



Jewel of Fifth Avenue



Wempe's exquisite jewelry

An Interview with Ruediger Albers, President, American Wempe Corp.

EDITORS' NOTE Ruediger (Rudy) Albers, President of Wempe USA, began his association with Wempe Jewelers 32 years ago. Joining in 1987 as a master watchmaker and sales professional at Wempe in Hamburg, he quickly ascended, transferring to New York City in 1988 and, in 1991, became General Manager of American Wempe Corp. Albers has set the tone for expert service and specialized, curated guidance offered at Wempe to its elite clientele, embodying the company's mission to be the very best in each of their markets.



Ruediger Albers

COMPANY BRIEF Since 1878, Wempe (wempe.com) has curated exquisite timepieces and jewelry. With 35 stores in seven countries and aboard the cruise ships MS Europa and MS Europa II, and headquartered in Hamburg, Germany, Wempe is a leader in the luxury retail arena. Wempe's flagship store is located on the iconic corner of Fifth Avenue and 55th Street in New York City, offering featured boutiques for Rolex and Patek Philippe, along with an unrivalled selection of the most prestigious watch brands and fine jewelry, including the brand's own.

What have been the keys to Wempe's success and how do you define the Wempe difference?

Aside from our prime location on Fifth Avenue and 55th Street, our people make the biggest difference. Many of them have been with us for over a decade or even two, and in my case three. This consistency, together with young passionate newcomers, ensures that we stay vital which is so important to maintain and build a loyal clientele for the future. With the wealth of information available online, it is critical to have employees who share our clients' passion and truly understand fine timepieces. Wempe continues to be a family-owned business, now led by the fourth generation, Kim-Eva Wempe. Based in Hamburg, Germany, she is able to maintain a family-like atmosphere despite the fact that Wempe is operating 35 stores and brand boutiques worldwide with 750 employees.



Wempe has made a major investment in its Fifth Avenue flagship store. Will you provide an overview of the store?

Our Fifth Avenue flagship store spans over half a city block on Fifth Avenue. This gives us a spectacular presence on Fifth Avenue where approximately 30 million people pass our windows every year. It makes Wempe the most prominent billboard for all our brands to showcase

the latest models as well as rare and extraordinary timepieces.

How are the watch brands Wempe works with positioned in the boutique?

The expanded boutique is easy to navigate. The store is flanked by a Rolex and Patek Philippe shop-in-shop where you can experience the full DNA of these two most iconic brands. The boutique is warm and welcoming and brands are grouped by style so you will find watches with a sportier flair in one area and classics in another. We find it important that our clients

can relax and be comfortable so most of our sales presentations take place while being seated and while having coffee, refreshments or champagne. We have added Girard Perregaux and Ulysse Nardin, two watch companies with a rich tradition and history, and a lot of technical innovations that truly excite.

Will you highlight Wempe's jewelry designers?

For almost 20 years, Wempe has not only been a retailer, but also a jewelry manufacturer. With our atelier, Wempe was able to create our own jewelry brand BY KIM, named after our CEO. Together with our French creative director, she insures that every jewelry creation has not just a great appearance, but also a very comfortable feel and fit. Under the leadership of our jewelry director, Michaela Kesselman, we were able to significantly expand our bridal and high jewelry collection. In addition, we are representing the iconic Wellendorff Jewelry and most recently partnered with the hot new brand Messika.



How are you positioning jewelry to have a larger presence in the redesigned boutique?

The new store concept allowed us to dedicate two entire windows right at the entrance to jewelry and we created a special section exclusively for jewelry where customers can sit comfortably and try on the various offerings while being tended to by certified gemologists and diamond graders.

Will you discuss Wempe's focus on customer service and how critical this is to the business?

Wempe has invested heavily into our state-of-the-art service department where four full-time master watchmakers perform small miracles on a daily basis. Their kindness and professionalism is well-known and provides peace of mind to our clients confirming that we are able to offer technical support long after the purchase as we have access to spare parts which many others do not. In addition, we have been bestowed with the great honor of being one of the four Official Patek Philippe

Service Centers in all of the U.S.

What are your key priorities for Wempe as you look to the coming year?

We continuously strive to further enhance the client's experience in the store as well as through events at other suitable and exciting venues. Our online shop is scheduled to open in 2020 and we are developing a state-of-the-art trade-in program for our customers. Wempe is well-positioned to master the challenges of the future and our very close relationships with the major watch brands will allow us to continue to strive to offer our clients the very best. ●

