

The Pastille Chair

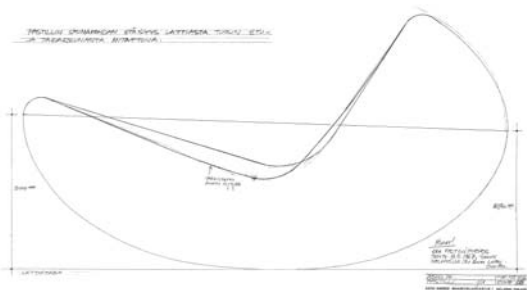
The origins of a classic

Interior architect Eero Aarnio, born 1932 in Helsinki



"The idea for the Pastille chair came from the Ball chair. I thought how the Ball sends a lot of unused space out there. The Pastille chair is designed to just fit inside the Ball chair. The truth, however, is that people will not buy the two chairs at the same time."

"I like the sheen of fibreglass, its hard surface and bright colours. It has to be used for making large, impressive objects. The Pastille chair was assembled from two parts with the rough surface of the laminate left unseen. I designed the chair to be an ergonomically good utility object. The first version was of Styrofoam and I carved a seat into it according to my own measurements. It was not quite perfect, but from the second version I could already proceed to a symmetrical full-sized model made of wood, which was then used for preparing the actual fibreglass mould."



"Pastille is a rocking chair. In designing it, it was necessary to keep in mind the centre of gravity to prevent the chair from tilting too much in any direction. It was also necessary to think whether fibreglass could be placed directly against the floor, or whether the bottom should be protected with some other material."

"An international name is always sought for my products. Sometimes the names come of their own accord, and sometimes they require some thought. Pastille evokes an association with cough drops. The chair has also been called the Pill, but that word has negative associations. You take pills when you're sick, but pastilles can be eaten by anyone."



Aarnio laminated the first Ball chair (1963) himself. He made a mould out of strips of plywood, lined it with kraft paper, upon which the form was laminated. The ground and polished fibreglass proved to be too flexible, and the interior was reinforced with steel tubing. Finally, the seat part was upholstered. The leg of the chair is of cast aluminium. Around the same time, Yrjö Kukkapuro also designed in fibreglass in Finland (Karuselli 1964).

Laminating a chair is the work of a craftsman

The Pastille chair is handcrafted. The green surface of the chair is injection moulded and the fibreglass reinforcing members are placed on top of the hardened surface. The reinforcements are shaped to conform to the mould by laminating with resin. The lamination is done separately on both halves of the mould and the respective halves are glued together. After gluing, the product is finished by hand. This technique is also used for making items such as boats, kayaks, glider parts and containers.



"I regard the Kupla (Bubble) chair as my most innovative chair design." It is blown like a soap bubble. A 10 mm sheet of acrylic is blown through a metal ring and slowly cooled to the shape of a bubble.



A collectible and a retro product

The Pastille chair came on the market in 1968 and it was originally sold mainly in the Asko company's own outlets in Central Europe. Sales figures slumped because of the oil crisis. Production of the model was resumed in the early 1990s, being presented by Adelta at the Cologne Furniture Fair. Demand grew around the middle of the decade, and the leading countries in terms of sales were the United States, Japan, England, the Netherlands and Germany. The target group consisted of young people who were not previously familiar with the chair. Recently, some 100 Pastille chairs have been sold each year.

