



A Focus on Jewelry



A WEMPE-CUT diamond ring (left)
and pieces from the Sensual Cocoon BY KIM collection

An Interview with Michaela Kesselman,
Assistant Manager and Jewelry Director,
WEMPE Jewelers, New York

EDITORS' NOTE Prior to joining WEMPE in 2000, Michaela Kesselman's work experience included being one of Cartier's premier jewelry sales specialists in Munich, Germany. She is a graduate Gemologist and Diamond Grader from the renowned Gemological Institute in Idar-Oberstein, Germany.



Michaela Kesselman

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.

WEMPE is known for its leadership in the watch category. Is the strength of WEMPE in regard to its jewelry offerings well-understood?

WEMPE has built its stellar reputation mainly with its timepieces and impeccable customer service. With our major expansion in the Fall of 2016, we were able to devote the necessary space and create a more luxurious environment for our jewelry customers which had an immediate and significant impact.

The new store stretches over half-a-city block allowing us to dedicate the two large entrance display windows exclusively to jewelry. Our advertising and PR is increasingly focusing on jewelry and we just became

the exclusive jewelry sponsor of the New York Botanical Garden's Winter Wonderland Ball.

Will you provide an overview of the range of WEMPE's jewelry offering and the jewelry designers that WEMPE features?

Our jewelry selection covers earrings, rings, bracelets and necklaces and our price point starts just under \$1,000 and has no limit in the high jewelry collection. We also offer men's cufflinks and besides our BY KIM collection, we also feature jewelry by

Chopard, Wellendorff, Messika, JB Star, Takat and Serafino Consoli.



WEMPE places a major focus around customer service and has its own in-house customer service operation. How critical has this been for WEMPE's jewelry business?

Customer service has always been our main focus and offering peace of mind is a major part of the WEMPE philosophy. Our jewelers are absolute reliable and efficient. We provide first class service not only during the selection process, but for years after. Our clients know that we are there for them, whether they come in for a new purchase or to create something

bespoke or to just get their diamond settings tightened, steam cleaned or polished while enjoying an espresso or glass of champagne.

The BY KIM line is designed to outlast short-lived trends and stay relevant over time. Will you highlight the BY KIM designs?

Kim-Eva Wempe works closely with our creative director, Catherine Plouchard, to develop new lines every year and all creations are personally approved by Kim-Eva Wempe before being introduced into the collection. The designs are innovative, yet classic and timeless, and the technical mastery is unparalleled. The goal is to create jewelry symbolizing elegance and strength.

What has made WEMPE so special for you as you approach your 20th year with the company?

I started in 2000 which was an exciting year. This is when Kim-Eva Wempe first decided to produce her own jewelry and created our own brand, the BY KIM line. I have been fortunate to be given the opportunity to build, shape and curate the jewelry collection for the New York flagship store, frequently visiting our century-old, yet state-of-the art atelier in Germany and attending international jewelry shows, spotting trends and building close relationships. In 2020, we are going to celebrate the 20th anniversary with some unique highlights for this special anniversary. The BY KIM line is entirely manufactured in Germany and exclusively available at WEMPE stores and soon online at wempe.com.

What are your key priorities for WEMPE's jewelry business as you look to the future?

We are focusing on the bridal and high jewelry lines which is very important to us. We want to start our relationship when our clients make one of the most important decisions in their lives – getting engaged. A relaxed consultation educating the client of all available options is often the basis for a lifelong client relationship. WEMPE has even developed its very own exclusive diamond cut, the WEMPE-CUT™, introduced in 2015. The round stone features 137 facets, 80 more than a traditional brilliant-cut diamond, reflecting light with absolute perfection and unparalleled brilliance. Being part of a family-owned company with uncompromising values and direct lines of communication has and continues to be an inspiring journey for me. ●

