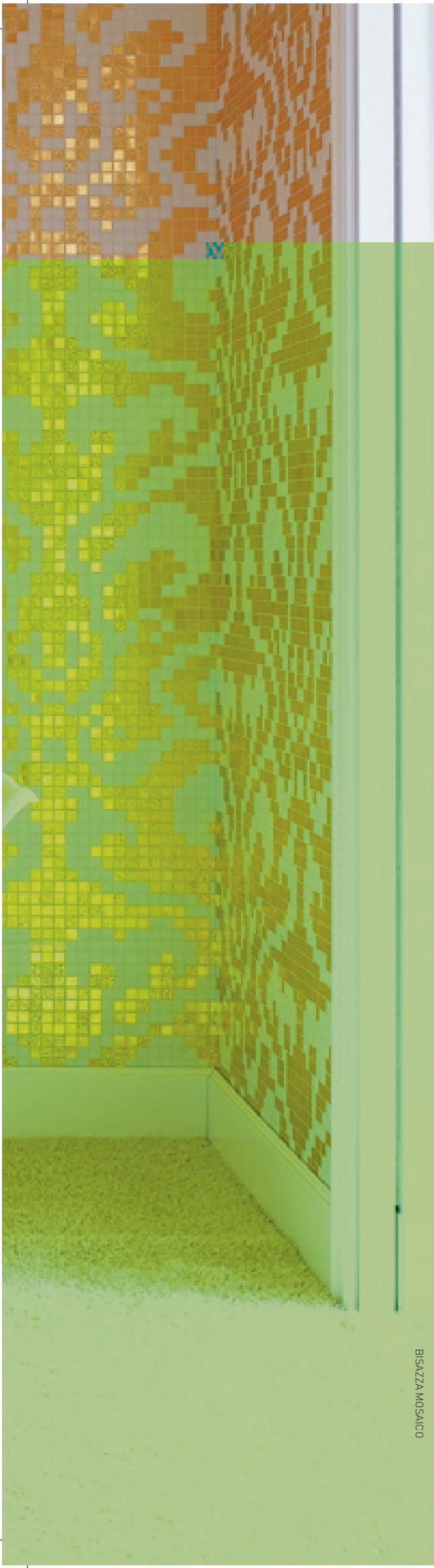


FAMOUS FURNITURE





Classic design pieces are a staple for a stylish interior. While trend pieces make great accessories and soft furnishings, when it comes to items that will stand the test of time, you can't go past a classic design. **Shelley Friesen** looks into the most famous and coveted furniture pieces from the 20th century to invest in.

I've always had a thing for designer furniture. Growing up, my grandma had an Eames Lounge Chair, and while other family members wrote it off in the early 90s as daggy and dated (even banishing it to the garage at one stage, the horror!), I always viewed it as a classic.

I've recently bought a new home, and while unfortunately my budget will only stretch to replicas, I am planning to fill my space with an abundance of classics, such as the Arco Lamp, Egg Chair or Turbine Clock. While they may be pricey, classic design pieces are just that – classic – and are guaranteed to stand the test of time.

When choosing designer furniture for your home, it's important to do your homework. To learn about iconic designs and designers, immerse yourself in furniture books and online replica stores such as Milan Direct and Matt Blatt, to get a better idea of the type of iconic pieces that exist and that suit your style.

Some of the greats to look out for include Isamu Noguchi, Charles and Ray Eames, George Nelson, Herman Miller and Arne Jacobsen, just to name a few. But if you're still stuck for inspiration, here is a guide to some of the most iconic furniture pieces (and my personal favourites), from the last century.



CLASSIC COFFEE TABLES

A girlfriend of mine owns a Noguchi Coffee Table. Although her living room is tiny, it sits as a centrepiece in the middle of the space, and is the first thing you lay eyes on when you enter the room. It immediately gives the living area a sense of class and style.

