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ARNE JACOBSEN (1902-1971) - THE GOLDEN EGG

A perfectionist modernist. These are the words that describe Danish design legend Arne Jacobsen. The life-long partnership with Fritz Hansen put Danish furniture on the world map with a series of trendsetting, technically revolutionary and ultra-functional furniture classics, all the result of a close and unique co-operation between architect and manufacturer.

Born and raised in the fashionable Østerbro district in Copenhagen and the son of an affluent merchant, it was not exactly on the cards that young Arne Jacobsen would, in time, become one of the world's leading modernists in furniture and architecture.

During his school days at Nærum boarding school, Jacobsen showed a great talent for drawing, and it was his initial hope that this creativity could lead to a career in the visual arts. However, his father, wholesale dealer Johan Jacobsen, had other plans for his son, so following a brief career as a sailor and a period as a bricklayer's apprentice in Germany, Arne Jacobsen was enrolled in the Copenhagen Technical Academy. After his graduation in 1924 he was admitted, with his father's blessing, to the Architect School under The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen where he studied under Professor Kaare Klint. This was a choice that would turn out to have a permanent impact on both Arne Jacobsen and Danish furniture design in general.

Already in 1925 the talented architect student was awarded an impressive silver medal for one of his very first pieces of furniture at the world exhibition in Paris. In 1929, only two years after his graduation from the Architect School, the 27-year old Arne Jacobsen won the first prize for an ultra-modernistic concept for *The House of the Future* at *The Building and Housing Exhibition of the Academic Architects' Association* in Copenhagen. The house was built for the exhibition, and it established Arne Jacobsen as one of the most visionary and progressive Danish architects at the time. At the same time, the house was the first example of actual modernistic architecture in Denmark.



BELLAVISTA

The publicity he gained for *The House of the Future* contributed to landing Arne Jacobsen his first major project in 1932 – the Bellavista housing estate including the Bellevue Theatre in Klampenborg north of Copenhagen. This project marked the beginning of a life-long partnership with Fritz Hansen who made the chairs for the theatre restaurant.

JACOBSEN AND HANSEN

The co-operation with Fritz Hansen took a successful commercial turn with the introduction of the revolutionary stacking chair model 3100 – later to be known as *The Ant*. It was given its name by architect, sculptor and painter Gunnar Aagaard Andersen (1919-1982) due to its characteristic, narrow “waist-line” between the seat and back. The chair was the first of its kind with the seat and back made out of one piece, and besides showcasing Arne Jacobsen’s unique talent as a modeller, it was a milestone in technical achievement for Fritz Hansen.

The advanced production technologies developed for this model, especially those behind The Ant’s moulded wooden seat, prepared the ground for a number of further developments of the three-legged success over the next years. These included the model 3108 that was used in the Bank of Denmark, a building planned by Arne Jacobsen, the model 3130 that won the Grand Prix award at the XI La Triennale di Milano in 1957, and not least the immensely popular and the best selling product of all times from Fritz Hansen – The 7 chair from 1955.

SWAN AND EGG

A special feature of the fruitful Arne Jacobsen/Fritz Hansen partnership was the fact that almost every piece of furniture was developed mainly using physical trial models at the factory workshops. Together with Arne Jacobsen the skilled cabinet makers and modellers at Fritz Hansen played an integral part in determining the final design and shaping of the chairs, as was the case with Arne Jacobsen’s two major works, The Egg and The Swan chairs from 1958. Both chairs were developed for Jacobsen’s modernistic masterpiece, the Royal Hotel in central Copenhagen, and to this day they stand out as classic and timeless style icons.

A special attraction for anyone wanting to spend a night at the hotel (today renamed to Radisson SAS Royal Hotel) is to ask for room 606. This is the only room in the hotel that appears with the original Arne Jacobsen furniture and design, exactly as when the hotel opened in July 1960.

OXFORD

Similarly, the popular Oxford-series was originally designed for St. Catherine’s College near Oxford, completed in 1968.

A TRIBUTE TO SERIES 7

Testimony to the continued popularity of the Arne Jacobsen collection from Fritz Hansen is the fact that in 2005, when the 50th anniversary of The 7 chair was celebrated, a number of the world's leading design brands such as Louis Vuitton, Paul Smith, Diesel, Mandarina Duck and Hugo Boss lined up to pay tribute to the Arne Jacobsen classic with a series of unique interpretations of the popular stacking chair. The chairs were subsequently auctioned off, following a true triumphal progress with exhibitions in London, Milan and New York.

Besides in the world famous buildings planned by the architect himself, you will find Fritz Hansen's Arne Jacobsen furniture in the famous Sydney Opera House by Danish architect Jørn Utzon, in the amazing National Art Center in Tokyo and not least as part of the furnishing in London's new architectural landmark, architect Sir Norman Foster's futuristic skyscraper *The Gurkin* (Swiss Re-tower).

Today the following Arne Jacobsen products are manufactured and sold by Fritz Hansen Ltd.:

The Ant, The 7 chair, Oxford, The Egg, The Swan, The Swan Sofa, and Series 3300

Furthermore, the Grand Prix chair from 1970 has been re-introduced in 2006, and spring 2007 will see the 3208 chair, also known as *the Lily*, re-entering the Fritz Hansen collection.

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