

**MORE** FROM WOOD.



MORE

[www.egger.com](http://www.egger.com)

The EGGER Group Customer Magazine

01



## The Future of **Construction**

Today, the Eiffel Tower could be built to a height of 1 000 metres – with wood.

No other material will play such an important role  
in construction and living in this century.

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## THE COMPANY'S CORE VALUES INCLUDE RELIABILITY, QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY.



Ulrich Bühler,

EGGER Group Management

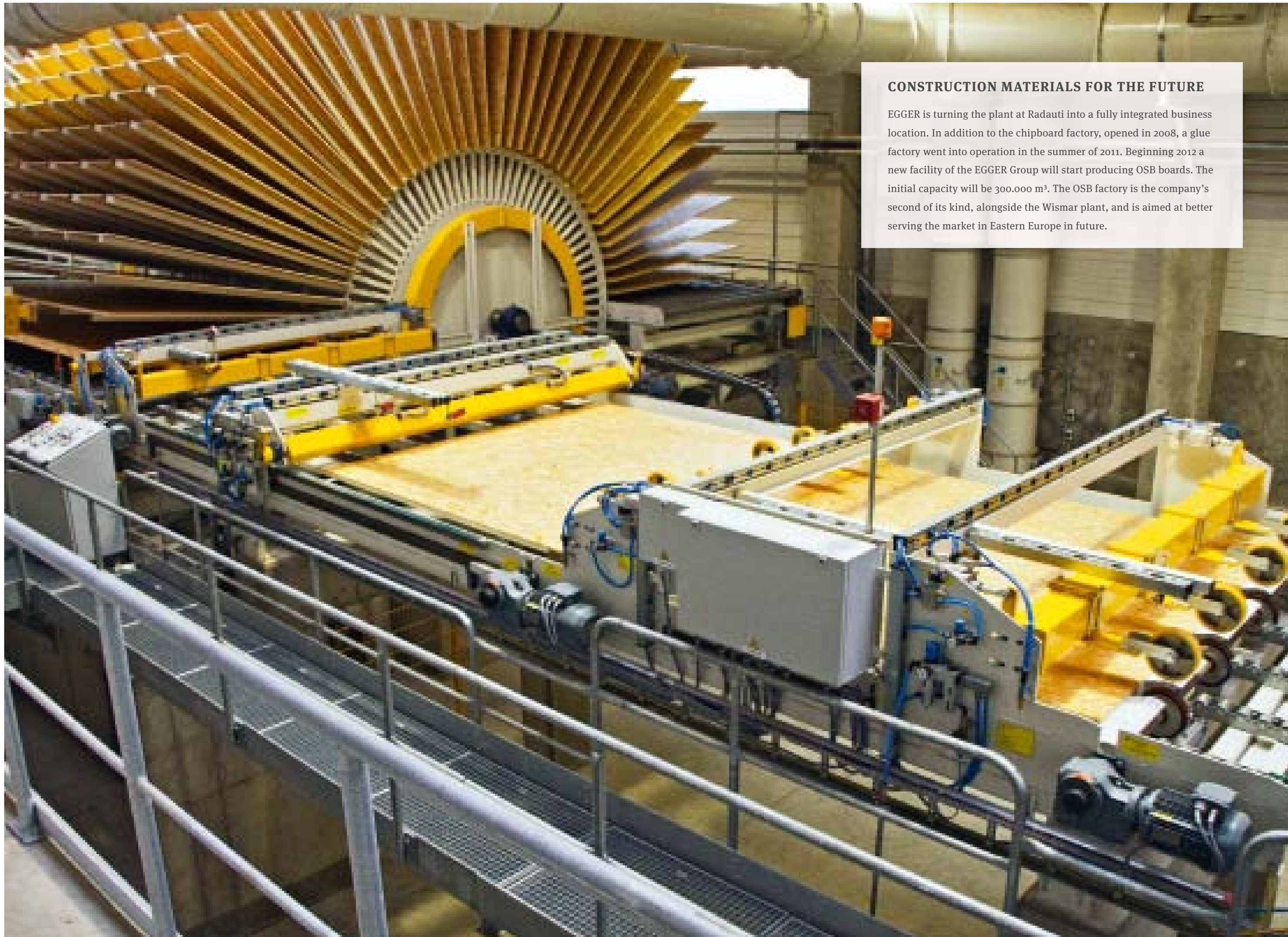
Exactly fifty years ago, on 18 December **1961**, the first EGGER chipboard factory went into service in St. Johann. Fritz Egger senior did not have a great deal of start-up capital at his disposal (a mere **50,000 deutschmarks**) but he made up for it in vision. And he laid down the core values of our philosophy, so that all decisions involved the heart, the head and common sense and all our business dealings are characterised by reliability and trustworthiness. Our handshake really means something.

With our new magazine, MORE we want to tell you more about these values, which remain the guiding principles of the EGGER Group. We introduce people who create innovative solutions and fascinating objects from wood. We aim to show how much inspiration and joy can be derived from living and working with wood.

And we report on projects which teach us how to use our resources more efficiently and sustainably and how to respect nature.

Some of these projects and ideas come from the EGGER Group. Others come from people whose attitudes and abilities have impressed us and whose values we share. It is more than fifty years since Fritz Egger senior formulated the guiding principle that could not be more visionary and valid today: "Wood is much too valuable to be just thrown away." We hope that you will be inspired by our magazine, MORE, and that it will bring you closer to the EGGER Group and the world of wood. Please feel free to offer us criticism, praise or suggestions. Our constant goal is to keep getting better.

On behalf of the EGGER Team,  
I wish you an enjoyable read



## CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS FOR THE FUTURE

EGGER is turning the plant at Radauti into a fully integrated business location. In addition to the chipboard factory, opened in 2008, a glue factory went into operation in the summer of 2011. Beginning 2012 a new facility of the EGGER Group will start producing OSB boards. The initial capacity will be 300.000 m<sup>3</sup>. The OSB factory is the company's second of its kind, alongside the Wismar plant, and is aimed at better serving the market in Eastern Europe in future.





### DESIGNER HOTEL FOR TREE LOVERS

The idea for a tree hotel first came to Kent Lindvall while he was fly fishing with his friends in Sweden. A tree house built for the set of the film “The Tree Lover” had been left behind in their native Lapland. The film, which tells the story of three nature-loving city folk, evoked similar longings among many guests of the nearby country hotel, “Britta’s Pensionat”. Britta is Kent’s wife. The Lindvalls commissioned different architects to create the first five comfortable, environmentally-friendly designer tree houses for their hotel, each one with a floor space of 15 to 30 square metres. One of them is the Mirrorcube in the photo: a suite made of plywood with an edge length of four metres, a queen-size bed and a roof terrace. To protect the local bird-life, the mirrored surfaces are clad with an infra-red film, which is visible to the birds but not to human beings. A further 20 “rooms” are planned for completion by 2015.

[www.treehotel.se](http://www.treehotel.se)



