

Eames collection update 2025

In September 2025, Vitra will present a comprehensive update to the Eames collection: several iconic products by Charles and Ray Eames have been revisited. The updates include more sustainable materials, new surface finishes and a range of authentic colours. Detailed descriptions of the updates to the various product families are provided below.

Eames Lounge Chair

When Charles Eames was asked about the design process for the Lounge Chair: *'Did you think of the Eames chair in a flash?'*, he responded, *'Yes, it was flash of inspiration ... a kind of thirty-year flash.'* By this he meant that he and his wife Ray had channelled all the experience gained from their other designs into the development of the Lounge Chair.

Charles also coined the phrase 'Innovate as a last resort', expressing the conviction that good existing solutions should be used for new designs rather than starting from scratch each time. The design of the Lounge Chair therefore contained some elements that they had already used in a similar manner in other products, such as the moulded wood veneer or the so-called 'shock mounts'. Nevertheless, the Lounge Chair looked incredibly futuristic when it was launched in comparison to the English club chairs that were common at the time – and it has since established itself as one of the most important furniture classics of the twentieth century.

True to the spirit of the Eameses, Vitra has now further refined many details of the Lounge Chair, drawing on decades of production experience and ensuring its sustainability for the future.

There are now six different veneer options to choose from for the wooden shells – with the exception of palisander, all the wood is now sourced in Europe. Palisander from Bolivia is still offered for the shells of the Eames Lounge Chair, as it is of great historical significance for the original design by Charles and Ray Eames. The composition of the inner layers of the veneer shells has also been revised with a view to sustainability and the face veneer or surface is now treated with a water-based varnish instead of a polyurethane coating.

The fabric and leather covers can be removed for cleaning or replacement. And all the individual elements – wooden shells, covers in many colours and bases – can be freely combined. Thanks to this choice of new options, armchairs can be configured with an unprecedented level of customisation, making it easy to find the right Lounge Chair and Ottoman for every taste and need.

Eames Aluminium and Soft Pad Group

The **Aluminium Chair** is one of the greatest furniture designs of the twentieth century. Charles and Ray Eames developed this chair in 1958 for the private residence of an art collector in Columbus, Indiana (USA). For its construction, the designer couple departed from the principle of the seat shell, instead stretching a panel of fabric or leather between two L-shaped aluminium side members to create a taut but elastic seat.

The design of the **Soft Pad Group** dates from the year 1969. In terms of both construction and shape, the Soft Pad Chairs are similar to the design of the Aluminium Group. However, their sewn-on cushions create a striking contrast to the slender aluminium profiles. The Soft Pad Chairs are softer and more voluptuous than the chairs in the Aluminium Group, but without losing the clean clarity of their common silhouette. The chairs adapt to the body of the sitter and provide extraordinary comfort.

The aluminium elements come in a chrome-plated, polished or powder-coated finish. Vitra is now expanding the choice of colours for the powder coating: in addition to the existing black, the new options of dark bordeaux and chalk are now also available. These hues are derived from the Eames colours aubergine and parchment and create new configuration options for the Aluminium and Soft Pad Group chairs.

Refurbishment Service

The two chair families are particularly durable thanks to the quality of their construction – it's not without reason that Vitra offers a 30-year warranty on these models. However, the longer a chair is in use, the need may arise to replace the fabric or leather – not only due to wear and tear, but also to match a new interior colour scheme, for example. This gives chairs an updated look and further extends their life cycle.

Vitra therefore offers business customers the option of having their Aluminium Chairs or Soft Pad Chairs reupholstered at the Vitra Campus in Weil am Rhein as well as to service or refurbish the aluminium frame. It is also possible to convert an Aluminium Chair into a Soft Pad Chair – and vice versa. The service is initially available in Belgium, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Austria and Switzerland, with other countries to follow.

Used, reupholstered and reconditioned chairs from the Aluminium and Soft Pad Groups may also be purchased by business customers and given a second life via the Vitra Circle for Contract initiative.

Eames Shell Chairs

La Fonda

The concept behind the La Fonda base had already been developed by Charles and Ray Eames in 1948 for the Plastic Chairs, which were launched in 1950. The final form took shape in 1960 when their friend, the designer and interior architect Alexander Girard, needed suitable chairs to furnish the La Fonda del Sol restaurant in the Time & Life Building in New York City.

