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The originals go by the name of Thonet

The furniture manufacturer Thonet GmbH can proudly look back on more than 200 years of tradition. Ever since 1859, when Michael Thonet used his then revolutionary bentwood technology to become a pioneer in high-quality mass production and industrial series production, the company and the Thonet brand have been synonymous with classic bentwood and tubular steel designs.

Time and again, however, two other businesses that are supposedly connected to Thonet led to some misunderstanding about which company is the real brand producing the iconic bentwood and tubular steel originals. So let's make one thing clear: the originals go by the name of Thonet! And that's us, the Thonet company rooted in the town of Frankenberg (Eder) in Germany, where we are still producing these original pieces today.

There is particular confusion around the product portfolios and naming of the Czech company TON and the Italian-based company Wiener GTV Design, which are not always entirely clear when referring to their historical roots. Neither of these companies has any connection to the Thonet family, who are the direct descendants of our business's founder.

Thonet is the only company that produces the iconic designs that rightly bear the title "Thonet originals". Felix and Percy Thonet are direct descendants of Michael Thonet and are the sixth generation of the Thonet family to be actively involved in running our company. We remain a medium-sized family business, partly owned by the Thonet family and partly by a similarly medium-sized and owner-managed family office, the Benner family.

We can now look back on more than 200 years of "Thonet" with one design milestone after another. Thonet lives up to this tradition not least by maintaining the heritage of bentwood and tubular steel furniture as well as through constant innovations in our product development. To this day, the rights to the "Thonet" brand in Germany and in most other countries of the world are owned by the Thonet GmbH from Frankenberg.

Our furniture has its price, but in return it will last for generations – just like our company. The tables and chairs that are made in our Frankenberg factory use the highest quality materials, meet the highest standards of workmanship and their classic design is timeless. All those years ago, Michael Thonet was already setting an example in how to reconcile economy and ecology. Our famous No. 14 coffee house chair (today the 214) epitomises this ethos. For more than 160 years, it has been associated with innovation, durability, reparability, a clever and efficient shipping method, resource-saving use of natural materials and the highest design quality. In 2021, the design was awarded the German Sustainability Award Design in the "Icons" category. Our furniture holds its value in the best sense, as a piece of culture. We nurture our heritage with dedication, while always looking to the future through constant innovation.

So where does the uncertainty around the link between the Thonet GmbH and these two companies, TON and Wiener GTV Design, come from? The latter was founded in 1938 by the Austrian side of the Thonet family and sold to a third-party investor when insolvency loomed. The company operated in Germany under the name "Gebrüder Thonet Vienna" until 2015, but has now been banned by a court order from doing so. The Czech company TON gained access to the production resources and machinery located at the Thonet factory founded in 1861 in Bistritz (in Moravia, today the Czech Republic) after its expropriation at the end of the Second World War. Neither of these two companies

has a direct connection to the German company Thonet GmbH in terms of family, finance or organisational structure.

So it's actually quite simple: only a Thonet piece of furniture is a real Thonet, embodying more than two centuries of tradition with perfected aesthetics, maximum comfort and incomparable product quality.

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