

# GUBI

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## Gascoin's Fulfillment of French Functionality

THE ICONIC C-CHAIR NOW IN PAPER CORD AND VENEER



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Originally designed in 1947 for post-war housing in France, the C–Chair has become one of French architect and designer Marcel Gascoïn's most iconic and enduring designs. Its compact size, together with its carefully balanced fusion of function, comfort and aesthetics, make it relevant to contemporary audiences.

Coming from a family of mariners, Gascoïn was immersed in all things nautical from an early age and became fascinated with the clever and compact design demanded by seafaring vessels. Later, he became part of an intellectual movement of modernists that included the likes of Charlotte Perriand, René Herbst and Le Corbusier and, like them, was driven by a profound sense of responsibility towards people who lived through the Second World War.

Gascoïn found the opportunity to combine these influences in a new standard of furniture for the smaller post-war housing constructed as part of France's recovery effort. The oversized and often uncomfortable Louis XV or Regency chairs of the past were no longer appropriate, so Gascoïn prioritized simple functionality, executed with meticulous attention to detail. His philosophy was to create useful furniture that would serve French families and eliminate useless ornament. He would carefully measure the houses, designing furniture to fit, optimizing and rationalizing family life, and in doing so creating a new sense of freedom. The utilitarian, yet elegant, pieces that resulted became a staple in French households. Today, they represent not only the aesthetic and practical power of his work, but also his admirable social conscience.

*"The C–Chair is an iconic design, with such a spirit of generosity in its creation, that we couldn't not put it back into production. It deserves its place in the pantheon of design classics and these new editions will only add to its growing reputation,"* says Jacob Gubi, Owner and Creative Director, GUBI.

Gascoïn created the first C–Chair – with a paper cord seat and backrest – for an apartment concept in Sotteville-lès-Rouen in collaboration with the architect Marcel Lods as part of a *gesamtkunstwerk* or "total work of art" in which every detail of the space was considered. The apartment was one of ten housing prototypes showcased at the International Exhibition of Town Planning and Housing in Paris in 1947. The C–Chair's slender footprint was ideal for that space and those just like it being built all over France at the time – and it is ever-more appropriate for the space-efficient apartments that characterize city living today – or simply for gathering more people around a sociable and lively dining table.

Today's C–Chair is designed in accordance with Gascoïn's original drawings – only the seat height has changed to reflect the increasing height of contemporary sitters. A strong, sturdy and durable frame and tapered legs provide the same sculptural skeleton for all editions. Each C–Chair is visually elevated with an inviting and comfortable seat and backrest in a range of lighter materials, that support multiple sitting positions over long periods of time.

Monique Laurent-Gascoïn, Marcel Gascoïn's daughter, explains: *"With his work, my father wanted to provide a better and easier life for all people. He not only achieved that in his lifetime, but through the collaboration with GUBI, he continues to do so today. When GUBI approached me about a collaboration, it seemed only natural – my father was influenced by Scandinavian design and I felt his work was from the same 'family' as the furniture already in GUBI's collection."*

GUBI's existing C–Chair Collection comprises a French cane edition, an upholstered edition and an edition with a French cane backrest and an upholstered seat. Two new editions for 2020 – a hand-woven paper cord edition just like Gascoïn's first design and a veneer edition – complete the family of five. Gascoïn's passion for wood and his dedication to craftsmanship shine through in every detail – and with a modular design to minimize wastage, as well as the use of formaldehyde-free glue and all-natural materials in the non-upholstered editions – contemporary environmental considerations are taken into account too.

The C–Chair (1947) is part of a synergistic collection which also includes the S–Table (1953), B–Table (1950) and the Trèfle Stool (1949) – a simple and flexible seating solution named after a four-leaf clover ("trèfle" in French) originally designed for children at a summer camp in Normandy. Designed to work together, and all well received in their own time, the pieces share an aesthetic coherence which means they offer a unified dining or office solution in any combination. The newly expanded collection of seat and backrest finishes provides additional flexibility, with the durable hand-woven paper cord edition being particularly suitable for contract environments and the elegance of the French cane perfect for a home interior.

GUBI has been working with the Marcel Gascoïn archive since the reintroduction of the first editions of the C–Chair in 2018. Always looking for new ideas and inspirations, Owner and Creative Director of GUBI, Jacob Gubi, came across this bold design gem in the archives and immediately decided to reawaken contemporary audiences to the work of Marcel Gascoïn, which had gone unrecognized for decades. The launch of two new editions broadens the C–Chair's appeal, making it relevant for more settings, both commercial and residential.