

MUSIC REVIEW

## Houston welcomes Lizzo home in style

The musical unifier continues to have a breakout year

By **Joey Guerra**  
STAFF WRITER

If there was ever a moment to see Lizzo in concert, this is it.

The rapper and singer, who grew up in Houston, is having a moment. Or a year, to be more accurate. Her single "Truth Hurts," originally released in 2017, is in its fifth week atop the Billboard Hot 100, the longest stretch ever for a female rap artist. "Good as Hell," first issued in 2016, is scaling the same chart for the first time. And her album "Cuz I Love You," which was released in April, is still in the top 10.

But it's more than numbers. "Truth Hurts" is the sort of hit that takes on a life of its own, connecting with a huge swath of fans from all sorts of backgrounds. Lizzo's music is an extension of her personal mantras, calls for love and positivity and affirmation and inclusion. During Friday's sold-out show at Revention Music Center, she made special mention of communities that have rallied behind her: "gender nonconforming people, queer people, black and brown girls."

Her material comes alive onstage, surging not only through her voice but through her face and body and purple hair. She turns pop stardom on its head because she smashes through beauty standards and dares us to do it as well. And she does it with the music, too, cleverly twisting overused pop tropes.

What that all means, then, is that Lizzo is the great unifier. She is, in this moment, all things to all people. Friday's

*Lizzo continues on D6*



Jamaal Ellis / Contributor

Lizzo took the stage Friday at Revention Music Center.



Colleen Scott

Carolyn and Michael McCormick moved from a home without a dining room to one that needed lots of furnishings.

## A room designed for dining

By **Diane Cowen**  
STAFF WRITER

**T**he move from a townhouse in Rice Military to a home twice the size in Briar Grove was the right decision at the right time for Carolyn and Michael McCormick.

Married seven years, the couple was ready to start their family and decided to

A wallpaper statement wall and a blue and gold color palette give couple a fresh take on traditional style

shift to a 4,600-square-foot home in a more family-friendly part of the city. The problem was, they had entire rooms without a stick of furniture in them.

"Our townhouse had a table under a chandelier but

**ONE ROOM**

not a dining room," Carolyn said. "So our new dining room was basically completely empty."

It wasn't just empty; it was empty and big. The McCormicks — who grew up in Katy and are now both lawyers — knew they

needed help pulling off the room in a polished way. They hired Lauren Thomas of Studio L Interior Design because Thomas had helped a friend of theirs decorate their living room.

Thomas started with the premise that they wanted a fresh take on traditional design and that they should stick with the home's established color palette, which has a lot of blue. Previous

*Room continues on D6*

## Discover bar-cart essentials at Access Design

By **Diane Cowen**  
STAFF WRITER

My next Access Design event, held in collaboration with the Houston Design Center on Oct. 17, brings a stellar lineup of Houston interior designers

to talk about ways to make your home look spectacular.

A one-day lineup has interior designer Linda Eyles followed by business partners Sarah Eilers and Sandy Lucas. Then, designer Pamela O'Brien and



Designer Pamela O'Brien

Christoffe, the Galleria store known for its luxury home goods, tableware and barware, will give a demonstration on bar-cart essentials, just as we're entering the holiday entertaining season.

*Design continues on D6*

**MUSIC REVIEW:** Tame Impala puts on electrifying shows. **PAGE D2**

**DEAR ABBY:** Widowed mother begins an affair with her married brother-in-law. **PAGE D4**

**Prices are Fall i n g**

DURING OUR **AUTUMN SALES EVENT**

**AVANA**  
WINDOWS & DOORS

www.avanawindows.com

NO INTEREST, NO PAYMENTS FOR 24 MONTHS WITH APPROVED CREDIT.