Designed by legendary Japanese-American artist Isamu Noguchi, this iconic piece was first introduced in 1947. The coffee table has become famous for its organic, sculptural form and unmistakable simplicity.

Originally known for his landscape architecture, Noguchi became famous for his sculpture and furniture designs, and today is one of the most celebrated designers of the 20th century. His designs blur the boundaries between art and functionality, the east and west, and industry and nature. As a result, his design pieces, in particular his coffee table, have gained icon status worldwide.

Noguchi Coffee Table www.milandirect.com.au



CONTEMPORARY CHAIRS

Another one of the most recognisable pieces of modern furniture is the Barcelona Chair. This stylish and elegant chair feels perfectly at home in any contemporary space with its sleek lines and timeless aesthetic.



The simple chair was exclusively designed for the German entry in the famous Ibero-American Exposition fair in 1929, which was hosted in Barcelona (hence the name). The chair has since become an icon of modernism, inspired by the folding chairs of history.

However, if simple lines bore you, and futurism and curved lines are more your thing, the classic Tulip Chair is an excellent piece to complement any modern dining table. Designed by Eero Saarinen in 1955, the Tulip Chair is one of the most iconic pieces to come out of the 50s. The chair mirrors the smooth, organic lines of futurism and utilises materials, such as fibreglass and plastic, that were considered experimental at the time.

Described at the time as being of the 'space age', the Tulip Chair is known for its use of curves and contemporary lines. This image was only further enhanced by its use in the original *Star Trek* television series in the 60s.

top **Barcelona Chair** www.milandirect.com.au
bottom **Tulip Chair** www.mattblatt.com.au

Sticking to the theme of organic lines, the Egg Chair, designed by Arne Jacobson in 1958, is synonymous with modernism from the 60s. Designed for the lobby and reception areas of the Royal Hotel in Copenhagen, the chair's full, sculptural shape epitomises classic Danish design and is an icon of the 20th century.

In contrast to the sculptural, organic shapes of the Tulip and Egg chairs, the Eames Lounge Chair and Ottoman were originally designed with simplicity and practicality in mind. Designed in 1956 by Charles and Ray Eames, the set has visible influences from the 1920s and the transition into the industrial, modern era.

Its classic design has made the Eames Lounge Chair and Ottoman an icon in the furniture world, and has kept the piece in production since its creation. One of the secrets of its success is Eames' focus on usability and practicality over style.

Husband and wife team Charles and Ray Eames were American designers, working prominently in architecture and furniture design in the 1950s. The two pioneered innovative technologies in their furniture designs, such as the moulded plywood of the Lounge Chair and Ottoman, along with similarly sought after fibreglass, plastic resin and wire mesh pieces.



top **Egg Chair** www.mattblatt.com.au
bottom **Eames Lounge Chair and Ottoman**
www.mattblatt.com.au

ACCESSORISE

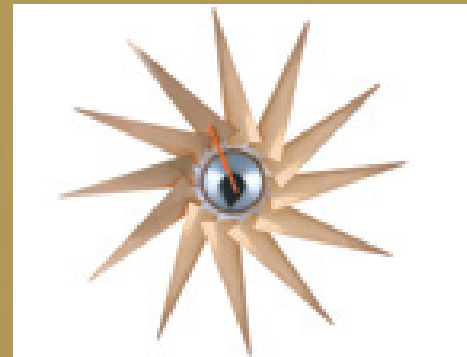
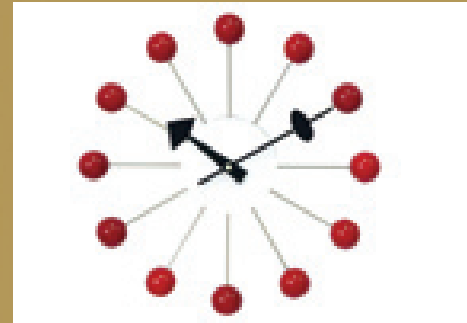
If large pieces of furniture aren't your thing, but you still want an iconic piece, why not add a classic touch to your space with an accessory.

