

Valet Chair

Design: Hans J. Wegner, 1953

pp250

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A functional sculpture

Wegner came up with the idea for the **Valet Chair** in 1951, following a long talk with Professor of Architecture Steen Eiler Rasmussen and designer Kay Bojesen about the problems of folding clothes in the most practical manner when it was time for bed. But the process of completing the design was not initiated before the Danish King Frederik IX ordered one after seeing the first four-legged version.

Wegner was dissatisfied with the four-legged version and continued working on the design for two years, before the King could finally receive his chair. By then the three-legged version had been created and made for the King in pine with a teak seat. Wegner wanted to show the King what an extraordinary beautiful chair he could make in even the cheap pinewood. Teak was used for the seat to stretch the exclusivity of the design. The Danish King ended up ordering a total of ten **Valet Chairs**.



Wegner the son of the local shoemaker, grew up familiar with the environment and tools used in his father's workshop. At an early age he developed an interest in nature, carving small pieces in wood using knives borrowed from his father's workshop.

Wegner was a frequent visitor to the local Museum of Art and was fascinated by the collection of fine porcelain figurines by the Swedish artist Theodor Lundberg. So, when in the late 1920's a large house was demolished near his home, the young Wegner acquired several large pieces of oak. From these he duplicated several of Lundberg's figures including the largest, Wave and Rock, carved with surprising accuracy and proportion.

With hindsight, when studying these three dimensional sculptures they demonstrate the skills and understanding of proportion and space Wegner later employed in creating the **Valet Chair** and other masterpieces like The **Round Chair**, **Swivel Chair** and **Cow Horn Chair**.



Examples of Wegner's early oak sculptures.









1953 King Frederik IX of Denmark is inspecting his new **Valet Chair**, the first one ever made. The chair is made of pine with a teak seat. The King immediately ordered another 9 **Valet Chairs** for the Royal Castles.

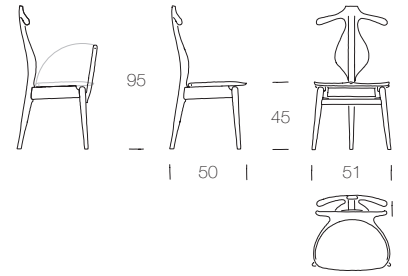


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The back of **pp250** works as a hanger for a jacket. The seat is hinged and can be placed in an upright position so the trousers can be neatly folded. Underneath the seat a box is revealed for keys, walet etc.



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