



**JOHANSON**



**Johanson // Inspiration**



**Cover**  
Poodle / PLUS1  
Concept  
Anna Herrmann  
Alexander Lervik

**Saga**  
Alexander Lervik

**Johanson has reached an international audience with Scandinavian design and solid furniture craftsmanship.**

**For more than 60 years, the public space has been our home ground. We have always valued our production highly and hold a high regard in being able to offer high-quality furniture made in Sweden. Through our flexible manufacturing, we enable tailor-made collections, where customers have the opportunity to choose from 400 RAL colors and over 100 textile and leather coverings.**

**Quality and the environment are important keywords criteria for us, with the company being ISO 14001 certified and meeting the high standards of Möbelfakta accreditation. Our products also satisfy the strict requirements of EU standards for testing and strength in public environments.**

**We work with some of Europe's best designers and constantly strive to challenge ourselves in terms of product development in form as well as materials and technology. The designers' ideas in combination with our Småland craft tradition, give the products a very special style and feel.**

**Welcome to Johanson**

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**Saga**  
Alexander Lervik

**Madison table**  
Alexander Lervik





**Saga**  
Alexander Lervik

**Madison table**  
Alexander Lervik

**Saga BS**  
Alexander Lervik







**Milo Low**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Milo High**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Milo Wing**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Milo Footstool**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Dice**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Stroll Butler**  
Böttcher & Kayser







**Dice**  
Böttcher & Kayser





**Moment**  
Johan Lindstén

**Peak table**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Moment BS**  
Johan Lindstén

**Peak Quattro**  
Böttcher & Kayser



**Ester**  
Alexander Lervik

**Madison table**  
Alexander Lervik







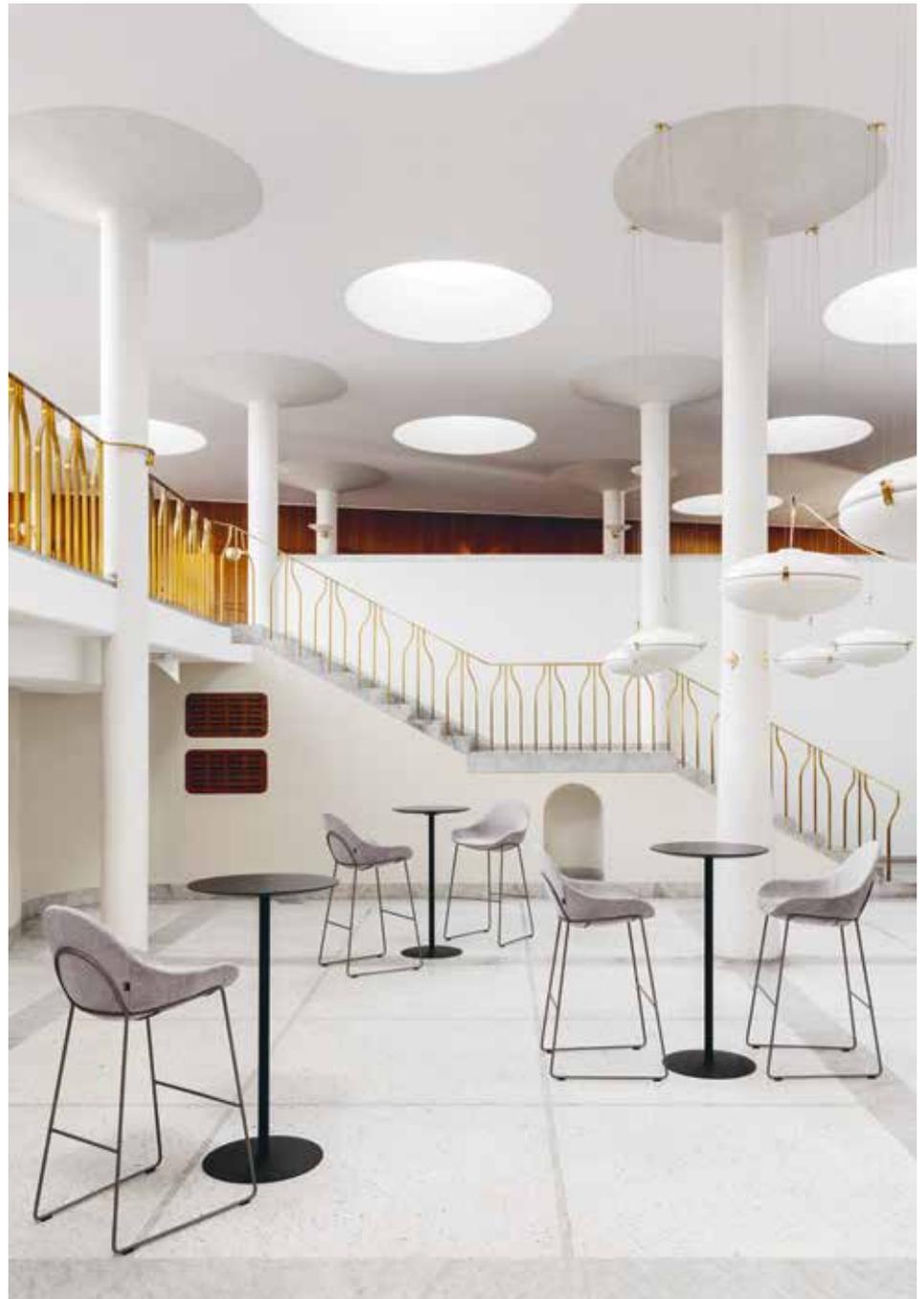
**Atticus takes its inspiration from Harper Lee's "To Kill A Mockingbird". The Atticus concept has its roots in the natural world, most specifically the North American mockingbird with its elegantly rounded wings that assume an almost shell-like form.**

**Atticus takes its name from the iconic hero of Harper Lee's classic American novel from 1960, To Kill A Mockingbird.**

**"It's not only one of my favourite books; its enduring story of justice for the underdog is especially relevant today. With this in mind, I sought to bridge my American heritage with Johanson's Swedish roots to create a new icon for the company. Atticus is a timeless collection based on respect for form, craftsmanship, comfort, and elegance."**

