



The Zirkeltraining™ Sportdirektor

Unique bags for ‘sporting directors’, business people, teachers and tech lovers

Zirkeltraining™ recycles and upcycles leather and rubber from sports equipment to make beautiful bags for professional and private use. A unique design goes hand in hand with practicability and a touch of nostalgia. Since 2007, founder Bernd Dörr has fabricated these vintage pieces with great love for detail, for which Zirkeltraining™ was awarded multiple international design awards. The newest invention is a high-end business bag as flexible as its users – the Zirkeltraining™ Sportdirektor.

TEXT: JESSICA HOLZHAUSEN | PHOTOS: ZIRKELTRAINING™

Who does not remember those sweaty hours in a school gym running around, jumping over vaulting boxes, bending the body while doing gymnastics and floor exercises? While some loved the challenge PE teachers set them, for others these hours were like living a nightmare. What most people do not forget is the smell of leather

while jumping over a horse, the touch of a rubber mat under their fingers when making a cartwheel. Zirkeltraining™ bags have the same haptic and, with their unique design, bring back people’s childhood memories, their histories of triumph and failure, of struggles and success. Being reminded of one’s own childhood is often sweet, even

if it has a bitter note: the sweat, fear and excitement when participating in physical education.

That is why many people actually buy a Zirkeltraining™ bag, says Bernd Dörr. Either because they were great in sports and want to be reminded of their former achievements or because they hated it and now make a statement of overcoming former disappointments. Others simply like the feel, the look and the beautiful design. Zirkeltraining™ is already celebrating its tenth anniversary. Right from the beginning, the company was very popular among people who have a keen eye for great design and innovations. But it took some time

to get acknowledgement from a wider customer base. This might correlate with the small number of bags the company, with its 15 employees, hand-produces: Only 10,000 to 12,000 pieces leave the manufactory each year. Zirkeltraining™ has a unique success story and in 2017 was even awarded the German Brand Award in Gold.

Only recently, Zirkeltraining™ entered the high-end market for bags and with 'Sportdirektor' (sporting director) constructed a high-tech bag that is modular, functional and unisex, a bag that simply looks different than any other bag of its kind on the market. "Brand new and very old, indeed" – both befits the bag. The haptic and look of used materials give the bag character, while its flexible layout makes it the perfect bag for modern businessmen and women who like to have a sporty appearance. The bag's interior is modular and can be ordered according to individual needs: for 13-inch or 15-inch notebooks or without any notebook sleeve. Like all Zirkeltraining™ bags, the 'Sportdirektor' can be bought at selected retailers only.

One of the main challenges Zirkeltraining™ is facing today is how to get hold of the necessary materials. "Many hours of child labour are needed," jokes Bernd Dörr about the materials' origins: The leather and rubber used for making the bags stem from school gyms from all over Germany. "At least 5,000 children have to have touched the leather of a horse or a vaulting box before the leather is beautiful enough to be reused as a bag." The leather gains a unique patina left by lots of hands.

All materials used are between ten and 50 years old. For gym mats, for instance, about 35 years are an optimum age, leather breaks after 40 years thus creating a unique patina no newly made leather can compete with. But how old the material must be depends on various factors: Humidity for example, or if the gymnastic apparatuses are stored in a room with open windows. Of course, the main challenge is to find a school that is currently swapping their old equipment for a new one and subsequently is ready to sell old gym mats,

horses, or vaulting boxes. This limits the amount of bags the Zirkeltraining™ craftspeople can produce each year as no new materials are used.

The close connection to the world of sports is not only substantiated in the original idea or the re-cycling of sports equipment: Zirkeltraining™ is also a partner of the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) and a sparring partner for the Confederation's mascot 'Trimmy'. The tiny man in sports dress invites everyone to participate in sports activities – not on an Olympic level, but as a healthy pastime. 'Trimmy' was the symbol for the old 'Trimm-dich-Pfad', fitness trails established in the 1970s especially in natural surroundings with the intention to motivate people to become active outdoors. Many of these trails were abandoned later on, but today celebrate some kind of rebirth.

You can follow Zirkeltraining™ on Facebook and Instagram.

www.zirkeltraining.biz

– ten years of #enteronlywithlightsoles



Founder Bernd Dörr (left) with creative companion Markus Kreykenbohm (right) won gold with Zirkeltraining™ at German Brand Award 2017.