

The L.A.

To make it big in Hollywood, Knoll is glamming up some of its most classic designs. *by Joe Harper*

Upgrade



YOU'VE SEEN MARCEL BREUER'S 1925 Wassily chair many times: in your lawyer's office or at a friend's apartment. But you haven't yet seen it with a yellow-gold frame. To celebrate the opening of its new flagship in West Hollywood, American brand Knoll—the manufacturer and distributor of many modern classics—is reinventing the 20th century for the 21st century. The L.A. store is just its second retail shop; its first is in Manhattan. With the changing times, the company also realized that some of the old stars needed a makeover to thrive in California's increasingly sophisticated design scene. Sparse, monochrome interiors are out, and colorful, tactile environments are in.

"Hipsters in Los Angeles are bringing back past ideas," says Knoll design director Benjamin Pardo.

"This resurgence is always cyclical, so I want to provide them with an opportunity to look back at our previous products, but also to see new designs and understand them." Knoll has brought archival European designs Stateside for the first time as well, including Tobia Scarpa's 1962 Bastiano settee and recent works by Piero Lissoni. Some reenvisioned pieces weren't classics, per se, but instead made the transition from the corporate suite to the home office, such as the 2008 D'Urso swivel chair, which now has curly shearling upholstery. "It was a question of how to make this chair comfortable in front of a fireplace in the country, or soft and inviting in an urban environment," says Pardo.

The new palette of materials is also a better fit for L.A.'s indoor-outdoor living, which offers plenty

The Wassily chair with a gold-plated steel frame and Spinneybeck leather in Indigo, \$4,192.

Platner dining armchairs with the new polished-rose-gold finish inside Knoll's L.A. showroom, \$7,650.



of natural light compared with, say, a low-floor apartment in Chicago or New York. "Sunshine, candlelight, and artificial light each change the characteristics of metals like rose gold," Pardo says, talking about the revamped Bertoia side chair. There are also the ubiquitous Saarinen tables, which are now offered with chrome or brass tops. "With LED lighting, we've lived through a period of everything being blue, so there's a desire to bring in warm light," says Pardo. "A lot of these metallics do that very thing." 314 N. Robertson Blvd., West Hollywood; knoll.com.

1. Bastiano settee in Edelman leather in Oak, \$15,700.

2. D'Urso swivel chair with Edelman curly shearling in Café Latte, \$5,795.

3. Riart Rocker with Edelman Cavallini hair-on-hide leather in Zebra, \$17,210.

4. Lucia Mercer's Stump table in Calacatta, left, \$4,715, and Nero Marquina, \$3,570.

5. Saarinen tables with chrome or brass tops, from \$1,960.