



# Le Corbusier chaise longue

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**Not on display**

**Title/Description:** Le Corbusier chaise longue

**Born:** 1928

**Object Type:** Chair, Furniture

**Materials:** Chrome-plated steel, Leather

**Measurements:** h. 730 x w. 1610 x d. 563 mm

**Accession Number:** 31505

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The *Chaise longue basculant* (LC 4) was designed in 1928 by the architect Le Corbusier (1887-1965), the architect and designer Charlotte Perriand (1903-1999), and the architect Pierre Jeanneret (1896-1967). It is made from a chrome-plated tubular steel frame which is long and formed in a soft curve resting on a painted sheet metal base and covered by black leather upholstery. The upper frame of the chair can glide back and forth on the base which made it possible to adjust the inclination angle and give the user a perfect position.

As Le Corbusier describes in his *Œuvre complete vol. 2*, he regarded the chair's most important feature as the fact that it could "adopt any position, always balanced on its own without mechanical intervention". [1] According to Le Corbusier, the chair was a "machine-for-sitting" and he stressed that these machines had different functions and should therefore also accommodate different positions for the body. [2] The chaise longue permits different reclining positions, which is fixed by the weight of the human body, from an ordinary chair for conversation, to fully reclined in its raised position.

The chair was designed for the Villa Church (1927-30) but was first presented to the public as part of a model apartment at the *Salon d'Automne* in Paris, 1929, along with two other chairs: *Fauteuil grand confort* and *Fauteuil à dossier basculant*. The openness and lightness of the new metal furniture accentuated the sense of the spatial flow which was so important to Le Corbusier in his architecture. [3] The chaise longue also represents Le Corbusier's and Charlotte Perriand's ideas about what furniture really was. Storage and even beds and divans should be built in and were considered "nothing more than pigeon holes." [4] It was the moveable pieces like chairs and tables that they defined to be furniture as Perriand formulated in 1929: "The French word for furniture, *"MEUBLES"* comes from the Latin, *"mobilis"*: meaning things that can be moved about. The only things that come into this category are chairs and tables." [5]

Therese Wiles, July 2022

[1] Pierre Jeanneret. *Œuvre complete vol. 2: Œuvre complete de 1929-1934* (Erlenbach-Zurich: Ed. d'Architecture, 1947)

[2] McLeod, Mary. "Charlotte Perriand: Her First Decade as a Designer." *AA Files*, no. 15 (1987): 7.

[3] Charlotte Benton. "Le Corbusier: Furniture and the Interior." *Journal of Design History* 3, no. 2 (1990), 103-124

[4] Quote from Charlotte Benton. "Le Corbusier: Furniture and the Interior." *Journal of Design History* 3, no. 2 (1990), 111.

[5] Perriand, Charlotte. "Wood or Metal." *The Studio* 97, no. 433 (1929), 279.

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## Further Reading

Benton, Charlotte. "'L'Aventure du Mobilier': Le Corbusier's Furniture of the 1920s." *The Journal of Decorative Arts Society 1890-1940*, no. 6 (1982), 7-22.

Benton, Charlotte. "Le Corbusier: Furniture and the Interior." *Journal of Design History* 3, no. 2 (1990), 103-124.

Jeanneret, P. *Œuvre complete vol. 2: Œuvre complete de 1929-1934*. Erlenbach-Zurich: Ed. d'Architecture, 1947.

McLeod, Mary. "Charlotte Perriand: Her First Decade as a Designer." AA Files, no. 15 (1987): 3-13.

Perriand, Charlotte. "Wood or Metal." The Studio 97, no. 433 (1929) pp. 278-79.

Rüegg, Arthur and Klaus Spechtenhauser. Le Corbusier: Furniture and Interiors 1905-1965. Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, 2012.

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