

THE QUESTION THAT HAS BEEN OCCUPYING US FOR OVER 100 YEARS

How far
can you
push
kitchen
concepts?

THE EGGERSMANN STORY



WELCOME TO EGGERSMANN

Dear readers,

How far can you push kitchen concepts? — Our answer: on and on. We are always ready to go new ways: with individual customization and by trying to make almost every design wish come true. As we did with the dream holiday home of an eggersmann client from Denmark, for example (Homestory p. 34).

Most wishes can actually be satisfied by what is already in our product range. After all, years ago, eggersmann began to experiment with a variety of new materials and to bring them “into the kitchen” — with a minimalist appearance that exposes a very clear visual idea for the kitchen.

With this abundance of materials, which we highlight from page 14 onward, customers can give their kitchen a very individual look. Luxury kitchens have long since become something of a statement and we discuss that issue with food writer and blogger Stevan Paul (interview p. 8). Traditional craftsmanship which has real quality and at the same time shows a clear desire for style has been part of eggersmann’s values since the year dot. As people from the East Westphalia region in the middle of Germany, it is not in our nature to talk about ourselves too much. But on the occasion of our 111th anniversary, we would like to show our partners and customers where these kitchens and this passion originate from. When company founder Wilhelm Eggersmann started making solid and reliable kitchens in 1908, he certainly did not plan for the eggersmann name to become the epitome of high-quality, individual kitchens in many countries. But he already had a peculiar persistence with which he pursued sophisticated customization. And he knew how to make the best of his chances — with typical East Westphalian modesty. However, coincidence played its part in gaining international success (p. 22).

In other words, what really makes a kitchen a luxury kitchen is that there is a story behind it. We hope you enjoy reading.

Where kitchens come from

eggersmann’s luxury kitchens are a product of Germany’s Westphalian down-to-earth attitude. But coincidence played its part in helping them become a global success.

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Anything but superficial

Marble patterns, textures and wood grain — more than anything it’s the variety of materials that gives your kitchen its unique character.

Page 14

The global buffet

Open-plan kitchens are a meeting place and provoke a fresh appetite for good food. Here are a few facts about the new global trend.

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Understanding markets

How local partners guarantee global success. Four questions for Michael Soltzoff (US) and Wei Guan (China).

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Resellers and imprint

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Showing a sense of style

The kitchen is the new living room. These days, people like to express themselves through their fine kitchens. Food author Stevan Paul explains why.

Page 8

Perfectly relaxed

Lars Nielsen built his dream holiday home in Denmark.

We pay a visit to a man for whom only the best is good enough — and he relies completely on eggersmann.

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A perfect match:
The material the
kitchen is made
from is usually used
in shipbuilding

HAVING GOOD FRIENDS AROUND AND CHATTING
TO THEM EVEN WHILE YOU COOK, BECAUSE THE KITCHEN
IS THE HEART OF THE HOUSE — AND ENJOYING THE
PANORAMIC SEA VIEW. HERE, LARS NIELSEN IS LIVING
HIS DREAM. A VISIT TO A PERFECTIONIST WHO HAS
PUT HIS TRUST IN EGGERSMANN (P. 34)



“The
kitchen
is a world
with the
stove
as its sun.”

VICTOR HUGO

“It conveys your own style”

Why the kitchen is the new living room and why people today express themselves through a stylish kitchen — Stevan Paul, food journalist, blogger and author of numerous cookbooks explains the new love for this “lifestyle hub” — and for cooking, too.

PHOTOS: ANDREA THODE INTERVIEW: FELIX DENK

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Mr Paul, you are a trained cook and you write about pretty much every aspect of food. Where do you spend most of your time — in the kitchen or at your desk?

It changes. There are times when I’m traveling a lot as a food journalist. And then I’ve got these phases again where I can completely concentrate on writing books. I actually do everything: think about the subject, produce the dish at the studio and write. That’s when I commute between my desk, the studio and, of course, my kitchen.

“THOSE WHO COOK TODAY
AREN’T HUNGRY
BUT THEY DO HAVE TASTE”

For many, the kitchen is the new living room. What’s the reason behind this?

In fact, the classic production kitchen that used to be the standard, and has been for a long time, is disappearing right now. Two new trends are taking its place. One is the big combined kitchen/living room which brings together cooking and eating. It is strongly centered around conviviality and what you need for that, of course, are open, beautiful rooms. Then it’s like a dream. One variant is the garden kitchen which has become very popular recently. It all started off a few years ago with Weber grills but then the guys — it’s mostly men — started to install a sink, a heat source and a big kitchen in the garden. On the other hand, the demographic change really does affect kitchens, particularly in big cities. There we have a population of singles with many single young people who work a lot and many single older people who no longer work. Property developers now build kitchens increasingly smaller because space is needed for living. All that is left is often just a small area where you can reheat your food. This is also the reason why streetfood has become such a big story — if you no longer eat at home you have to go somewhere else.

At the same time, there is a real boom about cooking — as you can see from the many cooking shows and new cookbooks.

That’s true. Many people are still buying cookbooks. These publishers do much better than those who

KITCHEN TALK

His life really is all about cooking and the kitchen. And Stevan Paul can explain why many people feel like that today



publish literature, who have far greater losses. Readers appreciate well-made, informative cookbooks that go beyond a simple collection of recipes. I just don't know how much of it is actually being cooked, though. I guess it is a bit like if you buy a "Schöner Wohnen" style magazine or "AD" design magazine, and then read it and really enjoy it, but still you don't take the next step to renovating the whole house afterwards.

