

The Shaving Mirror

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Global Village

Stay hungry. Stay foolish.



What are the most important inventions in human history? This question cannot be answered conclusively, but only illuminated by means of isolated examples. Without the light bulb, we would still probably be sitting in the dark; the phonograph, a milestone in the reproduction of speech and music, also stems from Edison. If we move the clock forward a hundred years we are already well on the way to the global village. In the meantime, the global network interweaves the lives of countless people as virtual neighbours. This is made possible by mobile technologies and devices that will fit in any trouser pocket. And because we have become independent of times and places, we no longer ask "How are you?" but "Where are you?"

Unimaginable twenty years ago, but lived reality today – and the work of a pioneer who was to change the world from his garage. Leading the way, Steve Jobs made technologies accessible to the masses; his computers were meant to be as easy to operate as a toaster. "Come with me and change the world" was the watchword of the 1980s. The apple logo gleamed in the colours of the rainbow, the world was to become a brighter and more imaginative place. "I don't need it, but I want it": The desire for the smart all-rounder

infected just about everyone. Now very few people leave the house without their digital companion ...

Think different! The legendary campaign, both clever and cunning at the same time, asserts that every user is just that: different, a pioneer, an unconventional thinker. At the turn of the last century, home computers (and many more things besides) began to glow in bright colours, hip companies and brands saddled up, digital communication became a lifestyle and a marketing tool, and design orientation a form of self-affirmation. And not forgetting the new freedom offered by mini-devices 'to go' that provide an almost inexhaustible playing field for mobile people.

Stay hungry, stay foolish? Jobs' appeal to humanity to stay thirsty for knowledge, playful and even foolhardy, remains a challenge. At least we have now been given the appropriate tools. And the appropriate app to make sure we do not get lost on the way. Waterproof mobile telephones (e.g. from Sony) do exist, but we advise against using them for wet shaving. You can press the loudspeaker button, just this once. – For Edison this would have been not only unthinkable, but also just bells and whistles.

Editorial

The Olympic Games in Sochi are already history. The Russian Riviera was intended not only as a playground for the best athletes, but also as a tourist magnet. Regardless of how many people made it to the world's most northerly subtropics, we like to imagine that some of them were travelling with MÜHLE. But it was not for aspiring Olympic champions that we added special "items of luggage" to our travel range for wet shaving in 2014. They are there to pamper every man on the move, from the business traveller to the slow cruiser who prefers more relaxed modes of locomotion. Our new travel necessaires made of fine cowhide have little in common with the infamous wash bag. We took our inspiration from classic etuis for valuable cameras or binoculars. The untreated natural material is tanned using a vegetable method and finished on a historical edge-sewing machine to form consummate individual items.

We want you to be able to celebrate your shaving ritual with the best ingredients at any place and any time. Mobility determines our lives; a good reason to dedicate the new issue of the SHAVING MIRROR to this fascinating topic. Incidentally, spring is the best opportunity to get on the move and put a little more culture in the luggage!



