

Our design

If you visit us at Gemla Fabrikers, chances are you will bump into a renowned designer or students from the College of Arts, engaged in a vivid discussion with our craftsmen and women. Collaborating and developing the art of shaping wood has always been a tradition at Gemla. Through the years, we have collaborated with ambitious and innovatory architects and designers, ranging from *Carl Bergsten, Gunnar Asplund, Uno Åhren, Sigurd Lewerentz, Yngve Ekström, and Peter Celsing* to *Jonas Bohlin* and *Mats Theselius* as well as *FRONT* and *Lisa Hilland*.

It is quite probable that you have sat on a chair from Gemla, without knowing it. Ever before the Swedish gastronome, Tore Wretman, chose Gemla to furnish his famous restaurant Operakällaren in Stockholm, many leading restaurants and cafés in Sweden have followed suit. All around the world, people are sitting on chairs from Gemla; at embassies, in churches, dining halls and hotels as well as at the Swedish Parliament.

Many customers come back, fifty years or later, to have their furniture carefully restored, giving them a new life. This dedication to our chairs pretty much sums up our values – sustainable quality thanks to beautiful, timeless design, durable construction and quality materials. Quite simply, a unique and sustainable craft.



The unique art of taming wood keeps us constantly on our toes, exploring new ideas and materials to enable both beauty and function. We often collaborate with upcoming talent as well as renowned designers. Above all, our driving force is to continuously find new, exciting and improved solutions, always with quality and the environment in mind.

More than 150 years can sound like a lot, but here at Sweden's oldest furniture manufacturer, Gemla Fabrikers, we are still young and curious.

gemla
Handmade in Sweden

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The art of taming wood

Our history

Passing through the beech forests and the small village of Diö by the river Helgeå, you will not only find Sweden's oldest furniture manufacturer, Gemla Fabrikers, founded in 1861. You will also encounter a curiously rich history, characterized by inventiveness as well as stubbornness, said to be typical of the region of Småland.

In the 19th century, craftsmen from Bohemia arrived in Diö, bringing the know-how and experience from Thonet's factories with them. Thereby, they were the first in Sweden to introduce the art of shaping wood, to make Vienna furniture. These craftsmen did indeed lay the foundation of this art, which has developed ever since here at Gemla.

Throughout the years we have been through factory fires and changes of ownership, as well as several alterations in direction and production.

We have tamed the wood, shaping it into beautiful chairs, cinema arm chairs and even hockey sticks and tennis rackets. We have quite simply developed and refined this technique, which we are now the only ones to master in the whole of Sweden.

The logo for Gemla, featuring the word "gemla" in a lowercase, black, serif font. The letters are slightly irregular and have a hand-drawn feel. The logo is set against a light, textured background that looks like a piece of paper or a label.

VILDA 5 WITH SPECIALLY MADE SUPPORT OF STEAM BENT WOOD.
EACH SUPPORT REQUIRES 15 STEPS IN PRODUCTION.

Our craftsmanship

We are picky when it comes to our choice of wood. We only work with certified beech and ash, and only the finest specimens pass our critical eyes. After cutting and working the wood, we can start taming it. First the wood is steamed for between six and twelve hours, to make it soft and flexible. We then shape the wood by hand and then insert it into special metal frames, a craft that requires both experience, patience and strong hands. The wood is left to dry for days before we again work it by hand to make it rounded and soft. This shaping technique enables light, strong and extremely durable chairs.

Each chair that leaves Gemla has been in the hands of dedicated craftsmen and women for hours, days and sometimes even weeks. They scrutinize every step of the production before there is a final check and each chair is labeled with a date and Gemla.

Some chairs are dressed in naturally tanned leather or textile. These chairs are padded using natural materials like hairlok, a mixture of animal hair and natural latex, as well as wool felt, but never polyether which we have excluded entirely. Environmentally friendly materials age beautifully and well. That way our furniture can be used and appreciated again and again, one generation after the other. That is our way of paying respect to our planet and to our environment.