



*Playing around comes naturally for Philippe Starck and Eugéni Quitlet, co-creators of the PLAY with DEDON line.*

At last year's Salone del Mobile, DEDON and Philippe Starck made design history with the launch of PLAY, a new concept in furniture that brings high-tech industrial processes together with an expanding range of hand finishings to give consumers unprecedented freedom of choice. This year sees an explosion of new options for the original PLAY chair as well as a brand new model, PLAY TAN. The DEDON International Times caught up with Philippe Starck, champion of Democratic Design, to hear more about the novel PLAY concept.

**In a recent interview, you said that no project is worthwhile if it doesn't fit into the "big picture", the evolution of human intelligence. How does PLAY fit into this big picture?** With PLAY, I find the possibility to take the best of two worlds, the high quality of industry and the fantasy and humanity of things made by hand. We've developed the perfect structure, very low-design and discrete, but also high-quality, very strong, affordable, stackable, comfortable — everything you want. And this gives us the opportunity to send this structure where there is somebody with special know-how. That means if we find somebody in India or Africa or Sweden — anywhere in the world — they can apply their special talent to the chair. There's an evolution in the way of thinking because it's the first time you have the best of these two worlds, and it's a way to give the best to the final user, and also some profit to the person who will work on it.

**Having created the frame of the PLAY chair and so many options for completing it, could you now imagine letting other designers, maybe young or emerging ones, contribute their ideas to the basic framework?** Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. With pleasure. It's like in computers — it's open system. Me, I just put the system up, the structure up. I shall be very proud and happy if somebody arrives from Ethiopia and says, "I have a good idea for using old yoghurt pots to make something for PLAY."

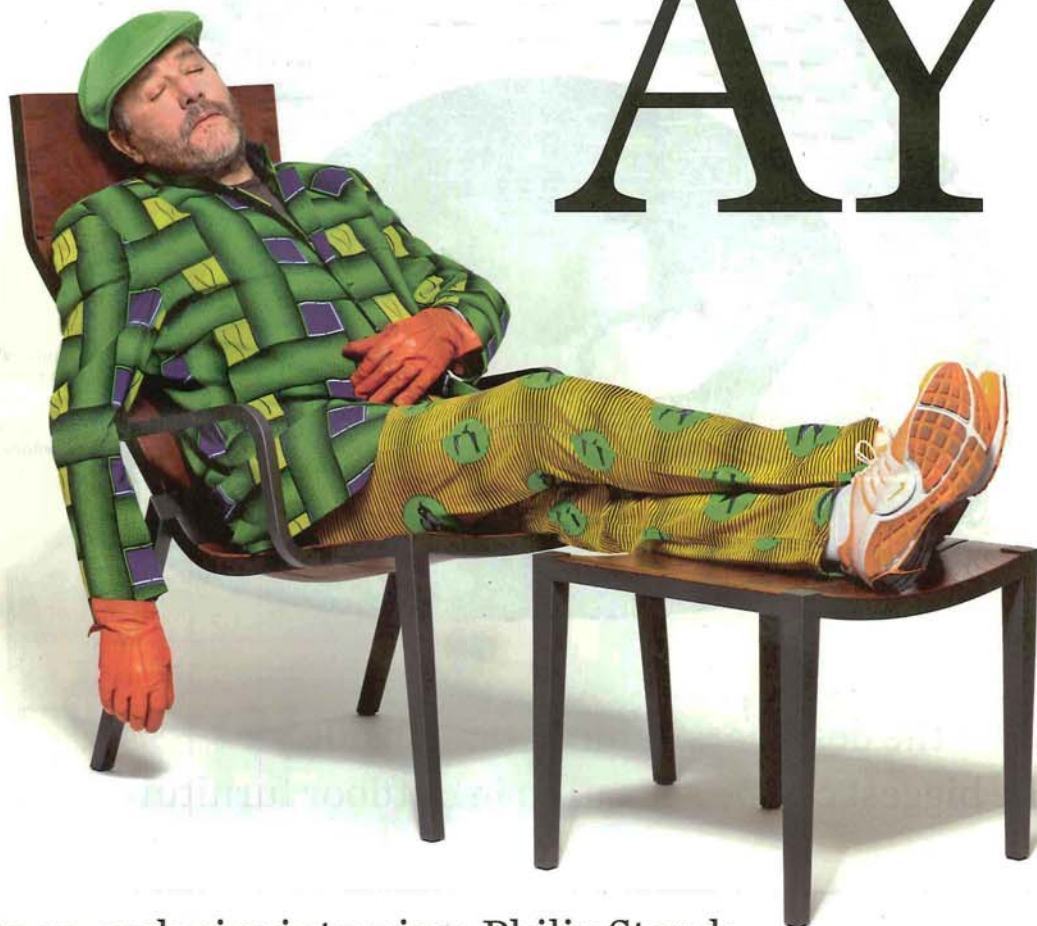
**Launched at last year's Salone, PLAY gave people an unprecedented number of choices — of materials, colors and combinations. This year, the number of choices has increased multifold. There is something which is very important to know: We are all different, and we have to respect that. There is man, woman, gay. There is fat, skinny. There is yellow, black, pink, what you want. And, even if it's just you, you have different views depending on if you're at home, if it's your first chair in life, if it's your last chair in life, if you're in a fantasy mood or in a classic mood. That means the first thing, the first service we have to give to our friends, is the freedom of choice. Me, when I design a PLAY chair, I don't design it. I am just a medium. I have some know-how. DEDON has know-how. We know how to make the best chair on the market. But we don't impose anything. We give the best parameters, and after, people are free to choose.**

