

Press release
Frankenberg/Cologne, October 2022

Sit back and relax on the 119: the lightweight lounge chair for living rooms and hotel lobbies

Design: Sebastian Herkner, 2021

Timeless materials such as bentwood and canework, reduced to the essentials: the 119 chair designed by Sebastian Herkner is a classic Thonet piece which will make its mark in any setting. It can be placed in living rooms, alone or in pairs, as an elegant counterpoint to a comfy sofa. And it's equally at home in a hotel lobby or Hybrid Work type lounge area. The 119 creates visual accents in a variety of interior design scenarios and, with the new upholstered version premiering at Orgatec 2022, it also offers an extra dimension of comfort. The design for the 119 emerged organically from the successful 118 chair programme, also designed for Thonet by Sebastian Herkner.



The 119 – a spin-off of the 118 family and yet completely independent

The 119 lounge chair has a memorably distinctive shape and promises maximum comfort: its wide, gently inclined backrest and deep seat that tilts backwards at an angle of 5.5 degrees are optimally designed for a relaxing sitting position. Comfort is taken to a whole new level in the new version of the lounge chair, now with upholstery or an additional seat cushion, which can be optionally attached to the chair's rear legs.

The relationship with the 118 chair family is evident in both the design principle and several finer details: the shape of the chair legs, for example, which are rounded at the back and have gentle edges at the front, picks up the horseshoe shape of the seat base. A bentwood frame encloses the seat of the 119, as with the models from the preceding 118 collection; both are available with a covering of canework and a moulded plywood or upholstered seat. The chair comes in the same stain colours and high-gloss lacquers as the models in the 118 collection.

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“Both the design and production of the 119 lounge chair highlight the balance struck between tradition and innovation. That’s what makes the chair such a good fit for Thonet,” explains designer Sebastian Herkner. The production process combines craftsmanship and technology: some components are handcrafted using the bentwood process, while others are based on the latest CNC technology.

“The 119, with its versatility – from living space to office to hotel – is a successful addition to our portfolio: it is strong enough as a stand-alone product and also works in combination with the different 118 models. This is us embracing the concept of landscape formation,” says Creative Director Norbert Ruf. In addition to the classic 118 chair in a range of finishes, the 118 F armchair and two different barstools complete the range.

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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, 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.