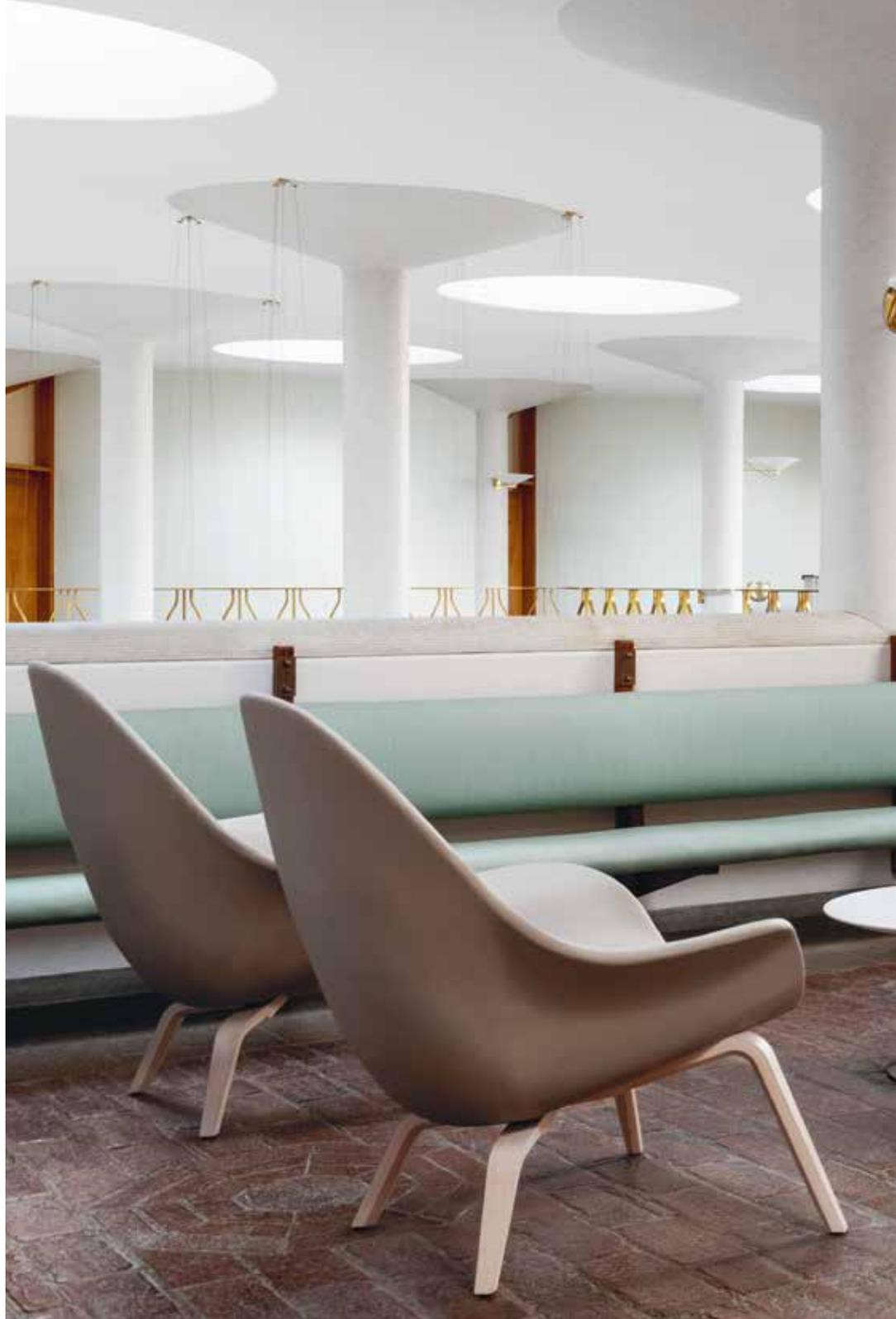
**// Erin Ruby**





**Atticus BS**  
Erin Ruby

**Stay table**  
Team Johanson



**Atticus Lounge**  
Erin Ruby

**Bail**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Stay table**  
Team Johanson







**Atticus Lounge**  
Erin Ruby

**Parker**  
Färg & Blanche

**Reform Daybed**  
Alexander Lervik

**Stay table**  
Team Johanson











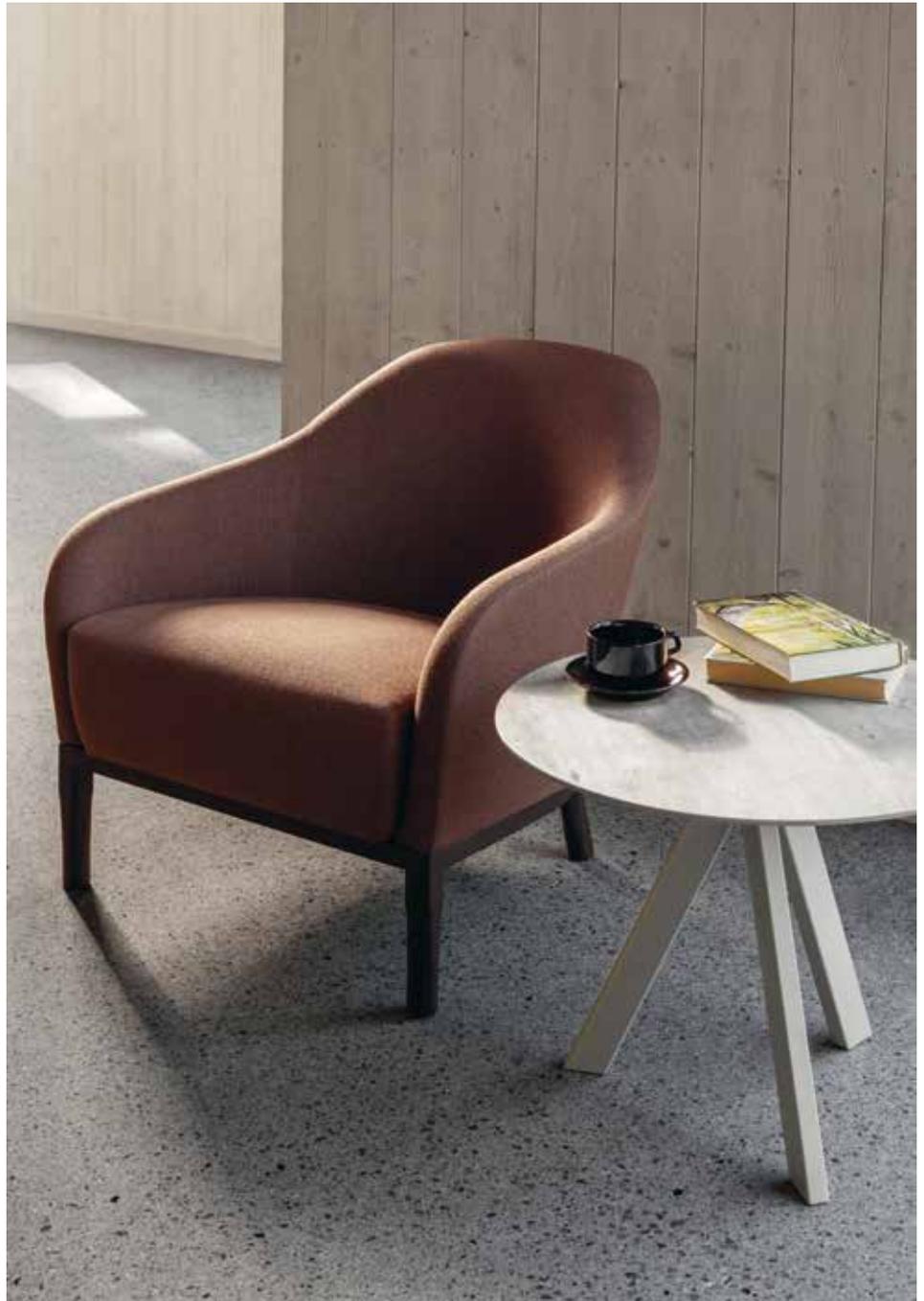
**Edith**  
Alexander Lervik

**Bail**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Bail Table**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**“I was listening to Edith Piaf when I was designing this chair and thought: this chair is going to be extremely comfortable so that you can sink into it, disappear into a world of your own and enjoy listening to music for total relaxation. I wanted the armchair to have an identity yet still feel light in design.”**

**// Alexander Lervik**



**Edith**  
Alexander Lervik

**Peak Triple**  
Böttcher & Kayser









**Bail**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Parker**  
Färg & Blanche