Where does the interest come from? Is it because you can't digitize cooking? Because the kitchen is a place of real stuff, of things you can touch?
That also fits the rise of the new crafts—from craft beer to dry-aged steaks to third-wave coffee. We have a very young and enlightened target group and there are also a few middle-aged folks engaged in this, people like me, who can afford it and want it. They want to find flavors in the kitchen. You can see in the younger generation that they are fed up with industrial stuff. And that doesn't always have to originate from a gourmet's perspective. Particularly not with the young people, here self-optimization is a big issue. If I eat well then I'll also be successful in my job, in my life.

“OUR KITCHENS HAVE
LONG BEEN PLACES
WHERE WE EXPRESS A
LOT ABOUT OURSELVES”

The new cooking trends also feature pickles, preserves, fermenting and baking. Craft techniques that are time-consuming. Is that a corrective against the acceleration of our daily lives?
Possibly. But what seems to be over is the cookbook trend to prepare a three-course menu with four ingredients in eight minutes. Thank God! People are discovering the beauty of taking your time, the meditative element of cutting vegetables. That really is a great thing. I very much enjoy this. The smells, the scents when dough is rising and baking, that is a truly great thing. In the end, though, this is a narrow target group.

Today, the kitchen is an expression of your personality, and has been for some time. You couldn't claim that about the so-called Frankfurt Kitchen, the last big invention on the market which was simply designed by the guiding principle of functionality.
Sure, the Frankfurt Kitchen was revolutionary in the 1920s. It was the prototype of the fitted kitchen. Today, it can no longer fulfill our demands and needs. What used to be functionality back then is individuality today. The kitchen is a lifestyle piece. This is already evident in the materials. Many new kitchens work with natural materials such as wood and stone, which

were also underestimated for a long time in terms of their care needs and hygiene. That then is, for example, combined with steel. There are also new types of country house kitchens that are no longer as exuberant as they used to be in the past but instead feature beautiful rectangular tiles that have a lot of character. I like this very much. I reduced all plastic in my kitchen, I no longer like to touch it.

Your book "Philosophie des Kochens" ("The Philosophy of Cooking") features the beautiful sentence: "Cooking today is more like free skating and a hob-

by than a necessity." And you resume: "Those who cook today aren't hungry, but they do have taste."
(Laughs). I have to say that is the best-case scenario. I think the overused phrase "You are what you eat" is still valid. Maybe even more than ever. Our kitchens have long been places where we express a lot about ourselves. They have become an important part of our lifestyle which we are happy to show others. You just have to compare it to the car. If you arrive in a big four-by-four you are likely to be met with a frown. They are completely out as lifestyle objects. It is a completely different thing to

Return of the real stuff—the increased interest in the origin of food matches the new joy in crafts





Tastes good to him: Stevan Paul learned in award-winning restaurants that performance can be fun as well

have a great kitchen—that expresses your own style, certainty in good taste, also your mindfulness and care when you consider the health and environmental aspects. It is simply so essential to nourish yourself that you can communicate on many levels in this way.

For you, the kitchen has been a workplace for a long time. How long have you been working in restaurants? Six years. Always in award-winning restaurants from when I started my training. It was a hard but educational board which I'll always be happy to surf on again. It is the foundation of everything I do.

Has work in the kitchen shaped who you are? Yes. I went there when I was 17 and had no idea at all about anything. I learned to work in a concentrated and focused manner. That achievement can be fun as well and stress disappears somehow once you become absorbed in your work. These are the principles that today shape my entire life. I am very meticulous, very accurate. This helps me as an author of cookbooks. I know that it is a good thing not to have any mistakes in a recipe.

Do you actually enjoy cooking for guests?

I totally do. I really cook every evening. That is the time when my wife comes home. Then we sit in the kitchen, although it is rather small, at the table with two chairs. We then talk about the day, relax while I'm cooking, eat something small. That's when I also try out things for the cookbooks. That's the moment when we experience the kitchen as a living room. ■

If Stevan Paul didn't exist, you would have to invent him. He is a real one-off in Germany's gastronomy landscape. He worked in award-winning restaurants for many years, was one of the first food bloggers in Germany, has written 14 cookbooks—often taking the photos for them himself. He is a regular author for a number of magazines such as Feinschmecker, Mixology and Effilee and is the food critic for the Süddeutsche Zeitung. He also published a novel "Der große Glander." Paul lives and works in Hamburg.

"THE AVERAGE PROVIDES US WITH A COMMON STANDARD. BUT THE EXTRA-ORDINARY GIVES US VALUE."

OSCAR WILDE

Anything

but

Marbling, texture, grain, gloss: it is the variety of materials and their typical color accents that eggersmann customers can choose from to give their kitchens a very personal character and own identity.

PHOTOS: CHRISTIAN PROTTE, MARIO T. DÜSTERHÖFT, WOLFGANG ZLODEJ

superficial



How to shine:

Polished brass with a waxed surface sets warm counterpoints — to the bright quartzite Bianco Nuovola, for example. This also creates a nice tactile contrast, because the natural stone develops a slightly leathery surface (above) over time. The Italian porphyry Valcamonica (left), on the other hand, dark brown and water-blasted, feels textured to the fingertips — and is easy on the eye.

Structurally strong by nature

“Fasseiche Starkfurnier”, a special-thickness barrel oak veneer, gives modern design kitchens an unmistakably authentic look. Natural structures

are kept, branches and cracks are still visible. At the same time there is plenty of precision:

The edges of the veneered components are beveled to 45 degrees. These mitre joints give the furniture a particular cube-like aesthetic.



