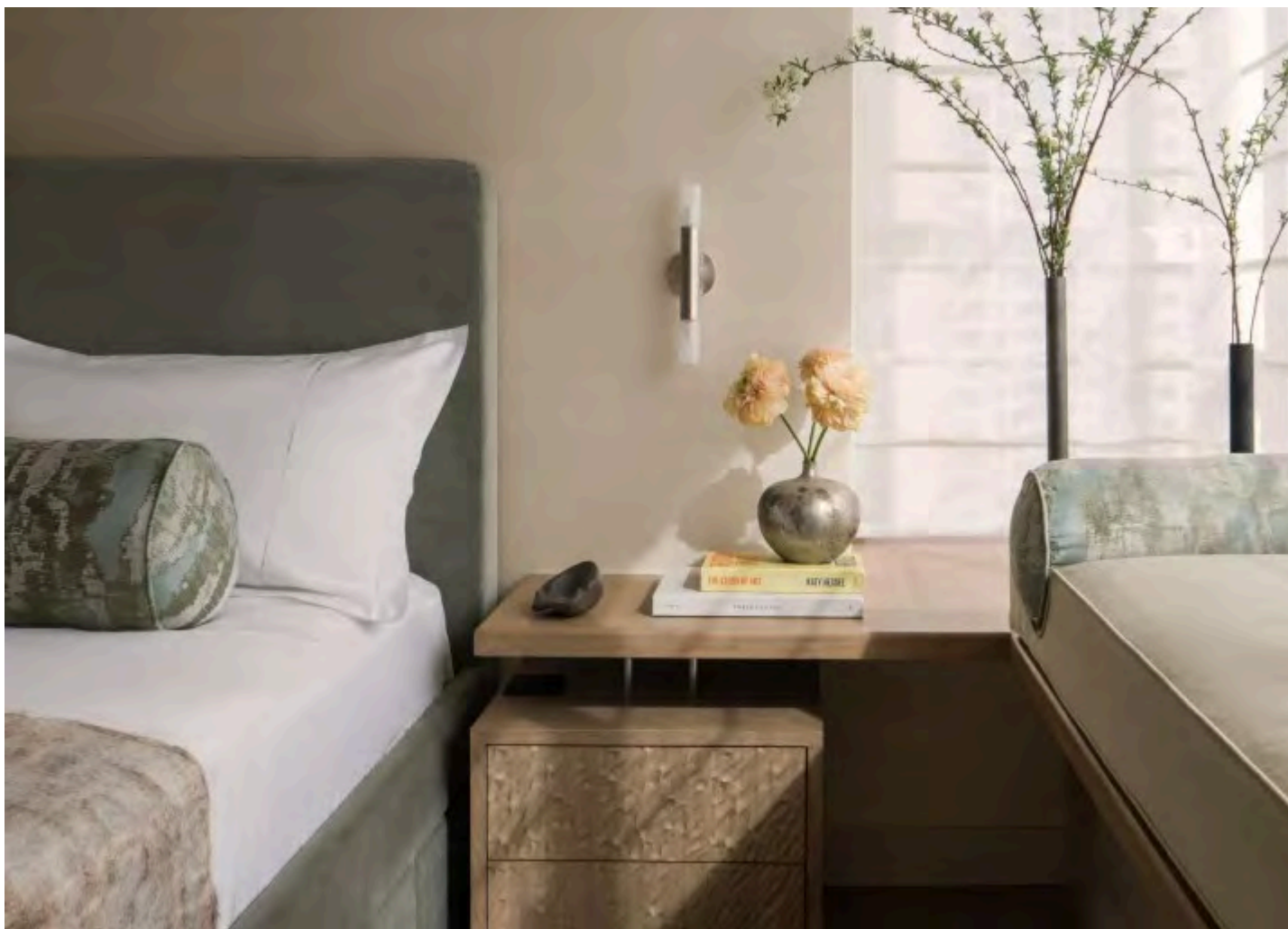
Black out Designer Ella Bridgland, of Studio Ella, installed vertical tracks to all edges of the window frames in the bedrooms, including this guest room, where the main and side panels of the bay windows meet. The borders of the separate blinds slot into the tracks, thereby creating almost total blackout and avoiding annoying slivers of early-morning light.

