GUBI

GUBI presents the GUBI 3D Chair – Recycled Edition

BY KOMPLOT DESIGN

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Designed by Komplot in 2003, GUBI's landmark 3D Chair was the first to incorporate three-dimensional veneer technology into its manufacture. Now, in another progressive development, GUBI has developed the Recycled Edition – an environmentally friendly option, perfect for outdoor use, that is made using recycled plastic. The plastic shell echoes the form of the natural veneer edition, with all of its edges curving away from the sitter, offering unparalleled comfort and unexpected light weight.

Industrial and graphic designer Boris Berlin and architect Poul Christiansen, who together form Komplot Design, describe design as an intermediary – a link between art and engineering, between manufacturing and the end user, between different cultures, between tradition and innovation, rationality and intuition, logic and emotion. It is this approach that enabled Komplot Design to see the potential in the innovative new technique of molding 3D-Veneer – a process invented in Germany by Dr. Achim Müller and developed by the Reholz GmbH company – when they saw it showcased almost 20 years ago. The 3D-Veneer allowed the design and production of wooden organic shapes that couldn't be realized before. In the past, the bending and forming of wooden veneers was possible only within narrow limits. The young, innovative German company changed all that, beginning a new era in wood design. Komplot Design worked closely with Müller to apply this new technology to the development of a chair shell and then with GUBI to prepare their prototype for production. The GUBI 3D Chair was the first industrial application of this new technology, and the realization of what molded veneer pioneers, such as mid-century designers Charles and Ray Eames and Arne Jacobson, could only dream of.

Molding 3D-Veneer not only offered new scope for the form of the chair, but the unique possibility of reducing its thickness to a mere 5.5 mm versus the 10–11 mm typical for molded veneer shells at the time. In other words – a reduction of the wood required by half, thanks to human ingenuity and inventiveness. And despite a complex construction process, its timeless design remains calm and uncluttered – and free from fashion-led detailing. It was quickly recognized as a modern classic and acquired for the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York and Designmuseum Danmark, Trapholt Museum, among others.

It is no surprise then that the pair immediately agreed when GUBI proposed a version in recycled plastic. Plastic is a very durable material for outdoor use and a pragmatic choice beneath fully upholstered chairs. Using post-industrial plastic – a special compound made of boxes, packaging and used technical components – provides the opportunity to give this incredibly long-lasting material a second or even a third life. The addition of a UV additive protects it from sun damage and finally, virgin plastic is added to ensure strength and durability. The GUBI 3D Chair can also be disassembled and recycled again at the end of its lifespan.

Just like its veneer predecessor, the double curves of the Recycled Edition's shell – now injection molded to equally slender thicknesses – provide an inviting and comfortable shape, even when unupholstered. Seen from the front, the organic soft shape of its shell seems full-bodied, but viewed from the back, the shell is surprisingly thin and the form is hollow, maintaining the original concept of the 3D Chair. The geometry of the shell offers the dynamic comfort not restricting the sitting posture – you can sit as you please, even sideways or using the back as an armrest.

The new Recycled Edition, available as a Dining Chair and Bar Stool in classic black, offers even more possibilities for use in indoor and outdoor spaces – and its sled base makes it stackable, providing flexibility for hospitality as well as private use.

The GUBI 3D Collection, which comes in variants with different bases, finishes and upholstery options, was always designed to be used in a variety of situations, from meeting rooms and conference rooms, to canteens, cafés, restaurants and residential spaces. Wooden frames were added to early tubular, solid rod sled and stacking steel bases in response to client demand and the collection has evolved over time, owing to a desire to embrace any interior. Today, it comprises a Dining Chair, Lounge Chair, Bar Stool, and Counter Stool.

The GUBI 3D Chair has won many design awards, among them the Danish Design Prize (2004) and the Red Dot Award (2004) and it can be seen in use at the new World Trade Centre and MoMA's 'Café 2' restaurant in New York, at Copenhagen and Los Angeles airports, and in Zaha Hadid's extension to Danish art gallery Ordrupgaard.

GUBI has been working with Komplot Design since the conception of the GUBI 3D Chair – the first chair in GUBI's Collection and GUBI's initial move away from a sole focus on office furniture. The collaboration remains a fruitful one as the GUBI 3D Collection evolves and the Recycled Edition is just the latest example of a significant creative partnership.