LEICHT: kitchens that create and shape spaces

Varying kitchen architecture creates homely spaces: LEICHT kitchens do not just satisfy the most demanding of ideas in terms of function. Thanks to a large number of individually plan-nable, homely elements they are the centre of social happenings and promote communication during cooking and eating – and have now been doing so for more than 90 years. This was also the case last year, a year in which the company once again witnessed further growth.

Success thanks to a clear, architectural vision

All over the world, LEICHT stands for homely, representative and open kitchens in all price segments. With a balanced price/performance ratio for individual kitchen concepts, the company from Waldstetten near Stuttgart occupies a challenging market segment. A holistic task which LEICHT faces with archi-tectural vision: because LEICHT always sees the kitchen as an entire space and offers solutions which cater to every requirement of interior design to ensure an all-round, harmonious design for the particular area. In this process, the brand follows the principle of timeless modernity with a reticent design language and elegant materials. Furthermore there are a large number of design possibilities with expressive, high-quality colours – including the exclusive range Les Couleurs® Le Corbusier consisting of 15 colours developed by the French/Swiss architect. Originally founded as a carpenter’s workshop in 1928, LEICHT is still benefiting today from its history, incorporating it in the present. Because the company still offers all the opportunities of a carpenter's workshop in terms of individualising a product – today, however, in the context of a highly modern industrial company.
Alongside kitchen furniture in lots of designs and special dimensions, LEICHT also produces the furniture and creates the design for the adjacent areas. This is how all kinds of different kitchen compositions come into being: spaces in which the kitchen is the focus and determines a homely overall scenario. Thanks to the variety of material and production, LEICHT succeeds in creating a continuous characteristic style in the kitchen with just a few surfaces and colours valid for all kitchen units, tables, storage space solutions and wall coverings. This diversity opens up a wide field for designers, planners and architects to implement their own individual creative and design ideas.

In 2015, LEICHT launched the online portal www.global-kitchen-design.com, unique in the kitchen industry as an inspiration for design ideas. On this website, planners and architects can upload projects they have realised with LEICHT kitchens. These can then be saved by other users in an ideas book. In this process, LEICHT also assumes the role of a network partner, bringing the kitchen planner and end customer together.

Growth with a variety of planning

Due to the multi-faceted planning possibilities and the resolute implementation of a modern, timeless style, the company was once again able to further consolidate and extend its position in the market last year. A new record was attained with sales of 148 million euros and an overall growth of almost 9%. The kitchen manufacturer has been able to considerably extend its position both in domestic and international business. This increasingly consolidates LEICHT’s position as market leader in the premium segment with, currently, an impressive market share of more than 27% (in the price segment over 20,000 euros according to a survey by GfK). To ensure the company can manage its growth, the workforce is constantly being extended; currently LEICHT has a workforce of 620 employees.

The wide product range and the dynamic growth are particularly due to the decision to create clear structures and set resolute priorities in production. More than 20 million euros have been invested in state-of-the-art machines and facilities over recent years. Digitalisation is now also completely in place: the company is completely SAP-controlled which means the most diverse measurements can be smoothly conveyed to the machines. To continue to be able to fulfil all orders and ensure long-term growth, a decision was made last year to build a new assembly plant.
Construction started on the 80,000m² site in the Gügling industrial park in Schwäbisch Gmünd on 17 September 2018 and is due to be completed in the summer of 2020. „With this new plant it is important for us to stay in the region and consolidate the Swabian site,“ says Waldenmaier. „Quality ‘Made in Germany’ and the proximity to the dealers certainly play a role in driving the success further.“

Growth of a strong brand
The company founded as a carpenter’s workshop in 1928 by the brothers Alois and Josef Leicht was sold to the Welle family in Paderborn in 1975. The Welle family still hold the shares to LEICHT. With the concept „product, service, brand“, the company launched its new strategic orientation with CEO and Chairman of the Board Stefan Waldenmaier at the start of the new millennium: this entails the development of a long-term and qualitatively high-grade product that can be planned in a variety of ways and which is brought to the end customer through specialist dealers. Furthermore, the brand was to be given more charisma with international fairs, online and ad campaigns, showcasing in the company’s own showroom as well as image publications. A milestone in this conceptual development is the „LEICHT | WELT“ opened in October 2014 which plays an important role for the company at its site in Waldstetten. The showroom, with its timelessly modern planning, features training areas and conference rooms and represents the LEICHT brand both in its appearance from the outside and its interior design. The different kitchen concepts of LEICHT are showcased here in perfection – in a representative environment which offers far more than your familiar kitchen showroom would. The kitchen area is shown here in great detail, with creative plans, elegant materials and demanding kitchen scenarios presented around homely elements such as modern luminaires, seating, carpets and even fitted with kitchen appliances. The „LEICHT | WELT“ has thus become an inviting meeting point for architects and dealers, a source of inspiration and a pool for ideas on contemporary kitchen planning.
Key data

1928  Founded by brothers Alois and Josef Leicht as a carpenter’s workshop

1940-1950  LEICHT developed the first modular kitchen which still has a valid measurement and grid system today

1975  LEICHT was taken over by Welle Holding and continued to be run as an independent company

1993  The company became LEICHT Küchen AG

Today LEICHT Küchen AG is a non-listed subsidiary of Welle Holding, shares are still held by the family

2014  Opening of the LEICHT I WELT at the company HQ in Waldstetten

2015/2017  LEICHT was deemed the „most innovative brand of the year“ at the Plus X Awards

2018  Laying of the cornerstone for the new assembly plant in the Gügling industrial park in Schwäbisch Gmünd

2018  LEICHT has a workforce of 620 and posted sales of 148 million euros

The dynamic development at LEICHT is down to 620 employees and a strong executive team: Ulrich Barth, Sales Manager Germany and Austria; Harald Blessing, Sales Manager Export; Stefan Waldenmaier, CEO and Chairman of the Board (l/r). Photo: LEICHT

All wishes and plans are individually designed to size at LEICHT. The architectural variety and quality „made in Germany“ are held in high esteem all over the world. Photo: LEICHT
The „LEICHT | WELT“ is an international meeting point for architects and kitchen planners. The exhibition centre, more than 1,500 square metres in size, houses a showroom, training areas and conference rooms as well as plenty of space for exchanging information and inspiration.

Photo: LEICHT/T. Vukosav

By 2020, LEICHT will have a new assembly site in the Gügling industrial park to be able to cater for more orders and further expand the positive growth. Photo: LEICHT

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