

COR Sitzmöbel Helmut Lübke GmbH & Co. KG
Nonenstr. 12, D-33378 Rheda-Wiedenbrück
T +49.(0)52 42.41 02-0 www.cor.de

Contact

Anna Thiessen, Corporate Communications
T +49.(0)52 42.41 02-235 a.thiessen@cor.de

PRESS

The Conseta Principle. A reflection by Harald Willenbrock.

Biologists call it symbiosis, economists speak of synergies, sportsmen and women know it by the name of team spirit. It's in the water, gives ideas wings and connects people together who had never believed they might match. It is an evergreen of evolution, based on the insight that combining individual elements often results in more than just their sum. Expressed in a formula, it reads $1 + 1 = 3$.

And since the way this principle works is as simple as it is ingenious, it was only a matter of time before Friedrich Wilhelm Möller happened upon it. Möller – a resourceful Westphalian, always curious and permanently impatient – was a man with such an abundance of ideas that a simple curriculum vitae could not possibly contain them all. A trained carpenter and heir of a carpenter's business, he became a field sales representative at COR in 1961. In that capacity he came to know the customers' demands as well as the furniture dealers' problems, and he served them both without further ado by designing better furniture. "Man is the measure of all things," was the credo of this ever-busy designer, who went on to become co-founder of an architectural office and owner of a successful furniture company. Möller's declared focus was "not on the fashionable, that doesn't interest me," but rather on "the additive element which, on account of its high degree of variability adapts to people's changing demands." This sublime standard found its ultimate expression in 1964 in Conseta.

Conseta is a combination of the Latin "con sedere" (sitting together) and "consetus" (put together) and stands for the simple insight that while people's demands and living conditions may change over the years, a few things always remain constants.

Such as the love of beautiful things, for instance or, equally the ultimate conviction provided by simple timeless design. In the early 1960s Friedrich Wilhelm Möller, commissioned by COR, combined all three elements to form a pioneering upholstered furniture system. Conseta, as it was called, was as flexible as a set of building blocks and as adaptable as a chameleon. Its individual elements could be disconnected and reconnected, expanded and reduced via a loop-and-wedge system. This combinations could be created of stools, armless easy chairs, corner units with armrests or upholstered trimmings, two or three-seat units even box or case-elements set between

COR Sitzmöbel Helmut Lübke GmbH & Co. KG
Nonenstr. 12, D-33378 Rheda-Wiedenbrück
T +49.(0)52 42.41 02-0 www.cor.de

Contact

Anna Thiessen, Corporate Communications
T +49.(0)52 42.41 02-235 a.thiessen@cor.de

the upholstered sections. Furthermore, Conseta was of such a reduced beauty that it endured outside of all styles and fashions. In short: it was the perfect symbiosis of a holistic system.

Yet at first it was a gigantic flop. When the world novelty was presented to the audience at the International Furniture Fair in 1964, the COR representatives disassembled and reassembled it dozens of times, demonstrated the versatility of the system eulogised this chameleon of sofas – but all to no avail. Möller's modular model was way ahead of its time; hardly a dealer dared place an order. A total of four orders – two of which were cancelled before the fair closed – was all crestfallen COR salesmen were able to present to Rheda-Wiedenbrück.

One year and a few minor modifications later (for example, the upholstery received a softer stuffing and the armrests were broadened) things gradually began to change. The main contributions to the adaptations and numerous variations were made by Friedrich Wilhelm Möller, who never left his house without a sketchpad and seldom left the COR building without sketches for new Conseta covers. "Conseta is more than a design," he wrote to COR director Helmut Lübke in 1994. "It is a basic idea about sitting on sofas which has been rethought, moved away from and reapprached for 30 years."

In the course of these decades Möller's furniture slowly but powerfully became an international bestseller. "For 36 years now Conseta has proven its adaptability to current trends and individual living needs," appreciate Gunda Siebke and Susanne Wittorf in their monograph *Design-Klassiker: Das Polstersystem Conseta von Friedrich Wilhelm Möller* (Form-Verlag, 1999).

Today seating furniture from Rheda-Wiedenbrück can be found in Auckland as well as in Anchorage, Cape Town and Kuala Lumpur. Countless copies, more or less successfully imitated, confirm its status as global star in universe of sofas. By the time Friedrich Wilhelm Möller died in 1996, his design had long since become a classic and had sold more than 500,000 units worldwide. (Today more than 875,000 Conseta elements are in circulation.)

Thus the connection between Conseta and COR, which this year celebrates its 60th anniversary, is one of the most successful symbioses of all in recent furniture history. Happy birthday, Conseta!