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IN A 19TH-CENTURY NEIGHBORHOOD IN MEXICO

City, a jewel of 20th-century Mexican modernism sits quietly tucked away among the trees. Across town, the design cognoscenti book months in advance for a timed peek at Casa Luis Barragán, the home and studio of the famed Mexican architect. But here in the city's Colonia San Rafael enclave, furniture designer Mark Grattan has only to roll out of bed to find himself immersed in the world of Barragán, having scored a coveted apartment in a rare building designed by the late icon.

Grattan is the founder of a red-hot furniture design studio, VIDIVIXI, and a star on the rise. Solange Knowles recently nabbed him as a product development consultant for her design studio and creative agency, Saint Heron. And this spring, the charismatic young talent makes his television debut as a participant in *Ellen's Next Great Designer*, Ellen DeGeneres's design competition on HBO Max.

How this native of Hudson, Ohio, ended up in Mexico City is a complicated tale. He founded VIDIVIXI—from Victor Hugo's poem "Veni, Vidi, Vixi," which translates from Latin as "I came, I saw, I lived"—in 2014 in Brooklyn. In 2016, he followed his heart and moved to Mexico City for a relationship. There, he teamed up with British designer Adam Caplowe, who became studio director at VIDIVIXI. But the love affair that had brought Grattan to the capital was rocky; when it ended he decided to stay and find a peaceful space that he could make entirely his own.

The living room's custom console has a marble top and doors sheathed in velvet. The rice paper table lamp is by Adam Otlewski, and the chrome sconces were found at a local flea market. **LEFT:** Grattan added mirrors to the living room to bounce light and reflect the park across the street. The plant is a Mexican tree fern.



As luck would have it, an apartment became available in the Barragán building. Grattan and his Himalayan cat, Amiga, moved into a two-bedroom apartment, which retained much of its midcentury detailing, from the original paned windows to the interior wooden doors with windows that filter in light. There is also an iron balcony where Grattan spends his mornings, a cigarette in one hand and a coffee in the other, peering through branches at the beautiful Jardín del Arte across the street.

It was the light that enchanted Grattan most when he viewed the apartment for the first time. And it was the light's progress that he tracked for over a year as he lived in the virtually empty space before he felt ready to begin decorating. "I get rainbows on the walls around



5:30 P.M., and the sunsets are amazing,” he says. To enhance the effect, he installed a wall of mirrors at the far end of the living room, and another one above the sofa. The natural light from the windows interacts with the mirrors, which in turn reflect each other, creating waves and sparks of unexpected luminescence.

Throughout his home, Grattan’s perfectionism is on display. He designed most of the furniture in the space, including the wall-mounted sideboard that extends across the entire back wall in the living room. In the bathroom, he moved the showerhead to make way for the installation of a bronze-glass door, then hung a fern above the entrance. “At night,” he says, “the mirrors, water, and foliage create the sexiest shadows. It’s a really beautiful experience.”

If Grattan has a runaway hit in his portfolio, it is his best-selling Docked En Rio platform bed, which pulls from Art Deco and Japanese influences. He created a custom king-size variation for his own sleeping area. “I truly don’t need much more,” he observes. A guajillo tree perched bedside on a cuboid plinth adds to the room’s tree-house quality. The minimal space is a testament to his restraint and aesthetic convictions. After all, only a perfectionist would sleep on the floor for more than a year rather than furnish his bedroom with inferior pieces.

Now that the decor is done, Grattan is elated at the results. And as for the personal journey that he took to get to this place, he observes with a wink: “Creating a beautiful space for yourself is the best revenge.” ■