MODERN DESIGN, CLEAR LINES: THIS IS THE FRAMEWORK
IN WHICH THE MATERIALS CAN REALLY SHOW OFF
THEIR APPEAL — AND IT PROVIDES DEPTH TO THE LOOK

Light in shape

Today, eggersmann customers have dimmable LED lighting installed in almost all kitchen elements in order to give even more definition and opulence to the surface materials' effect — here in the workbench with the quartzite Bianco Nuvola from Brazil.

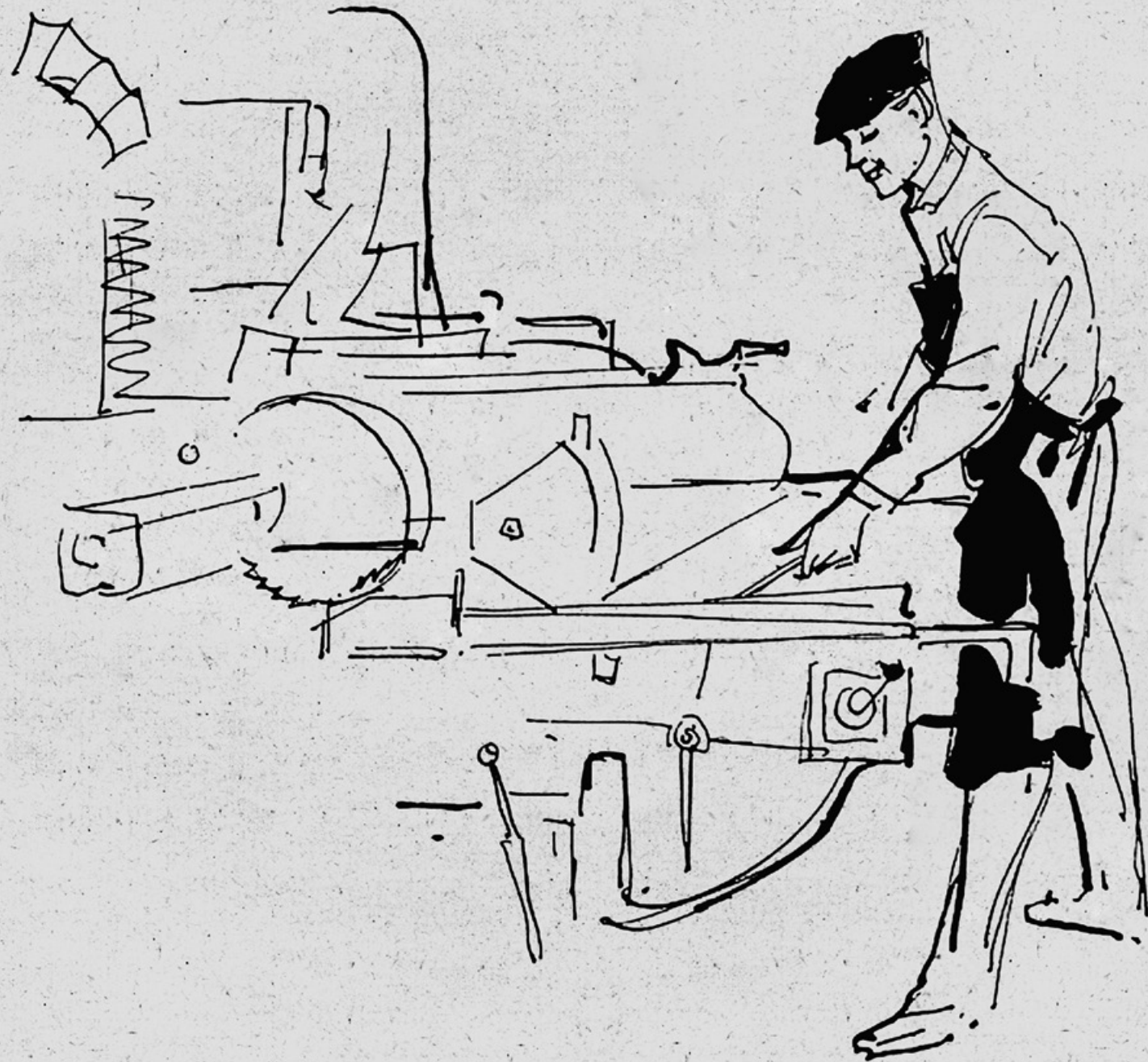
CREATING KITCHENS THAT HAVE A
LEGACY — THAT STAND FOR ENDURING
VALUES IN OUR FAST-MOVING TIMES

A kitchen like a rock

Choosing an eggersmann UNIQUE kitchen made from stone is a decision that has implications. Because not only the actual worktop is made from the selected block of natural stone, but so are the fronts, side panels, grip sections and plinth panels — which are all visible surfaces of the kitchen.

High quality with depth

Hot-rolled stainless steel: Usually, ships are made from this very strong and stable material. But what is usual about an eggersmann kitchen? Also certainly not the "Silver Touch" surface finish which makes the material look warmer and softer.



**“We can’t
move
mountains.
But we can
build unique
kitchens
from them.”**

MICHAEL WUNRAM, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EGGERSMANN

Where kitchens come from

In eggemann's luxury kitchens, a few basic Westphalian virtues and values come together: dependable craftsmanship, diligence, a love for experimentation, and a down-to-earth attitude. These are just a few reasons why these kitchens are in demand around the world today. But for the same reasons, they barely ever left Germany's borders in the past — the company's success story relied on a little bit of chance.

