

TRADITIONAL HOME

September/
October
2019

**Kitchen
2.0**
REIMAGINE
THE KITCHEN
AS THE HEART
OF HOME

10
RISING
DESIGN
STARS

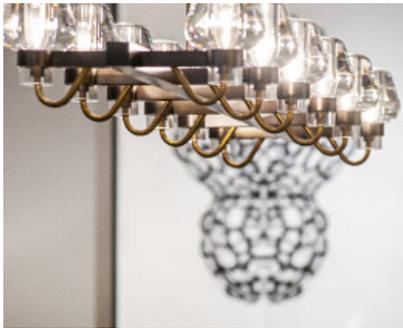
new Classics

TRADITIONAL DESIGN
FOR MODERN LIVING

Southern Style

BEAUTIFUL ROOMS WITH
HAPPY COLOR FROM OUR
CHARLESTON SHOWHOUSE

[8:15 am]



[10:00 am]

California King

Pacific Design Center showroom luminary Thomas Lavin reigns over a life well-balanced and well-lived

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY KRISSA ROSSBUND
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL GARLAND

Thomas Lavin turns to the expertise of his sister, Mary Tostado, and mom, Fyfe Lavin, to make his operation sing. He's always on top of the latest furniture releases, meeting with makers like Jiun Ho.

The sheer size of Los Angeles' Pacific Design Center makes it feel like a modern-day palace, minus the intricate scrolls and gilding. Much like the grand homes of royals, the building is divided into moments of individual style—and Thomas Lavin's almost 20-year-old showroom puts him in line to claim the longevity throne.

With a modern slant to lighting and furniture, the showroom, newly expanded by 4,000 square feet to include the country's sole non-corporate Christian Liaigre boutique, also unfurls a wealth of fabric options that range from classic and traditional to contemporary.

Whether he's imagining striking vistas within the showroom or picturing his newest arts endeavor, Thomas has a grand day in store. Come along as we follow him through a few hours in L.A.

DAY IN THE LIFE



[10:30 am]



[11:30 am]



[noon]



MY ENGAGEMENT IN THE BUSINESS IS DRIVEN BY MY CURIOSITY TO KEEP LEARNING.” —Thomas Lavin

[5:30 am] Thomas doesn't wait for the sun to rise in Los Angeles. He's up with the East Coast dwellers. A routine of Pilates or yoga at the gym followed by a cup of green tea jump-starts a day that promises a rich roster of activity.

[8:15 am] So many folks say goodbye to family as they begin their professional workdays. But when Thomas arrives at his showroom, he's saying hello. His sister, Mary Tostado, plays "drill master," assisting Thomas with sales meetings, setting goals for sales representatives, and fostering client relations. In Thomas' expansive inventory of textiles and wallcoverings, mother knows best. Fyfe Lavin shepherds products into display masterpieces in the showroom. Thomas meets with them and his staff to start the morning, then works on his own ideas for new floor plans.

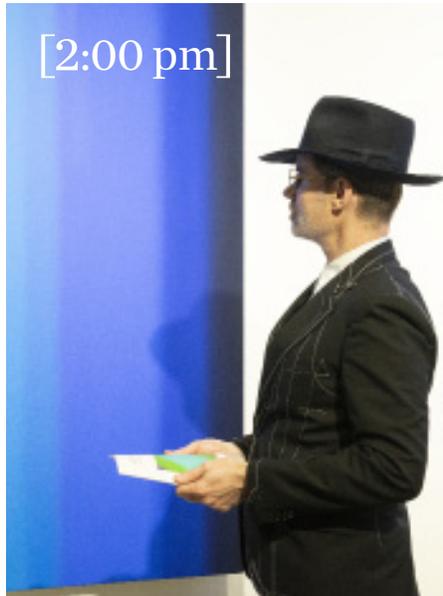
[10:00 am] Thomas and furniture maker Jiun Ho have grown up together in the design industry, launching their businesses in 2000.

Their childhoods, though, are a different story. Thomas is a Los Angeles native, while Jiun hails from Malaysia. When Jiun visits from his San Francisco headquarters, the pair share their global experiences in conversations that delve into the heart of furniture design.

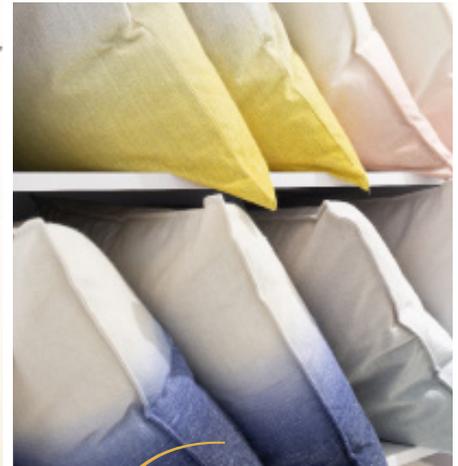
[10:30 am] After a chat with a fellow creative, the lightbulbs are going off. From a perch in the showroom's lighting gallery, Thomas takes time to put down ideas.

[11:30 am] Time to wrap up today's work in the showroom and shift gears to off-campus activity.

[noon] First up, lunch! Thomas meets with close friend and designer Matt O'Dorizio at nearby Lucques, a refined restaurant acclaimed for its market-driven California cuisine—and owned by former *Traditional Home* resident chef Suzanne Goin. You realize Thomas is a regular when you spot TL Veggies on the menu. The tasty assembly of seasonal vegetables was named in his honor.



Beyond the discovery of special lines such as John Pomp lighting or Rosemary Hallgarten textiles, Thomas spends his days celebrating his affinity for culture with trips to art galleries and piano lessons.



[2:00 pm]



[7:00 pm]



THERE'S NOTHING THAT I WON'T DO. I HAVEN'T LOST THE PASSION."

—Thomas Lavin

[5:30 pm]

[2:00 pm] To deepen relationships with industry creatives—and satisfy his appetite for new design and art, Thomas takes time to visit studios. He's a frequent visitor to Los Angeles' Edward Cella galleries, where he's introduced to works that he brings to his showroom. Today, works by contemporary artist Ruth Pastine, who paints with simplicity in intense color, catch his eye.

[5:30 pm] For Thomas, a life rich with culture embraces all the senses. Piano music audibly decorates his Hollywood Hills home with timeless beauty. His musical inclinations are inherited from his great-grandmother, whose living room was anchored by a Steinway grand piano. Childhood interest and lessons blossomed into a classical piano performance major during college at UCLA. But life on campus proved that while Thomas was passionate about the piano as a hobby, he didn't want to make a career of it. But he still

indulges in piano lessons once a week after work, and a 1940 Steinway holds a spot of honor in his abode. "I practice whenever I can because I know that the teacher is coming," he says. "I'm currently working on a Beethoven sonata. And my boyfriend, Destin Bass, sings, so we like to perform for family and friends."

[7:00 pm] After the final music chord has faded and the sun begins to melt into the horizon, it's time for Thomas to wind down. As he channels his bartending proficiency with a "wildly cold and up with onions" martini, he sports a traditional silk ikat caftan that he purchased on a trip to Morocco. The evening is augmented with whiffs of Israeli food—he and Destin are working to master the cuisine of Israeli-English chef Yotam Ottolenghi.

[8:00 pm] A movie or a book? Thomas caps his night with both. A 1980s French New Wave film titled *Diva* is cued on his television, and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night* rests on his bedside table. Some treasured moments, then lights out.

Always learning, always pursuing the best culture has to offer—that's how Thomas Lavin chooses to live. And tomorrow he'll do it all again. ■