

# 25 YEARS OF HENRICH & DENZEL: NEW IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

TEXT REINHOLD LUDWIG  
▲ PHOTOS HENRICH & DENZEL

FOR CAROLIN AND CHRISTOPH TEUFEL,  
HENRICH & DENZEL'S YOUNG  
MANAGEMENT DUO, THE MANUFACTORY'S  
25TH ANNIVERSARY IS A WELCOME  
OCCASION TO STRENGTHEN ITS IMAGE.



CAROLINE AND CHRISTOPH TEUFEL

LARGE PHOTO: NECKLACE WITH FLOWER  
PENDANT. PLATINUM AND DIAMONDS  
PHOTO: PLATIN GILDE INTERNATIONAL

**THE HISTORY OF ONE OF THE YOUNGEST** and at the same time most successful German jewelry manufactories is based on an eminently precious foundation: "Platinum. With a millesimal fineness of 950 it is the purest of all jewelry metals, thus predestined for creations of pristine beauty and reserved for all those who appreciate the genuine and essential." This is how this valuable and naturally white precious metal was advertised in popular magazines in 1984, the year of Henrich & Denzel's foundation. It almost seems as if Günter Henrich and Roland Denzel, his junior partner, regarded this advertising claim as a personal invitation, starting their jewelry production in Radolfzell on Lake Constance with a clear preference for high-quality platinum jewelry. Looking back, the 1980s were a period of awakening and change for the German jewelry scene. By means of unusual advertising concepts and spectacular ways of staging jewelry, Platin Gilde International put the "rarest and most valuable of all precious metals" in the limelight again after it had almost lapsed into oblivion after the Art Deco period.

**CLEAR-CUT DESIGNS WITH A DASH OF SENSUALITY**

Günter Henrich and Roland Denzel, too, were enthused by the opportunity to make their own contribution to modern jewelry design. In the 1990s, the consistency with which they pursued this goal from the beginning proved to have been the right path to follow. Just like other jewelry designers and manufactories, the company based its collection on clear-cut designs that are stripped down to what's essential, a principle developed by the Bauhaus school. This minimalism was the signature style of the new German jewelry elite and represented an all-encompassing concept that was contrary to conventional, industrially produced jewelry. But what should the company focus on in terms of its own unmistakable image? To begin with, Henrich & Denzel's jewelry won the market over with its straight-lined beauty. Then, only a few years after its foundation, the company was already renowned for the excellent manufacturing and finishing quality of its jewelry which set new standards for the sector. And last but not least, the excellent service provided by a highly committed team had become its special strength, appreciated by the growing number of partners in the retail sector, including some of the foremost jewelers in Germany and Switzerland.

From the beginning, Henrich & Denzel has been committed to the tenet of "Materialgerechtigkeit" ("truth to materials"), formulated by the Deutscher Werkbund (German Work Federation) and the Bauhaus. Thus, the company has always used only the best materials provided by nature. Also, it has always adhered to the principle of an honest use of materials, exclusively using 950 platinum as a white metal. Accordingly, its yellow pieces of jewelry have always been made of yellow gold of a millesimal fineness of 750 or higher. The colored gemstones it uses are always natural, and all the diamonds are graded according to the recognized standards of the International Diamond Council (IDC). And finally, Henrich & Denzel always makes sure not to use any diamonds from countries sanctioned by the UN.

In the first few years of its existence, Henrich & Denzel worked with reputed independent designers such as Günter Wermekes. In 1997, after graduating from the University of Applied Sciences in Idar-Oberstein, Jean-Paul Callau joined the company, complementing its development team composed so far of goldsmith Reinhold Denzel and technician Roland Denzel and thus strengthening the manufactory's own design competence.