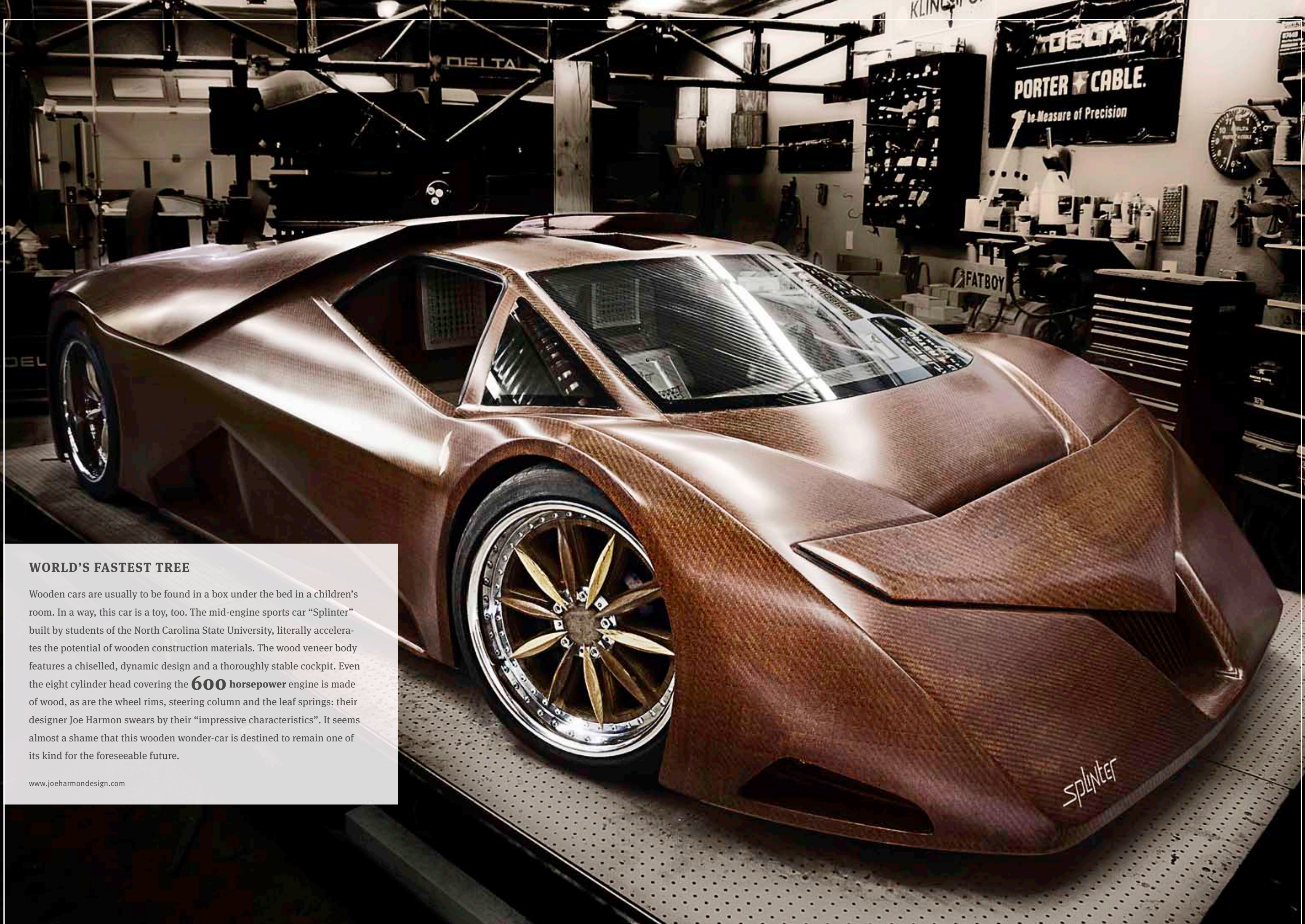
## 50 YEARS OF EGGER

“If our father, who died nearly thirty years ago, were alive today, what would he have to say at the celebrations tonight?” Those were the words of Michael Egger as he greeted his guests. And he provided the answer to his father’s question himself: “More than 1,000 people? A feast for the senses with a four-course menu in a Bedouin tent? Are you crazy?” Admittedly, the sight of the assembled guests was an impressive one. People from all over the world were gathered together to be wined, dined and entertained. “The world has changed almost beyond recognition in recent years,” said Michael Egger. “Yet, there are also things that stay the same. That is the secret of this company: “We want to remain recognisable.”

[www.egger.com](http://www.egger.com)







### WORLD’S FASTEST TREE

Wooden cars are usually to be found in a box under the bed in a children’s room. In a way, this car is a toy, too. The mid-engine sports car “Splinter” built by students of the North Carolina State University, literally accelerates the potential of wooden construction materials. The wood veneer body features a chiselled, dynamic design and a thoroughly stable cockpit. Even the eight cylinder head covering the **600 horsepower** engine is made of wood, as are the wheel rims, steering column and the leaf springs: their designer Joe Harmon swears by their “impressive characteristics”. It seems almost a shame that this wooden wonder-car is destined to remain one of its kind for the foreseeable future.

[www.joeharmondesign.com](http://www.joeharmondesign.com)



# E\_INSPARATION

“A future without wood is unthinkable. It is a sustainable material which can be used for innovative design solutions.”

Karsten Bleymehl, Material Connexion  
The Epoch of Wood (Pages 12 to 18)

## Ideas for Tomorrow

### BOARDS TO STOOLS

[www.lapalma.it](http://www.lapalma.it)



This success story began as a technical experiment. The Japanese designer Shin Azumi wanted to find out how far he could bend plywood without compromising its load-bearing properties. The result was an award-winning stool built according to the monocoque technique, as used in aviation and racing cars: a construction weighing only three kilos and made of a single shell. The manufacturer LaPalma successfully markets the stackable stool “AP” in a range of finishes.



### SMART WOODEN COVER FOR THE IPAD 2

[www.miniot.com](http://www.miniot.com)

21st century iPhone technology shrouded in a protective cloak of Kauri wood, which once lay buried deep beneath the surface of stone-age Earth – the Dutch haute couture carpenters Miniot certainly hit the right button with their customised iWood covers and iPad 2 cases, which the industrious workshop manufactures from a range of woods – although the true Apple fan would probably settle for nothing other than apple tree wood. The magnetic cover sticks to the case like the original polyurethane Smart Cover. Miniot has taken Apple’s recipe for success to a higher level: today’s mobile appliances don’t just have to work, they have to look good too.



### A HENHOUSE INSTEAD OF A GARDEN GNOME

[www.nogg.co](http://www.nogg.co)



Even city-dwellers know how to appreciate a freshly-laid egg for breakfast. But it has to come from a hen-house that doesn’t look out of place in a modern urban garden. The British designers Matthew Hayward and Nadia Turan decided to tackle the question and came up with the “Nogg”. The urbane, hand-made cedar wood egg is 1.2 metres high and accommodates up to 4 chickens, yet it looks more like a sculpture than a hen-house. The freshly fragrant wood has anti-bacterial qualities and comes from sustainable forestries.





THE FUTURE OF LIVING

# The Age of Wood

The high art of the five-axis router: the architect Shigeru Ban is setting new standards and trends with wooden constructions such as this one for the Haesley Nine Bridges Golf Club in South Korea.

E\_INSPIRATION

How will we live and build in the year 2025? Experts are predicting developments that will have enormous repercussions for design, architecture and material. But it won't all be new. On the contrary, humankind's oldest and most popular building material is destined for an illustrious future, too.

BY Till Schröder

It is quite simply a question of time: seven storeys in seven weeks, without hassle and without compromising on quality. This was the speed at which Europe's highest wooden town house sprouted into the sky in 2007, from laying the foundation stone to the topping-out ceremony. In conventional construction, one storey a month is considered normal. At last, after years of red tape and special permit applications, the architectural pioneers from Kaden and Klingbeil firm had finally opened a new chapter in construction history, and created an award-winning model for the future. The modern building, entitled "e3", with its clear lines and layout, has not just become a Mecca for architects and construction engineers, it has also put down a marker: wood is the construction material of the future. A new competition had begun.

Just a year later, the London office of Waugh Thistleton Architects broke the Berlin record, with an eaves height of 22 metres and a total height of 29.75 metres. Construction time from the start of planning to the ceremonial handing over of keys: 18 months. It took just an hour and a half to sell all the apartments. Word had got around about the pleasant indoor climate in these buildings. "When they think of wood, many people still think of an army barracks – cold in the winter and hot in the summer", says architect Tom Kaden. "But that's long since a thing of the past." Modern wooden buildings are extremely pleasant to be in and they address the big issues of our time: ecological awareness and sustainability.

The originals were quickly imitated. In June 2011, a topping-out ceremony in the Bavarian spa town of Bad Aibling marked the next milestone: Germany's "tallest wooden high-rise", eight storeys and 25 metres high. Three months later, the mayor of the Canadian city of Vanderhoof announced that work would begin on the "world's tallest wooden high-rise" in 2012. But they'd better hurry: in the Arctic town of Kirkenes in the far north of Norway, the Barents Secretariat, which co-ordinates trade relations between Norway and Russia, aims to complete a climate-neutral wooden high-rise in 2014, 20 storeys and 80 metres tall.

**"Anyone who wants to stay in the game in the future will have to cast off his reliance on ever-scarcer resources."**

The use of wood for buildings has a long tradition in Scandinavia, but it's catching on in other parts of the world, too. According to the German Association of Prefabricated Building Manufacturers, ninety percent of its members use panel construction systems based on MDF and OSB boards, with cellulose insulation. For house-builders who prefer a brick or plaster face, they simply clad the wood panels with the desired materials.

"A future without wood is unthinkable", says Karsten Bleymehl, Director of Library & Materials Research at the New York consultancy firm Material Connexion. The company, which has branches all over the world, has been

→



→ documenting the development of new materials and their effects on design since 1997. When asked about the qualities of wood, his verdict is short and simple: “It grows again and is a natural and well-known material.”



**“With the right assembly technique, wooden high-rises as tall as 1,000 metres are quite conceivable.”**

Wolfgang Winter, Technical University of Vienna

Today’s innovations are based on a rich treasure trove of experience. Wood’s bright future is founded on its illustrious past. No other material has played such a significant role in humankind’s cultural history. We are familiar with wood – and learning to trust it more and more.

The healthy indoor climate in wooden buildings is also beneficial to the climate outside. Forests and timber that are chopped down for building rather than firewood continue to store greenhouse gases. In other words, a

wooden building, viewed in the context of highly complex calculations – has fewer CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than a steel construction, as long as it stays standing for the same length of time.

“This view of the big picture, the ecological balance sheet, will have an increasing influence on the materials and aesthetics of our world”, says Bleymehl. “A lot of things that appear ecologically sound at first glance turn out to be shams. On the other hand, a lot of products that seem normal turn out to be much more ecological than one might think.” And here’s another safe bet: the world population will continue to grow. It crossed the seven-billion mark in 2011. As resources such as oil grow scarcer, prices for raw materials rise. Environmental renegades will find themselves squeezed out by the competition. “Companies that will still be around in 2025 are already taking these developments very seriously in 2011”, says Bleymehl. As the battle for scarce resources shapes up, it is concepts that spare the Earth’s resources that will win out. Chipboards and fibre boards are in the vanguard; manufacturing them gets almost twice as much out of a tree as solid wood cuts.

At the moment, however, construction laws in many countries make it difficult to realise wooden buildings in city centres. Asked why, the experienced structural engineer Wolfgang Winter, Professor at the Technical University of Vienna, cites historical and psychological grounds: “During the First and Second World Wars, Europe experienced large-scale fires which raged for days. This collective experience has resulted in a reflex reaction: in densely-populated areas, flammable materials such as wood are considered taboo to this day.” Technologically speaking, these fears are easily dispelled nowadays. Japan has also been through the trauma of large-scale fires and continues to build successfully with wood. Fire safety and wood are not necessarily a contradiction: by simply using thicker components, or reinforcing wooden columns with steel, or by using wooden construction materials treated with mineral binding agents, already in use in the construction of motorway

flyovers, wooden building components can withstand fire long enough for the emergency services to do their job. “All it takes is a change of thinking”, says Winter. He says nature produces well in advance and yields high-performance timbers with up to three times the density of spruce. Their impressive load-carrying characteristics and the world’s tallest building, the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, give Wolfgang Winter a bold idea: “Using these woods and the right assembly technique, along the lines of the Eiffel Tower, wooden high-rises as tall as 1,000 metres are quite conceivable.”