The bed makes use of the deep bay-window space and was designed and made by Studio Ella. The Collector wall lamp came from Audo Copenhagen and the Plateau tray was from Ephelis.



GUEST BATHROOM

The guest bathroom features a stained-oak and marble sink unit by Studio Ella and Purist brushed-bronze taps from Kohler (kohler.com.hk). The Ralina sconce was from Giffin Design.



A mix of textures creates a contrast between the city and nature in a redesigned high-rise apartment in Hong Kong's Mid-Levels. Photo: Steven Ko

Post Magazine Design & Interiors

A chic urban pad that's also comforting and inviting, its mix of textures invoking nature in a Hong Kong high-rise

Hong Kong Mid-Levels apartment revamp reflects 'the contrast between the city and nature' through a careful choice of materials, its designer explains

Her client has a space to relax and unwind, and one that will evolve with him thanks to its neutral palette that makes future refurbishing easy

Adele Brunner [+ FOLLOW](#)

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These contrasts, and the balance between them, inspired the design concept for British designer Ella Bridgland's latest project: transforming a 1,100 sq ft apartment in Mid-Levels from outdated to outstanding.

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Although the property had been in his family for years, he had never lived there and wanted to make it his own.



The challenge is how to create a level of personality, striking the right balance between aesthetics and functionality

Ella Bridgland, designer, Studio Ella

Unchanged since the 1990s, the apartment featured overpowering brown marble bathrooms and a claustrophobic, old-fashioned kitchen.

The layout was determined by structural walls, drainage locations and the requirement to retain the three original bedrooms for future resale value.



The apartment has an energetic feel while also being comforting and calming. Photo: Steven Ko

Although Bridgland stripped the interior down to its bare bones, she worked with the restraints and replanned the division, function and arrangement of the spaces rather than change the entire floor plan.

“High-rise, residential-tower typologies are ubiquitous in Hong Kong and the challenge is how to work with the often standardised modular framework to create a level of personality, striking the right balance between aesthetics and functionality,” says Bridgland, who worked for design mavens Tom Dixon, Sophie Ashby and Joyce Wang before setting up Studio Ella in Hong Kong in 2022.

Establishing a clear design language was crucial. While the flat bears all the hallmarks of a chic urban pad, with an energetic feel that communicates her client’s lifestyle, it is also comfortable and inviting.



The use of mixed textures and tactility expresses an earthy, calming aesthetic, a connection to nature that makes the apartment feel like a retreat, despite having the city on its doorstep.

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“Gouged timber drawer fronts to the bedside tables also add tactility and the feeling that the surface has weathered over time, which is complemented with more luxurious velvet soft furnishings and rugs.”



Looking down the corridor leading to the main bedroom, the eye is drawn to a sculpture by Hatch Area. Photo: Steven Ko

Bridgland also worked with her client’s feng shui master and incorporated various principles into her design. Among other things, the perforated screen near the entrance ensures positive energy is not blocked and the softened corners in the main bedroom avoid energy drain.

“We also established a refined material palette for a feeling of continuity throughout, focusing on texture against a muted backdrop to achieve a timelessness and apparent simplicity,” she says.

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The muted backdrop allows for bolder colour and patterns to be introduced through soft furnishings and artwork to refresh the space if and when desired

Ella Bridgland

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“As the flat has high ceilings, I was able to celebrate that by installing oversized cornices – a subtle, elegant take on a European reference that elevates and frames the space, giving it a sense of grandeur.”

