

Totally tubular

A ho-hum lounge chair goes far-out with upholstered tubes.

by Kelly Frush

Receiving complete creative control from a customer is a welcome if infrequent opportunity. When Vince Iacouzze of Concours d'Elegance Upholstery in Bushkill, Pa., got the go-ahead from his client, he already had a design idea in his head.

"My UPS driver saw all the fabric getting delivered to my house and I showed him around my shop," Iacouzze says. "Then he said he had a chair for me to reupholster that belonged to his father." The customer then handed Iacouzze the reins.

Iacouzze had a vision for this chair. He had seen a chair made with horizontal pleats and liked the design but thought it had a few flaws, aesthetically and ergonomically.

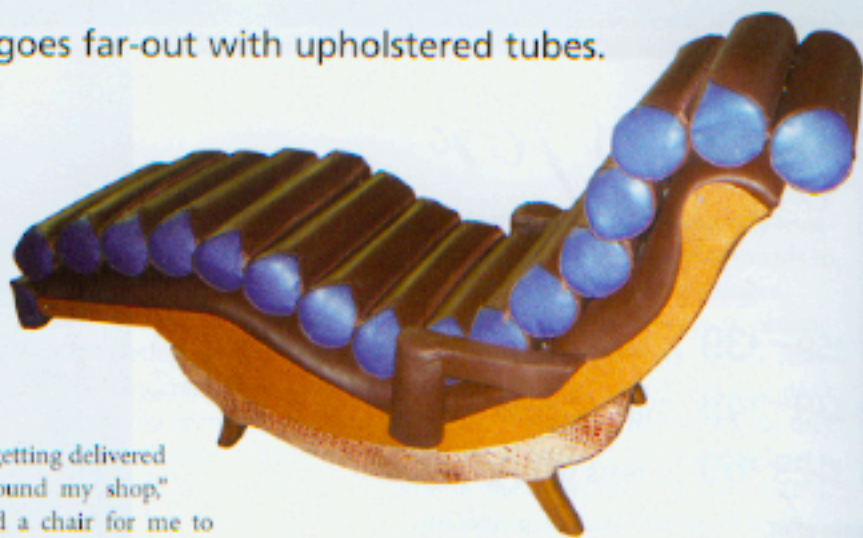
"If the seat wore out in one spot, how would you fix it without having to take apart the whole seat? Most of the time, that is the only recourse," Iacouzze points out. With his design, however, individual tubes could be removed and cleaned or reupholstered.

Iacouzze started by stripping the lounge chair down to its springs. He interweaved 4-inch jute webbing and glued on a foam sheet, which he then covered with two layers of 3/4-ounce Dacron. Iacouzze filled in the low spots with loose fill, then covered the chair with leather.

Iacouzze test-fitted all the tubes to make sure they fit into the chair at the right places. He planned to place the largest tubes on the chair so they would be under the torso of the body, and the smaller tubes were arranged down the chair in descending order according to their diameters.

"The customer almost cried when he saw the completed chair, he was so happy," Iacouzze notes. "He said he couldn't believe how comfortable he was with it."

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"The hardest part of this chair was the design function of it—how to make a completely functional, aesthetic chair that could be adjustable and repairable to the customer for years to come," says Iacouzze. He had his 6-foot-plus customer test-fit the chair; now it fits him like a glove.



The pink lounge chair belonged to the client's father and slides on a cradle. When Iacouzze stripped the chair, he discovered a heating device inside of it that was blackening the foam. "I had to remove all the power from it because a lot of the electrical system was fried," Iacouzze notes.