**Thanks to modern, high-performance computers, traditional construction methods are making a come-back**

Intricately-woven supporting structures, made, for example, of composite or laminated wood layers, already belong to some of the most sensational examples of new architecture, such as the buildings by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, the Centre Pompidou in the French city of Metz or the Haesley Nine Bridges Golf Club in Yeosu. Here, a woven trellis made of solid laminate woods covers a floor space of 36 by 72 metres, evoking associations with tree-tops. This construction style required not just huge computing performances in the planning stages but also technological advances in translating the data for the routers’ programming language. Each building component has its own individual shape, through the use of modern computer technology hundreds of unique and highly complex parts can be manufactured. This form of customised series production will change the face of architecture and design. Research by the Center for Information Technology and Architecture (CITA) in Copenhagen has already yielded evidence pointing in this direction. Interestingly, the latest developments do not result in the kind of abstract shapes usually associated with computerised aesthetics. “I see a trend towards a greater emphasis on the material itself”, says Martin Tamke, Associate Professor at the Institute, which is part of the Kunstakademiets Arkitektsskole. “In our eyes, the future



The world’s tallest wooden high-rise in the far north: the design for the 80-metre high Barents House, which the firm Reiulf Ramstad Architects plans to build with wood in the Norwegian town of Kirkenes.



- 1 Nine storeys in nine weeks: wooden high-rise by Waugh Thistleton Architects in London-Hackney.
- 2 Flexible friend: model of a computer-generated wooden construction by the Copenhagen-based Institute CITA.
- 3 Facing concrete in harmony with wood: the interior of the wooden high-rise built by Kaden and Klingbeil in Berlin.



→ will not be about forming a material to fulfil our own desires, rather the other way around: even in the early stages of design, we will be able to make precise predictions about the effects and qualities of the material.”



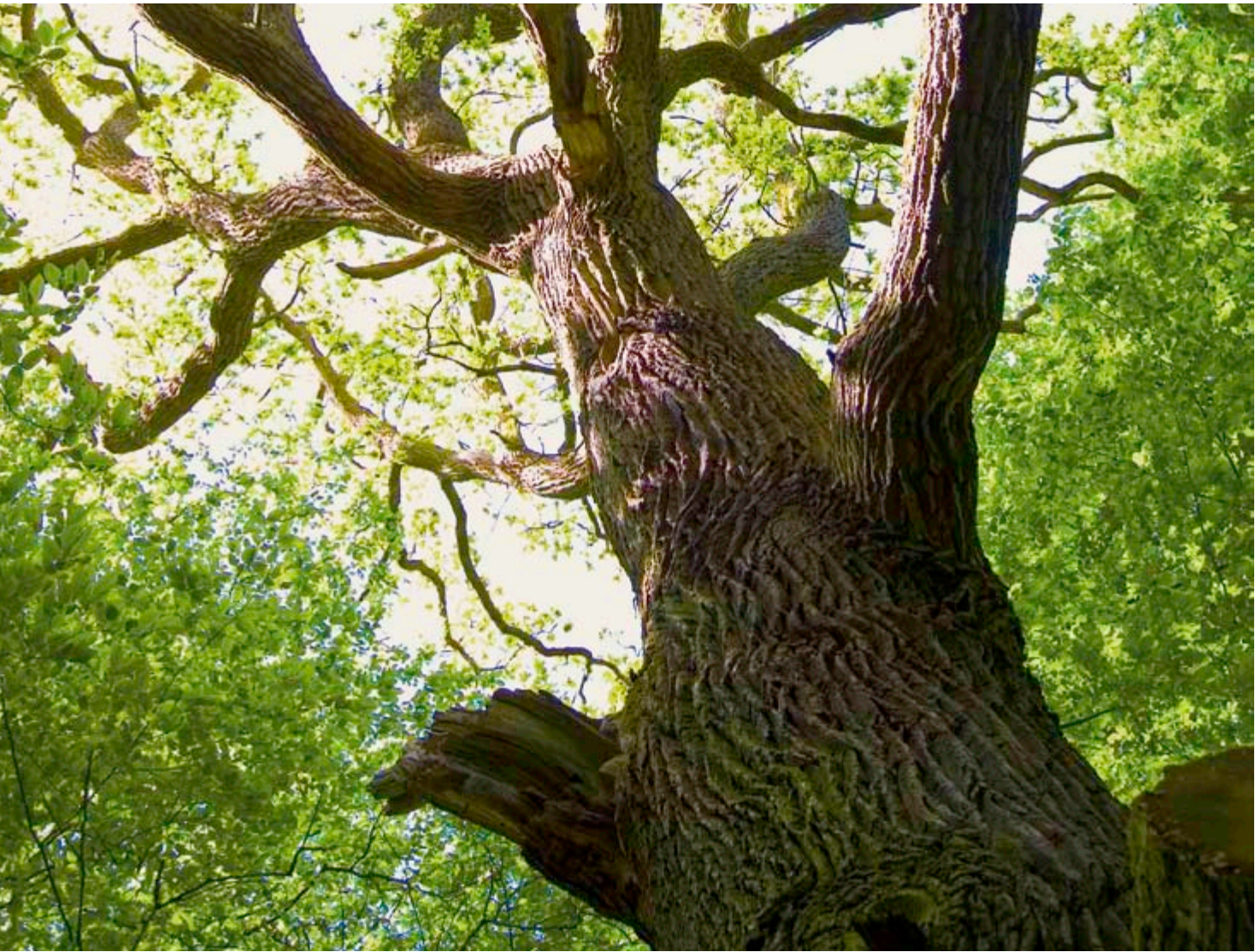
**“ The materials of the future must not just appeal to the eye, they must also appeal to other senses such as touch and hearing. ”**

**Martin Tamke**, CITA, Copenhagen

This new love of wood is also finding its expression in interior design. Designers are increasingly using this natural material to embellish other components such as facing concrete or glass. Wood is something that has grown, and boasts many natural and pleasant qualities. It is smooth, warm, and soft to the touch. It sounds good when tapped and many people appreciate its resinous scent. As a natural resource, it is genuine and unique – authenticity plays a central role in contemporary design. Even decorative materials have to offer more than just good appearances. What counts is the overall “performance”, as

Martin Tamke puts it. “The materials of the future must not just appeal to the eye, they must also appeal to other senses such as touch and hearing.” The ability of new materials to sound and feel right is just as important as their visual effect or cultural significance as a traditional construction material. Again, computer technology is opening up new horizons. The complete interaction between material, sound and spatial design can be simulated with increasing precision. The goal is to create “architectural atmospheres” that go beyond looking and feeling. Future-oriented materials appeal to the senses as well as fulfilling their functionality. The demands on them range from acoustic effectiveness, to high load-bearing capacity and ability to withstand fire. Furthermore, the carrying structure of the future must be harmless to both the environment and the individual’s health. “Sustainability and health are the big issues of the day”, says Bleymehl. Since they are made of reprocessed waste wood and old wood, chipboards, MDF and OSB are a perfect fit, especially taking into account developments in the fields of binding agents, which have drastically reduced pollution and emissions caused by wooden materials. There are increasingly strict environmental standards and regulations in place on leading markets such as Japan and the US.

Where will these developments take us? What will our cities, buildings and homes look like in the future? “In 2025, our choice of raw materials will be seriously restricted”, says Karsten Bleymehl. “Certain products simply will not be able to survive on the market. That is what will determine future design.” A reduction in the amount of materials used, sustainable thinking and health-consciousness will determine which manufacturers can stay in the game. It will be about mastering the art of omitting scarce resources, while gifting ourselves the experience of natural and lasting surroundings. Wood fulfils all the conditions in this regard. All it takes is a new way of thinking – but that’s also just a question of time.



# Wood is Growing Scarcer

Expectations are high when it comes to wood as a renewable raw material. At the same time, demand currently outstrips supply. Already, prices are on the rise. Manufacturers say politics are to blame.

BY Till Schröder

Wood is in. Oak is especially popular, both for furniture and floors. “There just aren’t enough oak forests to meet demand right now”, says Klaus Monhoff, chief designer at EGGER. Laminate floors with an oak veneer would be one alternative: the high-density fibre bases can be made from old wood and chippings. But there isn’t an endless supply of this raw material, either. Studies on wood as a resource show that if current political goals remain unchanged, there will be a drastic shortage of wood in ten years’ time. To meet their CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets by 2020, political leaders are banking on biomass as a source of energy.



## WOODWORK IN EUROPE

### FORM AND FUNCTION

Europe is banking on wood and building with wood. But the reasons for this are just as diverse as the local building traditions in different countries. In Sweden, for example, wooden houses have always been the norm – today, according to a recent study by the consultancy firm B+L, four out of five new houses are made of wood. In Austria, second in the table with 30.9 per cent wooden houses, the modern, sometimes avant-garde wooden buildings designed by the latest generation of architects are reminiscent of the virtuosity of traditional wooden buildings in Tyrol or Bregenzerwald. In 2010, about 15 percent of all new build-

ings in Europe were made of wood. And the curve is pointing upward. In general, two trends are emerging: In Western Europe, especially in countries with a long tradition of building with timber, wood as a building material stands for aesthetically demanding and ecologically aware construction, which gives house-builders and architects plenty of freedom to design as they wish. In many Eastern European countries, on the other hand – especially in Russia – wood as a building material is gradually drawing attention as a cost-efficient option for urgently needed housing construction.



→ And wood is considered the most plentiful biomass available. “To meet the targets for supplying renewable energy sources, the supply of wood would have to grow by 50% in the next twenty years”, says the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, the FAO. The FAO says that this policy requires an unprecedented mobilisation of all kinds of wood – and will result in “significant ecological, financial and institutional costs”.

