

## The Premier Address for Luxury Watches and Jewelry on Fifth Avenue

An Interview with Ruediger Albers, President, Wempe USA

**EDITORS' NOTE** Ruediger (Rudy) Albers, President of Wempe USA, began his association with Wempe 34 years ago. Joining in 1987 as a master watchmaker and sales professional at Wempe Hamburg, he quickly ascended, transferring to New York and advancing to General Manager, now leading the U.S. operations for more than 30 years. He set the tone for expert service and specialized curated guidance offered by Wempe to its elite clientele, embodying the company's mission to be the very best in each of its markets.



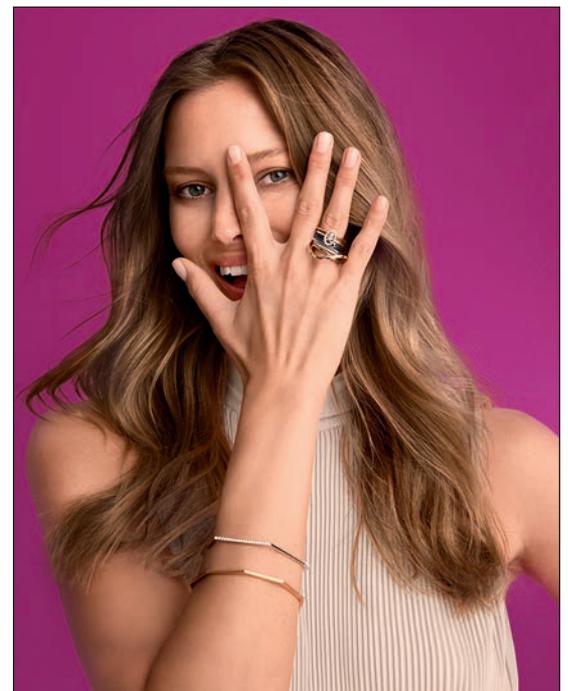
Ruediger Albers

*Avenue and 55th Street in New York City, offering featured boutiques for Rolex and Patek Philippe, along with an unrivalled selection of the most prestigious watch brands and fine jewelry, including the brand's own.*

**Will you highlight Wempe's history and heritage and what have been the keys to Wempe's consistent leadership in the industry?**

Wempe, with its 143-year history, remains a family-owned business led by CEO Kim-Eva Wempe. In 1980, her father, Hellmut Wempe, fulfilled his dream and opened in New York. Today, it ranks among the top five multi-brand retailers in the world. Wempe employs over 850 dedicated experts in their profession throughout 34 stores and brand boutiques in six countries, our watch manufacture in Glashuette, as well as in our own jewelry atelier in Schwaebisch Gmuend, Germany and our corporate headquarters in Hamburg.

**COMPANY BRIEF** Since 1878, Wempe ([wempe.com](http://wempe.com)) has curated exquisite timepieces and jewelry. With 34 stores in six countries and aboard the cruise ships MS Europa and MS Europa II, and head-quartered in Hamburg, Germany, Wempe is a leader in the luxury retail arena. Wempe's flagship store is located on the iconic corner of Fifth



*Playlist BY KIM, the newest Wempe jewelry line featuring 28 stackable rings*



*The New York flagship store occupies half-a-city block on Fifth Avenue at the ground level of The Peninsula New York*

**How do you describe the Wempe difference and what sets the company apart from its peers?**

Wempe's focus on customer experience continues to be a major differentiator. While Champagne, Swiss chocolates and espresso have always been staples of the shopping experience, it's the boutique's unique atmosphere, which feels more as if you are entering a friend's home rather than a store, that makes the difference. Our seasoned sales professionals work as a team and are poised to turn every visit into a memorable experience. Most of our team members have been with Wempe for at least 10 years, many of them 20 years, and in my case 34 years.

**Will you provide an overview of the watch brands that Wempe works with and what are the key factors you look for when partnering with a brand?**

Wempe is proud to offer the best of the best. Our major partners Rolex and Patek flank the store and give us access to their most desirable and collectible timepieces. We recently added Girard Perregaux and Ulysse Nardin to our offering and both have been instant successes. In total, Wempe offers 22 of the finest brands



*The titanium Girard Perregaux Laureato is limited to 230 pieces worldwide and exclusively available in the U.S. at Wempe*

including A. Lange & Söhne, Breguet, Breitling, Cartier, Chopard and Vacheron Constantin, just to name a few.

**How critical is the jewelry category for Wempe and will you highlight this offering?**

We have made great strides in our jewelry sales over the past five years and continue to be on an upward trajectory. Our newest collection “Wempe Playlist By Kim” is geared to attract a younger audience – the next generation of Wempe shoppers. We have added branded jewelry by Messika, Paris as well as Wellendorff to our collection. We are doing well with our very own and unique Wempe cut, which offers exceptional brilliance due to 80 additional facets.

**How did Wempe adapt its business to address the challenges caused by the pandemic and how proud are you to see the resilience of your team during this unprecedented time?**

Wempe has managed remarkably well through the pandemic, creating two independently functioning teams to ensure everyone’s safety. We were able to stay operational throughout with the exception of the state-mandated three-month shutdown. Despite being located in one of the world’s busiest tourist destinations, we have always placed our focus on the local customer which has benefited us greatly as borders remain closed to most foreign visitors. Our close-knit relationships with our clients allowed us to continue to conduct business and tap into clients’ desires to treat themselves while being unable to travel.

of the Peninsula lobby to incorporate our Rolex Boutique into our flagship store – a true sign of our continued commitment to New York City.

**How do you define the Wempe experience at your flagship store on Fifth Avenue in the heart of New York City?**

“Everyone leaves happy” is our simple mantra and it’s what keeps clients coming back and spreading the word. There is always something new and exciting to discover. Our Buben & Zoerweg Collectors Salon on the lower lever is a must-see for every timepiece collector. We created this special showroom which holds the answers to all your watch storage, winding and safe-keeping needs. Whether spy- or bullet-proof glass, or fingerprint recognition, we are happy to assist in creating your customized safe or watch winder solution.



*The Wempe Iron Walker Tide is the perfect wristwatch for all boaters and water sport enthusiasts*



*The Watch Collectors Salon at the lower lever offers the perfect solution for your watch storage, winding and safe-keeping needs*

**Will you discuss Wempe’s presence in New York and its deep commitment to the New York market?**

Since 1980, Wempe has been the premier address for luxury watches and jewelry on Fifth Avenue. We doubled our footprint in 2016 and are now occupying 5,500 square feet at the ground level of the venerable Peninsula Hotel at Fifth Avenue and 55th Street. We have the great privilege of operating the Rolex Boutique inside the Rolex Building on 53rd Street which is slated to be completely remodeled from the ground up over the next four years and will begin in January 2022. We are therefore temporarily expanding our footprint into part

**Will you highlight Wempe’s emphasis on service and quality at the highest levels?**

Wempe is very proud of its easily accessible state-of-the-art service department which is just one out of three authorized Patek Philippe service centers in all of the United States. Our master watchmakers continuously undergo training with the brands including Rolex, Cartier and others enabling us to have access to spare parts and to repair watches to the exacting standards set by each brand.

**What is your outlook for New York’s recovery coming out of the pandemic?**

While many of our clients were able to work remotely, I hear so often that they are missing the energy of the city. There is no doubt in my mind that New York will be back stronger than ever once the pandemic is declared over. Foot traffic is up significantly, and we are looking forward to what could well be our strongest fourth quarter ever and soon we’ll also be going live with Wempe e-commerce. ●