With its central pedestal consisting of four parallel shafts that split at the bottom to form a four-star support, the La Fonda is one of the most elegant and unconventional bases ever created by the Eameses. Always striving to develop comprehensive design solutions, they added the new base frame to their already extensive collection of Shell Chairs.

To date, Vitra has only offered this base version for the Plastic Armchair RE DAL and a limited edition of the Fiberglass Side Chair DSL with fabric-covered seat cushions in a pattern by Girard.

Vitra is now adding this option for the Plastic Chairs RE, the Fiberglass Chairs and the Wire Chairs. The La Fonda base for the DAL (Dining Height Armchair La Fonda Base), DSL (Dining Height Side Chair La Fonda Base) and DKL (Dining Height K-Wire La Fonda Base) models is available either in a polished finish or powder-coated in black or white. It is made of 95% recycled aluminium, which is in turn fully recyclable. The seat geometry and height have been adapted to current requirements.

Wire Chair

Charles and Ray Eames presented the Wire Chair one year after the Eames Plastic Chair with its one-piece seat shell that can be combined with diverse bases. Made from welded steel wire, the Wire Chair is a variation on this category of chairs, pairing transparent lightness with technical sophistication.

The wire shell can be joined with a variety of different bases and is offered without upholstery, with a seat cushion, or with a two-piece seat and back pad known as the 'Bikini' due to its shape.

Vitra has developed a new outdoor version of the 'Bikini'. Equipped with a clip system, it can now be easily removed and washed or replaced: the Wire Chair Bikini Outdoor. As the fabric and padding are weather-resistant, the powder-coated Wire Chairs can now also be fitted with a comfortable 'Bikini' pad in outdoor settings.

The existing classic indoor version of this two-piece cushion, which sits snugly against the wire construction, will still be available in the same wide selection of fabric colours and leather options. Thanks to this range of choices, a suitable Wire Chair can be found for every purpose – indoors, outdoors or both.

Eames Accessoires

Hang it all

Used instead of simple hooks, the brightly coloured small and large wooden balls of the 'Hang it all' coat rack encourage children to literally hang up all their things. 'Hang it all' is a cheerful alternative to boring coat hooks – and not just for children's rooms. And thanks to the uniform distance between the balls, multiple coat racks can be mounted side by side for additional storage.

The original multi-hued composition of 'Hang it all' was conceived by Ray Eames. However, she also developed several other variants at the time. Vitra has used the corresponding documents held in the Vitra Design Museum and the Eames palette to create four new additions in collaboration with the Eames Office: a neutral 'Hang it all' in a reduced spectrum of Eames colours, another in cool tones, one in warm hues plus an understated warm white version. As the colours are from the rich chromatic universe developed by Charles and Ray Eames, the different models not only ideally complement one another but can also be perfectly paired with other Eames products.

The coloured surfaces of the wooden balls are now sealed with water-based varnishes; the existing black ash and natural walnut versions have matt surfaces, while the others are glossy.

Occasional Table LTR

The LTR (Low Table Rod Base) is a small, versatile occasional table designed by Charles and Ray Eames, who used it in their own home in a variety of different ways. A number of these tables are still found in the Eames House today. Standing individually or in groups, some are decorated with objects collected by the Eameses, while others simply serve as a practical side table next to an armchair or sofa.

Vitra has now revised the materials of the LTR in collaboration with the Eames Office. Alongside the powder-coated version in black or white, the previous chrome-plated base has been replaced with stainless steel. The solid wood table tops now come in in European walnut and chestnut, which complement the existing version in dark oak. Table tops are also offered in laminated wood with a surface made of the sustainable natural material linoleum in the three colours jade, dark brick and smoke blue. The plywood version is also available with a high-pressure laminate surface in white or black from material leftover from Vitra's office table production.

Elliptical Table ETR

On account of its resemblance to a surfboard, the low elliptical coffee table ETR (Elliptical Table Rod Base) quickly acquired the nickname 'surfboard table'. The top comes in either white or black with a refined two-part base exemplifying a common theme in the work of the Eameses – namely that of bent steel wire welded together to make a rigid structure.