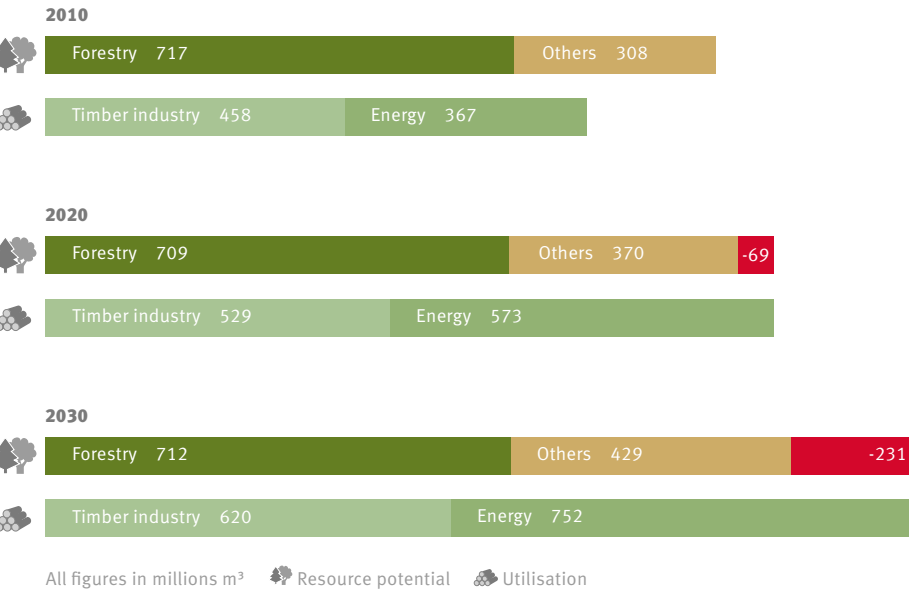
sions – and accelerate climate change.” The European Panel Federation (EPF) is critical of the policy of subsidising the use of wood for energy generation. EPF held a “biomass” action day in October 2010, calling on politicians and the public to abandon the policy of promoting wood as an energy source. They say the EEA’s doubts confirm their own scepticism. “We are in the crazy situation whereby the economic incentives to burn our most important raw material are damaging both the economy and the environment in the same measure”, says EPF president Laszlo Döry.

**Studies show that subsidising the use of wood as a source of energy causes the price of wood to rise faster.**

The wood-processing industry has been complaining of rising timber prices for some time now. The trend is set to con-

tinue in the future. This is confirmed by the results of the research project EFSOS 2 by the United Nations European Economic Commission and the FAO. Assuming a scenario in which the world population continues to grow until 2030 and politicians continue to seek local solutions, it says wood will continue to grow scarcer and more expensive. It finds that EU policies aimed at meeting ambitious climate goals, with the use of timber as an energy source at their core, will simply exacerbate this trend. “The price expectations reflect constantly rising costs throughout the entire forestry industry, driven by growing demand and supply shortages.” (see graphic below). The good news is that this leads to more economic use of the resource. This includes wood cascade chains: Plant first, then burn! That’s been a long-standing demand of manufacturers. Now, they are increasingly being supported by official institutions.

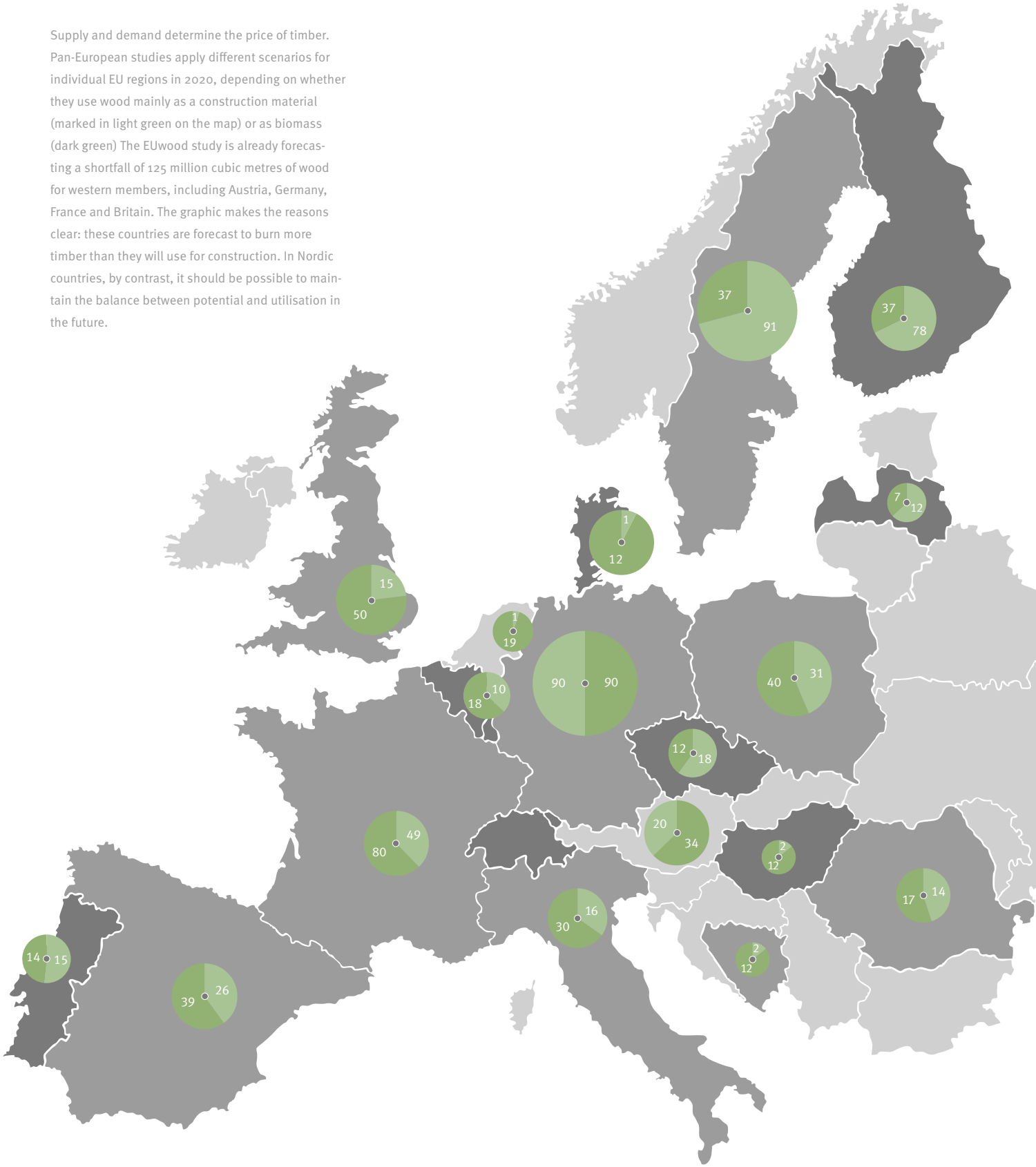
Potential and Demand in Europe



Source: Udo Mantau et. al. 2010 EUwood – Real potential for changes in growth and use of EU forests. Final Report. Hamburg, Germany.

Regional Differences in the Use of Wood

Supply and demand determine the price of timber. Pan-European studies apply different scenarios for individual EU regions in 2020, depending on whether they use wood mainly as a construction material (marked in light green on the map) or as biomass (dark green) The EUwood study is already forecasting a shortfall of 125 million cubic metres of wood for western members, including Austria, Germany, France and Britain. The graphic makes the reasons clear: these countries are forecast to burn more timber than they will use for construction. In Nordic countries, by contrast, it should be possible to maintain the balance between potential and utilisation in the future.

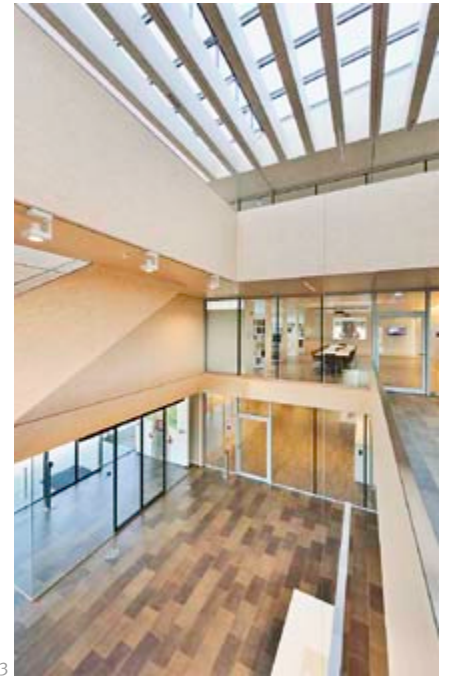


All figures in millions m³    🌲 Wood as a construction material    🍷 Wood as biomass  
Source: Udo Mantau et. al. 2010 EUwood – Real potential for changes in growth and use of EU forests. Final report. Hamburg, Germany.



# More than a Building

- 1 The office building in Radauti: built to the highest functional, aesthetic and environmental standards.
- 2 State-of-the-art workplaces for the employees.
- 3 The interior rooms are bright and spacious.
- 4 Wood plays a central role in the building's appearance.
- 5 The building received the German Gold Seal for sustainable construction.



It is an intriguing building. The new branch office of the EGGER family company in the Romanian town of Radauti is so flexible, versatile and innovative that it can be adapted to any location. It's the beginning of a tradition of sustainability.