Christian and Andreas Müller, Managing Directors

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Insight

Travel shaving cases

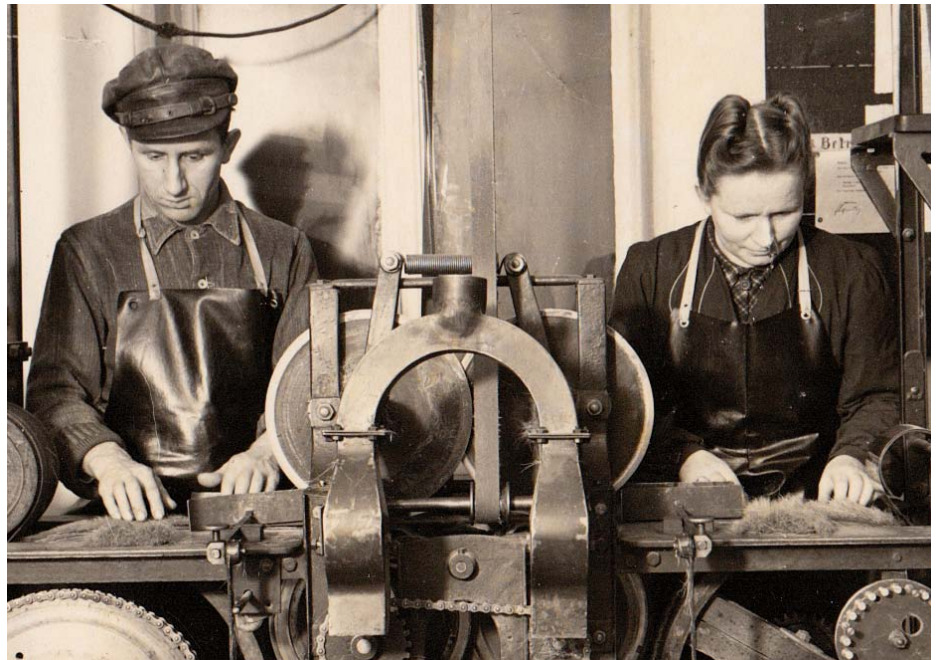
The revolution of the washbag has been a long time coming. Many models have now become practical, but not beautiful. This gave rise to our new travel necessaires made of genuine cowhide. Classic etuis for precision-engineered equipment such as binoculars, cameras or lenses served as models for this sophisticated yet unpretentious design. The leather cases are made by a regional manufacturer using a rare, historic edge-sewing machine. The leather is tanned in a special vegetable process and is characterised by its longevity and durability. It develops an individual patina in the course of its use, revealing traces of the owner, his travels and experiences. The large model has loops for brushes, safety or straight razors and nail clippers. The opened lid flap is fixed in place with the carrier strap. Shaving brushes should never be transported in closed cases when wet. Extra tip: MÜHLE shaving brushes with synthetic Silvertip Fibre® dry very quickly.

Our small model comes with a leather loop to attach the brush and razor. There is also room to stow shaving cream. The inner loop for razors can be expanded with a pair of scissors to accommodate larger models. Care and handling tips: The leather is untreated, and slight colour variations and small scars are characteristic features. From time to time, apply a razor-thin coating of care cream or grease for untreated leather types and then polish with a soft cloth. The case fastener becomes more supple with time. Slide the button through the hole by pressing the edge of the hole with two fingers. And now: bon voyage!



Brush Up

The inner compass



Mobility is not just a question of spatial flexibility. It can also be seen as a pacemaker for mental agility. A good entrepreneur needs both. Our grandfather and company founder, Otto Johannes Müller, would have turned 100 on 17 February. As one of ten children he became familiar with hard work at an early age. Together with his siblings he would pull a handcart to deliver wood to customers, also in the dark evenings. Materials for the Müller brush factory were sorted during the night.

Like many tens of thousands he was forced to join the Russian campaign. A shot to the lung put him in a military hospital until almost the end of the war and may have spared him captivity as a prisoner of war. Upon returning to his native Erz Mountains, as early as 4 July 1945 he founded a company that manufactured not only brushes, but also the candles that were needed urgently due to the power cuts. Ten years later, the goods, mainly shaving brushes, were already being exported to more than 30 countries. Candles were no longer required.

Today we are still honouring this legacy, of which our Stützengrün location is a part. MÜHLE is an outward-looking company with a strong export share of 30 percent, and in this online age we are networked with numerous trade partners abroad. Their number is increasing steadily, also in more exotic countries such as Mexico or Brunei. Many of our sales partners are discovering MÜHLE as an opportunity to establish Shaving Culture Made in Germany in new markets. This proof of origin is a pledge that we as a manufacturer must redeem every day.

In times when the large are no longer driving out the small, but the fast are driving out the slow, our inner compass is still set to quality which we not only assure continuously with many small development steps, but also continue to improve upon. A small example: Our travel shaving range with the new leather cases. They are as simple as they are exquisite – and the best that we can possibly offer you.