**HURRICANE IMPACT WINDOWS AVAILABLE**

Pella Andersen SIMONTON JW JELD-WEN

BBB A+ Accredited Business

MasterCard VISA American Express DISCOVER

Google Reviews ★★★★★

**\$150 OFF PER WINDOW PLUS FREE INSTALLATION**

**BBB** Awards for Excellence Winner of Distinction 2019

CALL TODAY FOR YOUR FREE IN-HOME CONSULTATION

**713-395-4084**

## STAR



Colleen Scott /

Carolyn and Michael McCormick turned to interior designer Lauren Thomas of Studio L Interior Design to bring the dining room project together.

## ROOM

From page D1

owners had left behind heavy gold draperies, and though they weren't the McCormicks' style, the couple could tell they were good quality, so they'd live with them or move them to another room.

Carolyn had been looking at magazine photos, and she showed Thomas one that had a mural on wallpaper. It wasn't so much the trees or foliage or birds that caught her eye, just that it was a design that had some height.

So Thomas took her shopping and they found Fromental's Imprimé pattern — it came in a number of different colors, including dark blue — and they both fell in love with it. That wallpaper, for a statement wall, launched the room.

The essential elements include that wallpaper plus a new chandelier, dining table, chairs, rug and a pair of paintings by Houston artist Katherine Price. A console they'd used as a media center wasn't needed anymore, so they shifted it into the dining room and decorated it with some ginger jars, plus a new mirror and sconces above it.

Thomas was glad to see a young family wanting to use a dining room for its intended purpose.

"For a lot of my clients with young kids — and that's a majority of the people I work with — the dining room becomes their kids' playroom," said Thomas, who worked for Laura U Interior Design before launching her own firm in 2011. "In this house, it is immediately off of the entry, so she wanted it to be a 'wow' statement. She really likes to entertain and wanted a room where she would use her china — and find an heirloom-quality table they could keep for years."

The McCormicks had been using a small table that had been in the family and was passed around. But this room demanded something much more substantial.

"Our dining table was completely wrong for the room. I wanted a big, grand dining table that we would keep the rest of our lives and that our kids and grandkids would want. And I knew I didn't know how to find that," Carolyn said.

After they found a beautiful dining table, Thomas recommended using different side chairs and host chairs. The side chairs were tufted in a stain-

## Dining room essentials

**1. Table:** This is a piece worth investing in. Make sure it's large enough to accommodate your family or your usual guest list.

**2. Chairs:** They need to be able to handle stains and spills, so choose stain-resistant performance fabrics or have them treated with a stain-resistant protectant.

**3. Chandelier:** The chandelier's width should be about a foot narrower than the width of the table and should hang 60 to 66 inches from the floor (that's going to usually be 30 to 36 inches from the top of the table), according to Thomas.

**4. Rug:** A rug will visually organize elements in a room, which is helpful if the dining room is large. Make sure it's big enough that chairs will be on top of the rug even when people are sitting in them.

**5. Art:** Art is necessary in every room. You can use one large piece or a series of smaller pieces. In the McCormicks' dining room, the detailed wallpaper could be considered art.

resistant navy-blue fabric and on each end are skirted host chairs in a sturdy off-white fabric.

"I like to encourage clients to invest in items you interact with on a tactile level," Thomas said. "In a dining room, that's the seating and the table. So comfort in all of the side chairs and the host chairs is important. You also have to keep in mind that they eventually will have kids, so stain-resistant and stain-proof fabrics and materials."

A new, much more contemporary chandelier with a gold finish was hung over the dining table, and because the wallpaper had to be hung and an electrician had to install the sconces and chandelier before the furnishings arrived, the McCormicks got a sneak peek at the light fixtures.

Thomas wasn't surprised when the McCormicks questioned its size because she said most homeowners will pick out lighting that is too small for the room. Plus, the one they replaced was undersized for the space.

Considering that a standard dining table is going to be 40 to 42 inches wide, Thomas picks chandeliers that are about a foot narrower, so they're inset about 6 inches on each side of the

table. She prefers to hang them 60 to 66 inches off of the floor — that means the lowest part of the chandelier will be 30 to 36 inches from the top of the table.