BY Lilo Solcher

Bruno Moser pores over the outspread plans: large-scale plans for a large-scale project – a project that is somehow modest and unobtrusive at the same time. Just like Bruno Moser, the architect – a man with rugged features and a mischievous smile. Moser lives and works here in the mountains of Tirol. And it is here that his biggest project so far was born: the EGGER company's office building at its brand new plant in the Romanian town of Radauti. He is sitting with EGGER project manager Hannes Ehrensberger, two months after the completion of the construction work. They are both aware of what they, along with many others, have achieved: they have laid the foundations for EGGER's own original brand of architecture. "We wanted something that was unusual but not extravagant," says Hannes

Ehrensberger, in his usual friendly but firm manner. He is someone who chooses his words carefully. "We wanted this building to express our philosophy." One of the guiding principles of this innovative family business is more topical than ever – "Working and living with wood" – a motto reflected by the office building constructed in the Romanian town of Radauti.

**A building that is versatile and flexible, ecologically sustainable and constructed almost exclusively with EGGER products.**

To understand why Bruno Moser won the contract, all it takes is a visit to the offices and living quarters of his architecture workshop in the village of Breitenbach. With its shingle cladding,

the building blends in with the Alpine architecture of the local village while retaining its own individual character. The expansive windows allow a clear view of the mountains and generate a sense of light inside. The building in Radauti was an unusual challenge for Moser. His job was to design a modular kind of building, constructed almost exclusively with EGGER products, that could also be replicated at other EGGER locations. In other words, he was to design an EGGER brand of architecture. On the one hand, it was to be a well-built house, versatile and flexible, ecologically sustainable, of a high and durable quality. And on the other hand, it was to have a symbolic quality, built with the boards that make up EGGER's core business. The architect created a 1:1 model in St. Johann to illustrate what he had in

mind. With Hannes Ehrensberger as project manager, Moser then turned the plan into reality in Radauti. And it is no mean feat. The façade of the office building is reminiscent of a chessboard, with fascinating contrasts despite the uniformity of the materials. The copper sheeting allows light into the rooms behind it while providing shade from the sun at the same time. "Over time, the copper will acquire its characteristic green patina, which will allow it to blend even better with the local surroundings and the wooden materials" says Moser.

The three main dimensions of the building, the floor plan, the height of the rooms and the elevation were determined by the size of the largest EGGER OSB boards (11.40 x 2.80 metres).





→ Ehrensberger lists off the OSB board’s virtues: stable in form, durable and resilient, almost completely free of pollutants and visually distinctive. The chessboard look was made possible by turning single modules 180 degrees. The high level of prefabrication posed a logistical challenge to the general con-

tilation and the waste heat from the adjacent chipboard plant is used to heat it.

On the request of the client in Tirol, the building was certified by the “Österreichische Gesellschaft für nachhaltige Immobilienwirtschaft (Austrian Society for Sustainable Real Estate Business). “We were aiming for the highest level” says Ehrensberger, “The Gold Seal”. Everyone was confident of success but when the news finally arrived, there were scenes of jubilation. “The Gold Seal is a rare award”, says Ehrensberger. As a rule, all EGGER products are EPD-certified (Environmental Product Declaration). Here, too, ecological impact plays a major role. EGGER uses raw timber from sustainable forestry only, preferably as close to the production plant as possible, to avoid long distance transportation. The company makes its products using only thinning wood, high-quality residual wood from saw mills and recycling wood. These self-imposed environmental standards also apply to the office building in Romania. Hence, the building in Radauti is a genuine model of what can be done with EGGER products – right up to the platinum-white laminated furniture, which the company also produced itself.

Constructing the office using OSB boards throughout was a major challenge for Bruno Moser, but it also yielded a high level of flexibility inside the building – and that was exactly what EGGER was aiming to achieve. Work has begun on the new EGGER technology centre in St. Pölten in Lower Austria. The system used in the office building in Radauti can be adapted for the purpose, without changing its exterior. Only the interior will have to be amended. “The best mark of approval is that the company continues to work with the construction system”, says Hannes Ehrensberger. It may sound modest but these are words of high praise. For it is the beginning of a new EGGER tradition.

“ We were aiming for the highest level, the Gold Seal. When the news arrived, there were scenes of jubilation. ”

Hannes Ehrensberger, Projektleiter

tractor, Holzbau Saurer. All heating and cooling elements were pre-installed, most of the technical equipment was also built into the construction elements, and the entire electrical cable system was also complete. It took 86 truckloads to deliver the prefabricated elements from Tirol to Radauti ‘just in time’. The homogeneity of the materials was important to EGGER, and new to the architect. “Everything in Radauti was practically made of the same material”, says Moser, namely OSB. The building is invitingly bright, flooded as it is with light. All the interior surfaces have glossy white finishes, while retaining the characteristic OSB texture. The inventive system by which the modules were stacked and staggered creates an interplay between the transparent and solid parts of the building. The light varies from module to module, yet there is always enough lighting everywhere. The patterns of light and shade are particularly fascinating in the foyer, which is three storeys high.

**A constructed philosophy and an invaluable opportunity to get a glimpse of the future.**

The entire building, which encompasses 3878.9 square metres of floor space, was designed with ecological sustainability in mind and consists of numerous passive house components. The walls and ceilings are well insulated and all the doors and windows in the building are triple-glazed. The office building is fitted with automatic heat recovery ven-



1 The offices are fitted exclusively with EGGER products . 2 Happy days: the architect Bruno Moser (right) and EGGER project manager Hannes Ehrensberger. 3 The new technology centre in Unterradlberg: you can tell by the exterior alone that it is has much in common with the plant in Radauti.



GOLD

GREEN BUILDING CERTIFICATION

The office building in Radauti received the ÖGNI/DGNB Gold Seal for sustainable construction. The certification comprises 60 criteria from areas such as ecology, economy, social aspects, technology, processes and location and requires the applicant to supply detailed specifications. At 84%, the level of compliance was outstanding.





# E\_SOLUTIONS

“Older clients prefer to use a drawing board, they lack experience with digital surfaces. Younger clients, on the other hand, are fascinated by the playful opportunities offered by the Virtual Design Studio.”

Michael Senft, Master Cabinet Maker  
Chipboards and Motherboards (Pages 32 to 35)

## The EGGER Team

### LUDGER MEINERT

Marketing and Sample Shop, Brilon

Four or five times a week, Ludger Meinert explains the production system in Brilon, Germany, to visiting guests. Even at his first job interview 20 years ago, it was already clear to both sides that this talkative industrial manager has a way with people. He is one of the originals, having been on EGGER'S German sales team before the plant was even opened. Back then, their desks were housed in a three-room apartment in Gütersloh, about 75 kilometres from Brilon. Today, he is also responsible for the samples store. Every day, 400 to 600 A4 samples are sent out to architects, joiners and industrial companies. “EGGER has grown a lot”, he says, “but the atmosphere remains familiar. And my friendly dealings with the owners and the plant managers give me added motivation.”



### EMIL GHEORGHE

Production Manager, Radauti

The technology in the new plant in his native Radauti has even come to the attention of Emil Gheorghe's friends and acquaintances in Bucharest. He lives and breathes for modern technology, which is why he applied to work for EGGER four years ago. Once he had been introduced to the job, he started setting up the production system and the production team for laminated boards. They fed the first board into the press by hand. “It was one of the most moving moments so far.” Today, production is in full swing. Yet the atmosphere remains pleasant and friendly.”

### ALISON BIRD

Risk Management, Hexham

Alison Bird was just a teenager when she applied for a job as junior office clerk 35 years ago. Back then, the chipboard plant in Hexham was still called Weyroc Limited. In 1984, EGGER took over the plant and expanded production. Today, Alison is responsible for risk management there: she negotiates credit default swaps, which protect EGGER against client defaults. These raw realities are part of her daily working life. “The financial climate is not great,” she says. All the more reason for the mother-of-two to be thankful for the “Work-Life-Balance” at EGGER. Alison is involved in the in-house project “Healthy business, healthy people” and advises her colleagues about retirement and pension policies.







THE FACTORY IN SANKT JOHANN

# Back to our Roots

Awe-inspiring view: the jagged rock formations of the ‘Wilder Kaiser’ mountain range, seen from the EGGER factory, loom into the alpine sky. E\_ SOLUTIONS

At 10 p.m. on 18 December 1961, the first chipboard was pressed at the foot of the ‘Wilder Kaiser’. MORE took a stroll down memory lane to where it all began, and met some of the people who helped to make EGGER what it is today.

BY Clemens Niedenthal

Admittedly, success cannot be measured in batches. But what if all the wood that is chipped, compressed and glued at the foot of the ‘Wilder Kaiser’ in the space of five days were to be simply stacked up towards the Tyrolean sky? The resulting tower would correspond exactly to the total output in 1962, the first full production year in the history of EGGER, and the first year of chipboard production in St. Johann in Tyrol. And that alone tells quite a story. For every one of its fifty years in existence, the EGGER parent factory alone has grown by a hundred and fifty percent of its original capacity. It’s a mark of productivity: last year, it turned out 349,000 cubic metres of coated chipboard.

But success cannot be measured in batches. Success begins with an idea. And back then, the idea appeared audacious. A chipboard factory, in the Tyrolean mountains of all places. At the foot of the ‘Wilder Kaiser’, which the post-war economic recovery had transformed into a thriving tourist resort, with the majestic rock formations of the mountain range and its picturesque Alpine towns and villages. It was a down-to-earth, ‘hands-on’, Catholic country.

In the summer of 1961, Fritz Egger had the old family saw mill torn down. A few months later, at 10 p.m. on 18 December, he produced his first chipboard at the very same spot. 3.50 metres long, 1.75 metres wide, it was the first standard size for a material that has long since become a modern-day standard in itself. Indeed, Fritz Egger may well have seen modern times coming long before some of his contemporaries in cities such as Vienna, Frankfurt,

Munich or Berlin, widely seen as centres of modernity. Chipboard – invented in 1932 by Max Himmelheber, and already enjoying a certain popularity thanks to the scarcity of timber after the war – was soon to make its material mark on our day-to-day lives. It would also make its mark on our vocabulary, giving rise to new terms such as ‘fitted kitchens’

***“ Fitted kitchens and fitted wall units – without chipboard, both would be unthinkable. ”***

and ‘fitted wall units’, just two modern-day furniture concepts which would be almost unthinkable without this light and easily-worked wood material.

