

Press release  
Frankenberg, January 2021

## S 5000 Retreat

**Straight from the 1930s to New Work: a modern update from Thonet and Studio Irvine**

When English designer James Irvine began work on a new interpretation of the S 5000 daybed-style sofa 15 years ago, he was designing for the present – with the future already in mind. Daybeds with tubular-steel frames were already an integral part of the Thonet range in the 1930s; from this classic design, Irvine created a versatile sofa system. Now Studio Irvine, directed by Marialaura Rossiello-Irvine – architect and wife of the late designer – has carried on with the idea of the convertible, minimalist S 5000 range, with its foundation of bent tubular steel, and has re-imagined it. The result is a modular system of sofas and seating elements with dividing panels. Numerous accessories such as tables, cushions and power sockets allow for a wide variety of applications in the context of New Work as well as in private spaces. The new S 5000 Retreat option can be used to block out noise or as a privacy screen, creating a private yet aesthetically pleasing working environment.



The question of how we will work tomorrow has been ubiquitous for quite some time now. Right in the middle of the development phase for the new S 5000 range, the Covid-19 pandemic turned our world upside down – and, at the same time, changed and expedited the need to adapt our working spaces. Physical space and separation have taken on a whole new meaning. This is precisely the idea behind the S 5000 Retreat: it creates room-in-room solutions and offers the opportunity to work in private spaces, even in open-plan offices. The layout of each individual room can be freely configured and adapted to new situations as needed.

The base module is available as either an upholstered one, two or three-seater unit on a tubular-steel base without backrest and side panels. Matching arm and backrests or dividing panels – a brand new addition to the range – can be integrated into the seat frame as needed to provide privacy and block out noise. Thus, every module can be expanded in a variety of different ways. The panels form a frame within which varying sizes of cushions can be freely arranged to create the desired set-up. The furniture range also includes small tables that are screwed to the tubular steel frame. This creates entire sofa landscapes that be extended or modified using the modular system. As a classic sofa, the S 5000 Retreat is perfect for modern living spaces. The smaller model with panels provides a smart working station for working from home, while its larger counterpart can be used in the central zones and the lounges of office buildings, in co-working spaces or in waiting rooms.

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“Despite its austere design, the S 5000 Retreat has been designed to give a sense of privacy and to promote creativity. It invites you to play with its materials, colours, shapes and dimensions. Even the cushions allow for different shades to be combined,” explains the designer Marialaura Rossiello-Irvine.

“Redesigning products that have already been a part of the company’s history is a conscious attitude regarding the ever-changing use of furniture, especially in the context of work. Sometimes it’s just not necessary to design an entirely new product. Sometimes it makes more sense to redesign existing pieces,” says Creative Director and Managing Director Norbert Ruf as he describes the creative process behind the S 5000 Retreat.

“I like to call it ‘ethical design’ when companies and designers intentionally examine where they are investing and how products are created,” adds Marialaura Rossiello-Irvine.

**Note:**

A video about the multifaceted stories and aspects surrounding the S 5000 Retreat can be found on the [Thonet website](#) as well as on [YouTube](#). We would be happy to see you integrate the link (or the original video on request) in your online coverage.

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***Thonet – future-oriented furniture design with a long tradition***

*The unique success story of Thonet began with the work of master carpenter Michael Thonet. Ever since he established his first workshop in Boppard on the River Rhine in 1819, the name Thonet has stood for high-quality,*

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*innovative and elegant furniture. The breakthrough came with the iconic chair No. 14, today known the world over as the Vienna Coffee House Chair: the pioneering technique of bending solid beechwood enabled the mass production of chairs for the first time. The second milestone in design history was the tubular steel furniture by the famous Bauhaus architects Mart Stam, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Marcel Breuer in the 1930s. During those pioneering years, Thonet was the world's largest producer of these tubular steel furniture designs, which are today considered timeless.*

*For the company today, the continuous process of innovation is the top priority, together with a focus on tradition and fine craftsmanship. Thonet's furniture designs originate both from its collaborations with renowned national and international creatives and from the in-house Thonet Design Team. Chief Executive Officer Brian Boyd and Creative Director Norbert Ruf manage the company from the corporate head office and production site in Frankenberg/Eder (Germany). Michael Thonet's fifth- and sixth-generation descendants are actively involved with the company's business as partners and sales representatives.*