

Press release
Frankenberg, April 2024

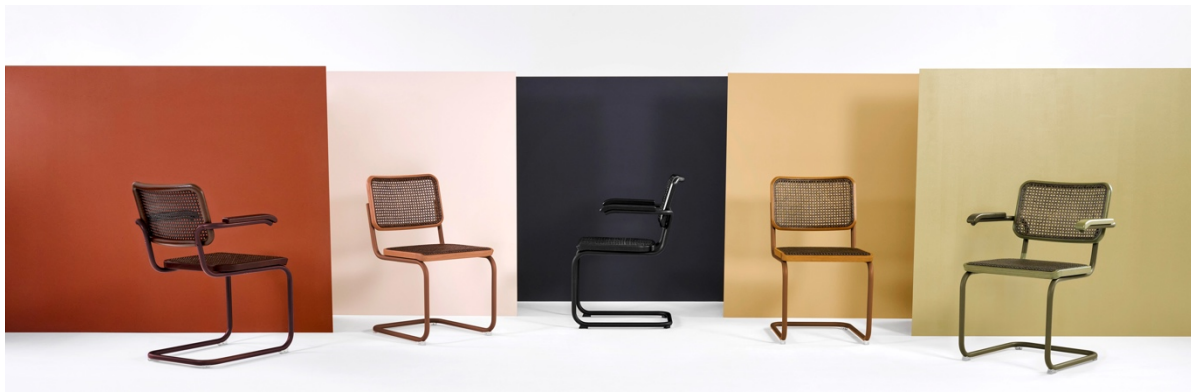
Herkner meets Breuer

Rethinking Classics: S 32/S 64 DARK MELANGE by Sebastian Herkner

Design: Marcel Breuer, artistic copyright: Mart Stam, 1929/30

Colour concept: Sebastian Herkner, 2024

The Thonet S 32 cantilever chair and the S 64 version with armrests designed by Marcel Breuer are some of the most iconic pieces of tubular steel furniture. Their popularity stems from the appealing combination of something new and something tried and tested: the solid-wood seat and backrest with canework embody tradition, while the chrome-plated tubular steel frame represents the present and the future. In 2024, renowned German designer Sebastian Herkner presents the “Rethinking Classics: S 32/S 64 DARK MELANGE” collection, exclusively curated for Thonet. Here, natural colour nuances in the chairs’ wooden elements and frames meet dark opalescent canework. This collection is a distinctive new take on popular classics destined to be statement pieces in any interior design. Thonet’s new elegant, dark canework is a material innovation based on natural dyeing processes.



The S 32 and S 64 tubular steel cantilever chairs – designed in the late 1920s and some of Thonet’s most popular chairs for almost a century – are particularly versatile and at home in a wide variety of interiors. Thanks to their aesthetic minimalism and clean lines in combination with airy canework, these classic chairs fit in numerous settings, such as conference rooms or restaurants, hotel lobbies or apartments. Their versatility has made them some of the best-selling cantilever chairs to this day. This new DARK MELANGE version represents the first time Thonet had offered canework in a dark variant.

DARK MELANGE canework shimmers, oscillating between a rich black, a dark chocolate brown and lighter tones. The reactive dyeing process produces subtle irregularities in the colour that give the material a particularly individual finish, accentuating the beauty of the natural product and its distinctive texture. DARK MELANGE provides a whole new interior design option, giving planners more scope to play with different hues, be it in the contract sector or in people’s homes. The new range also has excellent technical attributes, including exceptional non-fade properties, durability, abrasion resistance and high material stability. As part of his role in product development at Thonet, young designer Jan Christian Schulz collaborated with the team on numerous techniques in order to achieve the final colour and characteristic features.

With his collection “Rethinking Classics: S 32/S 64 DARK MELANGE by Sebastian Herkner” the Offenbach-based designer presents a fresh take on the ever-popular tubular steel classics in beautifully coordinating colours. “In this collection, we used colour to purposely celebrate the natural materials,” says Herkner. The result is five different stain colours for the oak elements, each

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combined with a matching powder coating for the chair's frame: elegant dark black, rich dark-brown chestnut, luxurious yellow-brown amber, light-pink coloured rosewood and a natural green sage. The stain leaves the natural grain of the wood visible, accentuating its character. Herkner has chosen natural nuances in the stain tones that combine perfectly with one another and, together with the DARK MELANGE canework, create statement pieces for all types of interiors. His use of powder-coated frames fits perfectly with the natural elements. While the chrome-plated tubular steel frame of the original design has a classically elegant feel, creating a contrast with the wooden elements of the cantilever chair, Sebastian Herkner's new collection lends a warm, cosy and organic feel to interior spaces – both in residential environments and in the contract sector.

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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.