

ROCK STEADY

DESIGNER MICHAEL BERMAN'S NEW FURNITURE COLLECTION FOR THEODORE ALEXANDER BORROWS INSPIRATION FROM ORGANIC SHAPES, MIDCENTURY SILHOUETTES AND CASUAL CALIFORNIA STYLE.

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Best part about working with Theodore Alexander on your new collection, Califolio?

The first thing the team at Theodore Alexander told me when we began to work together was "design like you have no constraints," and I immediately understood why. Their capabilities are endless; they have their own foundry and handle their own finishing and leather fabrication. It allowed me to create exactly what I wanted: a large, ambitious collection (of over 75 pieces!) with a real wabi-sabi flavor and plenty of interesting textures and finishes.

Share your inspiration for the collection.

The size of the collection enabled me to combine a lot of the different things I'm influenced by: organic design and materials, as well as American Art Deco modernism.

I also wanted to create a dialogue here that speaks to Los Angeles' eclecticism, to the way we celebrate the melting pot of cultures that make up our community and how we've learned to mix both high and low, elegance and simplicity in our homes.

Do you have a favorite piece?

They're all special to me, but I'm especially proud of the work we did on the Flint table (shown). To bring that piece to life, we had to work with Theodore Alexander to add new finishes and techniques to its repertoire. For example, for the handsome oak tabletop, we designed a finish called Sandalwood for a rich, honey color; then, to take it even further, we put it through a wire-brushing process before hitting it with white cerused wax and a very, very fine steel wood for a satin finish.

It also has a beautiful base.

Yes! The Flint table also features another new finish called Foundry, a lovely metallic that gives the base the illusion of being cast in bronze. In reality, the base is fabricated resin, which makes it easier to render its river rock-shaped cutouts. I've always been attracted to anything curvilinear or kidney-shaped. These silhouettes, popular in the 1940s through '60s, are some of my favorite things from that period of modernism.

Dream meal to serve on this table?

A fantastic L.A.-inspired lunch with fresh, homemade heirloom tomato salsa with chipotle peppers, vegetarian tacos with avocado and peppers, and delicious BBQ shrimp skewers. It's a great example of what entertaining in California is all about: flavor and quality and health. Just don't forget the gluten-free corn tortillas!

