



The World of Wempe

An Interview
with Ruediger Albers,
President, American Wempe Corp.



The exterior (above) and interior (left) of Wempe's flagship store at Fifth Avenue and 55th Street; exquisite ring and mechanical watch from the Wempe Atelier (below)

EDITORS' NOTE Ruediger (Rudy) Albers, President of Wempe USA, began his association with Wempe Jewelers 30 years ago. Joining in 1987 as a master watchmaker and sales professional at Wempe in Hamburg, he quickly ascended, transferring to New York City in 1988 and, in 1991, became General Manager of American Wempe Corporation. Albers has set the tone for expert service and specialized, curated guidance offered at Wempe to its elite clientele, embodying the company's mission: to inspire an exquisite life.



Ruediger Albers

COMPANY BRIEF Since 1878, Wempe (*wempe.com*) has curated exquisite timepieces and jewelry. With 32 stores in seven countries and aboard the cruise ships MS Euriopa and MS Europa II, and headquartered in Hamburg, Germany, Wempe is a leader in the luxury retail arena. Wempe's flagship store is located on the iconic corner of Fifth Avenue and 55th Street in New York City – offering featured boutiques for Rolex and Patek Philippe, and an unrivalled selection of the most prestigious watch brands and fine jewelry, including the brand's own.

There are many places to buy a great watch today. What makes Wempe special and what is the advantage the brand provides?



We're a family-owned company with 33 stores and, as such, we have a great relationship with our suppliers, a personal touch that is hard to match, and a very broad reach. In New York City, our location is passed by millions of people each year, affording us the additional advantage of targeted exposure.

Above all, what sets Wempe apart is our intention to serve and our dedication to service. All of our employees embody the brand purpose – to curate exquisite watches and jewelry in order to inspire an exquisite life. This goes far beyond the selection. When customers visit, our dedicated team immediately puts them at ease, welcoming them with our signature libations. Far and above selling, we are dedicated to having a meaningful conversation with each and every client, authentically seeking to understand what matters to him or her, what they are looking for, and finding them the most perfect object. It's no wonder our first-time customers almost always become life-long clients.

As you develop new stores, do you attempt to create a shop-within-a-shop for some of the brands?

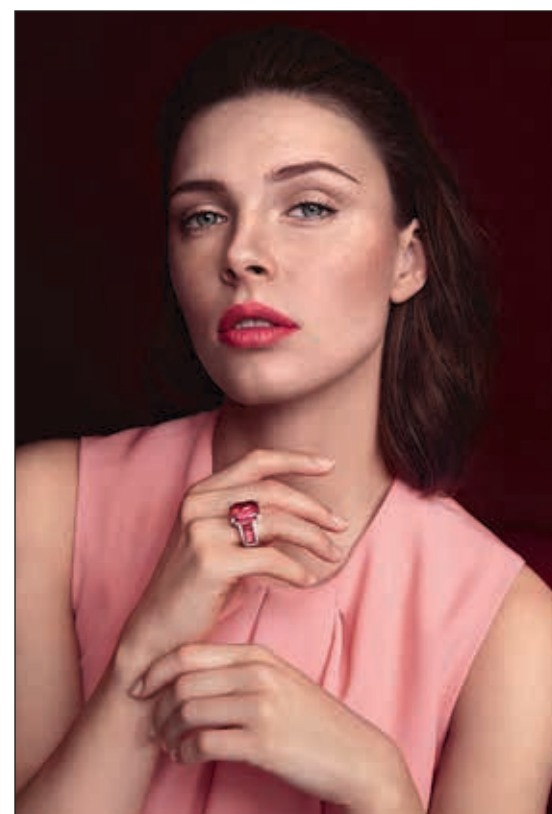
Our two biggest brands, Rolex and Patek Philippe, are the anchors of the store, and they are generally recognized as the leaders in the business. As such, we are honored to offer broad and exclusive selections for fans of these iconic brands and proud to be able to integrate them in such a way that their materials work very well with ours. Their featured spaces do not feel like a shop-within-a-shop, but signify the brands cohesive, consistent, and remarkable feel.

How important is jewelry to Wempe's business?

Jewelry is at the heart of Wempe's own brand. With our own Atelier in Germany, and featured areas and displays in the Fifth Avenue Boutique, it has become a true star within our selection, featuring the exquisite signature Wempe diamond cut – with 67 facets, and BY KIM's signature, best-selling line, Helioro.

Would you highlight Wempe's jewelry designers?

BY KIM is the signature jewelry line created by Kim-Eva Wempe. The epitome of modern craftsmanship created in our Wempe Atelier in Germany, BY KIM offers a curated selection of jewelry that makes a personal statement. Take, for example, the Sundance collection: this line sparkles



with gemstones that appeal not only to any woman's color preference, but that also speak to her own proclivities. Citrine will align the wearer with success and self-confidence. Rose quartz will align the wearer with love. With each piece, the ethos of Kim-Eva Wempe is brought to life, which has inspired, in turn, the brand purpose.

How have you positioned jewelry to have a larger presence in the redesigned Fifth Avenue boutique?

Today, you will find jewelry front and center: at the very entrance of the Wempe NYC flagship, and in its front windows. It's beauty that cannot be missed.

You also place a strong emphasis on after-service repairs and care that creates relationships that go beyond the sale. How critical is this emphasis?

This is another of our strong differentiation points. Wempe NYC has four in-house master watchmakers who are capable to perform small horological miracles right on the spot. As I have noted, we believe in exquisite service above all else. The inclusion of watchmaking on-premise is the natural extension of this profound Wempe principle. ●