**Largo**  
Börje Johanson

**Peak table**  
Böttcher & Kayser





**Bowl**  
Johan Lindstén

**Boston table**  
Mattias Ljunggren



**Studio**  
Alexander Lervik

**Madison table**  
Alexander Lervik

CAFÉSCENEN





**Haddoc EC**  
Johan Lindstén

**Speed Table**  
Johan Lindstén









**Haddoc Oyster**  
Johan Lindstén

**Madison table**  
Alexander Lervik

**Haddoc Shell**  
Johan Lindstén

**Venus table**  
Börje Johanson



**Mind**  
Alexander Lervik

**Plain table**  
Team Johanson





**Mind EC**  
Alexander Lervik

**Mind BS**  
Alexander Lervik

**Madison table**  
Alexander Lervik

**Speed Table**  
Johan Lindstén

**U-drop**  
Alexander Lervik







**Robbie**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**U-sit**  
Alexander Lervik

**Madison table**  
Alexander Lervik







**U-sit**  
Alexander Lervik

**U-sit Screen**  
Alexander Lervik

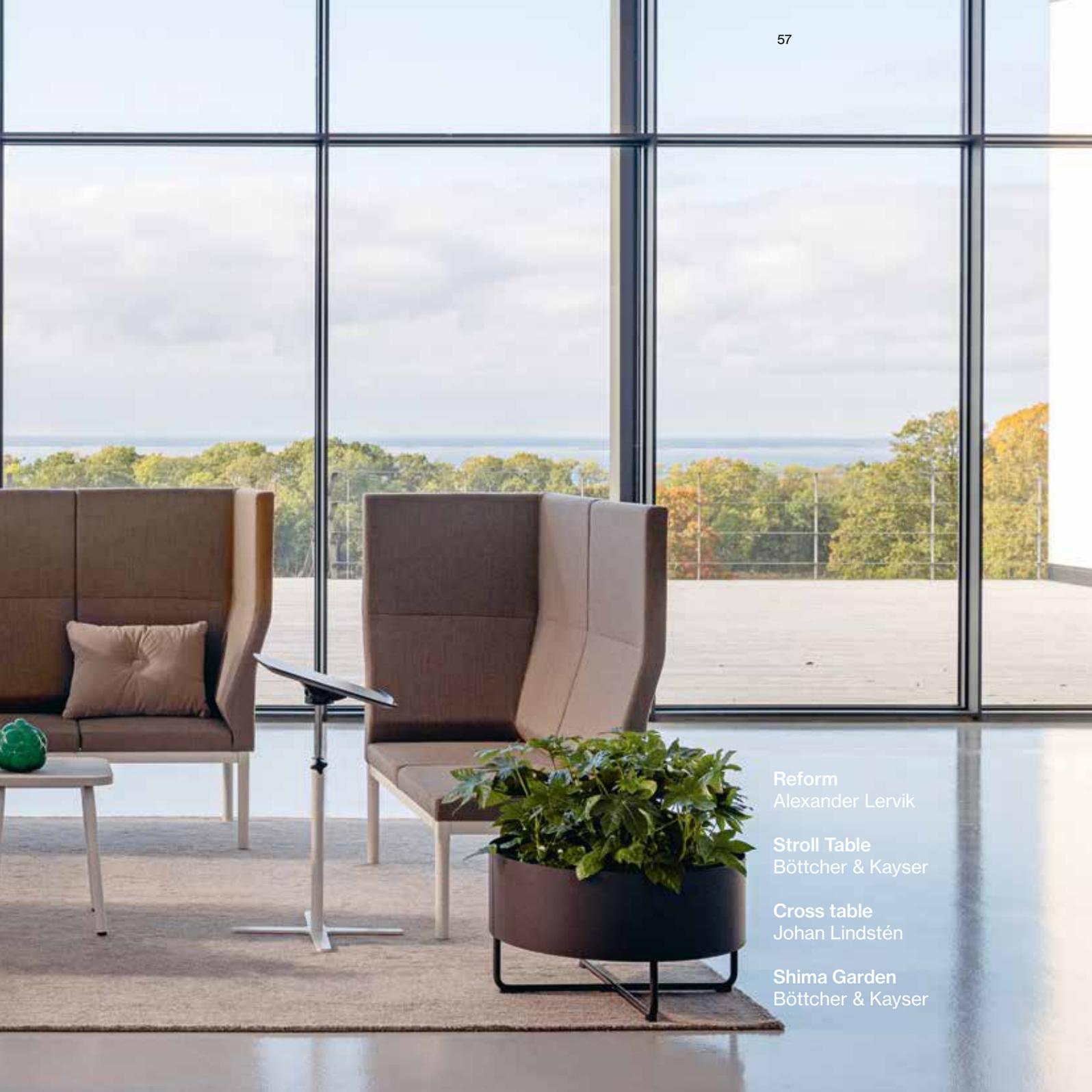
**Robbie BS**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Stroll Table**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**X-Bone table**  
Alexander Lervik