PHOTOS: CHRISTIAN PROTTE TEXT: OLIVER GEYER



Kitchen architecture:
The company's new
building in Hiddenhausen
is a style statement



Michael Brinkjost gives a tour of the production site — many distributors like to see it for themselves

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For a second it looks like some kind of alien object has landed here, in the middle of this placid German countryside. A few car drivers for sure might get that impression, as they drive through the hills, meadows and fields of East Westphalia, arriving in the village of Hiddenhausen which features eggersmann's new company building. Just a second ago, it was all countryside and villages, then suddenly there is this "object." A closer look shows that this is architecture at the peak of modernity. And it looks a bit like a kitchen—a kitchen by eggersmann. This, in turn, is mainly obvious for the people who have come here for this very reason: to visit the new showroom, which is located inside the iconic building. Some have come from far away.

One could almost think that the international success that the building radiates has merely gone astray in this rural area. But that is deceiving—this success story has grown here. For more than 110 years, eggersmann has stood for particularly high-standard kitchens. Here, in 1908, when Germany still had an emperor, Wilhelm Eggersmann and two of his colleagues began to carpenter high-quality buffets. Like the beech trees in the nearby Teutoburg Forest, things just grew, gradually but solidly. In the new showroom, just off the new monolithic kitchen units, visitors can still see the old kitchen cupboard that the company launched for its 40th anniversary. At that time, a few years after the end of World War II, a spirit of optimism developed there, turning the region into the Silicon Valley of kitchen production. Many renowned German kitchen brands come from here. Capable carpenters like Wilhelm Eggersmann supplied Germans with kitchen furniture as customer affluence grew in the postwar period. It was furniture that was meant to last forever. And that's what they also expected for their own company.

Stability: It has a long tradition here

The belief in the succession of generations is as firmly a part of the family business as the most stable corpus system. "Of course, I have also completed a carpentry apprenticeship," says Michael Wunram (55), the great-grandson of the founder and today's CEO. The question of whether managing the company had always been his wish from a very young age, he answers, however, with a somewhat brusque and straightforward East-Westphalian „No!“ As a teenager, he had no particular opinion about that. And even if he had, no one would have really cared about it. Wunram still remembers how, as a small child, his mother took him by the hand and went next door to his great-grandfather, who was already quite frail. "My mother had to swear to him that she would give the last drop of blood for the company." Christa Eggersmann has kept her word and made the company what it is today in the following decades.

There was no question that her son would continue the company's work. After a while he gradually wanted to develop it. Determined to make the company prosper further, Michael Wunram later added a degree in economics to his personal portfolio. But was there a master plan to make eggersmann such an export hit? That the name would later stand for valuable and unique kitchen furniture in over 40 countries? „No, it never was like that," Wunram admits. "I'd say: carpe diem. We just took advantage of our opportunities."

A passion and an instinct for opportunities

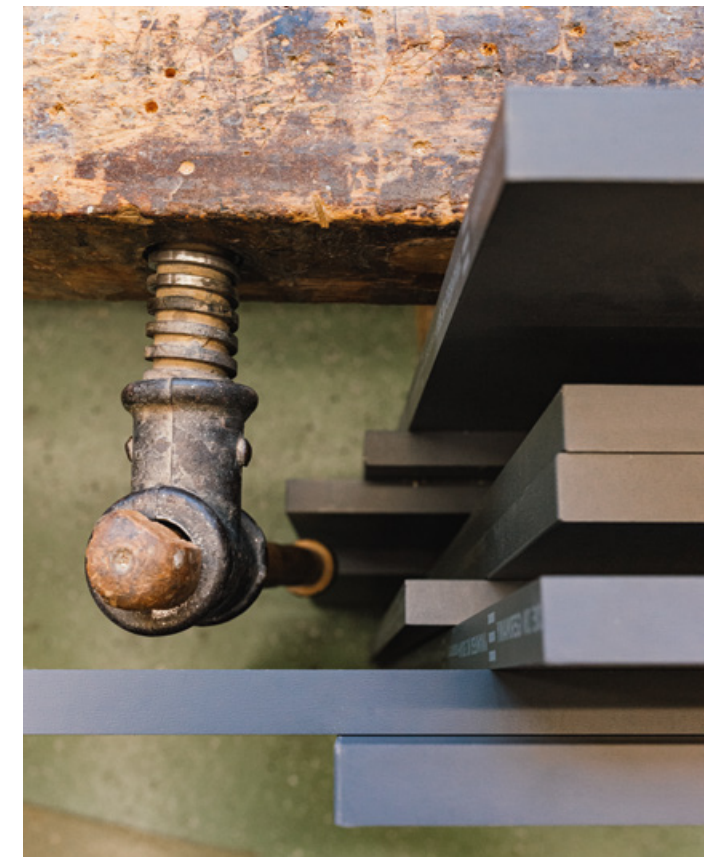
The local mentality in East-Westphalia is a down-to-earth one. They do not have much time for big visions. Those with visions should go to the doctor. But if something is done, then it's done properly—consistently, purposefully and always with passion. And that also means developing an instinct for opportunities and seizing them.

Just like on that fateful day in 1967. True, success didn't stray around in this rural area—but the first opportunity to export did. In the late 1960s, a Dutchman suddenly stood in the foyer, right where the entrance to the new showroom is today. The man had lost his way and was actually looking for a completely different company. So the staff at eggersmann explained how he could get there. From what started off as just a conversation, a business began to develop. It turned out that the man was a kitchen representative and incidentally already had set an eye on the show kitchens. The Netherlands became eggersmann's first major sales market abroad.

