



130 years of Bretz

Pressrelease

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True Characters



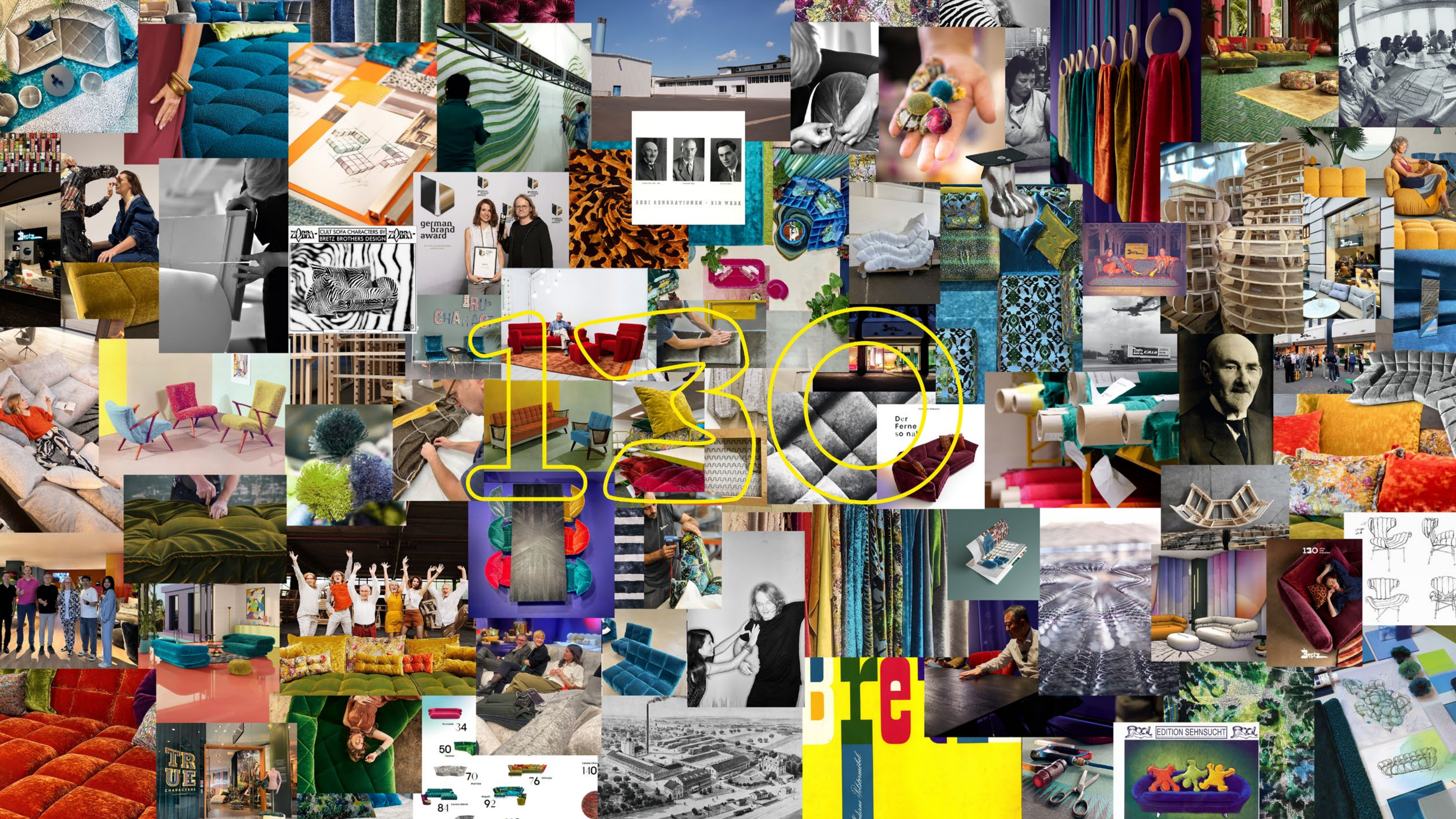
Oh how funky!

130 years of Bretz: a passion for courageous creativity

Bretz is turning 130 – a remarkable achievement in the fast-paced world of interior furnishings. Yet resilience is not the only virtue that runs in the veins of this family-run business. There's also the ability to endlessly reinvent the brand while preserving its intrinsic nature. A tale of challenges and solutions, of times past and future possibilities.