**Eden**  
Böttcher & Kayser





**Reform**  
Alexander Lervik

**Stroll Table**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Cross table**  
Johan Lindstén

**Shima Garden**  
Böttcher & Kayser



**Speed**  
Johan Lindstén

**Peak Ouattro**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Speed EC**  
Johan Lindstén

**Peak Triple**  
Böttcher & Kayser







**Frankie**  
Färg & Blanche

**Peak table**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Shima Garden**  
Böttcher & Kayser



**Frankie EC**  
Färg & Blanche

**Stay table**  
Team Johanson

**Frankie BS**  
Färg & Blanche







**Friends**  
Alexander Lervik

**Peak Triple**  
Böttcher & Kayser







**Dandy**  
Alexander Lervik

**Madison table**  
Alexander Lervik



**Norma Chair**  
Färg & Blanche

**Peak table**  
Böttcher & Kayser









**Edith**  
Alexander Lervik

**Norma**  
Färg & Blanche

**Detroit table**  
Mattias Ljunggren

**Race**  
Cory Grosser





**Race**  
Cory Grosser

**Stroll Table**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Race Table**  
Cory Grosser

**Shima Garden**  
Böttcher & Kayser





**Gap**  
Simon Pengelly

**Peak Quattro**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Shima Garden**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Stroll Bench**  
Böttcher & Kayser





**Gap**  
Simon Pengelly

**Apex**  
Johan Lindstén

**Peak Quattro**  
Böttcher & Kayser



**Cabin**  
Alexander Lervik

**Venus table**  
Börje Johanson







**Pelican is the first chair in Sweden to be awarded the European eco-symbol "EU Ecolabel".**

**"The idea of creating an easily stackable chair with maximum seating comfort and using recycled materials had been in the air for a long time. The Pelican model, released in spring 2020, is an elegant chair with soft lines and is made of recycled plastic".**

