

Fermob

French creator of
colorful & sustainable furniture

GOOD VIBES DESIGN

PRESS KIT

FERMOB IN THE CITY: THREE DECADES OF URBAN TRANSFORMATION IN NEW YORK



Baptiste and Bernard Reybier

From Parisian gardens to American public parks, Fermob has quietly and confidently shaped the outdoor spaces where people gather, converse, and unwind. With vibrant colors, thoughtful craftsmanship, and a storied design heritage, Fermob has become a familiar presence in cities across the U.S. — especially in New York, where its distinctive furniture can be found in public spaces, cultural institutions, and now, even restaurant interiors.

But Fermob's American story began long before its furniture arrived in Brooklyn Bridge Park or the New York Botanical Garden. For Fermob President Bernard Reybier, international expansion has always been a cornerstone of Fermob's strategy. Having spent early chapters of his career in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and at American multinational Black & Decker, Reybier developed a keen appreciation for the power of global markets — particularly the U.S., which he identified as a priority from the start.

"When I took over the company," Reybier recalls, "I told the team, 'We are a global company.' I even asked Martine, one of our 11 employees at the time, to translate 'table and chairs' into English. That was enough for us to start thinking internationally."

His ambition was clear: create a company built on exportable design, anchored by innovation and manufacturing expertise.

After Fermob's initial foray into the United States with the installation of Bistro chairs at Bryant Park in 1992, the company began exporting its products to the U.S. to fulfill mail-order sales. Fermob's presence in the U.S. expanded when, in 1998, a store owner from Up Country Home discovered the brand at the Maison et Objet trade show in Paris.



Impressed by Fermob's design and vision, she partnered with Bernard Reybier and became Fermob's first American distributor.

By 1999, the store created Home Country Garden to distribute Fermob's Bistro collection, eventually expanding to include other products. In 2006, the company ceased distributing other brands to exclusively represent Fermob, launching the Fermob USA brand and website to target residential customers. This shift marked a significant step in Fermob's growing presence in the U.S.

Today, Fermob USA is headquartered in Cumming, Georgia, where a dedicated team of professionals is committed to bringing the French *art de vivre* to the American market. All Fermob products are manufactured in France and shipped to the Georgia headquarters before being distributed to customers across the United States.



THE BISTRO AND LUXEMBOURG: TWO CHAIRS THAT SHAPED A BRAND

Created in the late 19th century, the Bistro folding chair became a favorite among lemonade sellers who sought to avoid paying café licensing fees by using easy-to-store, foldable furniture. Fermob developed its own version from the original "Simplex" patent, first registered in 1889, of which it is now the official trustee. The company has preserved the chair's charm and simplicity while modernizing its materials and finishes, making it an enduring symbol of French craftsmanship.

The Bistro chair remains one of Fermob's best-loved creations — cheerful, foldable, and unmistakably French. In 2014, to celebrate the chair's 125th birthday (shared with the Eiffel Tower), Fermob constructed a replica of the famous monument using 324 red Poppy Bistro chairs on the Champ de Mars in Paris, a poetic nod to both icons' enduring presence in everyday life.

Today, more than 150,000 Bistro chairs are crafted at Fermob's Thoissey factory each season, finding their way to gathering spaces of all kinds—terraces, homes, public spaces, and beyond—around the world.





LUXEMBOURG
Chair

If the Bistro chair embodies Fermob's heritage, the Luxembourg chair represents its evolution. Originally created in 1923 in Paris' municipal workshops for the Jardin du Luxembourg, these iconic garden chairs were reimagined in 2004 when Fermob invited designer Frédéric Sofia to reinterpret them. The result is the Luxembourg collection—a modern take that blends classic French form with 21st-century functionality, all while preserving the spirit of the original design Fermob continues to produce today.

Together, these two collections reflect the company's DNA: joyful, practical, and deeply rooted in place. Whether it's a folding chair on a Brooklyn sidewalk or a lounge in a public garden, Fermob furniture continues to quietly enhance how people gather — in France, in New York, and everywhere in between.