Since the draperies are gold, Thomas opted for a gold chandelier; the mirror over the console and the abstract paintings also have gold frames.

"I am still seeing a lot of gold and with different applications of it, such as patinaed or antiqued versions," Thomas said. "If someone is a little hesitant or thinks gold is too trendy, I push them to a slightly more antiqued brass, so it's not super brassy and shiny and new. It looks more classic when brass is toned down."

Since the dining room is finished, the McCormicks have been working on a nursery, since their first child — a daughter — will be born in November.

"I've been focused on the nursery and haven't looked around the house too much," Carolyn said. "The day she installed it, it was very much 'This room looks better than any other in the house. What do we do now?'"

To be considered for this "One Room" feature, write to [diane.cowen@chron.com](mailto:diane.cowen@chron.com)

## DESIGN

From page D1

Eyles, of Linda Eyles Design, will speak on "Luxe Layering: Defining Your Aesthetic and Bringing It Home" at 4 p.m. Oct. 17, followed at 5

p.m. by Lucas and Eilers, partners in the Lucas Eilers Design Associates firm, speaking on "A Passion for Collecting."

Afterward, O'Brien, of Pamela Hope Designs, and Tessa Eubanks, boutique director of the Christoffle store in Hous-

ton Galleria, will speak on "Mix It Up: The Very Versatile Bar Cart."

We'll give away some great door prizes, including a few new coffee-table books (value \$60-\$75) and two tickets (value \$200) to the Nov. 10 Risotto Festival held at the design

center. Wine, soft drinks and light bites will be provided.

Tickets are \$10 each, but you can use the promo code 8222 for free admission. RSVP is required; sign up at [accessdesignfall.eventbrite.com](http://accessdesignfall.eventbrite.com). Pelican Builders Inc., is the presenting sponsor, and

the event will be held in the Leisure Collections showroom, Suite 152.

Sign up for my Access Design newsletter, delivered straight to your inbox every Tuesday, at [houstonchronicle.com/newsletters/access-design](http://houstonchronicle.com/newsletters/access-design)



Jamaal Ellis / Contributor

Lizzo and her crew got the crowd dancing along during her performance.

## LIZZO

From page D1

crowd was as diverse as the city itself. There were single ladies and gay men, schoolteachers and drag queens, kids and older folks. A large group fiddled with wedding veils, an homage to the "Truth Hurts" video. Even boyfriends danced and sang along.

Several fans lingered outside, hoping to score last-minute tickets. They didn't seem to be very successful.

The show itself was nearly 90 minutes of electricity. She took the crowd to church, literally, with opener "Heaven Help Me," emerging from behind a pulpit in a gold robe that eventually revealed a Madonna-esque bodysuit. The backdrop mirrored stained glass, and she was joined by dancers known as The Big Grrrls.

Every moment was a declaration. Lizzo channeled James Brown during "Worship" and riffed on Aretha Franklin's "Respect." She poured searing soul into "Cuz I Love You." And she made like Tina Turner during "Crybaby."

The crowd was one of the

most enthusiastic in recent memory. They danced. They sang along. They chanted her name between songs.

Someone, to her delight, tossed an Elsik T-shirt onstage. Lizzo attended and played in the band at both Alief Elsik High School and the University of Houston.

"This has been one of the most incredible trips home ever," she said. "This time it feels so special."

She encouraged the crowd to "put a light up for every scrub you've ever known" during "Jerome," an ode to immature men. It was a clever twist on the usual concert cliché.

But mostly, she demanded we love ourselves — during the hypnotic "Water Me," which also deserves to be rediscovered; the celebratory bounce of "Soulmate;" the disco swirl of "Juice; and "Like a Girl," which starts "Woke up feelin' like I just might run for president." A fan near the stage brandished a shirt that read "Lizzo 2020."

"A b— just might," she quipped without missing a beat.

[joey.guerra@chron.com](mailto:joey.guerra@chron.com)  
[twitter.com/joeyguerra](https://twitter.com/joeyguerra)