

GUBI

GUBI presents the B-Table

BY MARCEL GASCOIN



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Marcel Gascoin reimagined the folding bridge table for the compact, modern homes built in post-war France. With space in short supply, Gascoin responded with a multi-purpose surface that could be deftly transformed from the typical square card table into a larger circular breakfast table by simply folding up a curved section on each edge. Now remastered by GUBI with the addition of magnetic locks for a smoother transition, the B-Table (1950) is emerging as a contemporary classic, perfect for homework, working on a laptop and dining.

After the Second World War, France's reconstruction effort involved significant investment into the building of houses and apartments. These homes were smaller than people were used to, but promised new modern comforts, so furnishing them required a new rational approach. Gascoin was able to draw on the inventive space-efficient designs he had been fascinated by throughout his seafaring childhood. He joined an intellectual movement of modernists – that included Robert Mallet-Stevens, Charlotte Perriand, René Herbst, and Le Corbusier – which was reinventing modern France. The new standard of useful and pragmatic furniture he developed freed the French people from the past and enabled them to look forward with newfound hope and confidence.

A deeply-felt social conscience meant Gascoin designed furniture that was not only highly functional, but also carefully crafted and aesthetically refined – he had no interest in creating iconic designs that would populate museums, but ironically, he did just that by humbly serving the needs of a French populace devastated by war. Realizing that modern furniture would have to work harder, he spent time researching how to combine multiple roles into a single piece. He took inspiration from the traditional folding bridge table and added functionality in the form of fold-up sections, which transformed a simple surface for four into a convivial table around which a family of up to six could dine comfortably. It is this size optimization, as well as its understated elegance, that resonates with city-dwellers in smaller spaces and today's compact homes.

The B-Table is two tables in one, each with a very different aesthetic. It comprises a sturdy oak or walnut frame atop four streamlined tapering legs. A square tabletop features an additional curved section on each of its four sides. Lifting up just two sections onto a curved crossbeam underneath and rotating the tabletop causes the other two sections to rise. All four sections slide effortlessly into magnetic locks, securing them in place. This smooth and simple transition means the table can be transformed from one form to the other – and back again – by one person in a single fluid motion. The entire table, even its innovative mechanism, is carefully crafted from solid and veneered oak or walnut.

GUBI has taken Gascoin's original drawings and refined them – increasing the height of the table to reflect today's taller diners and streamlining the turning mechanism with the addition of magnetic locks – to create a B-Table for the 21st century. Despite being known as the 'father of serial production,' Gascoin was unable to put the approach into practice in his lifetime. Using contemporary knowledge and insights GUBI has been able to see this ambition through. And, through a flat-pack design for energy-efficient transportation, as well as the use of FSC-certified oak and formaldehyde-free glue, contemporary environmental considerations are now taken into account too.

The B-Table (1950) is part of a unified collection that also includes the S-Table (1953), C-Chair (1947) and Trèfle Stool (1949). Designed to work as part of a coherent interior scheme, the pieces offer visually consistent and adaptable dining or office solutions, enabling the two tables to be mixed and matched with the C-Chair editions and the Trèfle Stool in any combination.

GUBI has been working with the Marcel Gascoin archive since the reintroduction of the first editions of C-Chair in 2018. Jacob Gubi, Owner and Creative Director of GUBI, is on a mission to realize the potential of this mid-century designer's work, by reintroducing it to today's audiences and aligning it with contemporary needs. The launch of the B-Table adds to a growing collection of Gascoin's work for GUBI.



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