



# Giving vintage Danish furniture new lease of life

Pelikan is a furniture small business with a difference run by Penny Oliver and Rachel Wirrmann. Penny spoke to **Adrian Peel**.

**B**ased in Haverhill and established in 2010, Pelikan specialises in transforming mid-20th century, mainly Scandinavian sofas into something pleasing to the eye and strikingly up-to-date.

It is run by Penny Oliver and Rachel Wirrmann, two old friends who share a passion for an aesthetic where form and function work together in perfect harmony.

Almost all of their vintage sofas and chairs are imported from Denmark, meaning that they come with excellent design and construction credentials.

Each piece then goes through a careful transformation – with the original spirit and integrity retained – resulting in it being stripped back to its bones and then essentially rebuilt.

This process is carried out with professional expertise, using only the finest quality materials and contemporary fabrics, all of which are fire retardant.

The end result is an original vintage sofa, usually from around the 1930s to the 1970s, beautifully reworked and ready for use for another 50 years. They also offer a bespoke restoration service.

Penny said: “We go back to the frame and refurbish with new materials and fabrics. We bring them up to date using high-quality wools and contemporary colours, and they look fantastic.”

“It means people are getting a comfortable piece of furniture which has that original vintage narrative. We’re just giving them a new lease of life.”

Both Penny and Rachel love furniture from that period and used to buy pieces for themselves, before turning their hobby into a thriving business.

“We found a really good group of upholsterers, and we enjoyed refurbishing the chairs and sofas,” said Penny, who used to work as a lawyer. “They were selling well and we were getting good feedback so we ended up specialising in that.”

“It came out of a love of the furniture. Often when the pieces arrive with us, they look a bit worse-for-wear but they really do restore very well.”

Penny added: “I think a lot of modern furniture is very big and deep and you can sit down and never get out again! We find that lots of our customers like the proportions of our furniture – it doesn’t overwhelm the space and it works really well.”

Pelikan will be exhibiting at the inaugural Cambridge Home + Garden Show at the Guildhall on Saturday, September 9, an event sponsored by the *Cambridge Independent*.

Penny said: “Historically we’ve sold a lot to London, and recently we’ve found we’ve had more local customers, which we really love.”

“We love Cambridge and we really want to get more involved in the Cambridge market. We like the ethos of the show and, because we’re an online business, it’s a great way to meet customers in person. In short, we thought it would be a good way to introduce ourselves to Cambridge.”

■ pelikanonline.co.uk  
■ camhomeshow.com



Advert ID:711105AQ  
129 mm by 160 mm  
Booking Code:711105AQ  
Customer ID:CAMBS CLASSICS  
Colour:4  
First Appearance:21/06/17  
Last Appearance:21/06/17