

Glashütte, June 2013

A precision edifice for a watch manufacture

Inauguration of the new Moritz Grossmann manufacture in Glashütte

Within the scope of a festive multi-day event, the new Moritz Grossmann manufacture celebrates its official inauguration in June 2013. In 2008, with a group of international investors, Christine Hutter established Grossmann Uhren GmbH. She started out with a small team in rented premises on Hauptstrasse in Glashütte. Only a year later, the company acquired a plot of land where a custom-configured manufacturing centre would be built. The 3000-m² parcel is located on Uferstrasse, across the street from the Müglitz River and the railway line.

On the one hand, the hillside site offers proximity to the township and attractive views of the crucible of Saxon watchmaking but on the other, the jaggedly rocky slope posed a formidable challenge to the planners. Despite the generously sized plot, the net cadastral area available for the building was a comparatively narrow strip totalling a mere 900 m². Special flood protection measures were necessary because of the adjacency to the Müglitz River, which frequently overflows its banks.

Additionally, the new manufacture building constitutes a pivotal brand identity element, reflecting the ambitions and the philosophy of Grossmann's watchmakers. The workstations in this production facility for superb high-precision timekeeping instruments had to be seismically isolated from the substratum.

Moritz Grossmann has arrived

Five architectural firms were invited to present their visions, and one of the proposals was instantly convincing. In a unanimous vote, the jury decided in favour of the concept submitted by Potsdam-based architects and engineers flender & drobig. Their plan envisioned an elongated three-level building that tapers to a tip in the north and is crowned by a prominent rotunda. With its impressive prow, the building resembles a ship moored on the banks of the Müglitz Valley.

Made of glass and Alucobond, the rotunda is the landmark of the revitalised brand and displays the MORITZ GROSSMANN signature, which is visible from afar.

This space, resembling a navigation bridge with an adjoining roof terrace that hovers above the structure, is ideal for representation purposes and events. The large windows offer panoramic views of Glashütte and the surrounding countryside.

flender & drobig accommodated the topographical challenges by placing the structure on stilts. The building is literally lifted off the slope by several metres. Parking spaces and the entrance area are located on the ground floor. The gleaming white complex with three levels for production and administration sits atop this substructure.

2010 marks the start of the construction phase with new challenges: The access options to Uferstrasse 1 are complicated: either through the railway underpass at the train station with a maximum headroom of 3.1 metres, or via the Dittersdorfer Weg, an adventurously steep road. Both options are less than ideal for the contractors. Moreover, the parcel nested in the rocky slope offers little space for storing construction materials, so logistics required precision timing.

Heritage in time – an edifice that lives up to the aspirations

Ergonomics and ecology are musts for a modern manufacture. Interior layout and technical infrastructure planning was governed by the strictest standards with a view to future needs. The modern technical resources in the design and engineering studios as well as in the production, finissage, and assembly shops are commensurate with the high-precision work performed there. Great emphasis was placed on lighting and illumination as a prerequisite for the sophisticated production processes and a vibrant manufacture ambience.

Top-quality materials and furnishings were chosen for all workstations, offices, and common rooms. The parts production department, where technology is paramount, can rely on latest-generation electronically controlled machining centres. Thus, the living interior of the manufacture constitutes a logical continuation of its extraordinary exterior.

An international group of watch connoisseurs provided funding for the development of the Moritz Grossmann manufacture. The building, machines, and equipment were financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Free State of Saxony.

In February 2012, with the capacity of the rented premises bursting at the seams, Christine Hutter and her then 24-member team moved to a suite of rooms in the new building that had been completed ahead of schedule.

At the new location, some 2700 m² are available for the enlargement of the manufacture. This assures that production capacities can be increased and technological resources scaled up, allowing the manufacture to gradually upsize process development and accelerate vertical integration. By June 2013, the head count had grown to 41.

While work on the building and landscaping neared completion, Grossmann's watchmakers were already focused on the development of the next debuts. The inauguration of the manufacture building coincides with the presentation of two timepieces: the BENU Power reserve and the ATUM.

Now that sufficient space is available to expedite new developments and expand production capacities, friends of the MORITZ GROSSMANN GLASHÜTTE I/SA brand have every reason to eagerly look forward to new models.

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