Oh
how
funky!





Der
Ferne
so nah

Real EDITION SEHNSUCHT Real

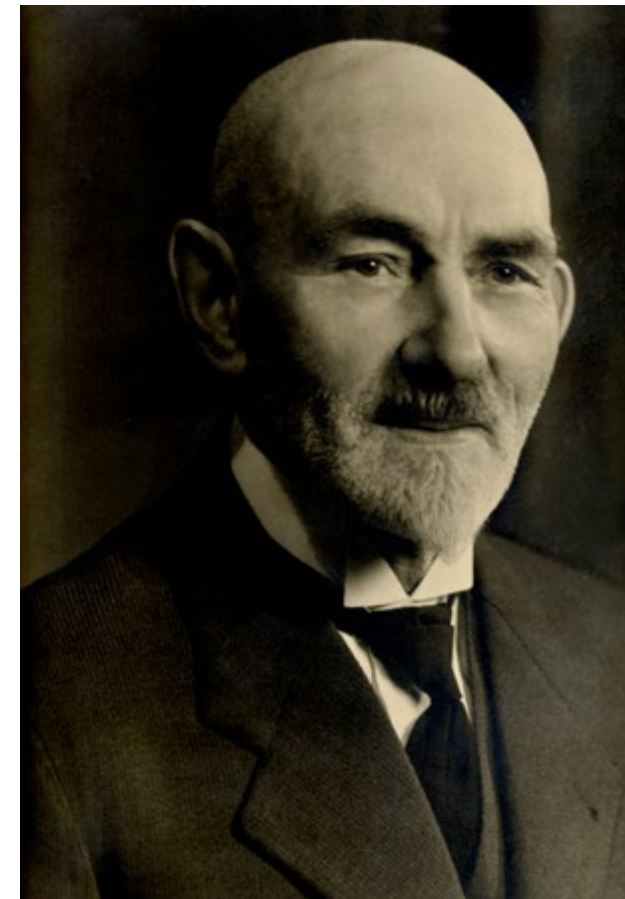
TRUE
CHARACTERS

| | | | | |
|-------|------|------|-------|------|
| 34 | 50 | 70 | 76 | 140 |
| Perle | Meer | Wald | Regen | Grün |
| 81 | 92 | | | |

How it all began: a bold step into the unknown

Taking his courage in both hands, Johann Bretz, a farmer's son from Gensingen, stepped off the beaten track of the family business to set up a bed base factory in 1895. In doing so, he laid the foundations for a company that would endure for five generations. His son Alexander expanded the business into upholstered furniture—then the Second World War destroyed it all.

Unbowed, the family worked tirelessly to rebuild the factory and transform Bretz into a prestigious international brand. "The lifeblood of our company is the intrepid spirit of innovation that every generation has shown," says Norbert Bretz, who now manages the business with niece Carolin Kutzera.



A metamorphosis: Bretz finds its fantastical feet

In the 1990s, Bretz made its most daring course change to date. With brothers Norbert and Hartmut now at the helm, they spun the wheel and took the business off in an entirely new direction. Leaving the company's take on rustic oak ensembles in their wake, the duo embraced fanciful, gaily coloured upholstered pieces with sumptuous shapes.





1997



2000



2006

"It was, in a nutshell, nuts," Norbert recalls. "But our father supported us all the way. I guess this willingness to motivate each other is part of the Bretz DNA." The Wildcat and Zebra velours put Bretz on the map. "We even had paws and hooves cast to match. No-one had ever done anything like it."

Now confirmed as a premium brand in the 2000s, Bretz became synonymous with passionate flights of fancy. Something neatly summed up by a buyer from Harrods: "Oh, how funky!" From then on, every design was an invitation to embark on an exquisitely personal, fantastical voyage full of boundless adventure.



50-60s



60-70s



90s-



00s



10s



20s



Bretz today: the fifth generation

Carolyn Kutzero, the figurehead of the youngest generation, is both a design visionary and brand strategist. As contours become rounder and softer, the pieces also offer a greater degree of modularity that lets them adapt to a wide variety of spaces. Thanks to Carolyn's background in fashion and her fondness for colours and fabrics, covers are now a higher priority in the design process. "The cover material is the clothing for the sofa and so it's central to its character," Carolyn enthuses. The look and feel of each fabric—its haptics and hues—inspires individual emotions and impressions."