Back in 1961, Manfred Dittrich was living in Springe, near Hanover. A young mechanical engineer, fresh out of university, his original task was merely to oversee the fitting of the machines for Fritz Egger senior. He was to be on hand when the press and the drier were put into service ... just in case. 50 years later, his own house stands right next door to the Eggers’ old farmyard, which Fritz Egger continues to operate. But what kind of a brainwave would attract a 24-year-old engineer from the lowlands of northern Germany to the mountains of Tyrol? What could possibly evoke such unbridled confidence in a single person, in a single idea, a single product? Manfred Dittrich →





**1** The green, green fields of home: the 240,000 square-metre factory complex in St. Johann.

**2** Making chipboard: the daily routine in the 1960s. **3** Where it all began: the chipboard factory in the summer of 1962. This first reinforced concrete hall remains a part of the production plant. **4** Visionary: the founder of the factory, Fritz Egger senior.

→ had been to St. Johann for the first time on 4 October 1961. On 8 December Fritz Egger senior offered him the job of plant manager. The original candidate, a technocrat in a white coat, had turned out to be downright incompetent – in his dealings with both man and material.

high, Fritz Egger and I would have to beg the people to come to their shift in the factory. They were all so busy in the fields.”

**There are a good 900 people employed here today, compared to 28 when Fritz Egger senior started out in 1961.**

The hay harvest is a family matter in the mountains of Tyrol. And perhaps because the Eggers came from a farming family, their factory has become something of a family itself. Names, for example, play an important role in this part of the world. “The person responsible for order and cleanliness in this area is: Peter Grieshuber”. The name is written in white letters on a red background on the new drier. And there are signs like this all over the factory complex, which now covers an area equivalent to some 100 football pitches. That way, you know who you’re dealing with. And there are plenty of people to deal with at EGGER’s parent factory. There are a good 900 people employed

here today, compared to 28 when Fritz Egger senior started out in 1961.

The product itself, the chipboard, wasn’t the only novelty for the people from St. Johann and the surrounding villages, who began to take jobs at EGGER in growing numbers. They were also new to industrial production, this minutely co-ordinated series of working processes. “After two or three years, everything had found its rhythm,” says plant manager Dittrich, “and we were very lucky with the people we hired back then – although it’s also partly down to the fact that we always paid a fair wage.” As Manfred Dittrich delves into the past, he makes sweeping gestures with his still sturdy hands, illustrating the sheer scale of the undertaking back then.

All the experiments, all the decisions, the constant expansion. They say a person grows with their responsibilities. And Manfred Dittrich is big enough to admire the achievements of his successor. “Nice work”, says the Lower Saxon

with a pat on the back for the new plant manager, the dyed-in-the-wool Tyrolean, Albert Berkthold. Keeping a company like this on the move down through the years and decades, and constantly adapting it to new conditions, is like a relay race. And one of the key moments is when the baton is passed on.

**EGGER has also been an energy supplier since 2008 – and the plant in St. Johann a highly-efficient combined heat and power plant.**

There’s a notice on the board inviting EGGER staff to join the factory running club. There are running clubs in nearly all 15 EGGER factories, founded by the staff. For every employee who starts a public race, for every kilometre completed, EGGER donates a sum to a charity based near the respective factory. Judging by the look of the staff at the plant in St. Johann, there are lots of athletes here. Or are these wiry people simply a product of the Tyrolean lifestyle and the crisp mountain air? During the winter, which can be pleas-

antly long in the Kitzbühel Alps, many of them go skiing after work.

Bruno Reiter was fifteen years old when he joined EGGER as an apprentice in the factory metalworking shop. That was thirty-five years ago now. And Bruno Reiter still remembers the time when he would have to explain to friends or relatives “why I started working in that factory”. An industrial complex like this leaves its mark on a landscape, especially on a landscape in which many families earn at least some of their living from tourism. “It all changed for the good in the 1990s”, recalls Reiter, “people here no longer regard us as the factory with the big chimney, rather as a modern, future-orientated company. We have so many trained chefs and waiters working here that we could open our own hotel tomorrow.”

In a way, Bruno Reiter and his factory went down the same road together. Once an apprentice metalworker, today he is head of quality management for the entire EGGER group. But he still

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**“ During the hay harvest we would beg the men to come to work. They were all so busy in the fields.”**

**Manfred Dittrich**, technical overall coordinator, retired.

“Our first employees were the second or third sons of farmers, untrained workers, there was really no such thing as a chipboard maker back then, not to mention wood technicians, as the profession would later be called”, recalls Dittrich, “In late summer, when the weather was fine and the grass



new high-performance drier, a huge facility, the most efficient of its kind in Europe. It was he who supervised the production line for the EUROLIGHT range, a highly functional and extremely lightweight building board, made of a robust honeycomb core sandwiched by two thin layers of chipboard. It's a



**“ Sustainable production means the optimum use of wood in a recycling economy. ”**

Albert Berkoldt, Werksleiter

highly sustainable product: not only is its weight reduced to a minimum; so, too, is the amount of wood and paper used in its making. But above all, Albert Berkoldt led the factory down a path that, at first glance, is a far cry from the real business of the family company: since September 2008, EGGER is also an energy provider – and the parent factory on the banks of the Kitzbüheler Ache a combined heat and power plant. It was a prominent energy and environment project that has drawn attention far beyond the borders of Austria.

**EGGER has continued to invest in technologies of the future in St. Johann in recent years.**

It may sound strange, but the idea is simple, and merely takes the chipboard to its logical conclusion. Based on the principle that what makes chipboard production sustainable is the fact that it uses every bit of a tree, and not just the choice cuts, EGGER looked for a way to make sure that the heat generated by the production process does not go to waste either. Hence, since September 2008, the waste heat from the high-performance drier has been supplying a district heating network in St. Johann. With 32 kilometres of pipelines, the network now supplies about 1,300 households and businesses with heat. “Optimum use of wood in a recycling economy” is how Albert Berkoldt puts it. But a simple idea can require a

highly complex solution. In this case, it took an ultra-modern flue gas purification system, a biomass boiler, and the large investments that go with them.

But EGGER is no stranger to investing in the future. Back in 1963, Fritz Egger was faced with suppliers who were unable to deliver. He decided almost overnight to invest in his own glue factory, which he kept operating for a couple of years. To the annoyance of his two sons, Michael and Fritz, as Manfred Dittrich recalls: “Cleaning the gluing drum was real convict labour but old Egger made no exceptions, everybody had to do their turn.” That's the EGGER family for you, getting every employee involved. The family and the factory grow together, like a tree. Year on year, nature draws its rings in the tree trunk. The plant, too, has grown concentrically: the old factory hall from 1961 is still standing in St. Johann, surrounded by ever newer buildings. In the last decade, EGGER has invested a nine-digit sum in the parent factory alone.

Here, at the parent plant in St. Johann, you can feel the sense of energy and innovation, the confidence that comes from being deeply rooted. Presumably, muses Albert Berkoldt, nobody would build a factory like this nowadays, with all the infrastructure and transport needs that go with it, in an Alpine valley far away from the nearest motorway – but without such a setting, it's pretty certain that this story would never have happened either.

→ prefers to call himself the “chipboard man”. Résumés like Bruno Reiter's are typical for a company that has always captivated its people. A company based on the conviction that ultimately, it is these people and only these people who can take the company further. That was the thinking of Fritz Egger senior, the pioneer, who was to die in an accident during the planning phase for a new, third factory. It is also the thinking of his two sons, Fritz and Michael. And it is the thinking of the three current managers, Thomas Leissing, Ulrich Bühler and Walter Schiegl.

Albert Berkoldt practically grew up with EGGER. Today, he is plant manager in the parent factory St. Johann and – in another capacity – director of production and technology for the EGGER factories in West Austria. It was he who oversaw the introduction of the



**1** In 2006 in St. Johann, EGGER started operating the world's first industrial production plant for manufacturing lightweight building boards with a honeycomb core, made of recycled cellulose. **2** Hot off the press: the pulp, known informally as the 'cake', on its way to the Controll press. **3** Quality control: a critical eye is cast over every board before it leaves the factory. **4** Short cycles hot press machines have been part of normal production at the plant since 1975. **5** The impregnation plant for sealing decor paper.







Nature and technology: the flue gas cleaning plant against the backdrop of the Kaisergebirge.

#### THE EGGER STORY

##### THE FACTORY IN SANKT JOHANN

- 1961** The first chipboard is produced at 10 p.m. on 18 December.
- 1962** Daily output in St. Johann is 30 cubic metres.
- 1963** In-house glue factory goes into operation (for a couple of years). That same year, the first veneering machine also goes into operation.
- 1973** A fire destroys much of the plant on 29 November. Even while the fire is still raging, Fritz Egger senior orders a new chipboard press.
- 1982** Fritz Egger senior is killed in a car crash. His three sons, Edmund, Fritz and Michael Egger follow in their father's footsteps.
- 1988** The first ContiRoll press goes into operation.
- 1992** EGGER adopts a new form of flue gas purification. It is the world's first wet electro filter to be used in the timber industry.
- 1993** The waste heat from the washing water is used to heat the public swimming pool in St. Johann.
- 1994** EGGER starts manufacturing furniture parts.
- 1995** EGGER starts manufacturing laminates, further expanding its product range.
- 1996** Edmund Egger dies in a planecrash.
- 2006** Launch of production of EUROLIGHT® lightweight building boards in St. Johann.
- 2010** Completion of St. Johann energy and environment project: the flue gas drier supplies 450 households with heating energy.
- 2011** EGGER celebrates its 50th anniversary.