WHEN SOMETHING
IS TACKLED HERE
IT'S TACKLED PROPERLY
— CONSISTENTLY,
PURPOSEFULLY AND
WITH PASSION

Taking advantage of opportunities, building personal connections and then reliably delivering quality. The entire model of success over the coming years was enshrined in this early scene. To this day, it is good relationships with local partners that count. "It is important to have a strong representation in the respective country through a strong personality," emphasizes Michael Brinkjost, the other Michael, with whom Wunram manages international sales. But most of all Andreas Schewe (61) is a real supporting pillar for the company. He has been

No matter how big
the appetite for
innovation
—good carpentry
is at the foundation
and core of
the business



GROWTH HAS ALWAYS
HAPPENED ON A SMALL
SCALE TO BE ABLE
TO STAY TRUE TO THE
PRINCIPLES OF CRAFTS-
MANSHIP AND
CUSTOMIZED PRODUCTION

**Kitchens that express
your individuality**

The kitchens themselves show personality — their own and that of the customer. This is mainly done through the special surface chosen by the customer, which gives the kitchen a personal look. eggerrmann's joy in experimentation has been expressed in recent years, especially in the variety of materials that are quite novel for kitchen furniture. The idea of something unique, of bringing the countertop material onto the front surfaces has been a total success: in addition to all imaginable veneers, stainless steel and stone are part of the range with their own unique grain, texture and feel. In doing so, eggerrmann has turned kitchen furniture into a medium through which people can express themselves individually. An innovation that has encouraged many customers to express special wishes. Brinkjost, for example, recalls a US customer who wanted his kitchen made of the same stone that made up his floor. But this particular stone was only available in America. So eggerrmann had the material shipped to Germany to send it back over the Atlantic again as a kitchen a few weeks later. It is individual, tailor-made production in a time of globalization. "As long as the effort is justifiable, we'll

working there for over 30 years and has built the eggerrmann of today along with Wunram's mother. Schewe cultivates excellent, long-established contacts in the European network of distribution partners — even his father worked for the company. Everything is rather close and friendly here at eggerrmann, which is in many ways a family business. In general, it is all about "personality."

The final touches
are done by hand
just like over 100
years ago



make it possible," says Brinkjost. And if not, no problem. Then the customer and the sales partner just have to live with a straightforward East-Westphalian "No" — but customers can still choose from a rich range of materials.

Sure, there were moments in the distant past when they were flirting with the idea of switching to mass production, Wunram admits honestly. After all, some companies here in the "Chipboard Valley" went down this path quite successfully — but others have failed along the way. For eggerrmann, that was never an option, really. The local conditions also

weren't really made for it. There, in the middle of the village, wasn't room for large-scale production. But it was possible to expand bit by bit and to invest in the most modern production technologies. With a touch of self-irony, Wunram calls the assembly of halls and workshops that has grown over time "our sheds and shacks combine." In fact, this is eggerrmann's great strength: The company has grown only on a very small scale and has remained faithful to the principles of craftsmanship and customized production. To date, just over 100 people work there, and the finishing touches are still man-made.

Forests and motor-
ways: eggerrmann's
home location is
typically German



Respectability and exclusivity all in one: Michael Wunram ensures the smooth running of the place

They kept on course out of a sheer lack of space. There had for a long time been something of a gap between the brand's charisma in the big wide kitchen world and the image it offered visitors here on the spot at the company's HQ. On the one hand, the latest in design (and sometimes already a bit ahead of current tastes)—and on the other, that East-Westphalian understatement: the foyer, a very small kitchen exhibition, behind it the "sheds and shacks combine."

"THIS SHOWS YOU HOW CONSERVATIVE WE ARE WHEN IT COMES TO OURSELVES"

Wunram still remembers the day when he realized that this was not the way to continue. A wealthy customer arrived from Russia and couldn't believe after finishing the short tour of the place that this was all there was. You can't be serious! "This shows you how conservative we are when it comes to ourselves," says Wunram. But after the Russian's visit he was determined that a completely new showroom had to be built.

This new showroom was finished in 2016 and has already proven to be a very important sales factor. Partners and customers come here and find exactly the eggemann aura that suits the brand: at the front, radiant modern kitchen design and behind it solid craftsmanship and the staff, for whom reliability means everything.

However, there is still no master plan that sets out how to develop further markets, says Wunram. The maxim mentioned earlier still applies: carpe diem. And he couldn't always tell Mr. Brinkjost to take some catalogs, fly to Tokyo and do cold calling. Finding a strong sales personality, building a good relationship—that is something that has to happen at the right time, it has to grow. Perhaps a Japanese representative might stray into the foyer by chance, but it is rather unlikely. Here at eggemann, people are quite realistic, but who knows. ■

"Hugely magnified kitchen furniture"

There are many angles to the eggemann story—including one that embraces architecture. We put five questions to Dirk Stanczus who designed the new headquarters.

INTERVIEW: OLIVER GEYER

As an architect, how do you approach a project for a client and a brand which also has high design standards?

In general, we always align with the developer and then create a tailor-made suit, so to speak, for them. If the client then also values aesthetics highly then we're happy. With eggemann we also had wonderful opportunities to make the product the subject itself. This required intensive discussion with the kitchen experts who work slightly differently from us and focus on different things. They think in nuances of color, something that we don't usually deal with as architects. This was a genuinely enriching experience.

How did this intensive discussion work?

We talked about the designs a lot and sometimes also completely dismissed them until we arrived at the final solution which was themed around the main headline of "joint and surface area." This eventually became the leading principle.

How does this guiding principle manifest itself?

