

Where Nature Meets Modern: The Jean Nouvel Seating Collection

How new lounges elevate aesthetics, functionality, and wellbeing at work

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In today's fast-paced world, office spaces must prioritize people to help them thrive. [Recent Steelcase research](#) highlights a concerning trend: employees are experiencing lower levels of wellbeing, and the rise of screen-based interactions contributes to loneliness and disengagement. Nature, with its innate ability to soothe and inspire, offers a solution. When working outdoors isn't feasible, bringing elements of nature into the workplace is the next best thing. Studies show that biophilic design elements can help improve mental wellbeing,^[1] while curved contours mimicking natural forms are preferred and linked to lower stress levels.^[2] Integrating nature into workplaces is critical for supporting a healthier, more productive workforce.

Embracing nature-inspired design, the Jean Nouvel Collection transforms any environment with its stunning look and ability to support a range of needs at work, from connection and socialization to relaxation and reflection. The pieces in the collection – the lounge, sofa, ottoman, and tête-à-tête – are marked by aesthetic and functional characteristics that nurture creativity and promote wellbeing.

NATURE'S ELEGANCE: THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE COLLECTION

With its organic shapes and contours, the Jean Nouvel Seating Collection evokes the same calming response we experience when interacting with nature. World renowned French architect Jean Nouvel captures the timeless beauty of nature in these pieces by emphasizing simplicity and familiarity. "The elementary quality I seek has nothing to do with minimalism or brutalism: it involves ambiguity and complexity," he explains.

"The simpler an object looks, the more obvious or familiar, the harder it is to make, the more emotion it offers, and the better it stands the test of time."

JEAN NOUVEL | Architect

Drawing inspiration from his upbringing near the water, Jean Nouvel designed the collection's pieces to mimic the fluidity of waves. The four beautiful pieces feature wave-like, edgeless shapes that eliminate sharp edges. Subtle contours expertly support arms and backs, while boldly rounded forms flow across the seams and swells of each [office seat](#), gently cradling and supporting the body.

CRAFTING THE VISION: FROM CONCEPT TO REALITY

Bringing the [Jean Nouvel Seating Collection](#) to life was a remarkable engineering feat, requiring extensive collaboration. The dynamic partnership between Coalesse (a Steelcase brand) and Jean Nouvel has fused innovative design with cutting-edge manufacturing techniques to bring this collection to life. Shapes seem irregular but they're far from formless, and the structures require extra artistry and skill to upholster around edgeless corners.

The forms are created using rotational molding. Foam is highly engineered to fit the rotomolded shell, resulting in uniquely organic shapes that are lightweight and easy to move. The very last layer is a textile shroud that covers the foam. The stitching around the edgeless forms required meticulous pattern development to ensure the pieces are smooth, flowing, and free from wrinkles. This attention to detail underscores the collection's commitment to both form and function.

TRANSFORMING SPACES: THE IMPACT OF THE JEAN NOUVEL COLLECTION IN THE MODERN WORKPLACE

The sofa, lounge, ottoman, and tête-à-tête can be mixed and matched in endless combinations. Echoing the spontaneity of natural formations in landscapes, water, and sky, any grouping can be assembled to create organic clusters and currents – like nature, they are never the same twice.

Jenna VanFleteren, Principal Designer who worked with the Coalesse Design Group on this project, describes elements that contribute to the epic beauty of the Jean Nouvel Collection. "The pieces have 360-degree elegance. They are designed to be intriguing and beautiful from all angles, which liberates you from the confines of traditional placement against walls," VanFleteren says. "This freedom unlocks endless possibilities for positioning them throughout a space, allowing you to tailor the arrangement to your unique preferences."

The tête-à-tête is designed to simultaneously accommodate both connection and individual work. Its unique shape allows users to choose how they interact with one another. Two people sitting on the tête-à-tête can just as easily have an intimate conversation, as they can independently enjoy a moment of relaxation in their own designated space.

The Jean Nouvel Seating Collection supports the flow of conversation or offers a spot for deep work and quiet reflection. It's the perfect addition to reception areas, transitional spaces, waiting rooms, and relaxation areas throughout the office. By embodying [community-based design principles](#), the Jean Nouvel Collection contributes to vibrant spaces like social hubs and rejuvenation areas.

A HARMONY OF NATURE AND DESIGN

The Jean Nouvel Seating Collection weaves the essence of nature into modern office environments, transforming them into vibrant, community-centric spaces that support wellbeing. Whether facilitating conversations or providing serene spots for deep work and reflection, the collection breathes life into social hubs and rejuvenation areas. The collection's versatility and organic forms make it a perfect addition to any setting, making a profound impact on both the space and the people who use it.

¹ Ríos-Rodríguez, María Luisa, Marina Testa Moreno, and Pilar Moreno-Jiménez. "Nature in the Office: A Systematic Review of Nature Elements and Their Effects on Worker Stress Response." *Healthcare* 11, no. 21 (October 27, 2023): 2838. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare11212838>.

² Tawil, Nour, Leonie Ascone, and Simone Kühn. "The Contour Effect: Differences in the Aesthetic Preference and Stress Response to Photo-realistic Living Environments." *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (December 1, 2022). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.933344>.