

Press release
Frankenberg, October 2026

Programme expansion for the S 243 contemporary tubular steel chair: stackable allrounder now available with armrests and in a barstool version Design: Frank Rettenbacher, 2026

Tubular steel has been part of Thonet's DNA since the 1930s. The company's portfolio includes such iconic modern furniture designs as the S 43 and S 33 cantilever chairs by Mart Stam and the S 32 by Marcel Breuer. The S 243 chair, designed by Frank Rettenbacher in 2024, remains true to the principles of form and quality embodied in its predecessors. It combines a tubular steel frame with moulded wooden components for the seat and backrest – and, using a minimal amount of material, achieves a result that is both exceptionally elegant and highly versatile. For Orgatec 2026, Thonet is expanding its range of stackable four-legged chairs to include a version with armrests, a bar stool and a counter stool. The programme expansion opens up additional potential in the Contract, Multifunctional, Co-working, Hospitality and Residential segments.



In 2024, Thonet unveiled its S 243 tubular steel chair, a versatile piece with clean lines. "The objective in developing this product was to create a clear, modest shape in keeping with the timelessness of the Thonet brand," explains Austrian designer Frank Rettenbacher. The result is a product with subtle references to Thonet's tubular steel history that also perfectly delivers the agility and versatility now demanded of modern furniture in our homes and workspaces.

With these new additions to its range, Thonet is consistently building on this versatility: thanks to its high-end solid wood armrests, the S 243 F version offers enhanced comfort and usability. The S 243 F is ideal for prolonged sitting and social situations, whether in a meeting room or at the dining table. It is available in a wide range of finishes and colours, and combines particularly well with the

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version without armrests to create a harmonious interior design scheme. Combining the models is also a particularly good option if you want to take advantage of the row arrangement functionality.

Similarly, the bar stool and counter stool literally take the timeless design of Thonet's successful S 243 to a whole new level. To cater for different bar and table heights, Rettenbacher has designed the S 243 H bar stool and the slightly more compact S 243 HT counter stool, which has a lower seat. On the bar stools too, you can sit comfortably for a whole evening: the backrest – not always a standard feature on bar stools – provides welcome support, and you can rest your feet on the frame. A black plastic footrest protects the powder-coated or chrome-plated finish from scratches and can be replaced if necessary.

The ability to replace individual parts of the chair was a priority right from the design stage of the original model: "Modularity was a key consideration during development: all of the components of the S 243 are designed to be easily replaced or swapped out. This increases the chair's longevity and underlines the company's commitment to sustainability," explains Rettenbacher.

The S 243's practical stackability is retained in the new models: up to four bar stools can be stacked on top of one another. In the case of the S 243 F model with armrests, six unupholstered chairs can be stacked together; for the upholstered version, the figure is five. This makes the entire product range particularly suitable for hire at events, with efficient storage options.

With its tubular steel frame, the S 243 product family draws inspiration from the S 43, S 33 and S 32 cantilever chairs, whose frames also feature a tube diameter of 25 mm. In contrast to the more linear and vertical geometries of the classic cantilever frames, the S 243 has a more dynamically designed four-legged frame, making it a more flexible piece in terms of room position. It can be used in so many different ways, with the new bar stool model and the versions with armrests only adding to the possibilities.

The technical and aesthetic characteristics of the S 243 are an ideal fit for the contract sector, but its unique, understated design also makes it a superb addition to private homes. "Even as a young boy, I sat on Thonet chairs at our family dining table, without actually knowing that they were Thonet chairs. They have a natural presence as pieces of furniture, seamlessly blending into any type of space," recalls Rettenbacher.

All versions of the chair are available in a wide range of different designs, including a variety of colours: with a seat and backrest made of moulded plywood; with a fully upholstered seat and a moulded plywood backrest; and with a fully upholstered seat and a backrest featuring tacked-on flat upholstery on the front. The tubular steel frame is available with either a chrome-plated finish or powder-coated in a range of both muted and vibrant colours.

About Thonet

Thonet has been making furniture for the residential and contract sectors since 1819. With a passion for bentwood and tubular steel, the German company produces iconic designs – from its famous coffee house chair and Bauhaus classics by Mart Stam, Marcel Breuer and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, to contemporary pieces by leading modern designers. Combining the latest production

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technology with traditional craftsmanship has made Thonet one of the world's favourite furniture makers. At the Frankenberg factory, innovative products are still being manufactured today, just as they have always been; they are designed for long-term use and are synonymous with the highest level of quality, functionality and a timeless design. The development of durable furniture has always been a defining feature of Thonet's corporate history. From the earliest days, Michael Thonet's first bentwood designs were not just aesthetically remarkable but also bore witness to a particularly thoughtful approach to the use of materials. Moreover, many Thonet furniture pieces last for generations: they are used for decade after decade and can be repaired in Frankenberg if required. Thonet's commitment to sustainable design, which is firmly anchored in its DNA, was recognised in 2024 with the German Ecodesign Award: the iconic 214 coffee house chair picked up the special Timeless Design award in the Product category.

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