Sedentary passions

In the first of a new series Nick Vinson chooses his top five contemporary chairs and sofas while, right, Judith Miller selects the best examples from the past

1 The Worker chair
by Hella Jongerius

In 2005, Jongerius introduced her highly influential Polder sofa, revisiting the modernist mantra of form follows function with her own “form follows feeling”. This year she added a chair, working “like a contemporary carpenter” to combine hand-crafted elements with technologically sophisticated materials. Her use of varied textiles and colours and decorative buttons have become a signature, and in this case, the result looks like workers’ clothes, hence the name.

From £1,360. www.usitro.com

2 Facett chair
by Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec

The Facett line, launched by Ligne Roset last year, has already won several design awards. Its form recalls the cuts of diamonds or even origami, enhanced by the clever use of bold graphic quilting. There are two sofas, an armchair and two foot rests (which fit into the chairs like jigsaw pieces and can be turned on their ends for lounging) as well as a quilted rug. Comfort and flexibility aside, the Bouroullec brothers’ triumph here is complex simplicity.
€2,114 (chair); €645 (stool);
www.ligne-rosset.com

3 Sofa
by Florence Knoll

This sofa, often copied but never bettered, was designed by Florence Knoll in 1954 (and has been in production ever since) to “fill in” the Knoll range, which also included designs by Mies van der Rohe, Eero Saarinen and Harry Bertoia. “I never