The factory photo dates back to the early 1950s.

Rituals Require Care

Safety first

We are all familiar with the hassle at the airport, standing in the queue for the security check. As if they were the first humans to walk the earth, travellers fuss and fumble around in bags, trolleys, rucksacks and trouser pockets to put their belongings on the conveyor belt. What? Liquids belong in transparent containers? And no more than 100 ml? Never

heard that, never seen it before! Despite the fact that it is pointed out to them umpteen times by signs and pixelated films as they wait. Here are the main points in brief: On flights departing within the EU, creams, toothpaste and all kinds of liquid cosmetics are to be placed in a resealable, transparent 1l bag. The quantity per product must not exceed 100 ml.

This is incidentally one of the reasons why our ORGANIC series includes an after shave and a shaving balm in precisely these sizes. Make it easy for yourself and your fellow travellers and check briefly whether special terms apply before embarking on flights overseas or to Russia. Then nothing will land in the disposal container and you can get airborne and relax.

Hall of Mirrors

The new man

Recently my sweetheart wanted to know if I would rather be reborn as a woman or again as a man. My facial expression should have sufficed as an answer. But it didn't. Why do I prefer my life as a man? I effortlessly portrayed an existence free of the constraints of make-up tips and hairdressers' price lists. At night in parks and underground car parks I fear neither for my body nor my gentle soul. I am spared unambiguous offers in shady bars. It takes me four minutes to wash my hair, and I don't need to teeter over cobblestones in high-heels. Choosing the right suit? Compared to ladies' clothing decisions, a piece of cake! I tactfully omitted to mention the matter of toilet seats and instead began to extol the virtues of my shaving brush collection.

But then I realised I was already skating on the thin ice of chauvinism. As a countermeasure I hastily went in search of my feminine side. Admittedly, I like to burn candles, preferably a whole bunch of them, I keep all kinds of knickknacks and I'm mad about cooking. Talking about feelings holds no horrors for me, my eyes fill up with salty fluid when watching "Notting Hill"

and a glass of Prosecco is not rejected as a girlie tippie, but drained with great gusto. I even find bath additives soothing. And let us be quite honest here: Surely a relaxed wet shave is comparable to women's everyday cosmetic rituals?

What luck beyond compare, to be a man, or so Goethe thought in his day. However, were he to know what has transpired in the meantime, he might be tickled by a certain curiosity about times like these. But who knows, perhaps his great intellect has long been reborn in the body of a woman, as a housewife and mother of several children, a businesswoman, a lady mayoress or a candidate for Germany's next top model.

No matter what the case, just as these words are darting on to the page, their author's feet, encased in Australian workman's boots, are resting casually on the desk. My numerous female colleagues in the open-plan office are never to be seen in such a pose. Is that an omen, I wonder?

Should he be reborn, our author Luis Bentele will naturally be glad to report on the experience.



Close Up

Berthold Baumann



When Berthold Baumann and MÜHLE met, it was love at first sight. In 2010, the trained carpenter was a member of the construction team working on the new production hall at the company site. He liked what he saw there. And before long he decided that he would like to become part of MÜHLE. "Working in the construction industry I've got to know a lot of companies. You notice immediately whether the atmosphere is right or not." Very soon, the Hundshübel native had found his niche: Together with three other colleagues he is responsible for finishing the brush handles, or more precisely for enhancing them in the form of different polishing cycles. Each synthetic or brass work piece is processed and checked individually. Synthetic handles are finished directly, while brass parts are first sent for electroplating. "I'm a bit of stickler for precision," says the father of four, who has a particular fondness for biathlon and used to be something of a skier himself. Since being involved in the construction of the neighbouring Eibenstock Dam from 1974 to 1982, many things in his life have changed. What has remained is his passion for wood, a renewable resource that he finds wonderful to work with. He continues to do so in his free time, helping his children to build their houses. "It's a pleasure to go to work every day," says Berthold Baumann, who values his colleagues and the Müller family of entrepreneurs alike. "We stand together." This is also evident in little things: Every Friday lunchtime, the staff organise a 'treat' for everyone, with meat purchased from a good butcher, for example. A pleasant, shared ritual instead of the usual sandwiches brought from home.

