

T H O N E T<sup>®</sup>



THE LEGACY COLLECTION

Designed by Dorsey Cox Design

[thonet.com](http://thonet.com)

## Thonet & it's LEGACY

More than 170 years ago, Michael Thonet registered a patent for bending solid wood. This simple act set in motion a series of design, material and process innovations that inspired many of the designers who subsequently became icons of the Modern age.



With patent in hand, Michael Thonet established a furniture company, Gebrüder Thonet, or in English, Thonet Brothers, which later was shortened to Thonet. The company was based in Austria, but quickly became well known around the world for producing sturdy, low cost, highly functional furniture.

Thonet's strategic advantage was that his patented bending process provided the means to create the first mass produced line of furniture that was beautiful and unique. Prior to Thonet's innovation, all furniture was handmade by artisans who crafted each piece one at a time. This costly method of production meant that well-designed furniture was out of reach for most consumers.

While the first patent awarded to Thonet was in France in 1841, his company was founded in 1830 and his first chair on record dates back to 1836. Named the Boppard Chair (4) after Thonet's birthplace, Boppard, Germany, this masterpiece was manufactured from laminated veneer, known today as plywood. However, this type of plywood chair did not establish Thonet as a household name—it was instead the solid bentwood products that he introduced years later. Arguably the most popular chair created in bentwood was the No. 14 chair, which didn't reach the market until 1859, many years after his original patent registration had been awarded.

During the late 19th century, many bentwood furniture designs were created by Thonet, with the help of unknown artists and artisans, who received little or no recognition for their innovations. However, by the turn of the century, a new design trend had emerged, and furniture manufacturers recruited renowned artists and architects of the time to create innovative new products. Throughout the early 20th century, the volume, expertise and reach of the Thonet Company's manufacturing capabilities attracted many of the world's leading designers:

**1906** - Otto Wagner designed the Postparkassen Stool (1), which Thonet produced, model 4746

**1925** - Marcel Breuer designed the Wassily chair (2) in 1925, which Thonet realizes through the process of bending metal tubing for furniture, Thonet began producing in 1929, model B3

**1927** - Mies Van der Rohe designs the double cantilever chair (3) for Thonet, model MR534

**1928** - Thonet introduces and produces Le Corbusier's Chaise Lounge

**1945** - Bruno Weil designs the 1294 Chair and Model 1177 (5)

In 1941 as demand for their furniture in the USA continued to grow and as WWII disrupted their European markets and material supplies, Thonet sent several experienced family members to start production in Statesville, NC. Soon after they added locations in Sheboygan, Wisconsin and New York City, where the factory was outfitted with state of the art radio frequency bending equipment to produce the highest quality plywood furniture parts available at that time.

## THONET ICONS

①



*Postparkassen Stool*

②



*Wassily Chair*

③



*Double Cantilever Chair*

④



*Boppard Chair*

The idea of using bent plywood to produce chairs became increasingly popular during the middle of the 20th Century and the technology was evolving rapidly due to the demands of the war effort and the subsequent post WWII construction boom. There were several iconic furniture designers, notably Alvar Aalto, Gilbert Rohde, and Charles Eames, who worked with bent plywood at this time and it is unclear who was really first to use bent plywood for seating during this period. However, it is indisputable that the process traces back to Michael Thonet's patent in the mid-1800's, more than 100 years before anyone else.

Now fast forward to more recent times. In 1987 Shelby Williams, a Company now owned by CFGroup, purchased Thonet's US business, and by doing so made it independent from the European parent Company, and thus enabled it to continue to make Thonet furniture in the USA. Thonet's US workforce and management took great pride in honoring the Company's rich heritage and traditions while bringing an American sensibility and practicality to chair making. Many new 'models,' including 1250, 1311, 1312, 1177, 2001, and 1318, were introduced between 1945 and 1955 and became staples in universities, libraries and restaurants in every state. Now, in the early years of the 21st Century, Thonet is thrilled to pay homage to Michael Thonet's essential and influential role in Mid-Century Modern furniture with the introduction of the Legacy Collection designed by the American furniture designer Dorsey Cox, and manufactured completely in the USA.