FERMOB AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF BRYANT PARK



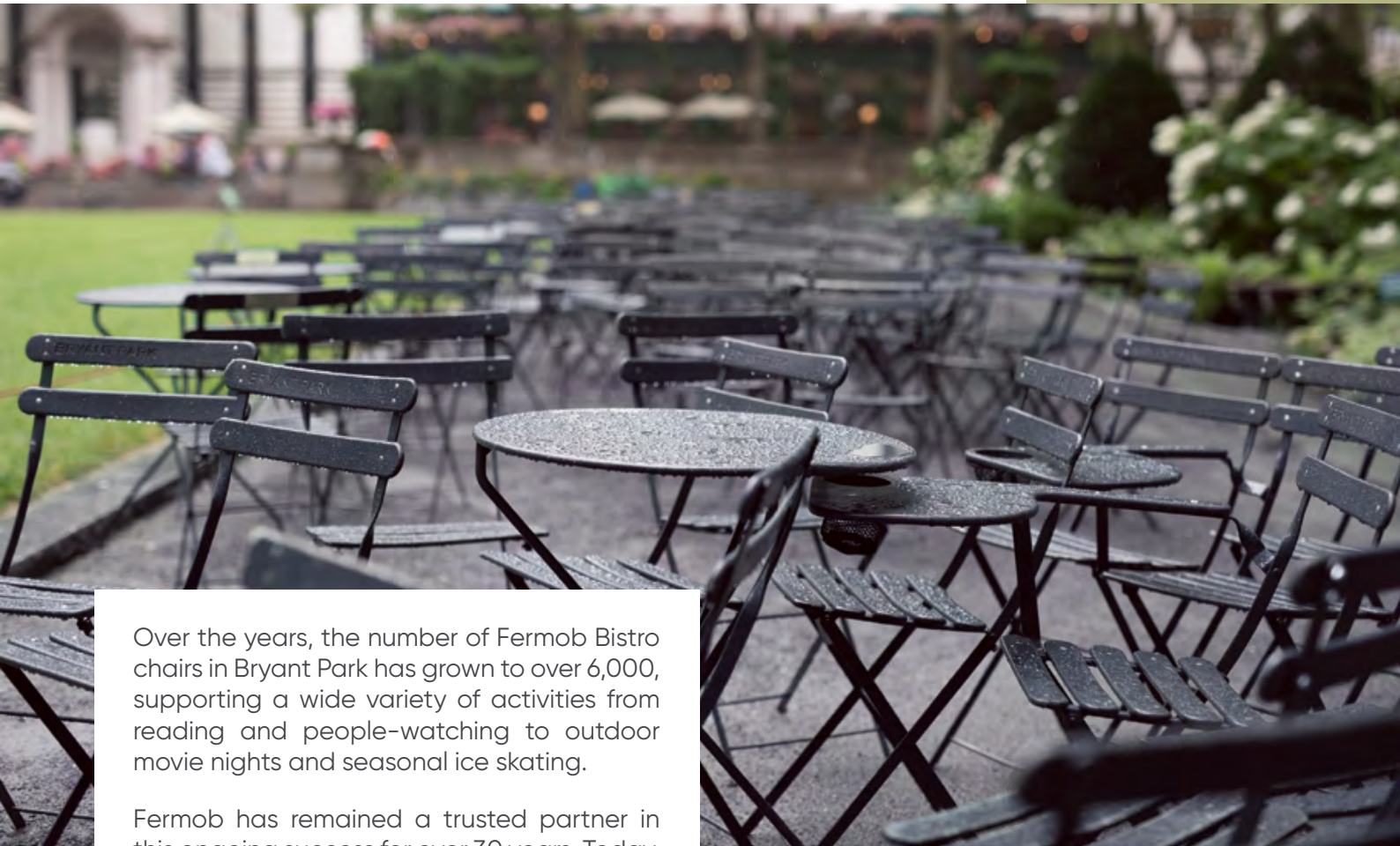
Fermob's iconic Bistro chairs are at the heart of one of New York City's most celebrated urban renewal stories. In the 1980s, Bryant Park was a place most New Yorkers avoided—plagued by drug activity, crime, and neglect. By the early 1990s, the city was ready for a change. In 1992, led by Dan Biederman and Andrew Manshel of the Bryant Park Corporation, a bold restoration project was launched to reclaim the park and restore it as a public asset. A key part of their strategy was surprisingly simple: introduce movable seating to encourage visitors to linger, connect, and feel safe.

After an extensive search, the team selected Fermob's steel-framed Bistro chair, modeled after the folding chairs found in Parisian parks and cafés. The idea drew on a European tradition of public seating that empowers people to choose where and how they gather.

"I like to say that everyone in New York would rather be in Paris and everyone in Paris would rather be in New York, but the chair has a real cultural resonance," says Manshel.

At the time, Fermob was still a small company with a team of only about ten people. Despite their size, they successfully fulfilled the initial order of 2,000 chairs—a remarkable logistical feat that underscored their craftsmanship and commitment. The arrival of these chairs, imported directly from France, made a powerful statement. If these valuable chairs could remain in the park untouched, so could people and their belongings. That simple act of trust sparked a shift in perception and behavior. New Yorkers returned, bringing life and pride back to the space.

