

# The History of the Barcelona Chair

*Barcelona Chairs reproductions vs originals at [www.gibraltarfurniture.com](http://www.gibraltarfurniture.com)*

Los Angeles, CA, March 1, 2008--Many prospective purchasers of the Barcelona Chair ask if the chair they are buying is "authentic" or original. Clearly they are trying to ensure that they end up with the best possible piece. However this is not the best question to ask to achieve this result.

For instance, the original 1929 chair was made by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe to furnish the German Pavilion at the International Exhibition in Barcelona. However the prototype was fashioned out of relatively low grade steel, with a chromed finish.

In comparison the Gibraltar Furniture [b]800 416 3635 [/b] release features the highest quality stainless steel frame. Although stainless steel was invented at the end of the 1800s, and patented in 1913, it was not in wide spread production for some time thereafter - and no doubt was not an easily accessible option in 1929.

Stainless steel is defined as an iron-carbon alloy with a minimum of 10.5% chromium. Stainless steel gets its name from the fact that it has higher resistance to oxidation, rust and corrosion. Different grades of stainless steel are resistant to oxidation associated with different types of environment. Eg. Air versus water, sweet water versus salt water etc. Resistance to oxidation associated with air borne moisture is normally achieved with additions of a minimum of 13% (by weight) chromium - given average ambient temperatures and salinity, but may require up to 26% for more extreme environments.

This works in the following way: The chromium forms a surface layer of chromium(III) oxide ( $Cr_2O_3$ ) when exposed to oxygen, however the layer is too thin to be visible, so the metal retains its smooth and shiny appearance. It is, however, impervious to water and air, and so serves to protect the metal beneath. Also, this layer quickly reforms when the surface is scratched.

This phenomenon is called passivation and is also seen in other metals, such as aluminum and titanium. Nickel also contributes to passivation, as do other less commonly used ingredients such as molybdenum and vanadium.

The addition of nickel or manganese makes stainless steel non-magnetic and less brittle at low temperatures. This is called an Austenitic steel and is graded as a 300 series steel. Over 70% of total stainless steel production world wide is 300 series stainless steel. They contain a maximum of 0.15% carbon, a minimum of 16% chromium and sufficient nickel and/or manganese to retain an austenitic structure at all temperatures from the cryogenic region to the melting point of the alloy.

â€¢ There are over 150 grades of stainless steel, of which fifteen are most common.

Type 304 is the universal grade; the classic 18/8 stainless steel. Also referred to as "A2" in accordance with ISO - International Organization for Standardization.

With regard to the Barcelona Chair, only two standard stainless steel finishes are common - in the creation of that distinctive highly polished aesthetic appearance. € No. 7 - reflective finish € No. 8 - mirror finish

We polish our Barcelona chairs to a brilliant mirror finish as standard feature. Knoll will charge you extra for this upgrade. Here is an image that displays the triple polish look on all of our Barcelona frames.

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