

Online-Ausgabe EN

Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry FH
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Medienart: Internet
 Medientyp: Fachorganisationen

Online lesen

Themen-Nr.: 230.025
 Abo-Nr.: 1074199

Keller Trading settles in new premises

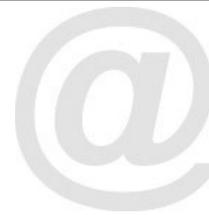


Twenty-five years ago, Keller Trading fulfilled its first order. Today, more than three thousand customers strong, the firm has moved into an entirely renovated historic building.

On the day in February 2016 when Babette Keller-Liechti invited clients, suppliers, employees and friends to the new premises recently acquired by Keller Trading, she could look back on a string of outstanding achievements. Dynamic and jolly, the company's CEO talked of the past at the inaugural evening, and of the firm's very modest beginnings.

Keller Trading was established officially in 1991, though as early as 1989 Babette Keller-Liechti was already making simple cotton cases used by watchmakers for watch heads. She enjoyed working for her first clients, whose number included Breitling, Vacheron Constantin, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Audemars Piguet and Omega. In 1995, a revolutionary fibre from Japan was discovered. Its qualities were evident and the head of the firm, never short of ideas, made up some squares which she sent to two hundred watch manufacturers with the message: "Touch me, try me, call me!" Success beckoned and all of the watchmakers placed orders. The Japanese supplier guaranteed exclusivity of their product to Keller Trading and the fabric took on many forms: cloths for polishing and cleaning, presentation gloves, dustsheets, cases and workbench covers.

In 2005, the firm took up residence in the industrial zone of Bienne, at the foot of the Jura mountains, and opened its own serigraphy workshop. Products were now stamped KT (Keller Trading) or personalised according to clients' wishes with their own names or logos. In 2009, the firm was hard hit by the watch industry crisis and short-time working was introduced. Babette Keller-Liechti refused to throw in the towel and took advantage of these difficult times to develop new products and make inroads into new markets, such as the hospitality industry, museums, chocolate-makers and luxury fashion generally. Constantly on the lookout to increase its customer base, the firm attended the Singapore International Jewellery Show in 2011. The following year, she presented the firm's products at the Hong Kong Watch & Clock Fair. This Asian experience convinced the businesswoman to open her own office in the heart of the well-known International Finance Center in Hong Kong. Today, the Bienne based firm has more than three thousand clients who appreciate its



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superior quality products.

Materials

Fabrics used in the past were liable to cause damage to precious metals by scratching or scuffing, or leaving deposits of grime and residue on watchmaking components and jewellery. Consisting of 50% polyester and 50% nylon, the Haute Couture microfiber used today by Keller Trading overcomes all these problems. The knitting yarns are made up of hundreds of microfilaments a hundred times thinner than a hair, that gently clean materials and remove dirt and dust, which is sealed inside the fibres to prevent it spreading. The remarkable quality of the microfibers is unrivalled worldwide in terms of efficiency.

Eager to offer its clients new ideas, Keller Trading launched a variety of gentle, environmentally-friendly cleaning liquids: Eau de Glace (black lacquer, brushed aluminium, transparent or rose-tinted frosted plastic), Eau de Brume, Eau de Perles, Eau de l'Or and Eau d'Argent.

Quality

Since its inception, Keller Trading has made quality its trademark, primarily by selecting only the best microfibers. Quality control is assured by extremely rigorous processes at every stage of production, allowing faultless products to be guaranteed.

Between the arrival of the basic material in the workshops of the Bienne firm and the packaging of finished products, each article undergoes at least four individual inspections. Gloves are fitted and checked one by one to detect even the slightest defect. Any defective articles are systematically discarded.

The fabric is also regularly and painstakingly inspected by an independent laboratory. The aim of these tests is to ensure the non-corrosive properties of the microfiber on metals such as gold, platinum and silver, and the preservation of its qualities over time.

Personalisation of products

All products can be personalised in one of four ways: serigraphy, embossing, thermal printing and sublimation (surface printing). Each client can therefore print their firm's logo or other motif according to their wishes.

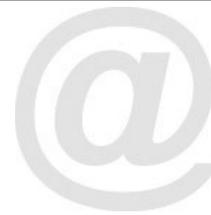
New premises in Bienne

Finding space in short supply at the premises occupied by the company in Les Champs-de-Boujean since 2005, Babette Keller-Liechti decided a move was in order. At the foot of the Taubenloch gorges in Bienne, she discovered a factory previously owned by one of the city's old wireworks. She immediately fell in love with the building, even though it was in a dilapidated condition. Her husband Pierre Liechti, an architect, drew up renovation plans which appealed to the site's owner, the Soleure based firm Espace Real Estate. Babette Keller-Liechti succeeded in taking out a lease on the building and work commenced under the supervision of her husband, who was put in charge of the renovation project. Progress was difficult, however the end result exceeded expectations. The floor space of around 2,000 square metres is a mix of history and modernity, where objects from bygone times stand side by side with modern, high-tech equipment. On the ground floor, a central atrium houses the conference room, around which there are small lounge areas, while the first floor is occupied by offices. Next door, a bright workshop accommodates the firm's skilful workforce, who cut, sew and inspect the different products. On the second floor, in an immense space, stand the firm's textile printing machines. The federating approach of this unique businesswoman truly knows no bounds, since the building's ground floor also houses the offices of her architect husband.

Datum: 03.03.2016



Fédération de l'industrie horlogère suisse FH
Verband der Schweizerischen Uhrenindustrie FH
Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry FH



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The story of this renovation would not be complete without mention of the fire that ravaged the roof of the building in mid-July 2015, the day before the firm was due to move in. It was a heavy blow which sapped the morale of the entire team, but also helped to develop a sense of camaraderie among those involved in the project.

Babette Keller-Liechti

Babette Keller-Liechti is fond of saying she was born an entrepreneur. At the age of nine, she visited the Foire des Echantillons with her father. She readily confides, too, that to succeed in business, an academic background is not necessary. Willpower, creativity and determination are enough... as her example proves! These qualities also made her a worthy winner of the 2009 Prix Veuve Clicquot, a distinction which greatly influenced her way of thinking. She became more aware of the need to protect the environment, and also her loyal employees, who are her foremost concern. Babette Keller-Liechti is the mother of four children. One of her daughters, Harmonie, has worked alongside her for more than ten years and is today Vice-President of the company.

March 03, 2016