

**What:**

**SMILOW FURNITURE**

Midcentury Modern classics return to production. ▼

**Though little known now**, Mel Smilow was once one of the country's most important designers of Midcentury Modern furniture. Born in the Bronx in 1922, Smilow started designing as a young man, then partnered with salesman Morton Thielle in 1949. Their six Smilow-Thielle stores, including a Manhattan flagship, sold reasonably priced furniture designed and made as painstakingly as pieces of art. After the partners split, the company closed its stores in 1972; Smilow died in 2002. But his daughters Judy and Pam rescued "dozens and dozens" of designs from the basement of their family home, and Judy Smilow is now reintroducing some of her father's most beautiful pieces, including those shown here in sustainably sourced American walnut.



**Democratic** Because Smilow wanted to make his furniture affordable for the middle class, he designed it with inexpensive-to-replace cushions and covers instead of upholstery.

**Focused** "The attention to detail and the finishing both front and back, the way it features the beauty of the wood, were trademarks of my father's design," says Judy Smilow.

**Price:**  
rail back sofa, **\$12,000**  
ottoman, **\$2,400**  
armchair, **\$3,900**

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**Back Beauty** Beautifully detailed backs allow owners to make the furniture decorative elements in open space, rather than pushing the pieces against a wall.