**Isn't there such a thing as too much choice?** Yes, I agree with you — too much choice kills the choice. It becomes the contrary. It gives you frustration and kills the pleasure of having it. But before you have too much choice, there is time. First, just try to give the right service to all the different institutions and people — you have time before it's too much!

**Among the new choices for PLAY, I was surprised to see there's even an upholstered version. It's not upholstery like your grandmother had — it's a pure, high-tech thing we mold. There's a foam. We**

have a very special fabric on it. It's a sort of evocation of upholstery, with an iconic look, but the technology is completely modern, to be durable. Because something has changed — we are now completely out of the Kleenex Society. And now one of the most modern parameters is longevity. We have to think that when you buy a chair, it's for you, for your life, for your children, for your grandchildren.

**In addition to more freedom of choice for the original PLAY chair, there's also a brand new model. Tell us about PLAY TAN.** It is based on what I think is the good angle — the good position — to think, to dream. Because



## In an exclusive interview, Philip Starck muses on love, life and the revolutionary potential of his latest PLAY with DEDON chairs

when you are completely horizontal, you sleep. When you sit up straight, you are too much awake. And I think this 45-degree angle of PLAY TAN can give at least the possibility to have what is called a *semi-ouvert*, or half-open, mental state. You know, half awake, half asleep, which is the best way to create dreams, to think — to do the only job which is interesting for humanity!

**Is it true that PLAY TAN was modelled on those green metal chairs we see in the parks of PARIS?** I've spent a lot of time in the Jardin du Luxembourg, and I've seen a lot of people who were just thinking like that. They were not looking at the landscape. They were not looking at people. They were not reading.

They were just dreaming. And that gave me the idea.

**You've invested so much of your own belief and love into the revolutionary PLAY concept, and you've entrusted it to DEDON to carry it out. Why do you feel that DEDON is the right company for this?** Everything at the base is a human story. It's a love affair. I don't like big companies. I love people. And Bobby, the founder of DEDON, is the right guy. He makes decisions by himself, in one second, just with his nose. He doesn't make marketing research. He's just a pure animal of intuition, and it's with these type of people you have to work — it's with these type of people you make a good project.

