

NOTE

Note Design Studio plays with fire
Process-driven designer experiments with Japanese charring technique shou sugi ban for new Note Editions launch



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Stockholm's multifaceted design studio, Note, has built its international reputation on a philosophy of experimentation and curiosity. By exploring the possibilities of materials and processes rather than working to reach a defined end-point product, the studio team has maintained a track record of creativity and innovation, often using the unexpected outcomes of experimental techniques to inform its designs. Note's most recent line of enquiry has involved the traditional Japanese timber-treatment technique of shou sugi ban – the application of fire to wood. The extraordinary results of Note's material experiments are now available through Note Editions – the studio's direct-to-consumer sales platform where it showcases its in-house creative projects.

"Experimentation is in our DNA. In every project, we try to break the mould. It can sometimes be tiresome and time-consuming, but we learn so much from our mistakes – quite often a failure is the birth of something new."

– Kristoffer Fagerström, Partner, Note Design Studio



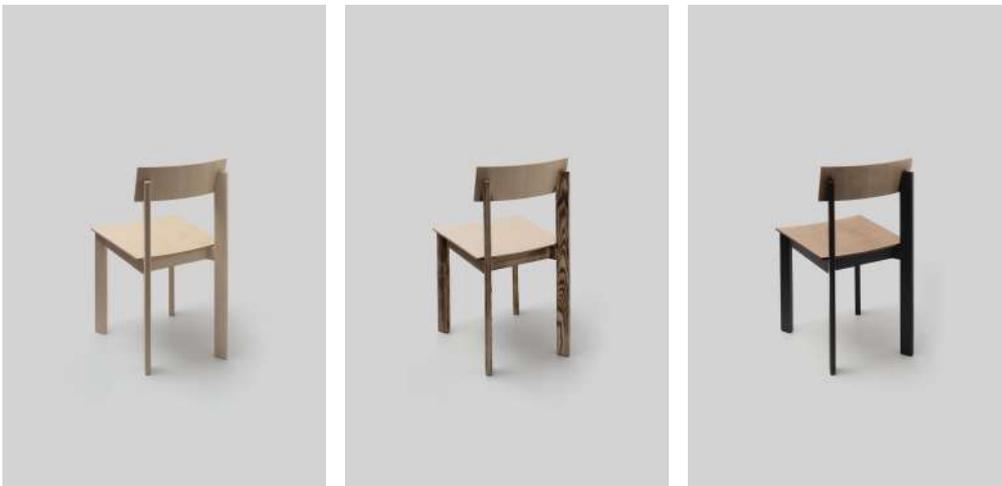
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Touched by fire

Sometimes known as yakisugi, this process of shou sugi ban involves charring cedar wood over an open flame in order to make it stronger, more durable, and more resistant to damage from insects, water and even fire itself. This meant that the technique was historically used to treat timber cladding when building houses. Contemporary architects often return to it as a means of capturing a distinctive aesthetic.

Shou sugi ban is a demanding and very hands-on technique through which timber is exposed to an open flame, which burns the soft wood first, leaving harder wood unaffected. As well as strengthening the wood, the effect of flame enhances the timber both visually and texturally, darkening the wood and emphasising the grain. By changing the intensity of the flame and the duration of its application, it's possible to create a range of different aesthetic effects.

The Note team were keen to discover what impact shou sugi ban might have when applied to wooden furniture, and whether they could use the principles behind the technique to achieve a black finish, creating colour contrasts within a single-material item of furniture without the need for paints or stains.



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The hot seat

For this project, Note literally set fire to their previous work. One of the most popular designs the studio has created for Zilio A&C, the Candid Chair is a robust, minimalist and adaptable seat constructed entirely from ash wood – which makes it the ideal subject for a shou sugi ban-inspired trial by fire.

After test-charring a few small pieces of wood, Note moved on to the complete chair. In the process, Note discovered that burning the wood could achieve some startling aesthetic effects that, although not the intended outcome, had a distinctive beauty of their own. As well as the predicted blackening, the burning also produced a charred look and texture that underlined the natural colour and pattern already present in the wood grain.

"I love how the burning enhances the natural pattern in the wood, which makes the expression so much more dynamic and ensures every chair is unique."

– Malin Engvall, designer, Note Design Studio



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Note Editions #3

Note decided that Note Editions would be the perfect platform to celebrate and share the results of their Shou Sugi Ban project with design fans.

Three special variants of the Candid Chair are now exclusively available to buy through Note Editions, each representing a different stage in the Shou Sugi Ban project's process – the 'before', the 'during' and the 'after':

1. The untreated blonde edition in plain ash;
2. The burned edition, with a char-emphasised grain pattern;
3. The blackened edition, with black stained-ash legs and a contrasting smoky-toned seat and back.

From 25 November, the new chairs will be available to order directly and exclusively from the studio via the Note Editions website, where they join the Mallow armchair for Labofa, launched in June 2020, and the Void Matters seating collection with Sancal, which was added in spring this year.



The new Shou Sugi Ban collection is available to order at note-editions.se. Delivery takes 14 days from ordering within Sweden; international orders are dependent on customs legislation in the destination country.

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Notes to editors

For more information about the project and the collection, and to source images, please contact note@zetteler.co.uk.

Prices

Blonde Candid chair €350

Black Candid chair €350

Burned Candid chair €500

Note Design Studio

Founded in 2008 by Johannes Carlström and Cristiano Pigazzini, Note is a Stockholm-based design studio working across the fields of architecture, interiors, products, graphic design and design strategy. Now comprising a team of 14 designers, Note has grown to become one of the most internationally admired names in Scandinavian design, working with a wide range of international design brands and winning a steady stream of design awards. The studio launched Note Editions – its direct-to-consumer online sales platform – in 2020.

notedesignstudio.se

[instagram.com/notedesignstudio](https://www.instagram.com/notedesignstudio)

twitter.com/noteds

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Note Editions

The Note Editions platform gives Note a unique connection to its international audience of design aficionados, allowing them to buy specially selected limited-edition pieces directly from Note, without competing with its partner manufacturers. Conceived in response to the cancellation of design fairs in the wake of the Covid pandemic, Note Editions serves as the practice's straight-to-consumer sales and marketing channel and gives it an opportunity to showcase the outcome of its creative experiments.

note-editions.se

[instagram.com/note_editions](https://www.instagram.com/note_editions)