Also paramount was the need for decor that would stand the test of time, so Bridgland used a soft, neutral palette with soothing colour accents, notably a rich burgundy in the living room and understated blues and greens elsewhere.

In response to the client’s lifestyle and current requirements, she turned one of the smaller bedrooms into a study and repurposed the other as a dressing room that can also accommodate guests.

In the latter, she built a day bed over a deep bay window ledge, with storage beneath it to maximise the usage of space and to optimise views.



One bedroom was repurposed as a dressing room that can also accommodate guests, with a day bed built over a deep bay window ledge, and storage beneath it. Photo: Steven Ko

“It was important that the apartment would remain relevant and evolve with my client as he reached different life stages rather than needing to be re-renovated,” explains Bridgland, who took 10 months to complete the project.



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The result is a home that elegantly frames this duality.



The living room of the redesigned apartment. Photo: Steven Ko

Living room

The antique burgundy armchair has been in the client’s family for years and details have been forgotten. The AML stool came from Frama (framacph.com). The Fly SC5 coffee table was sourced from &Tradition (andtradition.com) and the Oyster bowl was by Ephelis from Studio Wool (woolstudio.co).

The other ceramics came directly from Ephelis (ephelis.studio). The perforated walnut television cabinet was designed by Studio Ella (studioella.co) and made by Filum (filmgroup.com).

Entrance leading to living area

A geometric wooden room divider and shoe cabinet, both made by Filum, separate the small entrance from the living room. These two pieces, along with the rug, were designed by Studio Ella.

The Plum planter was by Tom Dixon (tomdixon.net), the Develius sofa from &Tradition and Branch Bubble pendant light by Giffin Design.



The dining room of the Mid-Levels apartment, with artwork by Tomo Campbell. Photo: Steven Ko

Dining room

The artwork, *Such* (2019), by Tomo Campbell, came from Cob Gallery (cobgallery.com) and the Tube pendant light was from Giffin Design (giffindesign.com).

The Elliott dining table was by Jason Miller Studio (jasonmiller.us) and the Cesca dining chairs with cane seats were from Knoll (knoll.com). Studio Ella designed and made the velvet banquette.



The kitchen, with blinds by Hunter Douglas. Photo: Steven Ko

Kitchen

The kitchen was designed by Studio Ella and built by Filum. The Etruscan Pitcher H33 was from Audo Copenhagen and the blinds were from Hunter Douglas (hdgallery.com.hk).

Corridor leading to main bedroom

As you walk down the corridor leading to the main bedroom, the eye is drawn to a sculpture by Hatch Area (hatcharea.com) and an AML stool from Frama.



The main bedroom of the apartment, with tall vases by Colin King for Audo Copenhagen. Photo: Steven Ko

Main bedroom

The velvet-covered bed, bedside table (which extends across to the window seat), daybed, rug and blinds were all designed and made by Studio Ella.

The antique silver vase was from Hatch Area and the tall cylindrical Stance vases were designed by Colin King for Audo Copenhagen (audocph.com). The Crown sconce was by Giffin Design.



To make the apartment look more special, a sizeable chunk of the budget was directed towards luxurious fixtures, such as the phoenix marble in the main bathroom. Photo: Steven Ko

Main bathroom

In the main en suite bathroom, Studio Ella designed, and Filum built, the mirror and the phoenix marble sink unit, which has a lip around its edge to prevent toiletries rolling off. The Femme II Murex vase was from Ephelis.

Guest bathroom

The guest bathroom features a stained-oak and marble sink unit by Studio Ella and Purist brushed-bronze taps from Kohler (kohler.com.hk). The Ralina sconce was from Giffin Design.



The stained oak and marble sink unit with rounded corner in the guest bathroom, designed by Studio Ella. Photo: Steven Ko

Tried + tested

Designer Ella Bridgland, of Studio Ella, installed vertical tracks to all edges of the window frames in the bedrooms, including the guest room, where the main and side panels of the bay windows meet.

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