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ROCK AND HIGH ROLLER

Gemma Price talks to Lenny Kravitz about his interiors for the US\$38 million New York development 75 Kenmare, which combine his artistic past and effortless cool



Warm wood and bronze accents complement the palette of textured greys and whites

Lenny Kravitz is becoming as celebrated for his arts and design accomplishments as for his Grammy Award-winning music.

In 2018, he was named Creative Director of lauded champagne house Dom Pérignon. Later that year in September, he rolled out his first project for the brand: *Assemblage*, an exhibition of photographs he took at a dinner party held at his Los Angeles home – which he designed – attended by personalities the likes of Harvey Keitel, Susan Sarandon and Alexander Wang.

Slated to open later this year: his first New York residential interiors project, 75 Kenmare, a condo comprising 38 one- to four-bedroom homes priced from US\$1.7 million in Lower Manhattan’s NoLita neighbourhood. A penthouse unit, with a 1,850sqft interior and almost 700sqft of private outdoor space, is tagged at US\$7.5 million.

Inspiration for 75 Kenmare’s highly articulated façade, which emphasises light and shadow, came from nearby buildings, shares its Manhattan-based architect Andre Kikoski, who has won the American Institute of Architects’ Institute Honor Award and the James Beard Foundation Award for Outstanding Restaurant Design, as well as accolades for his work at *The Wright* in the Guggenheim Museum. Traditional hand-laid brick details have been reinterpreted in cast concrete, with bronze-hued framing and fins gilding street-facing vertical panels casting a glorious, warm glow evocative of New York’s Art Deco architectural heyday.

In its first commission for a project’s entire interior design, Kravitz Design was responsible for the custom ensemble of all interior tones

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— Lenny Kravitz

Private spaces are kept clean and cool



and textures, adding matte-finish white oak floors as well as a neutral-tone palette rich in wood and stone to complement the condo's generous, almost floor-to-ceiling windows to create light, expansive interiors.

Kitchens, meanwhile, feature Gaggenau appliances integrated into the custom, matte-white lacquer cabinetry, complemented by an elm-clad refrigerator and elm breakfast bar. Bathrooms – bisected by walls and floors clad in grey-toned titanium travertine on one side and contrasting French vanilla marble on the other – offer sleek, custom floating elm-wrapped vanities accented by polished Bianco Drama marble countertops and sinks, and deep-soaking Devon&Devon tubs.

“Music and design are very similar in that you're making something out of nothing – they're built on layers. In the end, you have a mood, a vibe – something that makes you feel differently than you did before you heard it or experienced the space,” says Kravitz, adding that the firm took multiple passes to develop well-appropriated floor plans that maximise every square metre.

When considering designers who could marry Nolita's grungy arts-driven past with the polished elegance of a modern New York development, Daniel Hollander, Managing Director of developer DHA Capital, did not have to look far.

Kravitz Design is headquartered a five-minute stroll from the site. Established in 2003, it has developed a reputation for edgy, cosmopolitan aesthetics, earned through collaborations with Miami's Paramount Bay Condos and Paris' L'Arc nightclub, as well as industrial design partnerships with CB2, Swarovski and Philippe Starck for Kartell.

Kravitz's personal connection with the downtown area, though, runs much deeper. After returning to New York to work on his music after high

school in the 1980s (a time when the city's nightclubs, bars and streets were world-leading arenas for artistic expression), his first Manhattan apartment was on Broome Street in adjacent SoHo and he hung out in Nolita. “Those were the places I felt most comfortable,” he recalls. “There were still a lot of mom-and-pop shops at that time. You knew everybody. You knew the lady running the shop here, the shop there, the guy at this store... it felt very cosy.”

Today, Nolita is home to multiple outlets of upscale international fashion labels such as Rag & Bone, which rub shoulders with luxury boutiques like Duncan Quinn, where you'll find bespoke Italian shirts, handmade shoes and suits cut by hand in New York. Along its blocks, you'll also find contemporary art boutiques, extravagant venues – think the gold-themed glam-gothic GoldBar – and long-running restaurants such as Emilio's Ballato, where local artisans and celebrities sit side by side to devour Spaghetti alla Puttanesca.

“It's a good balance between old school and new school,” Kravitz says. “Besides having the new people who have moved there, you have a lot of folks whose families have been there for generations, so it's a really great mix of people and energy.”

He's already looking forward to other interiors and product design projects in partnership with hotel properties and legendary brands. “We'll be creating limited-edition packaging and bespoke furniture pieces that integrate with the ritual that revolves around champagne. I'm really looking forward to continuing the collaboration with Dom Pérignon and being inspired.”

CELEBRITY DESIGNS



Opened in Florida's Vero Beach in 2008, Costa d'Este Beach Resort & Spa (left) is styled by its owner, singer **Gloria Estefan**, who selected warm, amber lighting for many spaces and porthole motifs to give it the feel of a luxury yacht.



Cher has maintained her passion for designing homes alongside her entertainment career. She sold her Gothic Revivalist Malibu mansion at auction in 2005, followed by a six-bedroom pod-style home of her own design with Moroccan and Balinese influences at Four Seasons Resort Hualālai, Hawaii, in 2010 (above). Its central pod includes a great room, a dining room and a master bedroom suite, all of which enjoy island views and access to the spacious covered lanai, adjacent infinity edge pool and spa.



The members of **Pearl Jam** helped design their namesake suite at The Edgewater Hotel in Seattle, the band's home city. The skull painting over the fireplace, equipment case, Moroccan rug and electrical guitar were pulled from their recording studio.



Thai-American musician and actor **Krissada Sukosol Clapp** designed the 39-room The Siam (above) in Bangkok, in collaboration with celebrated American designer Bill Bensley. In keeping with its royal Dusit district setting, the hotel resembles a Thai temple, with rooms that feature decorative elements with an eye on mise en scène. In The Siam's screening room, for instance, there are hundreds of retro Siamese theatre tickets, from *The Sound of Music* to Hitchcock's *Psycho*, while black-and-white photos of the nation's boxing heroes as well as their belts and ceremonial gear adorn the gym.

Film director **Francis Ford Coppola** owns several resort properties, but one of the best known is the 20-room, eco-friendly Blancaneaux Lodge in Belize, which he designed as a private family retreat until it opened to the public in 1993.

In 2007, **Richard Gere** and his ex-wife Carey Lowell bought a historic 1762 building and transformed it into the eight-room Bedford Post Inn, one of New York State's most intimate, romantic boutique stays.

Ellen DeGeneres, who has told *The New York Times* that she grew up wanting to become an interior designer, has redesigned and flipped several homes with partner Portia de Rossi; many are featured in her 2015 book *Home*.

Actor **Robert De Niro** has a share in hospitality chain Nobu and oversaw the decoration of his swanky 88-room Greenwich Hotel in Tribeca, where he launched the equally famous Tribeca Film Festival. Style standouts include a bar headed by celebrated chef Andrew Carmellini, the popular Locanda Verde restaurant and the Japanese-inspired Shibui Spa.

Kanye West has set his sights on more than upscale sneakers. He's collaborated with Belgian interior designer and art dealer Axel Vervoordt on his office furniture as well as the interiors of his and Kim's Hidden Hills home, and has said he wants to open an architecture firm called Yeezy Home, staffed by “architects and industrial designers who want to make the world better”.