

GUBI

PRESENTS

BEETLE IN 3D VENEER

by GamFratesi



GUBI presents Beetle in 3D veneer by GamFratesi

A material makeover for an iconic GUBI design

In 2013, GUBI and GamFratesi introduced the Beetle Chair to the world, and a modern classic was born. Now, a decade later, the studio has reimagined their landmark design concept in 3D veneer – giving the Beetle a bold new natural expression and further emphasizing its status as an archetypal design, open to interpretation in any number of materials.

The veneer edition takes the organic, nature-inspired form of the original Beetle shell, and adapts it to accommodate the realities of working with veneer. The result translates the Beetle's distinctive curves into a molded wooden shell, giving the chair a new material aesthetic without compromising the comfort for which it has become renowned, and expanding the design's relevance to even more interior settings.

The shell of this new iteration comprises two separate pieces. The backrest and seat are connected by internal spring-steel brackets that are invisible from the outside. Each piece is 3D-molded using a bending press – a method of shaping veneer pioneered by mid-century designers such as Charles and Ray Eames and Robin Day, and which GUBI has evolved to the next level. In 2003, GUBI became the first design brand to employ three-dimensional veneer technology, with the production of the landmark GUBI 3D Chair by Komplot Design.

3D technology enables designers to produce organic shapes that were once impossible to create. This molding technique is uniquely able to create the Beetle's distinct curvature using veneer, while maximizing its comfort and flexibility. This required an extensive process of experimentation to perfect. Transforming the veneer from flat surface to three-dimensional form also introduces depth and texture to the material, emphasizing the vertical grain and color of the wood, and giving the chair a premium appearance and a natural character.

Despite the Beetle's transition to a new material, GamFratesi's original inspiration – and the design's namesake – is still evident in the veneer edition's form, perhaps even more so. The sinuous seat and back are visual echoes of the segmented parts of a

beetle's body; the hard outer shell mirrors the insect's protective exoskeleton; and the upholstered seat and backrest reference the soft body inside. The addition of wood veneer only emphasizes the design's connection to the natural world and the forms of nature that inspired it.

The Beetle has always involved a high degree of skill to produce, but with the veneer edition, GamFratesi has introduced an even greater level of craft. The meeting point of the two shells, as well as the junction between the wood and the upholstery, underline the craftsmanship that has gone into the chair, as well as emphasizing its precise detailing and graceful form. The thickness of the shell varies: wider at the points of connection, to allow for greater strength, but thinner at the edges to preserve the iconic silhouette.

Light and dark wood veneers are available: oak and American walnut. Together with the wide range of upholstery options, this means the chair can be matched with interiors of any style or color palette, and to be deployed equally effectively in the home or in hospitality settings, where it makes a striking and peerlessly comfortable seat. As with the existing Beetle Collection, these new veneered editions are configurable as dining, bar, counter, and meeting chairs.

GamFratesi has been working with GUBI since the inception of their studio and the development of the Beetle Chair. With their own dual heritage, Italian Enrico Fratesi and Danish Stine Gam share GUBI's ability to synthesize seemingly opposing ideas – the classic and the contemporary, the intellectual and the sensual, the understated and the expressive, the manufactured and the unique. These juxtapositions, as well as the boldness and curiosity that drives their desire to find inspiration in unfamiliar territory, are epitomized in the new veneer iteration and the wider Beetle Collection.