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Furniture



EDELMAN LEATHER AND HERMAN MILLER

A match made in modern heaven.

It was designer Charles Eames who best articulated Herman Miller's vision when he said, "It was never my design objective that the furniture be different or novel; only that it be good to sit in, good to use, good to look at, and easy for everyone to buy." For the past 50 years, Herman Miller has held true to that simple philosophy. From the eternally stylish 1950s furniture by the Eameses, George Nelson, Alvar Aalto, and Isamu Noguchi to the contemporary practicality of the Aeron office chair, the Michigan-based company has consistently produced superbly crafted modern furniture.

That same attention to detail characterizes Edelman Leather, a third-generation leather goods company that has supplied the leather for the walls, floors, and upholstery in corporate interiors, private jets and yachts, and residential projects. Once suppliers to the fashion industry, the husband-and-wife team of Arthur and Teddy Edelman expanded their business 20 years ago, finding their niche in the high-end custom upholstery market. Now their son and company president, John, an avid collector of mid-century modern furniture, is making a move into design-conscious furniture. "When I got into the family business 10 years ago, I started scavenging flea markets for vintage furniture that I could reupholster with our leathers," says John. "The pieces I was finding were well designed, but I didn't see them as true collectibles. They had fallen apart. The quality just wasn't there."

Herman Miller has produced some of the most iconic pieces in modern design, but it has paid scant attention to making



Above: Eames Lounge Chair and Ottoman. Below: Eames Sofa in kid calf leather.

the upholstery modern. The collaboration between the two companies has closed these gaps. "We are bringing the best of the two worlds together," says Edelman. "They are the best in design; we are the best in leather. Everything that leaves our showroom has to be inspected by an Edelman. After all, we are still a family business."

The Herman Miller for the Home collection is bringing new life into the classic furnishings. "We took whatever could be upholstered in leather from

the 1950s designs, along with a few contemporary pieces from designers like Mark Goetz, and are offering the furnishings in our materials," says Edelman. With over a dozen of the classics now available in more than 600 different colors and 50 different textures through Edelman's showrooms, these are no longer the same familiar, tired-looking chairs. "I challenge anyone not to look twice when they see a classic Eames lounge chair in bright metallic blue leather," he says. Edelman will also color-match the upholstery to any personal possession, from a watchband to a vintage car interior. "Great leather doesn't get reupholstered; it gets inherited. It becomes heirloom quality," Edelman says. "More than creating a piece of furniture, we are creating a part of someone's life." —SAMANTHA BROOKS



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