



Reopening of Stadtcasino Basel: historically faithful theatre seating and furniture for the foyer by Girsberger Customized Furniture

The opening week of the Basler Konzerthaus, from 22 to 30 August, will also mark the end of a major project for Girsberger Customized Furniture. The complex of buildings that make up the Stadtcasino have been refurbished, remodelled and extended according to plans by architects Herzog & de Meuron, in a process that began back in 2016.

As well as preserving its acoustic properties, one aim was to restore the Stehlin concert hall, originally built in 1876, to how it looked in 1905. Girsberger was commissioned to produce the seating – 1388 folding seats – according to the original design. The Swiss furniture maker also created a central seating feature and fabric-draped canopies in the foyers for this stunning group of buildings.

Bützberg, 11.08.2020

The Stehlin concert hall, which was built in 1876 and is one of Europe's oldest and most important concert halls, has undergone many changes over the course of its history. During the first refurbishment in 1905, stucco work was added to the ceiling and the colour scheme was overhauled.

This architectural gem has now been restored to its former glory, following a period of renovation and extension work delivered by Basel-based architects Herzog & de Meuron in close partnership with the Cantonal Office of Historic Monuments. Having been completely refurbished, the complex looks stunning with its reinstated classical style elements. Boasting many integrated technical innovations and optimized acoustics, the concert hall, with its new seating based on the original design from the

hall's early days, now forms the heart of the historic complex. Girsberger Customized Furniture developed this furniture based on information gleaned from old photographs.

Using various prototypes, sitting comfort, folding mechanism, materials, colours and dimensions were agreed with the architects, and various acoustic set-ups were tested in the laboratory. The seating is made from solid oak (stained smoked oak), along with certified fire-retardant upholstery foam and velour fabric. A pneumatic stop damper keeps the folding mechanism quiet.

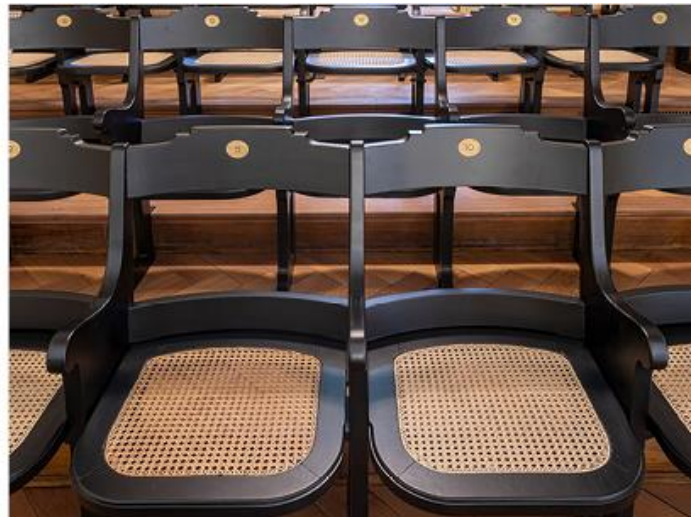


Creating a prototype based on old photos
Photo: Daniel Kuhn / Girsberger



The final design of the folding seat:
Photo: André Bolliger / Girsberger

In the Hans Huber Hall, which is also listed and is used as a venue for chamber music, Girsberger repaired and relacquered the folding seats in the gallery, which incorporate woven rattan.



Repair and complete refurbishment Folding seats in the gallery of the Hans Huber Hall Photos: André Bolliger / Girsberger

The Concert Hall, a formerly autonomous building which had grown around the core structure dating back to 1876, has now been joined to the rest of the complex by an extension comprising foyers, service areas and artists' dressing rooms. The radically overhauled façade of the new building draws on the neo-baroque architectural style of the original, which continues inside the building in the foyers and the sweeping stairs with their distinctly classical air.

Girsberger Customized Furniture – which specializes in furniture and furnishing elements for individual settings conceived by architects and designers – also produced a large, central bench in the main foyer, which can seat 24 people. Huge canopies were also created to plans by Herzog & de Meuron. The substructures, upholstery elements and velour fabric are flame retardant and meet all the fire protection requirements. The base of the bench is finished in mirror-polished chromium-nickel steel.

Davide Mastrodomenico, who is a member of the management board of Girsberger Switzerland and is in charge of the Customized Furniture department, is extremely happy with the result: “We find projects like this, which are about using the skills of the architects to make the client's visions a reality, absolutely fascinating. We are proud and thankful that we have been able to turn the customized furniture born of this relationship into a tangible reality. We are both delighted and honoured to be part of this unique history!”



In the foyer on the upper floor: The central bench with canopy also forms the opening for the two-storey high crystal chandelier, which hangs all the way down to the ground floor. Photos: André Bolliger / Girsberger

Having manufactured and restored the seating at Theater Basel, KKL Luzern, Theater St. Gallen and the HSLU chamber music hall, Stadtcasino Basel is the fifth large project of this kind to be delivered by Girsberger in Switzerland. Whether creating replicas, producing new furniture or restoring the theatre seating, Girsberger worked closely with the architects and the Office of Historic Monuments throughout, to optimize existing product features or add new elements.

Due to the interdisciplinary skills needed for the refurbishment of Stadtcasino Basel in the areas of solid wood and surface processing, metalwork and upholstery work, Girsberger was the perfect partner for this collaboration.



Looking up from the ground floor, the canopy appears weightless, yet it conceals a balustrade on the upper floor. The upholstered and fabric-covered structure was also made by Girsberger Customized Furniture. Photos: André Bolliger / Girsberger



About Girsberger:

The Swiss company group was established in 1889 as a woodworking shop and soon made its name as a manufacturer of seating furniture. Today, it focuses on providing high-quality and innovative furniture solutions for offices, public spaces and homes and has particular expertise in processing solid wood.

Its own production sites combine a variety of different manufacturing disciplines, thus providing a high degree of production versatility and allowing the strategic move into Customized Furniture and Remanufacturing. From Koblenz, close to the border with Germany, the solid wood trade unit supplies all types of wood-processing businesses with top-quality solid wood.

Today, the international company group is managed by Michael Girsberger, who is the great-grandson of the company's founder. Outside Switzerland Girsberger has sales companies in Germany, France, the Benelux countries, Austria and Turkey; the company's headquarters are in Bützberg, near Berne. Production locations are situated in Bützberg (Switzerland), Endingen (Germany), Kraljevci (Serbia) and Silivri (Turkey).

Girsberger introduced climate-neutral production in 2015 and was awarded the EcoVadis gold medal for its transparent, sustainable supply chain in 2019.

For more detailed information about the company visit www.girsberger.com.

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