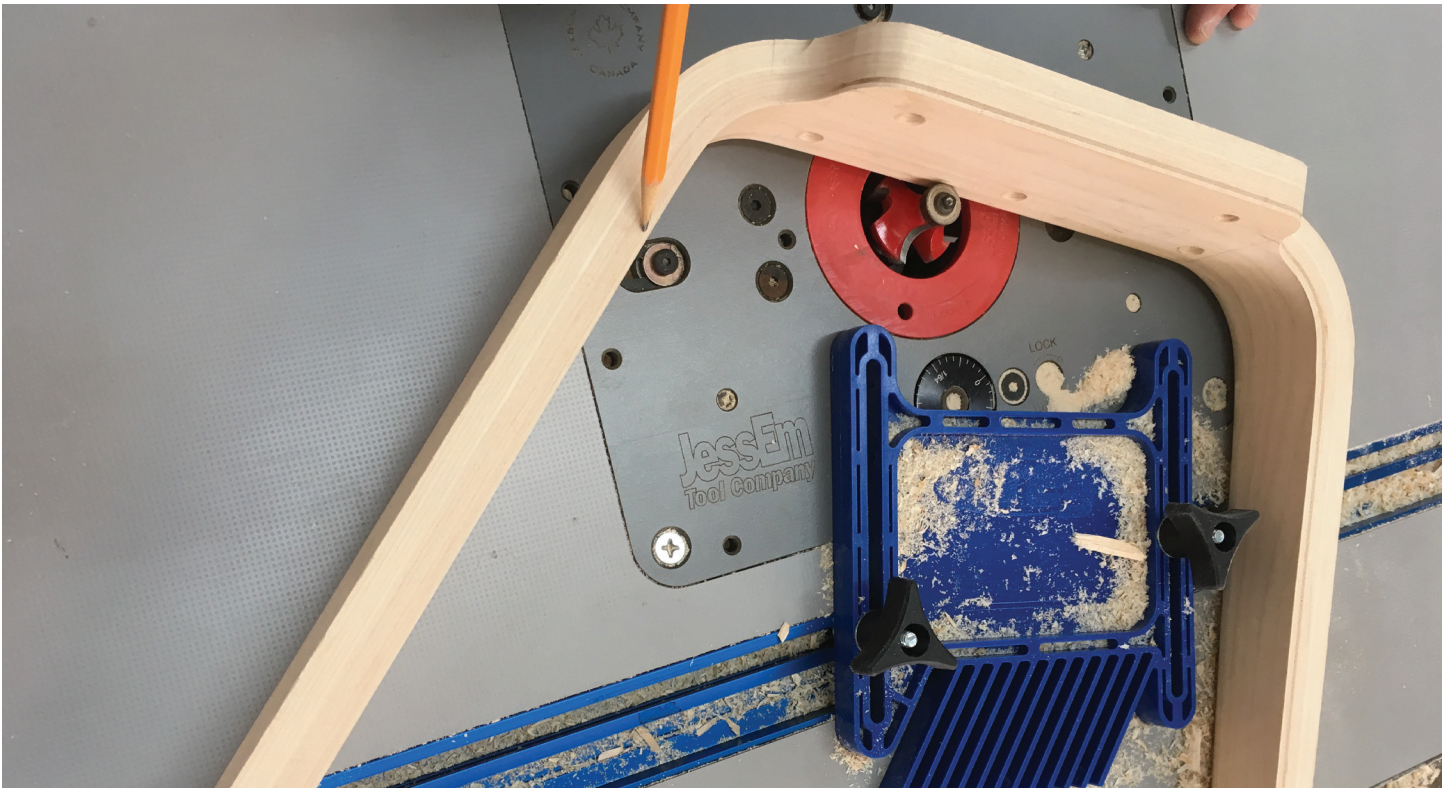


*"I've been a student of Michael Thonet for years and consider him the founder of modern furniture," Cox says. "His process for bending wood to create components led to the development of seating with timeless, classic designs. The Legacy Collection re-introduces and re-imagines a classic Thonet design in a new updated architecture."*

Inspired by Bruno Weil's bent plywood collection for Thonet in 1945, the Legacy Collection uses the same bent plywood manufacturing methods of that era. Designed to facilitate multipurpose, collaborative space in corporate, education, hospitality and healthcare environments, the Legacy Collection includes chairs, barstools, personal desks, dining tables, and community tables at various heights. A modern twist on Mid-Century Modern design makes the Legacy Collection especially relevant.

Although plywood has a very ancient lineage, today's plywood technology allows Thonet to bring ultra modern aesthetic, environmental and functional benefits to the Legacy Collection. At the client's request the veneer face can be composed of numerous species, including maple, birch, ash, oak, walnut, or cherry. When stained, the veneer provides very consistent color and allows the beauty of the natural wood grain, with its richness of figure and tone, to adorn the chair.





Today Thonet uses sophisticated adhesives, pressing technologies and modern construction techniques to deliver exceptional strength and performance. The components are joined using metal to metal fasteners that deliver BIFMA performance, yet still facilitate field repairs and future re-upholstery requirements, if needed.

Seating in the Legacy Collection combines exceptional comfort and classic design. While retaining the basic lines of the original design from the 1940's, the back and undersides of the plywood components have gently rounded profiles that offer greatly improved ergonomic comfort and a smooth, sensuous, tactile experience. Chairs and barstools feature finished wood seats or upholstered seats as an option. The barstools and bar-height tables have metal foot rails that bring a dynamic visual and tactile contrast to the warmth of the veneer and add a robust structural integrity. A personal desk, available with casters, offers the essential flexibility and mobility required by today's multipurpose environments and complements the chair's refined architectural line.

The Legacy Collection uses modern design and manufacturing techniques to refine Thonet's timeless classics and builds on Thonet's legacy of bringing reasonably priced, beautifully designed products to the commercial market, while staying true to the simplicity and beauty of the originals.



*Thonet is very proud to note that this new Legacy Collection is designed, engineered, and 100% manufactured in the USA.*