Interview with Managing Director Carolyn Kutzera: "My heart beats for design"

When was the last time you were brave?

In my job, together with my team, I am constantly. We're always designing different furniture that challenges us so much in the design process that it really stretches our nerves (laughs). At times like this, it's important to stand firmly behind our philosophy and not take the easier route.

What do you say to people who don't really dare to try a Bretz creation?

I would like to invite people to really feel inside themselves, to free themselves and follow their instincts. It shouldn't matter whether others would make the same decision. People often come to us in the store because they have seen something they like and it has aroused their curiosity. Then the critical thoughts set in: 'Should I go for something more discreet? I don't want to do anything wrong'. In the end, the person decides on the piece of furniture that triggered the love-at-first-sight moment.

Kautsch, the sofa that Carolyn designed for Bretz in 2012, stayed in people's minds for a long time.



Female managing directors are a rarity in the male-dominated industry. Was it brave of you to decide to take on this position in 2018?

It was the next logical step for me. My heart beats for design. I want to drive forward the transformation of the company in areas such as digitalization, omnichannel sales and sustainability. At the same time, the decision was a leap into the unknown. I'm the only woman at some industry meetings. But women make most furniture purchasing decisions, so I think it's important to include them in management and give their perspective more weight. I hope to encourage more women to pursue an ambitious career. If I can help others progress, it will help me too. The expectations of me are perhaps higher because I work in my family's company - and Bretz's aspirations can only be fulfilled with an excellent team in which everyone is as free as possible and motivated to contribute their ideas.

Carolyn's keynote speech at the Inside Industry Summit 2024. Her topic: "Creative and courageous in tough times: How we stay young".



The Ohlinda sofa designed by Carolyn celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2024.

You had twins in 2022. How do you reconcile all of this?

We try things out and test: what works, what do the children think, what do I think? It's important to take time out and have the courage to clearly express the need for it. Back then, I went back to work after just a few months. I don't want to sugarcoat anything, it is difficult. But with the support of your family, good communication and team spirit, you can get through it.



The company emphasises an open culture of communication and conflict handling, and champions the idea of personal responsibility. Everyone should feel encouraged to contribute their ideas and expertise. This does make for some “pretty intense” design meetings, Carolin says. “While we seem to face impossible challenges with almost every new sofa, we always find a way if we work together.”



An untamed classic: Wildcat Reloaded

To celebrate its 130th anniversary, Bretz has reimagined its iconic Wildcat material as a new sofa. With its rounded, organic contours and leopard-skin pattern, Balaoa conjures up memories of the optimistic and eccentric joie de vivre of the 2000s while extending an enticing invitation to indulge in a little fun and frolic. The comfortable half-moon backrest also helps one to keep one's cool when the chair takes a head-spinning turn around its own axis.