You see how large facade panels are fitted together with joints. That is, fundamentally, a strong magnification of a piece of kitchen furniture. It is the same at eggemann—the joints are placed in a very considered and minimal way. Kitchens never have handles but actually always consist of different materials. That is very important. eggemann was also one of the pioneers to use materials that were not naturally used for kitchens such as natural stone and steel and connecting them together with joints. And that is exactly what we have also made the principle of this architecture—we have large areas that are fitted together and we have created features with concrete and wood. In that sense it has become very symbolic architecture.

"THIS IS VERY SYMBOLIC ARCHITECTURE"

At first glance it seems as if you have completely focused on a modern style. Does this architecture also reflect the company's traditions?

To start with, it was about arranging the setting. It was a hotchpotch of elements that had developed over decades. Now there is a clear contrast to the old Eggemann villa next door—and with it a dialogue between old and new. But also the company's history and what is behind it is represented in the architectural detail.

Since eggemann always has been a manufacture and a slowly grown crafts business that still focuses on individual production we have complemented the black of the facade and the concrete with wood. This adds warmth to it.

The individuality of these kitchens expresses the personality of their owners, sometimes even their rough edges. Is that also reflected in the building?

The kind of composition we have here is very individual. These inlaid elements are a special feature, for example the concrete corner with the window that is integrated in the black facade. These are some of the smaller particularities that certainly required a little courage. ■



Dirk Stanczus

Dirk Stanczus is one of the directors of the bks architecture firm that has branches in Lübeck, Hamburg and Bielefeld. bks realizes company buildings far beyond standard solutions, with individually designed architecture that is tailor-made for the customer. That fits perfectly with eggemann.



Mankind gathers at the stove again

Throughout ancient times

Open fireplaces double up as places to cook. They are often used communally by several families together — that’s what archaeological findings in Anatolia and Mesopotamia suggest.

800 BC to 300 AD

The houses of wealthy Greeks are the first to feature kitchens in a separate room. Roman villas have separate kitchens, too — which also protect the residents from exposure to smoke. Most of the time only slaves work there.

European Middle Ages

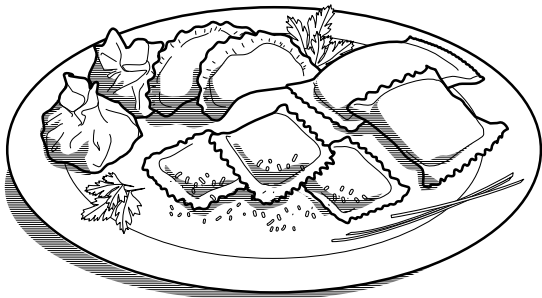
Ordinary people live in houses without a separate kitchen space but which have a fireplace instead — and a hole in the roof allowing the smoke to escape. The fire is a light and heat source. In the late Middle Ages, kitchens move from the center of the room to the wall and the first brick stoves are built. Cooking is done in tripod cauldrons which can be adjusted for height. Aristocrats usually set up their kitchens in separate buildings because of the fire risks.

Early modern period

There is a huge increase in the number of cooking utensils (e.g., different pots and spits) that need to be stored in the kitchens of wealthy people. Fireplaces are walled in and covered with iron sheets. There are round openings for the pots on top. The first completely closed stove is built in the 18th century. —>

The global buffet

The trend for the kitchen-living room as a meeting place and a new focus on good food is truly international. After all, it’s about universal human needs. Here are a few facts from around the world.



Dim Sum, Swabian and Italian ravioli

The filled dough pockets make their appearance in some 40 different parts of the world — more or less independently from each other. The reason that they have become such a success probably stems from the fact that the pasta case elegantly solves a universal problem for cooks: what do you do with the leftovers?

3,000

years is how long chopsticks have been used. Around 1.2 billion people eat with these slender pieces of wood. You have to coordinate 30 muscles to skilfully use this eating utensil.

900,000,000

people eat with a knife and fork, and that isn’t solely in the western world. Cutlery is standard in Thailand and Indonesia too. Some 4 billion people eat with their hands, although they often do so in accordance with very strict table manners.

Serving up knowledge

Sociologist Norbert Elias puts the fact that Europeans began to eat with a knife and fork down to a change in approach toward manners and mores in the 18th century. It was a time when it became embarrassing for people to get their hands dirty while eating. So they cut up their food with a knife and used a fork to put it in their mouths. In China, by contrast, a knife on the table was regarded as barbaric.

19th century

A kitchen, which also features a separate entrance for deliveries, is at the heart of upper-class households — but it’s well hidden. Bit by bit, industrialization enters this space too: running water, more compact cooking machines, gas and electric stoves.

20th century

The Bauhaus-influenced “Frankfurt Kitchen” becomes the prototype for fitted kitchens: functional, practical, space-saving — and separate from the living area.

From the 1980s


More and more people ask for individually designed kitchen-living rooms. The kitchen — which had been architecturally hidden for a long time — now becomes the new living room where family and friends get together.

Kitchens of the world

egggermann is represented in over 40 countries. This map only shows some of the most important sales partners and showroom locations.



More Info at:
egggermann.com/
haendler

A close-up, black and white photograph of a pencil resting on a set of architectural blueprints. The blueprints feature various geometric lines, arrows, and handwritten numbers like '5' and '17'. The pencil is positioned diagonally across the frame, pointing towards the bottom right.

"OUR CLIENTS EXPECT
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OF THEIR HOUSE."