Vitra now pairs the black or white table top with a matching powder-coated base frame, giving the expansive coffee table a contemporary aesthetic. The table top is made of poplar plywood with a robust high-pressure laminate surface.

Stools

In 1960, the Eames Office was commissioned by Time Inc. to outfit the interiors of three lobbies in New York's Rockefeller Center. As part of this project, Charles and Ray Eames created the Lobby Chairs and a series of stools. They designed the seats of these lathe-turned stools in solid wood to be concave enough to provide a comfortable place to sit, but not so deep that a teacup would tilt and spill. The stools can therefore also be used as occasional tables. The various models are differentiated by the distinctive profiles of their shafts.

Vitra is now producing the stools in European walnut and also adding a new, light-coloured version in chestnut to complement the dark version. At the same time, the surface finish was also changed from varnish to hard wax oil, replacing the former glossy shine with a matt appearance and giving the stools a completely new, soft look.

Eames House Bird

Charles and Ray Eames enriched the collage-like interior of their private home, the Eames House, with numerous objects and accessories that they brought back from their travels. For over fifty years, the figure of a wooden bird has stood in the centre of the living room – an artefact that was highly treasured by the couple and frequently appeared as an accessory in photographs taken by Charles and Ray.

Vitra has now reworked the Eames House Bird: the previous models in black and walnut have been joined by a bird figure in light-coloured ash wood. With its understated, puristic look, this version offers new possibilities for stylish interiors.

The surface treatment has also been modified: water-based lacquer is used for the Eames House Bird in black, pigmented oil for the cotton white version and dark pigmented oil for the walnut version. The wood grain of the bird figures has thus been made more pronounced, giving them a softer, more refined and less plastic-like appearance. The walnut version was changed from American to European wood.

Eames House Whale

Charles and Ray Eames surrounded themselves in their legendary Eames House with their own designs and an extensive collection of folk art, as well as other small objects found on their travels, in nature and in everyday life. A prominent feature of this collage was a huge wooden whale over two metres in length, an anonymous work of North American folk art. Charles and Ray Eames were exceptionally fond of the painted object: it occupied a permanent place in the Eames Office and was also used in photo shoots – such as the first photos of the Lounge Chair.

The smaller-scale reproduction of the Eames House Whale by Vitra is crafted from ash wood. The paints with which it is meticulously hand-finished are now water-based for environmental reasons.

Eames Elephant

In the early 1940s, Charles and Ray Eames spent several years developing and refining a technique for moulding plywood into three-dimensional shapes, creating a series of furniture items and sculptures in the process. Among these initial designs, the two-part elephant proved to be the most technically challenging due to its tight compound curves, and the piece never went into serial production. One prototype, which was given to Charles's 14-year-old daughter Lucia Eames, was loaned to the Museum of Modern Art in New York for a 1946 exhibition. It still survives in the Eames family archives today.

After issuing a limited edition in 2007, Vitra commenced serial production of the legendary Eames Elephant in plywood for the first time in 2017. Vitra has now changed the veneer of the Eames Elephant (plywood) to use wood sourced in Europe: instead of American walnut, the pachyderm will be made of European walnut and a new, light-coloured version made of chestnut is being introduced. Both wood variants are treated with water-based lacquers.

Vitra has also adapted the sculptural construction in a version made of plastic. This model is now manufactured in plastic sourced from post-industrial waste. The transition to recycled material is accompanied by a revision of the colour palette for the Eames Elephant RE: the previous colours black, white and pale pink are complemented by the four new colours emerald, green, sky blue, Eames Red Orange and canary yellow.

Plywood Mobile

In the early 1940s, Charles and Ray Eames conducted a series of experiments for the purpose of refining their plywood moulding techniques. These investigations led to the creation of an object whose biomorphic contours are strongly reminiscent of Ray's artwork and graphics. The Eameses hung the piece as a mobile from the ceiling of their Los Angeles apartment.

In collaboration with the Eames Office, Vitra has now complemented the existing Plywood Mobile A with the new Model C, which is likewise inspired by one of Ray's paintings. At the same time, the dimensions of Model A have been slightly increased – which is why it is now called Model AL. Both Plywood Mobiles consist of two abstract, organically shaped plywood elements that playfully revolve around one another. They are available in black and now also in the colour ice grey.