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WINNING RECIPE FOR KITCHENS

Blending exquisite design with the finest of materials, Swiss kitchen manufacturer Zbären serves up a winning recipe to discerning clients around the world

With a family history of exceptional craftsmanship that includes generations of skilled cabinetmakers, it's easy to see how the name of Zbären has become so respected in Swiss kitchen design and manufacturing. 'My grandfather was a highly successful cabinetmaker and my father followed suit,' says Benjamin Zbären, Managing Director of Zbären: Swiss Kitchen Manufacture. 'Having met some exceptional architects in Gstaad, whose clients were looking for equally exceptional kitchens, he had the idea to start a kitchen business. He invested in the necessary machinery and we now design and make everything ourselves.'

INDIVIDUALLY TAILORED DESIGN

Today the company employs 30 people, including many skilled local craftsmen. The firm designs, manufactures and installs all of its kitchens, providing clients with the highest levels of craftsmanship, along with the advantages of working with a small family company. A Zbären-designed kitchen is always tailored to the individual needs of the customer. 'Each project has to take the space, environment, budget and, of course, the preferences of the client into consideration,' says Benjamin. 'We start with a blank piece of paper and bring all these elements together to create something magnificent. No two kitchens ever look the same.'

Zbären uses the finest materials in its quest for individuality. 'We employ a lot of wood,

particularly oak and spruce, in our designs, as well as a good deal of reclaimed wood,' says Benjamin. 'A few years ago, maple was popular, but now oak is back in style'. Alongside wood, the firm also uses glass, metal and even leather in its designs. 'We've made cupboard doors clad in leather,' he adds. 'Anything is possible.'

'Many kitchen studios mass-produce their designs, but here everything is manufactured with a particular client in mind'

The company crafts its own wooden features and has a pool of skilled craftsmen that it can call upon when necessary. Blacksmiths are on hand to design beautiful handles, and stonemasons are available to create anything from an elegant detail to an impressive stone counter. 'Many kitchen studios mass-produce their designs,' says Benjamin, 'but here everything is manufactured with a particular client in mind.'

The design process begins with an initial discussion at which the client, architect or interior designer presents their ideas or plans. The design team at Zbären then discusses materials and requirements and makes an initial proposal. 'Kitchens are meticulously planned to ensure the maximum use of space,' says

Benjamin. 'We often wait until after a particular drawer or cupboard has been installed to decide its precise purpose. It's not until someone starts working with their kitchen that they can decide exactly where they want the spice drawer or cutlery to be situated.'

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE

Indeed, in addition to designing a customer's kitchen, the team at Zbären is happy to source the contents of each cupboard and drawer, providing cutlery, utensils and other kitchen items should the client desire. The entire process, from first meeting to installation, generally takes around six months.

The firm produces work all over the world, from Bermuda and Russia to Germany and the UK, and understands that many clients are unable to visit its Swiss showroom more than once. This calls for an exceptional level of service, which Zbären, with its bespoke approach, is more than capable of delivering. And while the company specialises in kitchens, the team at Zbären is experienced at extending a design into other areas of a house – possibly working through to a dining area, for instance.

With its impressive design and craft talent, alongside customer service that is second to none, the company's future looks bright. 'Our goal is to continue to seek out customers who value good craftsmanship,' says Benjamin. 'We love unique clients with unique homes, who test and push our design skills.'
www.zbaeren.ch