**// Johan Lindstén**



**Pelican**  
Johan Lindstén

**Plain table**  
Team Johanson





**Pelican**  
Johan Lindstén

**Peak table**  
Böttcher & Kayser





**Pelican**  
Johan Lindstén

**Peak table**  
Böttcher & Kayser



**Pelican BS**  
Johan Lindstén

**Venus table**  
Börje Johanson

**Peak table**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Pelican**  
Johan Lindstén

**Peak Bench**  
Böttcher & Kayser









**Saga**  
Alexander Lervik

**Sputnik**  
Mattias Ljunggren



**Stroll**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Peak table**  
Böttcher & Kayser





**Pilot High**  
Alexander Lervik

**Madison table**  
Alexander Lervik

**Pilot Low**  
Alexander Lervik

**Venus table**  
Börje Johanson





**Eye**  
Alexander Lervik

**Eye Lounge**  
Alexander Lervik

**Eye Table**  
Alexander Lervik









**Bella**  
Börje Johanson

**Viggen**  
Börje Johanson

**Vinga**  
Börje Johanson

**Peak table**  
Böttcher & Kayser





**Plateau**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Detroit table**  
Mattias Ljunggren

**Boston table**  
Mattias Ljunggren





**Plateau**  
Böttcher & Kayser







**Charlie**  
Färg & Blanche





**Charlie**  
Färg & Blanche

**Parker**  
Färg & Blanche



**Mississippi**  
Johan Lindstén







**B-bitz**  
Pinc/ Team Johanson

**Aston**  
Johan Lindstén

**Eden**  
Böttcher & Kayser

**Venus table**  
Börje Johanson









**Shima**  
Böttcher & Kayser





**P77**

Jonas Lindvall

**Madison table**

Alexander Lervik

**Rib**

Alexander Lervik





**Jackie**  
Mattias Ljunggren

**Stay table**  
Team Johanson

**Jupiter**  
Börje Johanson





**Venus**  
Börje Johanson

**Venus table**  
Börje Johanson



## **Our history //**

**From the Johanson brothers' armchair industry to Johanson Design**



Hylands Hörna  
1966

## Boxing Day Christmas 1966

Sweden still has left-hand traffic. Tage Erlander is prime minister. Watching TV is the great pleasure of the people, there is a TV set in almost every man's home. But we only have a single channel and all the programs are broadcast in black and white. Audience judge Lennart Hyland is one of the country's most popular people. His live entertainment program Hyland's Corner makes almost two-thirds of the population expectantly sit down in front of the TV box. One of the program's standing features is "Beautiful Mask," which involves Hyland trying to figure out who's hiding behind the evening's disguise. Sitting on a live horse, a shape strongly reminiscent of the ingenious knight Don Quixote clatters onto the stage. With the help of a number of questions and inclined assistance from the studio audience, a confused Lennart Hyland reaches the conclusion that it is the talented and somewhat eccentric actor Per Oscarsson who is the evening's secret guest. And here begins one of the strangest and most remembered performances ever in Swedish TV history. Oscarsson gives a monologue about everything from sex education to immigration policy, but it is not what he says but what he does at the same time that attracts the most attention. He's stripping! Calmly and methodically, the actor strips off several layers of sweaters and long underpants, until he stands there in just his boxer shorts. The stripped-down articles of clothing are set aside on a bar stool that is neatly highlighted from the studio décor.

Three viewers of the five million who have more or less been horrified to see the rather innocent feature in a contemporary perspective are in a villa on Drottninggatan in Markaryd. This particular trio is almost certainly proud rather than shaken. The bar stool in question is designed and manufactured by the Johanson Brothers' Armchair Industry, just a few steps away from the house where they sit. Neither grandmother Lilly Johanson, her son Börje nor daughter-in-law Sylvia have any idea how the family business's sales success Barstol 1 ended up in Sveriges Television's prop storage at Gärdet in the capital Stockholm. But as soon as the bar stool is placed in front of actor Oscarsson, Börje realizes that there is something big going on. He picks up his Super 8 camera and immortalizes the spectacle. For those who do not have access to the Johanson family's archive of old film reels, the clip is thankfully posted on Youtube!

But let's take it all from the beginning.



Barstol 1

## 1920 – 1933

Vara's son Albin Johanson works for a couple of years as a base at a lamp industry in Stockholm but is lured down to Markaryd, where his brother and brother-in-law started a cement factory. That doesn't go quite as Albin intended. The brother and brother-in-law let him pull the whole load at the factory, which in the long run does not carry itself. So Albin, who is happy in reading and proficient in everything he sets out to do, is forced to find other ways to make a living. According to the youngest son Sven – who is the main source of this part of the story – the father often changes professions, possibly he was a restless nature.

Every cloud has a silver lining; Albin meets a girl from the area. Her name is Lilly and she has her roots in Traryd, in the middle of snapphaneland! Albin and Lilly get married on July 28, 1922 and move into a multi-family villa in Skärsjödäl, right next to the old dance floor. Here, in quick succession, the six siblings Gösta, Margit, Gunnar, Börje, Britta are born and in 1933 it is finally the youngest brother Sven's turn to see the light of day.

Despite the large number of children, Mother Lilly has time to contribute to the household coffers. She takes sewing work for Ekå and sews straps for their sandpaper machines. Ekå, founded in 1928, is now called Ekamant and is actually the world's oldest manufacturer of sandpaper.



Fam Johanson.  
From the left back row:  
Albin, Lilly, Gösta, Margit.  
Front row: Gunnar,  
Börje, Sven och Britta.

## 1934 – 1952

It's time for Gösta Johanson, the eldest of the siblings, to embark on his professional life. With completed seven-year elementary school in his pocket, he gets a job at Fabriks AB Ekå. None of the other Johanson siblings continue to study, but all of them finish their schooling as thirteen-year-olds. Gösta has green fingers, remembers little brother Sven, and is also equipped with an extraordinary sense of order. That he is a valued employee would show: Gösta and two other particularly talented employees each receive a plot of land donated by Ekås' founder and owner Ernst Andersson. The year is 1948 and the address Hyltevägen. With the assistance of his father Albin, who by now holds a position as a building inspector, his own house will soon be ready and Gösta and later his sisters and brothers can move in. "As we got married and started our own families, we moved on," Uncle Sven recalls.

It is also now, during the second half of the 1940s, that the teenage brothers Börje and Sven get a place as apprentices in Kåre Back's upholstery workshop. Here they will remain for some time into the next decade, and even then big brother Gösta, after a stint as a gardener, joins them. Börje and Sven find it easy to absorb the craft, probably a talent they inherited from their multi-talented father. Gösta's strong point lies more in the orderly and logistical direction. The characteristics of the three brothers complement each other well. Front and foremost, they master the craft themselves. Börje's entrepreneurial spirit and sense of design are matched by Gösta's organizational skills, while Sven's inventive eye for detail, design and production is invaluable when the time comes to start his own business.

Börje is good at football and plays in Markaryds IF. On a football trip to Denmark, he wins a brass pillow in the lottery. He's never seen one before and is struck by the idea that he and his brothers could make it themselves, being the upholsterers that they are.

## 1953 – 1971

The Johanson brothers' armchair industry was founded in 1953. The famous brass pillows will be the company's first product, made of artificial leather / galleon, upholstered with wood wool with wadding on top. The pillows consist of triangles that are sewn together so that they form a star pattern. The galleon is initially bought from the wholesaler Karlssons in Oshult, but becomes too expensive. Instead, they turn directly to the manufacturer, Gamlestadens Konstläderfabrik in Gothenburg, where they become one of the largest customers. The brass pillows are consumed "like butter in Småland".

The name Bröderna Johansons Armchair Industry sounds grand so it suggests, but the reality is completely different. Production initially takes place in Gösta's basement with an old bad sewing machine as the only aid. The sewing machine, incidentally, is borrowed from mother Lilly. As demand increases, more machines are acquired. Thanks to knowing Gunnar Lindberg, whose parents run the clothing store Lindbergs Konfektion, you are allowed to buy some at an affordable price from there.

A happy coincidence gives a real boost to the sales successes. The middle brother Gunnar has made a political career and thanks to that he becomes director för the dancehall Skärsjödalen, which then is developed into a public park. That way Gunnar gets to know businessman Sture Malmgren, who sells lottery goods all over Sweden. He takes a liking to the Johanson brothers' brass pillows and in this way the brass pillows from Gösta Johanson's basement become lottery prizes in practically every raffle there is, from Ystad in the south to Haparanda in the north.

