

# The Four Seasons

**For Immediate Release**

27 April 2016

## Auction / New York

26 July 2016

10 am

## Exhibition / New York

20 – 26 July 2016

## Located at

99 East 52 Street

New York, New York 10022

For press inquiries contact

**FITZ & CO**

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**wright20.com**

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New York, April 27, 2016—Wright is pleased to announce the auction of the furniture and designed tableware and objects from the historic interior of The Four Seasons Restaurant, designed by Philip Johnson for Mies van der Rohe's landmark Seagram building on Park Avenue in New York City.



Image by Jennifer Calais Smith

Since its establishment in 1959, The Four Seasons has garnered acclaim as much for its culinary innovations as its seminal interior design, and has been recognized as a unique global destination and quintessential example of Philip Johnson's aesthetic throughout its storied history. A veritable cathedral of modernism, all designs for The Four Seasons will be offered for sale, including the Grill Room's famed banquettes, alongside all furniture including the original suite of Barcelona seating from the travertine lobby, custom Tulip tables with polished bronze tops, groups of custom Brno chairs, tableware and objects such as custom wine coolers, planters, serving carts and even the bespoke pots and pans made for the remarkable restaurant. The architectural details and fittings, such as the iconic metal curtains and paneling will remain in place and will not be sold. The auction will take place on-site at The Four Seasons on July 26, 2016.

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Richard Wright, founder and President of Wright says, “I am truly honored to work with Alex von Bidder and Julian Niccolini, co-owners of The Four Seasons, to celebrate the historic legacy of this iconic American interior with this auction event. Wright has always held a particular focus on modern architecture and design, and this interior so perfectly captures the modern spirit in heroic and elegant fashion. Though The Four Seasons is an international landmark, I consider it an example of what can only be accomplished in New York City. Having expanded to New York with our Madison Avenue galleries and office in the last few years, we are excited to have the opportunity to tell this incredible New York story.”

The Four Seasons will close July 16th, in order to open in a newly designed location, beginning a new period for this legendary restaurant. “It’s an extraordinary privilege to be planning the next chapter in The Four Seasons’ colorful life. Every detail is so important and fascinating to explore because this restaurant is a true New York ‘character’ with all the swagger and understated bravado of the city’s most vibrant personalities. We know the eyes of the world are watching to see where we will land, who will design the space, and how the quintessential 20th century restaurant will graduate into its future. And we can’t wait to share the good news.” – Alex von Bidder, Co-owner, The Four Seasons

The Four Seasons Restaurant consists of two grand rooms and several private dining rooms, accessed by a quintessential Miesian staircase rising from the travertine marble entrance lobby off 52nd street in Manhattan. The Grill Room is a luxurious open chamber paneled with richly grained French walnut with its famous shimmering metal curtains\* framing Richard Lippold’s arresting sculptures\* above the bar and mezzanine.

*\*Will remain in the space, and will not be offered for auction*

*The Four Seasons will be on view in The Four Seasons Restaurant at 99 East 52 Street, opening July 20th through the 26th. The auction will occur on site on July 26th.*



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From the Grill Room on the south side of the building, through the so-called Picasso alley, resides the Pool Room, a more formal room of equal measure, centered by a sparkling twenty-foot square pool cornered by trees rotated, as is the theme of the restaurant, with the changing of the seasons.

The Grill Room became the original power lunch, a term coined in a 1979 *Esquire* article in reference to the daily gathering of social, political and cultural elite. Hosting luminaries from every conceivable corner of society and culture for six decades, The Four Seasons has welcomed an endless list of iconoclasts from Presidents and Royalty, to newsmen, writers and publishing figures, from artists and musicians to fashion world luminaries and celebrities; President Truman and President Obama, Princess Margaret and Princess Diana, Valentino, Diane von Furstenberg and Anna Wintour, Truman Capote and Nora Ephron are among the restaurant's distinguished patrons. A myriad of notable events have been held here from weddings to anniversaries and events for business, society and charity. And of course, the famous birthday parties of such figures as John F. Kennedy, Sir Elton John and Norman Mailer.

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The Four Seasons Restaurant, a modern Gesamtkunstwerk, was designed as a balance between the rigorous design values of Mies and the textural luxury fundamental to an inspired dining experience. Designated with landmark status by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1989, and perhaps the most important International Style interior space in the world, the interior and décor of the restaurant has remained largely unchanged since its opening. Despite the contents to be sold by Wright as a result of The Four Seasons move, the interior of the rooms will remain intact in keeping with its landmark status. Custom designed furniture and objects by Philip Johnson, as well as custom ordered furniture from Knoll, all of which will be offered at auction, are synonymous with the setting of the architecture. The tableware, examples of which are held in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, was designed by L. Garth and Ada Louise Huxtable. Stemware, serving ware and even the pots and pans, also designed by the Huxtables, are consistent with the design vision. The end result is a seamless total work of art, where everything the eye catches upholds the virtues of the original vision of this singular space.

Brent Lewis, Director of Wright's New York location notes, "For New York City, The Four Seasons is an institution. For the world it is a destination. It represents, with such grace, the very ideals of modern architecture and design. It has a subtle power that is resonant from far off. Yet for so many, its power is more intangible and very personal. There is a soulfulness to these rooms and these objects that must be celebrated for their simple beauty alongside their history."



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Built without any expense spared, The Four Seasons became the costliest restaurant to have ever been built. Its final cost of \$4.5 million in 1959 was said to be greater than the entire cost of the Guggenheim Museum. Every detail was considered in order to remain true to the vision of the designers. The very concept of the restaurant was modern indeed. Though inspiration and influence was taken from traditional French and Continental culinary models, The Four Seasons was to be an American restaurant. It is credited with being the first to offer seasonal menus, and to focus on fresh and wide-ranging ingredients. In its 1959 opening review in *The New York Times*, Craig Claiborne observed, “There has never been a restaurant better keyed to the tempo of Manhattan than The Four Seasons...perhaps the most exciting restaurant to open in New York within the last two decades.” Winner of countless culinary awards, including the James Beard Outstanding Restaurant Award, The Four Seasons will be given this year the inaugural James Beard Foundation Design Icon Award.

Wright will publish a special catalog for The Four Seasons auction, honoring its history and legacy with essays by Paul Goldberger and others.

A public preview will be held on-site at The Four Seasons July 20–26, 2016. The auction will be live and open to the public, and will take place on-site at The Four Seasons on July 26, 2016, beginning at 10 AM EDT.

**About Wright:** Wright is the premier auction house specializing in modern and contemporary design. Since its founding in 2000, Wright has handled more than 40,000 lots across the spectrum of 20th century and contemporary design. Based in Chicago, with a gallery in New York in the historic Parke-Bernet building at 980 Madison, the company was founded and is run by Richard Wright along with a group of creative and innovative specialists who have pioneered whole fields of collection, championed architecture at auction and presented fine art with dependable results, cultivating an illustrious place within the auction industry. Wright is also a leading figure in direct and private sales of art and design with an online marketplace for furniture, decorative arts and design, Wright Now.