

Chaise Tout Bois

Design: Jean Prouvé, 1941

A shortage of metal during the Second World War inspired Jean Prouvé's creative spirit: he developed his only chair to be made entirely from wood. Vitra is now reissuing this design from 1941, which matches the modern-day mindset, not just with regard to the choice of material but also in terms of inventiveness.

During the Second World War certain materials, such as metal, were scarce, forcing Jean Prouvé to search for alternative solutions. As the chair's French name indicates, Jean Prouvé developed the Chaise Tout Bois entirely from wood. Its design is very similar to Prouvé's famous Standard chair.

The profile of the rear frame section – back legs and backrest support – is characteristic of Prouvé's furniture and architectural designs. It articulates his intention to provide added strength at the transition point between the seat and backrest, where the load weight of the human anatomy is greatest.

Prouvé created several prototypes of this chair during the war for the purpose of testing its structural strength as well as the joints, leg position and connection between the seat and back. The chosen type of wood depended on what was available at the time. After the war, there was once again a sufficient supply of oak, which due to its hardness and strength was commonly used in France to construct ships and cathedral roofs. As these properties are also ideal for an all-wood chair, the Chaise Tout Bois was ultimately made out of oak and plywood – also offered in dark-stained versions when requested by Jean Prouvé's customers.

In 1947, Prouvé won an award for the Chaise Tout Bois in the 'Meubles de France' competition. The concept of the competition was to find attractive, high-quality, mass-produced furnishings to meet the post-war needs of society – particularly refugees and young married couples.

Chaise Tout Bois, which is being produced by Vitra for the first time in 2020, matches a design variant from 1941, whose construction does not require a single screw. The height and seat meet current norms and requirements. Chaise Tout Bois is available in light or dark oak.