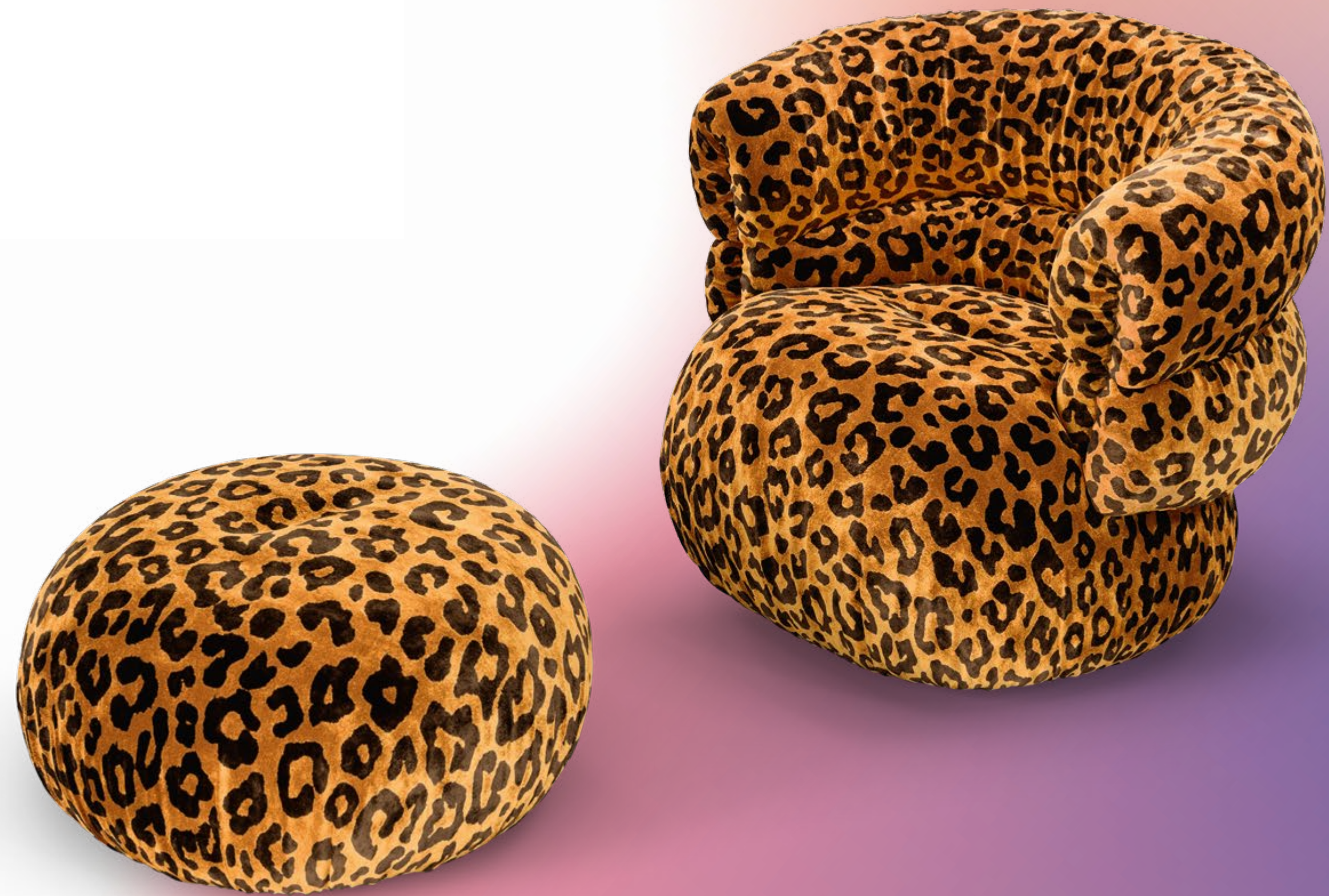




Balao

wildcat

The Balao armchair in the new Wildcat velour is not just a piece of seating furniture - it is a throne for bold individualists, a tribute to courage, passion and unbridled joie de vivre. Here, comfort and couture merge into a sensual experience that is second to none. A piece of furniture that not only seduces the room, but also the senses.



Bretz tomorrow: staying true to Germany – and the spirit of innovation

For 130 years, Bretz has shown how tradition paired with change is the perfect duo to dance the design tango. What about the future? “We will certainly be keeping our production in Germany,” Carolin promises. Modernised buildings and an optimised energy footprint are proof of the regular investments Bretz has made to its premises and processes. The new photovoltaic system supplies all of the electricity needed by production and admin alike. The modernisation programme was also aimed at making the working environment more appealing.



Carolin: "We want to motivate young people to learn the artisan's noble trade and join us in making our inspirational projects a reality. Alongside our modern approach to team leadership, we're also improving in many other areas as well. We're working to include more aspects of sustainability in our products, and researching new materials and methods that guarantee durability without compromising on our unique visual appeal."

Bretz is already deploying advanced technology that gets its designs closer to the customer in various digital formats. As one example, these tools can be used to place the typically bold and many-coloured Bretz creations into the customer's own environment and so provide an initial impression.



What will never change is the Bretz promise of superlative quality, velours galore, modularity, seats that go extra-deep and an abiding interest in dreaming up undreamt-of ideas. And one principle above all else:

Creativity and courage makes everything possible.



To another 130 years...



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