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Wing Mirror

Saks Fifth Avenue, Mexico

A legend and one of THE labels for superior shopping pleasure at the same time: Saks Fifth Avenue in Manhattan debuted in 1924. Today the luxury department store chain has over forty branches worldwide. One of them is situated in Mexico City – and has a soft spot for MÜHLE. This is down to the initiative of Uriel J. Smilovitz, a renowned distributor of luxury watches, and his passion for the wet shave. Mexico once possessed a high culture of wet shaving, and he firmly believes that it should be revived with the best products and services. This is why he has incorporated the MÜHLE brand in his project entitled “Luxury on demand”. He quickly reached an agreement with Saks when he went there to present selected products from the German manufacturer. The international distributor emphasises that his collections are not just a selection of the best models. To him, it’s about more than a particularly fascinating men’s watch or an exquisite shaving accessory. The brands that he champions stand for “something bigger”: the lifestyle of opinion leaders, the pleasure of surrounding oneself with something special in private. Like anywhere else in the world, Mexico also has a market for luxury niche products which is capable of further development. “The brands that stay true to their roots will be those that succeed.” This is a matter where he places his trust in MÜHLE – not least because the wet shave is and remains an intimate ritual: “The appropriate accessories are an expression of the appreciation that you show for your life, also in this respect.” Uriel Smilovitz began as a 17-year-old when he was travelling in the Middle East. In his luggage was a safety razor from his father; for him it was “almost a piece of home”.



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Rear-View Mirror

There is a train to ...



Today, the word Interrail conjures up fond memories of the good old days when there were no adventureless 20 euro flights to Paris or bargain hunts on the Internet. In short, this form of travel was cult. Its railway stations were not indistinguishable shopping malls, but places where you arrived and continued your journey, perhaps waving with a handkerchief. Train stations became mysterious portals, beyond which adventure beckoned. Once on the move, you read books like Hemingway’s “The Sun Also Rises”, reliving his words in the arena of Madrid instead of indignantly informing 1,357 friends via Facebook that you’ve just slurped a latte for 16 euros in St. Mark’s Square.

One ticket for 30 European countries. That meant almost endless spaces, and overcoming their boundaries was a privilege of youth. What counted was not the political borders but the surprises, the gradual process of familiarisation. Admittedly, the ticket was not valid for the whole world, but that made no difference. New worlds waited between Lisbon, Athens and Stockholm, no matter how large or small they may have been; a backpack full of yearning and curiosity, and not much else. Interrail meant crossing

the Ebro on the night train, tents blown away by the Bora, foreign currencies like the lira, the franc and the schilling – and traveller’s cheques hidden in worn-out training shoes. At border posts you showed your passport with a smile to unsmiling customs officers. Communicating with home required the right coins – and telephone boxes.

Interrail was the distance from all previous experience, the finding of a new closeness to oneself. That meant homesickness and longing at the same time, summer flings, counting the last pennies, detergent in a tube, occasionally shaving in the station toilets, which was not looked upon kindly in all countries. But stop! Before this trip degenerates into a lament, rescue is near! Anyone who believes that Interrail is a thing of the past, like “The Generation Game”, flared trousers or Sandy Shaw, is totally wrong. The long-distance passport to freedom still exists. And even those who bumped along the tracks for the first time 42 years ago can step aboard again. There are various models for youths, adults and senior citizens to choose from. Whether or not you really need to take a laptop along should be given careful consideration. For many reasons. All of them good.

Speakers’ Corner

As a precaution I remove the blade from my safety razor before every trip. Otherwise the blade is good for ten shaves! Do you have a better solution?

Holger L., Rome

We recently introduced a practical small blade protector for this reason. The plastic cap fits our safety razors with both open and closed comb, and reliably protects the blade – as well as your fingertips.