The transformation was swift and profound. Movable seating gave people a reason to stop, stay, and socialize. More than just chairs, they became tools for placemaking.



Over the years, the number of Fermob Bistro chairs in Bryant Park has grown to over 6,000, supporting a wide variety of activities from reading and people-watching to outdoor movie nights and seasonal ice skating.

Fermob has remained a trusted partner in this ongoing success for over 30 years. Today, the park orders approximately 1,000 Bistro chairs annually to maintain and refresh its stock, a testament to both the durability and enduring appeal of the design. Additionally, the park has expanded beyond the Bistro line: Fermob's Luxembourg collection is now used to create inviting lounge areas, and Luxembourg kids' chairs have been introduced to welcome the park's youngest visitors. Fermob tables, too, are now a staple throughout the park, helping define social and recreational zones for visitors of all ages.

As Executive Director Dan Biederman notes, "Often, we need furniture that doesn't even exist yet, and it is a privilege to have a thought partner like Fermob in solving for our distinctly high-traffic use and aesthetic excellence."

Today, Bryant Park stands as a vibrant symbol of how visionary leadership, intentional design, and public-private collaboration—right down to the choice of a chair—can reshape not just a space but the daily rhythm of an entire city.



FERMOB AND THE REVIVAL OF TIMES SQUARE

After playing a central role in the transformation of Bryant Park, Fermob once again found itself at the heart of another major urban renewal—this time, in one of the most iconic locations in the world: Times Square. Like Bryant Park, Times Square had suffered from decades of neglect. By the 1980s, it was synonymous with crime, drug use, prostitution, and urban decay. But the 1990s marked a turning point. The formation of the Times Square Alliance, a Business Improvement District (BID) established in 1992, mirrored the strategy used in Bryant Park and aimed to restore the square to a safe, vibrant public space.

Inspired by the success of movable seating in Bryant Park, the Times Square Alliance pursued a similar approach, seeking to reclaim street space for pedestrians. Fermob—whose colorful Bistro chairs had become a familiar sight in the city—was a natural choice. By the early 2000s, New Yorkers had already seen Fermob chairs in Bryant Park for over a decade, and their presence had come to symbolize comfort, safety, and a welcoming environment. The city commissioned Danish architect Jan

Gehl to lead a new urban planning initiative to pedestrianize parts of Times Square, and Fermob was asked to provide seating for this bold transformation.

In this context, 400 Fermob Bistro chairs were installed in Times Square in a striking “Poppy” color—selected deliberately to reflect the bold, vibrant visual landscape of the area. This eye-catching red-orange hue added a jolt of color to the concrete expanse and immediately became a visual fixture in the square.

However, early feedback revealed a new challenge. Given the high-traffic nature of the site, the standard Bistro chair needed to be more robust. In response, Fermob engineered a special version of the chair using thicker, more durable steel—capable of supporting up to 260 lbs.

This redesign proved so successful that Fermob adopted the enhanced structure as the new standard for the entire Bistro collection, a direct legacy of its work in Times Square.





The impact of this effort was not just structural—it was symbolic. The chairs played a role in helping reclaim Times Square as a place for people, not just traffic. As Fermob President Bernard Reybier recalls, the head of the Times Square Alliance once told him, “It’s amazing—people used to call us to complain about pollution in Times Square. Now they call to talk about the color of the chairs.”

Since 2010, Fermob’s Bistro chairs in Bryant Park have been screen-printed with the likeness of Times Square, marking the deep connection between the two urban spaces and Fermob’s role in their shared story. Today, with over 50 million passersby annually, Times Square is a global landmark. For many French visitors, spotting a Fermob Bistro chair in the middle of Manhattan feels like a moment of homecoming, so much so that it’s become a tradition to send photos of the chairs back to loved ones in France.

From a neglected thoroughfare to a pedestrian-friendly plaza filled with color, conversation, and community, the rehabilitation of Times Square demonstrates what great design and thoughtful partnerships can achieve. Fermob’s furniture doesn’t just brighten public spaces—it helps create a social link between people, inviting spontaneous gatherings, shared moments, and a sense of belonging. And at its center, once again, is Fermob’s humble yet transformative chair.

**More inspiring stories to come
as Fermob’s colorful designs make
their way across the US!**



LOCATIONS



The Art Institute of Dallas



The Art Institute of Dallas



Philz Coffee - Chicago



Hamptons Showhouse - New York



CitizenM Hotel - New York



CitizenM Hotel - New York



Ballard's Resort - Minnesota

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