# Chipboards and Motherboards

EGGER'S Virtual Design Studio (VDS) is more than just a tool for visualising the company's decors. HolzForum and the kitchen manufacturer ewe are already banking on this entirely new way of planning and presenting.

BY Clemens Niedenthal

The HolzForum (Wood Forum) features a samples room, where breath-taking finished surfaces made of solid timber or veneers wrap themselves around the visitor like magical ribbons. It's a kind of pantheon to a wonderful material that aims to inspire people to create "high-quality interiors".

This "wood experience" is the brain-child of the Munich-based timber merchant Klöpfer, a family firm dating back to 1890. The company has more than 16,000 clients on its books. Michael Senft's furniture workshop in Munich-Haar is one of them. But above all, it is also one of about 1,200 Klöpferholz-certified members of the "Netzwerk Holz" (Wood Network). Certified member means that Michael Senft has





1 & 2 Master cabinet maker Michael Senft uses the inspiring working ambience at Klöpferholz to advise his clients. 3 VDS in the ewe showrooms at Pasching, near Linz.



→ proven his woodworking expertise in a series of specialised training courses and, especially, by making excellent products. And certified member also means that the master cabinet maker is entitled to use the infrastructure of the Munich-based HolzForum. Given the increasing digitisation of working processes – especially in the trades and crafts – the HolzForum decided to integrate the Virtual Design Studio (VDS) launched by EGGER last year.

**Both EGGER and Klöpferholz are investing in the future with innovations that go above and beyond their core businesses**



Since the spring of 2011, craftsmen such as Michael Senft can almost literally paint pictures of their “fine furniture” on the walls in the form of virtual projections. “Older clients prefer to use a drawing board, they lack experience with digital surfaces. Younger clients, on the other hand, are fascinated by the playful opportunities offered by the Virtual Design Studio. You can try out this colour or that colour, this decor or that decor and suddenly you realise: that’s the one for me.”

EGGER developed the Virtual Design Studio and Klöpferholz invests in the tradesmen’s community association – two company policies that stem from the same idea. With innovations and investments that go above and beyond their core businesses, both EGGER and Klöpferholz are reaching for the future of their industries: fittingly, this development comes in digital form – for cabinet makers and furniture manufacturers have long since turned to digital design programs. More than 30 VDS-HD systems have already been sold around the world. The system has received numerous rewards, most recently the

German Design Prize 2012. VDS has set the bar high and is well on the way to becoming the industry standard.

Michael Senft also knows that the future of his five-man operation depends on its ability to “present convincing individual solutions. People who come to us do so because they want something special. It would be a fatal error to try to compete with the standard solutions to be found in furniture stores.” So what are Senft’s expectations of the Virtual Design Studio? “I expect the technology to function as a kind of mediator between craftsman and client, and I expect the customer to be able to visualise what is ultimately going to be fitted in his living room.”

Günter Schwarzmüller takes a similar view. He is marketing director of the Austrian kitchen manufacturer ewe, which markets high-quality, customised fitted kitchens under the brands ewe, FM and Intuo. In “batch numbers of one”, as Schwarzmüller is keen to emphasise. In other words, each kitchen is built individually once the order is placed. That saves storage costs

but also rules out economies of scale through mass production. Variability, individuality, even a certain extravagance, these are ewe’s selling points.

**Taking digitisation a step further, entire kitchens could soon be presented as virtual projections.**

Like HolzForum, ewe was one of the first companies to opt for an investment in the Virtual Design Studio – and added the digital visualisation tool to its new showroom in Pasching, near Linz, which it inaugurated in May this year.

From the beginning, the approach has been to use an open system that illustrates not only the EGGER decors but also those on offer for kitchens manufactured by ewe, FM and Intuo. The exclusive natural stone worktops were also specially digitised for the purpose. The Virtual Design Studio in the showrooms in Pasching ideally complement the two dozen fitted kitchens on display. In future, however, says Schwarzmüller, kitchen showrooms may be replaced entirely with applications based on the VDS for modern computers such as tablets. “Take a look at one of our typical business partners,

future: “We no longer accept any new decors for our product range if they are not also available in the form of digital files.” It seems only a matter of time before digital presentation processes turn into digital production processes. “With the Virtual Design Studio as a basis, our aim is to bring together visualisation and production,” says EGGER marketing director Hubert Höglauer.

The first technological hurdles have already been cleared. A digital printing facility is going into operation at the EGGER base in Brilon. All 1,100 available EGGER decors are already in digital storage: each one has a digital doppelgänger, a scanned, 150-gigabyte decor file. And some day, probably sooner rather than later, these images will be printed on a grand scale: straight from the computer onto the chipboard.



**“With the Virtual Design Studio as a basis, our aim is to bring together visualisation and production.”**

Hubert Höglauer, Marketing Director of the EGGER Group

for example a cabinet maker who only has room for one or two show kitchens in his workshop. If we think through the opportunities offered by digitisation, some day he could put all our kitchens on virtual show at once.” That, says Schwarzmüller, is why the company is trying to anticipate the digital

VIRTUAL DESIGN STUDIO

INSPIRING SOLUTIONS

This year, acting on the wishes of numerous retail and industry clients, EGGER launched its Virtual Design Studio (VDS) in a range of versions. With its 40-inch touch screen, the VDS-HD is predestined for use in showrooms. VDS LIVE, on the other hand, uses two video projector equipped with wide-angle lenses to project decors onto a kitchen cabinet. The version with the Mixed Reality Interface virtually presents decors that the user can also feel at the same time. EGGER explains more about the VDS on the Internet at: [www.egger.com/vds](http://www.egger.com/vds)

OPEN SYSTEM

Each VDS version is an open system that can be customised as required. It can also portray decors and materials that do not come from EGGER. And users can upload their own architectural and furniture designs to the VDS-HD system.

OPTIMISED PROCESSES

The Virtual Design Studio is a building block in the company’s digital strategy, as summarised by the motto “Think without Limits”. Accordingly, the EGGER plant at Brilon has put an innovative multi-pass printing system into operation. Thanks to its width of 207 centimetres, this digital printer can cover all the standard sizes in chipboard production.

AWARD-WINNING

The German Design Council awarded the Virtual Design Studio the renowned “German Design Prize” in silver. It’s the latest in a series of prestigious awards. In 2010, the VDS received the “iF communication design award” in gold, one of Europe’s most important design prizes. Furthermore, the jury of the prestigious “red dot award” presented the visualisation system with the “communication design award 2010”.



# On the road with EGGER

A spectacular showroom on wheels on a European tour. Wherever it stops, customers can experience the entire EGGER product range.

## MEET THE RESOURCE

Wood, the central theme of the EGGER philosophy, MORE FROM WOOD, is also the starting point of the exhibition. Viewers get to know the raw material and experience for themselves the main species of wood along with chipping and strands, the basic ingredients of OSB boards.

## SUSTAINABILITY YOU CAN TOUCH

From forestry work through manufacturing and recycling to the conversion of waste heat into energy in biomass power plants: EGGER's use of raw materials forms an efficient, sustainable material cycle. Its various stages are illustrated using Augmented Reality Technology. The viewer holds a board up to the camera and the system demonstrates the processes in the individual stages of the cycle.

## VIRTUAL TOUR OF EGGER HOUSES

Users control their tour through the EGGER house via Mixed Reality Interface (MRI), which involves moving a figure around the construction plan on the terminal in front of them. Visitors can activate construction details and find out how and where the different materials are used in the building of a house.

## SAMPLE WITH SPATIAL EFFECT

VDS LIFE projects the decor of the visitor's choice from the FLOORLINE® collection onto the floor. At the same time, the visitor can hold or touch the real thing and feel its texture. It's all made possible by a Mixed Reality Interface (MRI). The interface recognises the decor sample selected by the visitor and simulates the corresponding spatial effect on the floor.

## DESIGN STUDIO WITH MRI TECHNOLOGY

Try out different decor simply by pointing your finger – it's easy with the Virtual Design Studio (VDS). This visualisation system uses a 70-inch screen and a Mixed Reality Interface (MRI), which integrates the real samples, which the viewer can hold or touch, into the virtual display. The system turns customers into designers who can experiment and play with their ideas and motifs.

## THE GALLERY OF REAL SAMPLES

A comprehensive sample show on the wall of the exhibition introduces the visitor to the colours of the current decor collection and the latest trends. The seminar room offers an attractive setting for dealers to tell their customers more about the EGGER product range and philosophy in conjunction with the Virtual Design Studio.

## ON TOUR



The mission: "Discover the World of EGGER". 17 stops in six weeks, with more than 1,300 visitors – in the Czech Republic and Slovakia alone. "People are astonished", says driver Thomas Brenner. His company specialises in exhibitions on wheels, but "I've never come across such interest before." The tour set off from the Ukrainian capital Kiev in March, going through Belarus,

Poland, Romania and Hungary. By the end of 2011, more than 6,000 visitors had seen the truck. Sometimes the schedule involved a show a day, for trade fairs or specialist dealers who stock EGGER products. Their customers, cabinet makers and architects, can experience the current collection and the philosophy behind it in one compact product range.

## EXHIBITION & SEMINARS



The team needs three hours to set up the truck. Then EGGER staff guide visitors around the exhibition, which begins in a forest setting with birdsong. Tree trunks of various species introduce the topic of timber. The next part of the tour is about the EGGER philosophy, demonstrated through the latest in media technology, such as Augmented Reality and Mixed Reality Interfaces.