SABINE ORLOWSKI, CHIEF INTERIOR DESIGNER EGGERSMANN

Completely relaxed perfection

Lars Nielsen is a well-regarded financial auditor, the type of person who is satisfied with only the very best — and he he is making no exceptions when it comes to building his holiday home in Denmark. But he admits that his quest for perfection can be exhausting. We went to have a look at the project which also features an eggersmann kitchen.

PHOTOS: CHARLOTTE DE LA FUENTE INTERVIEW: OLIVER GEYER

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Now that everything is finished, Nielsen can at last connect completely different things with the word “perfect” when it comes to his holiday home. Things that really matter. For example, his nine-year-old son can go for a short wander in the morning, to climb the cliffs at the bottom of the sea or to herd

the sheep on the pastures by the shore. From above, through the panoramic windows, this looks a little like a scene from the children’s TV animation series “Shaun the Sheep.” By the time that happens, Nielsen, an early riser, has usually been sitting at the windows alone for a while to simply enjoy the view — until something stirs in the family’s bedrooms at the back of the bungalow, his ten-month-old daughter chuckles, his son comes around the corner and Nielsen’s wife Pernille makes the first pot of tea for the day in the kitchen. For Nielsen, perfect here also means knowing that he could later go fishing with a friend at any time. Or not. At the top of this busy man’s to-do list is sweet idleness.

It is easy to imagine how Nielsen, who actually lives in Hong Kong with his family and works there as a partner of an international auditing firm, sometimes daydreams during his daily work routine and escapes to this place of longing in his thoughts. But nothing could be further from the truth: “Dreaming?”, Nielsen asks with a mischievous grin. “I can just look at my phone. There are several cameras and I always have live images on our alarm system’s app.”

Nielsen freely admits that he is an incorrigible perfectionist. When he starts something, he has to do it properly. But is he also a bit of a control freak? The smile on his face quickly changes to the expression of a schoolboy who has just been caught. In fact, not everything regarding this dream house — a classic Bauhaus-styled bungalow, which blends harmoniously into the coastal landscape with its dark, earthy brick facade — has been quite so relaxed during the planning and construction phase. He has surely annoyed the workers, if not occasionally driven them insane, the 48-year-old freely admits — and he quickly provides a few examples: He



HOMESTORY

had all the bathroom tiles removed after they had just been laid, because the different shades weren’t arranged in the best possible way to suit the pattern. To set out this pattern, he completely recreated his Hong Kong bathroom as a 3-D model. There was a similar situation with the handmade bricks that make up the outer and inner walls: Nielsen had them specifically produced in different shades of color, they had to be put together in a particular order. Unfortunately, the masons had to take an entire wall apart and build it again.

He admits that sometimes his perfectionism exhausts him too. He had no doubt that his home should absolutely be this classic Bauhaus bungalow but with a roof that protrudes unusually far out. This was not only a challenge in terms of the building’s engineering, it was also difficult to get planning permission — because it deviated too far from local building traditions.

When you visit the friendly Dane in his home, there isn’t any evidence of the control freak. Per-

haps his character traits are hidden like the cameras which also lie somewhere under the calm and clear surfaces that are easy and soothing on the eye. In general, all this gives off a very relaxed overall effect. The house as the mirror of the personality that built it: relaxation based on perfection.

But why all this considerable effort for a place that is without doubt beautiful, but also very far away for a family who are based in Hong Kong?

Kitchen
conviviality is
basically what
it’s all about

AT THE TOP OF THE BUSY MAN’S TO-DO LIST IS SWEET IDLENESS



Hot-rolled and brushed stainless steel is usually used in shipbuilding — but it is quite fitting here

"In 2011, after my father passed away, my wife and I wanted to be with our families more often," says Nielsen. But they did not want to have to always be living out of their suitcases and sometimes they wanted to be able to host their friends. After years of globalized living and working, this house construction was probably also a return to his roots and a more leisurely lifestyle in Denmark: Lars and Pernille both come from this region, their parents' homes are only 10 minutes away. The two of them met in a nearby town 30 years ago when they were both teenagers at the business school. And just as they have always remained faithful to each other, their contact with friends from the area has never faded. Now he has a place where this sense of home and belonging can be lived out. But for Nielsen there was no question that this place should not only be near his

family, but also "close to perfect" — architecturally and in terms of the furnishings.

"We always wanted a large living room with sea view, where you can cook for friends and chat with them while doing so, because the dining table is right next to it. If you want, you should also be able to stretch out on one of the sofas."

This is how he, as the developer, sums up his wishes that have now taken shape in the architecture here. Incidentally, his idea of creating a convivial place for friends also convinced the officials at the municipal building authority. However, he made a conscious choice that it shouldn't be the classic Danish living-kitchen combination where there is always a large dining table but with a separate living room. Instead, he created a whole "living landscape" where the kitchen forms the social hub. To the left is a sofa area for watching TV, on the right another sofa corner with a fireplace — and all of it faces the sea.

The final choice of an eggersmann kitchen came about because the brother of a good friend of his builds exclusive lofts in Copenhagen and likes to equip them with eggersmann. "That's when I saw these kitchens for the first time and immediately knew: That's a completely different quality," says Nielsen. So he made his way to Germany equipped with a few samples of the living area's defining materials—the bricks of the walls and the floorboards—to find out together with Thomas Weisselberg at Planungsloft Hamburg what the perfect surface material for the kitchen could be for this combination. Nielsen was at first fascinated by eggersmann's many stone kitchens, but they would have competed too much with the bricks of the house. So the choice fell on hot-rolled and brushed stainless steel, a material that is still very rare for kitchens and that originates from shipbuilding. How fitting for this place.