RINGS FROM THE "MERIDIANO" LINE FEATURING DESIGNS OF AN AIRY LIGHTNESS



THE COMPANY BUILDING AT RADOLFZELL WHERE CRAFTSMANSHIP IS PRACTICED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL



NEW WEDDING RINGS WITH TOUCH OF INDIVIDUALITY. PLATINUM AND DIAMONDS



Some of Henrich & Denzel's jewelry lines were crowned with outstanding success on the market such as the "Spiegelkerben" collection presented in 1993, the Vegas ring introduced in 1999 and the Cascadem line launched in 2005. With a creation also presented in 2005, made of platinum and diamonds and resembling a flower that opens and closes, the company demonstrated its extraordinary technical and creative know-how. The manufactory's excellent quality was honored, for example, by the prizes it won in 1995 and 1996 in the Japanese "Platinum Design of the Year" competition, and the company's appearance at the trade shows in Munich, Basel and Las Vegas always earned it a lot of recognition.

The Janus bangle bracelet created in 1996 is an excellent example of the successful symbiosis of innovative design, intelligent manufacturing quality and the perfect choice of materials. Thanks to an integrated, patented mechanism, this platinum bracelet adorned with diamonds can be turned 360 degrees and thus show its two "faces": When closed, it is characterized by a minimalist, geometrical sleekness and when opened reveals its more opulent side flaunting a surface pavé with diamonds. In 1997, the Janus bracelet was awarded the title of Germany's most innovative modern piece of jewelry.

In 1993, only nine years after its foundation, Henrich & Denzel was able to build its own company building which, in 1998, was complemented by the so-called "Innovation Tower" for the design depart-

ment. Since the late 1990s, the company has also held a top position in the wedding ring sector thanks to its skillful combination of platinum and diamonds. The manufactory at Radolfzell became a model company and the specialist for well-designed platinum and diamond jewelry. In 2006, when he turned 65, Günter Henrich retired from everyday business. But platinum has also remained a central theme for his daughter Carolin and her husband Christoph Teufel who, from 2009 on, are managing Henrich & Denzel alone. In the company's anniversary year, the share of platinum jewelry is no less than 70 per cent. However, there are plans to launch a veritable fireworks of new ideas and initiatives this year to markedly increase the product range.

**PLANNING THE FUTURE AS A DUO**

Carolin and Christoph Teufel have their offices right next to each other in the manufactory's upper floor. The connecting door is wide open – an indication that the Henrich & Denzel company is managed by a couple. Herbert Kleinbrückner, the third CEO since 2006, will resign from his position and leave Henrich & Denzel GmbH in 2009 to take over the company's Swiss subsidiary, Henrich & Denzel AG. This will enable him to set new emphases, but he will also continue to attend to his customers in Germany and the EU.

"After the change in management, it was very important to maintain the company's continuity and style," Christoph Teufel comments. This was not difficult for Carolin because she grew up in a family enterprise where private and business life were always interconnected. After studying business administration, she worked in Henrich & Denzel's accounting department and also gained experience in the marketing department of the IWC watch manufactory. She proudly considers pieces like the Tulip solitaire ring and the Janus bracelet with its option to either conceal or openly display its brilliance as classics that need to be cultivated.

Christoph Teufel, like his wife a graduate in business administration who also holds a of Master of Advanced Studies in Marketing degree obtained from the University of Basel, was in charge of the marketing department of a company with 400 employees before he started managing Henrich & Denzel. At first, he needed to adapt to a family business that had been shaped so much by its founder's personal style. But as a design aficionado, he was also fascinated by the well-developed product culture, the quality mindset and the staff's team spirit. Thus, when the young management duo took over, they could rely on a committed team in product development as well as on the experience of a successful design team. Motivated and experienced employees, perfect production processes and excellent customer relations fostered by friendly sales representatives provided a solid basis



AN EXCITING NOVELTY:  
THE "TREMOLLO" RING.  
PLATINUM  
COMPLEMENTED BY  
TWO AQUAMARINES  
AND A TOURMALINE



PURISM WED WITH SUPREME LUXURY: PLATINUM BRACELET  
AND RING ADORNED WITH BAGUETTE DIAMONDS

that made for a smooth generational change. Soon, however, Carolin and Christoph Teufel also had to learn to reconcile business and private life because it didn't take long before they had a daughter, and a strong-willed one at that. In addition, a time of dynamic change also called for introducing entirely new accents.