When the basement becomes too small for the growing business, Börje realizes that there are old modules that the army no longer has any use for. He buys a military barracks that is set up on Gösta's plot. The first own factory is a fact!

Towards the end of the 1950s, interest in brass pillows has ebbed away, but the business has expanded with other things. Now armchairs, mattresses, beds and ottomans are made. The frames are initially purchased from elsewhere. At the same time, production is moved to newly built premises, which are eventually taken over by the heat pump company NIBE and are still there.



The Johanson brothers' armchair industry on Hannabadvägen 1963-1972, now NIBE's head office.



Boda



Bras pillow

1953 – 1971

Here, the Johanson brothers' armchair industry also has its first real office.

The office is managed by Börje's wife Sylvia with the help of, among others, a married brother-in-law, Arne Lindeberg. In 1963, a woman was hired who would become a valuable asset to the company. Her name is Anna Greta Johansson, a handsome but tough woman. She looks after all foreign agents and all correspondence with them. Anna Greta is gifted with languages and over time receives the title of export manager. She is until the mid-1990s, in parallel with Börje, something of the company's face outwards, when new forces in the form of Börje's sons Dan and Paul take over the leadership. However, she remains officially employed until 2001.

As production grows, of course, more staff are required. One of the first is Kåre Back, the very same upholsterer who had Börje, Sven and Gösta as apprentices in his own workshop. However, the first employee is Lasse Jönsson, who is just 14 years old when he started in 1959. Lasse will develop into a first-class, energetic and record-breaking upholsterer and, with its enormous capacity, plays a very significant role in production. Lasse is of tough mettle and continues to work until he is over 70 years old!

By the early 1960s, the workforce has expanded to about ten people, a handful of whom are seamstresses recruited from the local community. It is Sven Johanson's task to acquire sewing machines for the new seamstresses. Singer and Pfaff are the best brands. The seamstresses, who work piece work, get to use the machines at home and the furniture fabrics are delivered by Sven, who has not only learned how the efficient electrical machines work but can also repair them if necessary. It is also Sven who makes most things and draws patterns for the fabrics.

The company's first customers are people who live in the area. The reputation of high quality and reasonable pricing is slowly but surely spreading in ever wider circles. More often than not, Börje is seen steering his fully loaded flatbed in shuttle traffic between the factory and the railway station, for forwarding to a growing clientele. It is not long before a company truck is acquired to keep up with all the deliveries. The Johanson brothers' armchair industry is also a decent early adopter of establishing a troop of travelling salespeople. Also utilizing the

opportunity to show off at furniture fairs, such as Stockholm, Malmö and Copenhagen. Before the fairs, there is always frantic activity in the factory. All brothers, even those who do not work in the company, plus brothers-in-law and enough adult children, will help pack the truck that is going away. Once in the exhibition area, the stand itself is built up. For many years, it is Sven who is responsible for ensuring that the job is carried out according to the drawings.

Business rolled on. Börje Johanson is the driving force in the business and also the one who mostly designs the furniture, but Sven often has a finger or two in the game, especially when it comes to finding solutions to various design problems. The biggest challenge is to come up with new models so that the sellers have something to show off.

From the fact that the majority of production is aimed at the home environment, the public sector is now beginning to be targeted. On the contract side, Gerdman's Inredning accounts for almost half of sales. The export market is starting to take off in earnest. With the help of a couple of American brothers, who on the one hand are a bit awkward to deal with, but on the other hand order hundreds of each product, the step is taken over to the other side of the Atlantic. There are many Swedish descendants who want to decorate with Swedish furniture. In the years before the turn of the decade 1969-70, the Johanson brothers' armchair industry gets in touch with Danish Niels Hørlyck Agencies, which becomes the company's agent all over the world.

Niels – who is a special personality – travels around with a catalogue of Scandinavian furniture and writes orders on the assembly line. He maintains most of his business relationships on the golf course. In the then largest export market, the United States, mainly the captain, houston and navigator armchairs find space in many JR Ewing-like offices. An important component of these armchairs is the well-constructed steel bases.

These are designed by the self-taught Sven Johanson in this area and manufactured in the neighboring workshop run by Samhall and whose manager Helge Jansson is married to Gösta, Börje and Sven's sister Britta. Helge is very good at finding solutions for metal welding. For Johanson, the significant and unique trumpet foot base is made in two pieces



Venus 1960



Venus 2020



Gösta Johanson



Sven Johanson

that are pressed together and welded together with a collared pipe before it is sanded and becomes exemplary fine, without any joint! The workshop was taken over in 1998 by Johanson and is now called Metector.

We can't talk about the 1960s without mentioning the classic egg-shaped armchair Venus, one of Johanson's best-selling furniture of all time. Numerous are the bars, restaurants, nightclubs, cruise ships, offices and private homes where Venus is a prized part of the décor.-

The armchair, which is not entirely straightforward to produce, gets an unexpected revival when Peter Gaszynski, owner of the trendy interior design store House in Stockholm, in the

late 1990s discovers it. He is in search of retro furniture and becomes completely lyrical when he comes to Markaryd to visit. The crux is only that Venus no longer remains in production, which is why the factory has no tools left. But it works out. Dan and Paul, who by then took over responsibility for the business, find the company that delivered the tool, Strandex in Rävlanda, and get them to manufacture a new one. A deal is being made, which would be very profitable for all parties involved. Here, of course, Sven Johanson's expertise comes in handy, he remembers in detail how he solved the trickiest moments in the production and Venus' rebirth is an important milestone in Johanson's success story.

