

Press release
Frankenberg, October 2025

Bauhaus meets comfort: the S 33/S 34 “Soft” cantilever chair with fabric covering Design by Mart Stam (artistic copyright), 1926

Thonet is upping the design options of its iconic S 33 and S 34 cantilever chairs, which are now available with a fabric covering. Mart Stam’s first cantilever chair design, originally from 1926, has been given a new look and feel: the purist design has been turned into a cosy chair that looks soft and inviting without sacrificing its cubic shape or characteristic clean lines. Customers can choose from a variety of different fabrics in the Thonet collection, making it easy to coordinate the S 33/S 34 V “Soft” with any interior design concept in the hospitality sector.



A design that sets change in motion

“Why four legs if two will suffice?”, was artist Kurt Schwitters’ takeaway in 1927 after setting eyes on a cantilever chair for the first time. The S 33 caused a sensation when first unveiled at the 1927 Werkbund exhibition at the Weissenhof Estate in Stuttgart. The history-making pieces lent the rooms in which they were shown an unusually pure, fresh and bright look. Mart Stam began experimenting with gas pipes back in 1925, initially joining them together with standard pipe joint fittings. He then progressed to filling the steel tube with sand, applying heat at the points where he wanted to bend it at right angles. Via this process, Stam invented the principle of the cantilever chair that no longer stood on four legs – a construction principle based on formal restraint that was to become an important building block in the history of modern furniture design. Initially, Stam was not too concerned with the give of the curved tubular steel. He was much more focused on its clean lines. And his S 33 cantilever chair was more than just a functional piece of furniture. It was part of a broader design revolution, heralding a new approach to architecture and living.

With its minimalist form, the S 33 cantilever chair was the first of its kind. In 1961, Germany’s Federal Court of Justice (BGH) granted Mart Stam artistic copyright for the design of the cantilever chair. This means that the design is protected by copyright in Germany as a work of applied art. Today, thanks to

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the extensive expertise of its employees, Thonet produces this classic chair by hand, combining traditional craftsmanship with state-of-the-art technology. The S 33 is not a museum piece, but rather a living part of the Thonet's continuously evolving collection.

Soft, comfortable and versatile: the “Soft” version of the S 33/S 34 V with fabric covering

With the new fabric seats and backrests, the S 33 V “Soft” and the version with armrests, S 34 V “Soft”, remain true to their heritage while also opening up new design possibilities. The finely tuned proportions and cubic shape of the original design remain, while the textile surface creates a – to use Creative Director Norbert Ruf's words – “plastic visualisation of comfort”. The S 33/S 34 V “Soft” is characterised by a cosy look and even greater comfort. It is an ideal chair to use at the dining table, at a desk or as an additional chair in a bedroom or guest room. With the option of individually matching the fabric to a space's material and colour concepts, this versatile piece of furniture fits into a wide variety of interiors, making it an ideal choice for both private living spaces and commercial settings.

The colours can be selected from the wide range of fabrics in Thonet's standard collection. Models with chrome-plated frames combined with natural-coloured fabric coverings showcase the chair's strong connection to the Bauhaus tradition, yet have a significantly softer look than the purist classics with butt-leather coverings. A black powder-coated frame gives the chair an elegant and sophisticated charm. Combined with dark fabrics, it appears timeless and professional. For a cosy, playful effect, meanwhile, a white frame in combination with a pastel-coloured cover is the perfect choice. The fresh colour combinations break up the austerity of this Bauhaus classic and transform the S 33/S 34 V “Soft” into an altogether gentler piece.

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 technology with traditional craftsmanship has made Thonet one of the world's favourite furniture makers. Its production facility in Frankenberg continues to create innovative products that are designed to last. Thonet furniture is synonymous with quality, functionality and a timeless design language. Sustainability is engrained in the Thonet story. From the earliest days, Michael Thonet's first bentwood designs were not just aesthetically remarkable. They expressed a deep understanding of efficient use of resources. Thonet furniture has a very long life cycle and is built to be handed down from one generation to the next. It can also be revitalised in Frankenberg upon request. 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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