

King of the Castle

Finding inspiration in his castle-cum-headquarters in Germany, Managing Director of Sieger Design Christian Sieger discusses with Ruckdee Chotjinda his new bathroom-into-bedroom concept for his principal partner Dornbracht -The world's leading luxury bathroom products.



Harkotten Castle in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany
where Sieger Design has been headquartered since 1988.



Dornbracht DEQUE with Pearlstream
The gentle, individual jets of the pearl stream make a very special tactile experience.

the man from Sassenburg in the Lower Saxony state of Germany is well dressed in business attire but with a creative hint here and there. A pilot chronograph watch, strapped to his left wrist, is visible only when he settles into his seat.

Christian Sieger and his brother Michael are now in charge of the family business that their father Dieter started. The firm, set up in the '60s, specialises in design management, architecture and marketing communications.

"High-quality design goes way beyond aesthetics," says Sieger. "Sieger Design believes that high-quality design is not only the pinnacle of aesthetics but also an overarching concept that takes into account the economic, ecological, social and cultural dimensions."

Perhaps it is the company's grandiose workplace that has helped define such an over-reaching philosophy. As unlike most design companies, Sieger and its 40-person team operates not from a non-descript skyscraper but out of Harkotten Castle.

Originally built for a certain baron, this 18th century structure in the surround of a moat and a sculptured park over 10,000 square metres in size was completely restored by Dieter Sieger in 1988. And it is from this very same castle that one inspirational design after another is conceived for their global clients - including the top-end German bathroom and kitchen fixtures manufacturer Dornbracht.

"We design around 90 or 95 percent of Dornbracht products. They produce the hardware, if you like, we the software. Our

collaboration is very intense, with all but constant communication. The two offices are actually quite close together so the commute is only one hour by car."

Dornbracht's tagline 'The Spirit of Water' is very illustrative of what they do. The Bath and Spa arm of the company produces everything from taps and faucets to high-tech showering systems.

"It is a very long lasting marriage [laughter]. Really, it's quite a unique position that we enjoy due to the fact that my father started producing work for Mr Dornbracht senior. We've also managed to work across or through generational changes on both sides. My father retired in 2003 but we still have a very fruitful partnership"

According to Sieger, happy times are easy; it's the tough times that prove the

real strength of the partnership. Third generation Dornbracht management and second generation Sieger Design management are now working ever harder to inspire the consumers with new possibilities. And despite claiming that his brother has stepped into the creative shoes while he assumes responsibility on the business side, the designer in him is still eager to contribute.

"Today's presentation is about trends in the bathroom and the joy that bathrooms can create. But aesthetics alone is not enough. We need to inspire the architects to create different sizes of bathroom, allowing people to have more space. You can't automatically buy a bigger apartment. But maybe you can think about, say, the bathroom and the bedroom as they are linked so closely," adds Sieger. "The bathroom is where you go at the beginning and end of each day, so why can't we bring them together and call it your private heaven inside the house."

The concept is much like the kitchen-into-the-dining room concept. The only difference is that the health and wellness benefits are somewhat more

pronounced and perceptible for the bathroom and bedroom combo.

"We're not offering medical products. It's more about the work-life balance that people are talking about these days. We have three or four recharge locations for our phone. But where do we recharge after the constant e-mails and phone calls. We are saying that the bathroom can take over this role. It can't cure cancer or other illnesses but at least you feel better when you have your preferred settings on your shower."

Vertical Shower and Horizontal Shower systems are also put to good use under this concept as they offer sensational showering experiences with the ATT or Ambiance Tuning Technique where water intensity and temperature can be, in their words, 'choreographed' to create the desired balancing, energising and de-stressing effects.

Christian Sieger is confident these luxury products from Dornbracht will be well received by Thailand's many prestigious hotels and spas. Several products designed by Sieger for Dornbracht have won key awards over the years. ■



Mr. Christian Sieger
from Sieger design
The driving force behind the success of Dornbracht's award winning products.



Dornbracht Horizontal Shower
permits showering using the AMBIANCE TUNING TECHNIQUE while reclining.