## 1972 – 1993

After a few shaky years with generally declining industry figures, Börje Johanson and his brothers manage to get the ruckus back on track. So much so that they find themselves forced to look for larger facilities. In 1972, the factory moved to newly built and more modernly equipped premises on Hässleholmsvägen. Now it says Johanson on the factory signs. A little over ten years later, in 1983 more precisely, the owner duo Gösta and Börje receive an offer to sell their company to an investment company, which had already acquired Gerdmans Inredning, which several years earlier had been the brothers' largest customer. Among the synergies investors seem to see is that the two companies can have a common computer system. A cable just over a kilometer long is therefore drawn from Gerdman's premises down to Hässleholmsvägen, where new terminals are installed. It's big machines that makes a lot of noise," Johanson recalls. Nephew Lars Wenlid, phenomenal at computers, is very helpful in the change. The new machines mean a new start for the business, both administration and production are affected. The oldest brother Gösta, who until then is the one who keeps track of where all the stuff is in his head, is relieved, as is Börje, who does not really want to let go of control, but now



Börje Johanson

Johanson Design's premises on Hässleholmsvägen 1972-2008



realizes it is a positive change for everyone involved. Though once in the beginning it's about to take an end with dismay; an accountant accidentally pulls out a plug so the whole thing goes out!

In the early 1980s, sales were around SEK 12-15 million, with a peak in 1987-1988 when it was up to SEK 20 million. The investment company has meanwhile received other plans and in 1985 Börje buys back the company, now as sole owner. The total number of employees stays around twelve people. Many are faithful servants who stay for a whole working life, several continue to work after reaching retirement age. A clear sign that you are happy with both employers and colleagues. The conflicts that may arise are resolved quickly and smoothly. All furniture is designed by Börje, often assisted by his younger brother Sven. The "TV star" Bar stool 1 continues to sell well, as does the era-typical AMIGO TV armchair. There is no talk of moving production to a nearby low-cost country, like many competitors. Börje Johanson has decided that everything will be manufactured on site in Markaryd, maintaining full quality control and the job is done properly.

Markaryd in the 1980s is no different from what it looks like in 2021. The approximately 6,000 inhabitants, most of whom live in their own villas, experience the community as a safe place. Nibe has started to grow so fast, which provides many jobs. While mom and dad are at work, the children engage in outdoor activities. A lot of football. Several of the ball-kicking youngsters, look up to the local hero Nanne Bergstrand as a role model! Two of those who participate in all sports with life and desire are the brothers Dan (born 1967) and Paul Johanson (born 1972), Börje's sons. Their memories of their father's workplace are limited. It is very exciting to follow mom Sylvia after working hours and savor the special smells from the workshop, borrow the scooters that are used to get faster between the stations on the shop floor and to play ping pong on the staff table tennis table! When they get a few years older, they get summer jobs mowing the grass and eventually some simpler chores in production such as putting paws on chair legs, helping to pack the truck and building stands when it's time for the annual furniture fairs. But that they would shoulder their father and their uncles' cloaks in the family business is far from a given. However, destiny had spun its own tapestry for the Johanson brothers 2.0..



## 1993 – Present

At Christmas time in 1992, Börje Johanson suffers from an acute heart condition. The eldest son Dan, who has just finished his university studies in Halmstad and who before military service worked full-time for a few months on the factory floor, has temporarily returned to his hometown and now suddenly has a greater responsibility. The third week of January it is off to the IMM fair in Cologne and a short time after that to the Furniture Fair in Stockholm. On both these occasions, little brother Paul is dispensed with military service by an understanding colonel and can also do his bit. Father Börje remains convalescent so when it's time for *salone del Mobile* in Milan, Dan once again has to hold the helm, this time alone as Paul has not been given time off from his military service. Everything goes like a charm. Dan and Paul have now gotten to know the company's foreign agents and seriously got to experience the atmosphere at the world's leading furniture fairs. At the same time, the opportunity is given to get a closer insight into how the 'business' itself works. It gives you a taste for more. But there is still a great deal to be discussed before any final decisions can be made.

The reality is, Johanson have experienced some pretty tough years. Sharply declining turnover. No new models being developed. The company is quite simply, depleted and it has gone so far that it is more or less decided the company should be sold. Negotiations are conducted with a venture capital company and results in the business being retained, with Dan and Paul as half-owners while father Börje and mother Sylvia own the other half. Sylvia still works in the office with responsibility for accounting. Börje is recovering from his heart attack and formally retains the CEO title, but for medical reasons his efforts are limited to nurturing relationships with some of the factory's key suppliers. In practice, Dan and Paul take over responsibility for the entire business. The fact that both parents remain together with the mainstay Uncle Sven is a huge security for the young brothers. At the same time, it involves a balancing act. Dan and Paul have ambitions and want to invest in the future and develop, while father Börje, who is formally still in the CEO's chair, is a more cautious general. Consequently, you have to hurry slowly, but with patience combined with youthful enthusiasm and proven competence, you eventually get Dad on board!

Dan and Paul have many ideas about what measures are



Paul och Dan Johanson

necessary to implement in order to turn the tide in the right direction and gradually increase the pace. It is decided that product development is a prerequisite for survival, so together with his uncle Sven, Dan and Paul sit down and started sketching. Help has been received in conversation with Erik, who, as he has worked for several years at Niels Hørlyck, knows the market well. The joint analysis was that modern executive armchair is a niche to go for. The combination of advanced mechanics from a reputable supplier in Italy, a slim profile and a thin, nice, high back results in the Lotus chair. There is nothing like it on the market and Lotus will be a success!

With the assistance of an advertising agency, catalogue and PR material is picked up, and flyers sent out. The new generation of Johanson is looking to move from a somewhat hierarchical corporate culture to a more vibrant and open, more even organization. "Management by walking around" as it is called in the terminology of the time. Dan gets to benefit from his university studies in marketing and sales and they start making their own business plans. A very rewarding move is to hire Halmstad University and ask some of the students to do a customer survey to find out how Johanson is perceived by the market. The results would show that Johanson is considered great value for money and strongly admired for its trumpet style base.