"So far, Henrich & Denzel has focused on Germany, the EU and the USA," Christoph Teufel explains. An important new aspect, as he points out, is to advance the company's globalization to ensure its growth in the future as well. Therefore, he personally attends to the task of expanding the international markets, realizing in the process that jewelry from German manufactories is very popular among jewelers from abroad and that the modern German formal idiom is recognized and appreciated on an international scale. Another plus factor, he says, is the German quality, both in terms of technology and craftsmanship: "When our customers come to visit and see how much artistic craftsmanship and technology is involved in our jewelry, they are fascinated." However, as he adds, technology can only provide a good preliminary product for the goldsmith and ensure consistent quality. What really makes the difference is perfect craftsmanship.

Today, a key issue for Henrich & Denzel is to further develop and complement its product range. In 2004, the company already introduced some color with the Magnuovo line. In 2009, these colored gemstone rings and pendants, predominantly made of platinum and featuring clear yet smooth shapes, will be complemented by the new "Tremolo" line. While in music, a tremolo is brought about by a rapid reiteration of a tone or of alternating tones, the Henrich & Denzel Tremolo is constituted by the harmony of the colors of three cabochon gemstones. The new, expressive Tremolo line also indicates the company's turning away from some of the markedly filigreed pieces it produced in the past few years. The Tremolo line offers customers the choice between 950 platinum, 750 yellow gold and 750 rose gold. By now, Henrich & Denzel sometimes even uses white gold, but only on request and only for wedding rings and the solitaire rings of the Due Più line. Platinum was and still is the central pillar of Henrich & Denzel's product range.

The second important object for 2009 is to expand the company's diamond jewelry range by a new ring series and to complement the Lily collection by a new bracelet to underline Henrich & Denzel's emphasis on platinum and diamond jewelry. Yet another theme is to offer an entry-level price class. "We also want to attract customers and appeal to a younger clientele with innovatively designed pieces in a more affordable price range," says Carolin Teufel. Of course, these pieces will also include 950 platinum or 750 gold, combined with artfully cut gemstones or other materials such as wood and leather. When asked about the general changes in jewelry design in the past few years, Christoph Teufel says: "Spacious metal surfaces have taken a back seat in favor of smaller, more filigreed pieces with more diamonds." Also, austerity and sobriety have more or less become a thing of the past. Today's jewelry is a lot more playful, inviting people to thoroughly enjoy the pleasure of wearing it. "What the designers need to do today is meet the women halfway and let some of their own ideas go. Design mustn't be an end in itself." Does this mean less design? "Of course not," Carolin and Christoph Teufel reply. In their opinion, taking the needs and desires of the jewelry customer into consideration might even require a greater design effort. Today, a designer is



PENDANT AND WATCH BY THE FRENCH KORLOFF BRAND WHOSE JEWELRY IS NOW MARKETED AND IN PART MANUFACTURED BY HENRICH & DENZEL

confronted more than ever before with the task of winning the customer over with the beauty of a piece of jewelry. "Women are fascinated in particular by good design," Christoph Teufel adds.

Towards the end of the conversation with the young management duo, they come up with a real surprise: From now on, the manufactory in Radolfzell will also market the jewelry lines of the French Korloff brand in Germany and Austria and even manufacture part of them. Korloff, a Parisian jewelry brand, was established in 1978 by Daniel Paillasseur, a jewelry designer born in Lyon in 1948. The name Korloff was inspired by the famous Korloff Noir, the world's largest black diamond which was owned for several generations by the Korloff Sapojnikoff family from St. Petersburg. Legend has it that it will bring happiness, good luck and prosperity to anybody who touches it. "We will manufacture all the Korloff products that we are equipped to produce," Christoph Teufel says. In addition, Henrich & Denzel will develop new products for Korloff and, with the HD-Precious Brands GmbH & Cie. KG company specially established for the purpose, also be in charge of marketing the brand in Germany and Austria.

Carolin and Christoph Teufel are convinced that Henrich & Denzel will profit from this German-French alliance. Their company is technically well-equipped to manufacture the products of the Parisian brand, and the synergies arising from Korloff's international positioning will be advantageous for both companies. But maybe the legend will simply prove itself true. ■■■■