

Thomas O'Brien with selections from his new line for Century Furniture, including a Courtyard table and Stradling armchair and ottoman. **Below left:** The Wyllie chair.



DEBUT VISION QUEST

Tapping an array of global inspirations, decorator Thomas O'Brien conjures an expansive new line of furniture for Century

Everything in the collection is meant to mix and match, not only with one another but also with homeowners' existing furnishings. And each of O'Brien's creations comes with a compelling backstory.

"A history does make things better," he says.

While touring Austria, for example, O'Brien became obsessed with a graphic marble floor at the Kunsthistorisches Museum and used the pattern as a starting point for the wood-and-glass doors of his Vienna cabinet. The Fox Tuxedo sofa, which O'Brien describes as "very masculine and tailored," is loosely based on a Scandinavian sling-back seat. Closer to home, an antique Duncan Phyfe paw-footed mahogany chair—part of a set that had been given as a wedding gift in the 1830s and remained in the same family until O'Brien purchased it some three decades ago—was reimagined in earthier oak and with a high, buttoned back.

"I love how you can change the character of a chair or sofa so much just by manipulating the scale," O'Brien says. "It becomes an entirely different thing." Next on his Century drawing board, he reveals, is outdoor furniture. And, yes, he'll be looking around his own house for even more bright ideas. centuryfurniture.com —STEPHEN TREFFINGER

For decades the acclaimed New York-based interior designer Thomas O'Brien has been acquiring vintage and antique furnishings that have caught his eye on trips to England, France, Japan,

and points beyond. Much of this beloved trove—which, O'Brien notes, includes "quite a few orphan chairs and bits and pieces of things"—ended up in storage. Hoarding, though, it's not.

A number of those treasures are making their way into the designer's new house on Long Island, and many served as key inspirations for his premier collection for Century Furniture, which arrives in stores across the country this fall. Filtered through the clarifyingly contemporary perspective that is the hallmark of O'Brien's firm, Aero Studios, the Century line is a smart 120-plus-piece tapestry of styles that includes case goods, upholstery, and mirrors.