Snaps

Two changes that Dan and Paul quickly realize are necessary are to review the sales side and to start collaborating with external designers. Gradually, the foreign agent network is rejuvenated and the strategy in co-operation with these company's international representatives is also drastically changed. From stick to carrot, one could sum it up. Instead of pushing and making demands, Dan and Paul travel around

asking how they can help and support their Agents. This also allows them to become more responsive to what kind of products the market demands. In 1997-1998, a new agent was appointed to the large market of Germany and around the same time Peter Schneider gets in touch. Peter, a Dane living in England, is working on a project for British Airways and spots the iconic Venus trumpet base from Johanson. Mutual liking arises and Peter becomes the company's agent in the UK. It turns out to be a stroke of luck, in 2006 Peter secures an order from the London office of major international bank Arab Bank, a very lucrative order that still continues to this day.

Almost 50 percent of Johanson's total turnover is exported with representation in a total of 55 countries. Another couple of measures that fit under the heading "Sell side" are the transition from net to gross price list, which means that those who buy more frequently can be offered better trading terms. You also begin to process the important target group of architects in a more efficient and conscious way.

Until the generational change in the mid-1990s, all design had been done in-house. Paying royalties to designers was considered an unnecessary expense. The first step in the new thinking really comes from outside initiatives. Designer Mattias Ljunggren, who collaborated a lot with Källemo and is a big name, gets in touch because he needs help with a bar stool he designed. The chair is called Sputnik and still remains in the range. Having such a well-known designer as Mattias attached to him is of course a feather in the cap and makes it easier when the next designer profile approaches for discussions about collaboration. It is Leo Thafvelin and his first creation for Johanson is named Snaps, also a barstool. Snaps secured an iconic status and became a major export success. Customers in the UK, Germany and the Netherlands buy the stool in large numbers. Shipping companies are becoming aware of the special design, which means it ends up on a number of cruise ships and ferries. Stena Line is one of the first customers to furnish two new boats in a deal with fierce competition. But Paul and Dan go up to Gothenburg and manage to row the order home. Stena is still an important customer today.

In 2003, the collaboration with designer Alexander Lervik begins. Alexander has since been an important cog in the



Johanson Design's premises in Markaryd 2022

## 1993 –Present

Johanson design machinery. When he has the assignment to develop the interior for the Sturecompagniet indoor venue in Stockholm, he receives strict rules of conduct from nightclub owner Vimal Kovacs to only use Johanson's furniture – they are the only ones who can handle the hard wear and tear that occurs in nightclubs!

Stockholmer Magnus Östlin was one of Johanson's biggest customers in the mid-1990s. When Dan asks if he wants to switch sides, there is no time to consider and he was quick to accept. Among the things that mean the most for the success in the Stockholm district is the aforementioned Vimal Kovacs, who owns Stureplansgruppen. He wants all the furniture in the group's nightclubs and restaurants to come from Johanson. The clubs thus become a kind of showcase for the Småland furniture manufacturer.

In 2002, a showroom opens at Grev Turegatan 50 in central Stockholm. The Stockholm department is growing all the time and six years later Daniel Jonsson is hired as architect manager. In 2013, the showroom will be moved to Ringvägen 9, where there are larger premises and its own parking spaces. Sales are increasing at a rapid pace in the district of Stockholm, Mälardalen and Norrland. Thanks to Daniel and Magnus, they manage to get Johanson's furniture into companies such as Spotify, Google, Coca Cola, Trygg Hansa, Klarna, NCC and ABB. One of the success factors is Dan and Paul's responsiveness to market changes and development ambitions. The brothers always find new approaches.

In the late 1990s, Magnus mediates contact between Johanson and the design agency Pinc in Stockholm. Pinc has created the fantastic flexible system B-bitz, which with seat poofs as a base can be combined with everything from backrests to light boxes. B-bitz is the starting point to reach a wider clientele because it is a system everyone can work with and at this time there is nothing like it. Ten years later, B-bitz has evolved into the modular sofa system U-sit, which in 2020 accounts for a large part of the company's turnover. The mastermind behind U-sit is Alexander Lervik.

Sustainability is a 'buzzword' for many, but for the brothers it's their driving force. The philosophy is simple: our furniture should be created in an environmentally friendly way, long lasting and the material should be recyclable to be used again. When new products are developed, sustainability is included

right from the drawing board. For example, the RIB and P77 chairs, which were launched in 2011, are made of recycled materials and the Nordic Ecolabel is awarded. The Pelican chair series, designed by Johan Lindstén in 2020, is the first chair in Sweden to receive the EU Ecolabel.

And so there it goes. More and more sustainability measures are being introduced, the company is ISO 14001 certified in 2008, energy consumption is reduced with various measures and in 2021 virtually all products meet the criteria for Möbelfakta. Over 90 percent of the range is adapted for a circular economy. But if you ask Dan and Paul, it's mostly common sense that's required.

A look back gives perspective on Dan and Paul's ambitions and the company's strong development. In 1993, when Dan and Paul step into the picture in earnest, Johanson has twelve employees and a turnover of ten million SEK. The company's future hangs in the balance, but a healthy bet is half won, and the brothers decide to bet fully.

In 2020, the staff consists of 60 people on Anders Anderssons väg, where the move will take place in 2009. In 2020, sales in the Group have reached approximately SEK 200 million. The Group has Metector in Markaryd, where all steel components are manufactured by about twenty employees, the independent production unit LTZ in Lithuania, also with about 20 employees, the artificial leather wholesaler Corium (since the late 1990s) and the new brand Decibel, which manufactures sound-absorbing sound plates.

In 2021, Johanson will move into its new large showroom on Blekingegatan 22 in Stockholm, as part of adapting to a more sustainable future. Here, customers can see, feel and sit in many of the furniture included in Johanson's large range in peace and quiet before deciding.

The story of Johanson does not end here. Some brass pads are no longer raffled off after football games. Instead, solid furniture is created with timeless design making its way into every corner of the world. With a corporate culture that breathes fun at work and a genuine desire to give customers value for money, the company is today a strong player in a large international market.

Johanson stands stronger than ever – and still with foundations firmly anchored on Småland soil



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