Nielsen was so taken by this brightly shimmering steel that he felt it should determine the overall picture of the kitchen—from the base cabinets and the dishwasher door to the worktop, cooking island, hanging cabinets and even the extractor hood. This required some extra effort: The steel fronts of the tall cabinets first had to be mounted on

aluminum frames, in order to create the required depth for the concealed hinges. Because the door strength increased as a result of this, the corpuses of the tall cabinets had to be mounted with an offset of a few millimeters. This created a uniform front line. In order for the dishwasher door to open and close gently despite its weight, Thomas Weisselberg had special springs installed at Miele. And the cooker hood had to be completely taken apart and then reassembled — this was the only way the steel could be fitted to it. "These are just a few examples. I really appreciate the fact that they always create individual solutions." Nielsen was also enthusiastic that eggersmann first completely set up his kitchen before delivery at his request to make sure that everything fitted together with one hundred percent accuracy.

That seems to be true for the Nielsen-eggersmann collaboration, too—it just goes well together.

Because their aspirations are the same: perfectionism that leads to high-end design, clarity and functionality. And if everything is right in the end, then it leads to the perfect conditions for relaxation.

Asked if he also prepares the fish he caught himself, Nielsen says: "To be honest, I prefer to get involved with eating the food." But his wife loves this kitchen and when they are here, they also like to cook traditional Danish food. The only thing he needs to watch out for, though, is that his love for his country's culinary delights is reined in a bit, otherwise he would gain weight too quickly. Wouldn't that be the perfect place to retire to? "We're going to be here even more often," says Nielsen, "but not all the time!" Then Nielsen tells us that they are planning something in Copenhagen, too, and that he can well imagine enrolling at university there later—to study architecture. Building the house has given him a taste for it. ■

A passion for high-quality materials: The walls are built from hand-made bricks



"I REALLY APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT THEY ALWAYS CREATE INDIVIDUAL SOLUTIONS"

“Grand kitchens are in demand”

Michael J. Soltoff represents eggersmann in the US market. He knows what the American kitchen customer wants — and that they are prepared, quite literally, to give kitchens a lot of space. Here is a little insight into his wealth of experience.



Michael J. Soltoff

Michael J. Soltoff is 61 years old and has his office in New York City. He has worked for eggersmann as their distribution partner for more than a decade.

What kind of kitchen preferences do Americans have?

The US is extremely diverse as a society, as are the kitchen preferences. However, one thing that you can say for sure is that grandly designed kitchens are in demand. The living environments usually provide plenty of room for very spacious kitchens. In many cases, the traditional furnishing styles are still in demand, but you can clearly recognize the desire for modern international and classic design especially among our high-end target group.

How is the eggersmann brand perceived in such a market?

We present eggersmann in the US primarily as a kitchen brand that stands for clear lines and modern design as well as for a high-level ability to reach complete individuality. And that is exactly what our demanding customers value us for.

What are the current kitchen trends in the US?

Generally, there is a lot of emphasis on durable and natural surfaces. That is why natural stones are in high demand. At the same time, gold and bronze colors are very popular to provide a kind of accent and so are glass doors and open shelf areas. People

like to show off their plate collections and high-quality pots and pans. But lighting and other technologies (some of which can be integrated into home communication systems) also play an important role in our planning.

“IT’S NO PROBLEM,
WE JUST REFIT”

And what special request do American customers often make?

There is a particular demand for so-called “lift shelves” by which large, heavy kitchen appliances can be automatically raised from the storage cupboard to the height of the worktop. These mechanisms don’t exist in Germany — but it’s no problem, we just refit the cabinets in the US. ■

“Unique in the market”

The fact that Chinese customers often say that they fell in love with eggersmann straight away is something that distribution partner Wei Guan can easily explain: These kitchens fulfill all the modern individualistic desires — but also offer traditional backdoors when needed.

How would you describe eggersmann’s target group in China?

China has changed a lot in the last 20 years. There is now an upper class with a very solid asset base. These people have an international perspective, they come to Europe to visit design fairs and know exactly what they want.

And what do these customers expect from their kitchen?

They want a very high-quality and perfectly functional kitchen according to their individual design wishes. This shift has seen interior design developing open kitchens for this customer group’s home environments — these “living kitchens”, which aren’t there just for the purpose of cooking, but also for socializing with family and friends. Design is therefore becoming increasingly important, it has to be in line with the style of the interior as a whole. However, kitchens in China have traditionally been closed spaces and therefore the Chinese often want a small enclosed area next to the kitchen where they can cook in the Chinese style.

How does eggersmann meet these requirements?

We offer elegant solutions with swinging doors to create such closed areas. And as far as individual design is concerned, eggersmann is unique in the market in any case. Chinese customers are enthusiastic about the choice of materials for the kitchen fronts, the colors and the design details. Natural

stone, stainless steel and glass in particular are all very popular. In addition, laminates with nanosurfaces are also in demand. We work closely with architects and try to meet all the special requests you can imagine. For a penthouse project we once delivered fronts with a surface that had been finished with real gold particles. Many customers and architects say that they “fall in love” straight away with eggersmann’s products.

“WE HAVE
DELIVERED FRONTS
FINISHED WITH
REAL GOLD PARTICLES”

And what are the upcoming kitchen trends in China?

Right now they hardly differ from international trends. But there is currently an interesting parallel to what is happening in Germany: Separating waste is becoming a hot topic in China. We always include such developments in our designs right away. ■



Wei Guan

Wei Guan has been eggersmann’s partner in China since 2012. His office is at the Beijing showroom.

Get in touch!

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We’re looking forward to being in touch with you — whether you are a salesperson, architect, construction company or developer.

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