George Nelson, an architect and designer, is known as one of the founding fathers on American modernism, along with Charles and Ray Eames. Among other works, George Nelson Associates designed clocks for Howard Miller in the 1940s. In this time, it is estimated that there were over 150 designs created by Nelson and his team.

Designed by George Nelson in 1948, the Ball Clock is one of the most iconic timepieces around. Fun, whimsical and modern, the clock makes an instant statement on any wall. With its sculptural use of different shapes, the Ball Clock is more art piece than timepiece, making it an immediate focal point of any wall. Nelson's vision was to bring "modern, lasting design into common aspects of the home", which he successfully achieved with this design.

Another of Nelson's iconic timepieces is the Turbine Clock. Unlike the Ball Clock, the Turbine Clock has a more serious edge to it, with its sharp turbines and industrial colouring. At home in any warehouse space, the Turbine Clock evokes visions of retro design, with a thoroughly modern feel.

A modern lighting classic, Achille Castiglioni's Arco Floor Lamp, designed in 1962 is instantly recognisable by its dramatic stainless steel arc and heavy marble base. An instant statement in any space, the Arco Lamp will tower over your sofa or dining table, lighting your space while adding sculptural significance.



top **Ball Clock** www.milandirect.com.au
middle **Turbine Clock** www.mattblatt.com.au
bottom **Arco Floor Lamp** www.mattblatt.com.au

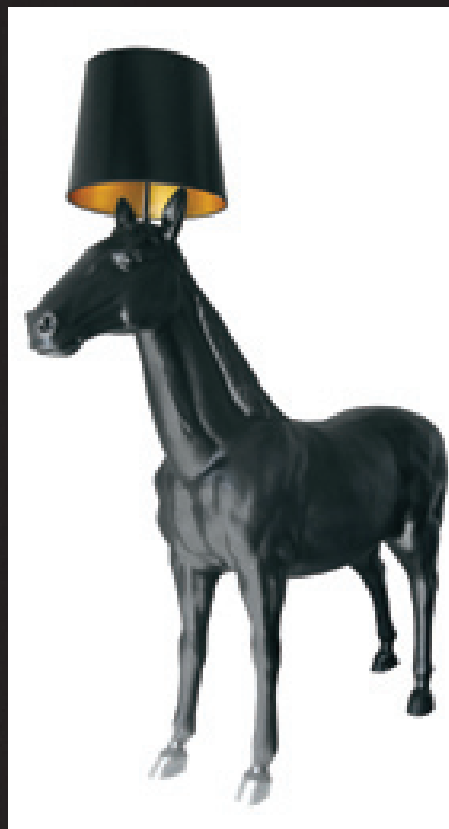
MODERN MASTERPIECES

After something current to invest in? There are some very interesting designs in the market today to choose from which are sure to be as iconic as the designs mentioned 50 years from now.

Phillipe Starck is one of the designers leading the way in modern furniture design, with many of his pieces already gaining iconic status. Modern designer furniture is all about extravagance and making a statement.

This brings me to my last furniture icon. While a little left of centre, the Horse Lamp is one of my favourite modern design pieces. Ironic and playful, the Horse Lamp will be a talking point in any home.

First showcased at the Milan Design Fair in 2006, and designed by the FRONT design team for MOOOI, the Horse Lamp stands at the same height as your average thoroughbred. This is not a piece for those with tiny apartments. More conversation piece than lighting instrument, the Horse Lamp is described by MOOOI as "furniture to fall in love with or hate forever", and if nothing else, will become the ultimate conversation piece in any home.



right **Horse Lamp** www.mattblatt.com.au

Whether it's a Tulip Chair, Noguchi Coffee Table or Arco Lamp that takes your fancy, an iconic piece of furniture is an investment that will keep your space stylish for decades to come.

Now, I'm off to my grandma's garage to retrieve her Eames Lounge Chair...