The bright winter garden with 70-inch screen and decor exhibition can accommodate up to twenty seminar participants. The road show started out in Eastern Europe and heads for Central and Southern Europe in 2012. The EGGER Web site has a special page devoted to the truck, the tour and contact data for event enquiries:

[www.egger.com/roadshow](http://www.egger.com/roadshow)



# E\_NATURE

“I know that planting trees alone will not be enough to stop climate change. But by planting trees, we children are taking action, doing something together to sustain our future.”

Felix Finkbeiner, 14  
Stop talking and start planting! (Pages 46 to 49)

## Sustainable living

### WOODEN TREASURES UNDER WATER

[www.stauseeholz.de](http://www.stauseeholz.de)

Some like it exotic, for example, Purpleheart, red Cabbage Tree or the dark red Bauhinia Bolle Tree. But their import is banned, to protect their native forests from illegal felling. Underwater forests are a different matter – such as the one at the bottom of the Dr. Blommestein Reservoir in Suriname, a body of water three times as large as Lake Constance. The virgin forest was left intact when the dam was flooded in 1974. The underwater treasure trove is estimated at about 10 million cubic metres of timber, that’s about 500,000 truck-loads. These mature woods are some of the most precious in the world. Their stability and durability make them ideal for fine garden furniture. And there’s no problem getting them certified for environmental compatibility.



### NEW FOREST THE SIZE OF ITALY

[www.iamo.de/china-international-research-group](http://www.iamo.de/china-international-research-group)

In most countries, forests are gradually disappearing: in China, they are spreading. A massive reforestation program was launched after devastating floods in the late nineteen nineties, but it also has a commercial purpose. The aim was to plant trees over an area of 320,000 square kilometres by 2010. To give an impression of the scale of the project: Italy is just over 300,000 square kilometres in size. “About 90% of the target area has been reforested”, says scientist Jens Frayer, who monitors the project. Most of the trees are alder for timber production, and walnut trees. The forests are managed by local farmers, who received compensation for changing the way they use their land under the Sloping Land Conversion Program (SLCP) – and help China maintain valuable wood resources.



### THE OLDEST WITNESSES

[www.emg.umu.se](http://www.emg.umu.se)

They say that if something is to survive, it must keep changing with the times. The same goes for the world’s oldest tree, a spruce in Sweden that is more than 9,500 years old. Its genetic make-up is identical with that of older branches and cones in the earth beneath it. The tree has survived because its deepest branches continue to put down new roots. “It has constantly been cloning itself”, says Peter Rosen. Rosen studies diatoms, which can yield information on the climate 5,000 years ago. “But the spruce is the oldest witness, and tells us that the world was two or three degrees Celsius warmer 10,000 years ago than it is now.”







A CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL EGGER

# Deep Down Inside

When taking strategic decisions Michael Egger puts his faith in common sense and his gut feeling.

When Fritz Egger senior pressed his first chipboard, his sons were still teenagers: Michael Egger and his brother Fritz learned the business of manufacturing wood-based materials from an early age. And they take the strategic decisions at EGGER to this day. MORE spoke with Michael Egger about company management, family spirit and the challenges of the future.

INTERVIEW Jens Lohwieser, Till Schröder

The door opens at four o'clock sharp, and out comes a handsome man, accompanied by his dog, a Rhodesian Ridgeback: Michael Egger greets everyone with a smile and a handshake. "Am I late?" No, we were early. "Punctuality is a core value for me and our company, you know." We sit down at a wooden table and the conversation begins.

**MORE: From your office, you have a spectacular view of the Tyrolean Alps. Have you a close bond with nature?**

Michael Egger: When you grow up here, nature is all around you. Everyone here has huge respect for it. To me, it is a

great privilege to be able to live in a landscape like this.

**MORE: When you were a child, did you go walking in the woods with your father a lot?**

Michael Egger: Not really. There was never time. But father used to show us around the saw mill, and later the chipboard factory. That was fun. He used to do things like sitting us up on the Caterpillar or the wood piles. That's how I came to be close to wood.

**MORE: Was the natural beauty of your home country an important factor in your decision to adopt**

**environmental protection and sustainability as guiding principles of your company early on?**

Michael Egger: We think very hard about how to make the best possible use of our raw materials. For a company, there is always a commercial aspect to sustainability. For example, as far back as 1992, we spent 100 million Austrian shillings on the flue gas purification system. At the time, there was no such thing as a filter system like that in the entire machine industry, so we had to develop it ourselves. And we took environmental considerations into account. Now, we use the waste heat, too. Since 2008, we have been supplying

practically all of St. Johann with district heating. Every one of our big factories has its own flue gas purification system and its own biomass power plant.

**MORE: In 1961, your father, Fritz Egger, tore down a saw mill that was going well and invested in an entirely new technology. Today, he is considered a visionary. How was he regarded back then?**

Michael Egger: At first, people laughed at my father. There were nine other chipboard factories in Austria and they all had better financial resources. He had just 50,000 deutschmarks. But he also had the right touch and his

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→ vision – nothing could deter him. When he was turned down by the big machine-builders, the Bison company eventually built him his first press. It was for boards measuring 1.85 x 3.50 metres. Today, that would count as a large laboratory press at best. But it still had a daily capacity of 28.4 cubic metres. That was a whole truckload.

“ *The boss is not the centre of the company universe. Everyone at our company is important, from the cleaning lady to the engineer. That’s what makes the family spirit of this company.* ”

Michael Egger

We thought it would be impossible to sell that much in tiny Austria. Today, we sell 800 truckloads a day. That makes the beginnings look modest but anyone who experienced those times also developed an appreciation of the product.

**MORE: We spoke earlier about punctuality. Values and quality play an important role in your company philosophy. Do these things change with time?**

Michael Egger: No, the core values remain. For example, back when I was a small boy, the working boots nearly weighed more than I did. When we loaded up a truck and climbed aboard to strap up the load, we used to take off our boots so as not to damage the boards. That way we learned to have great respect for the product. And I still can’t abide anyone climbing over a pallet with his boots on. Cleanliness in the production process is very important. It’s something you feel deep down inside.

**MORE: You were 14 years of age when the first board was pressed in your family’s new factory on 18 December 1961. What do your recall about that day?**

Michael Egger: The first board was pressed in the evening, the school holidays had long since begun. And I still remember how a young worker got his hand caught in a sprocket wheel and badly injured himself. Accidents

like that were common in the old days. Altogether, there were 28 people working there at the time. Some of them are still alive. My father had an incredible instinct for picking the right staff. The technical manager, for example, was a certain Herr Dietrich from Hanover. He was sent by the Bison company to install the machinery and my father hired him on the spot. He had just got engaged and he rang his fiancée and told her to get on the train to St. Johann. Manfred Dietrich stayed and worked here right up to his retirement, like most of our employees, by the way.

**MORE: Even today, the company’s workforce, which has grown to 6,500, continues to sing the praises of the family spirit at EGGER. How do you do it, especially when you have to overcome borders, cross continents and adapt to foreign mentalities?**

Michael Egger: It is not as difficult as it sounds. The boss is not the centre of the company universe. Everyone at our company is important, from the cleaning lady – and we make sure about this – to the engineer, from the receptionist to the managing director. Well, actually we don’t have a managing director, we have group managers. The fact that every member of staff counts is what makes the family spirit, the sense of solidarity that you are asking about.

**MORE: We just read the newspaper article hanging on your wall. Your father turned down the title “commercial councillor” four times, supposedly because he did not want to alienate his employees. Tell us more about that story.**

Michael Egger: In Austria, and especially in Vienna, everyone likes to be called “commercial councillor” or “medicinal councillor” or “master of whatever”, it’s pure addiction to titles! My father was told four times by the regional head of government: “I’m going to make you a “commercial councillor”. And my father always turned down the title, as do my brother and I, incidentally. Eventually, he simply gave the regional head of government 10,000 shillings and said: “Now, just be quiet.” That was his direct, down-to-earth way of dealing with that kind of thing. He did not need a title, nor did he want one.

→





→ **MORE: The industry has changed a lot since you were a boy. What advice would you give young people today, like your own children, who are already working in the business?**

Michael Egger: The next generation will face enough challenges. IT for example. Logistics, systems and instruments have become extremely complex. But of course, technology is not everything. That’s why they should all get the same basic training as we got. It’s about how they treat the employees and it’s about learning not to think too complicated. What counts is ordinary common sense. And the head should not overrule the heart all the time. You’ve got to be able to do the basics in your sleep but you don’t have to know the complicated stuff off by heart. You’ve got to be able to listen. But you don’t have to be as patriarchal as my father. That’s why the table in my office is round.

**MORE: How do you go about identifying issues that will be important in the future?**

Michael Egger: Get the head and the heart working together! The next big issue for us is the future of wood as a resource. Timber is getting more and more expensive. One reason is that the biomass energy industry is receiving massive subsidies from the EU. That’s forcing us to change the way we think. That’s why we’re banking on reverse integration. One example is our plant in Brilon, where we built a saw mill in 2008. We have to be able to produce the timber ourselves again. But it’s also very important to work in a sense of partnership with other saw mills. Just waiting to see what the market offers is guaranteed to be the wrong way to do it.

**MORE: Does that mean that EGGER has to secure its own resources?**

Michael Egger: You must be talking about EGGER Forestry in England, where we have been offering timber harvesting as a service for some time now. And our plant at Gagarin in Russia has a forest covering about 80,000 hectares. There are many strategies for dealing with the changing situation. One strategy is short-rotation tree plantations, recycling is another. All our plants – and this another one of our pioneering ideas – have recycling facili-

ties. We are also investing heavily in light-weight construction systems. Here we have the world’s only production plant for lightweight honeycomb boards made of recycled paper. Unfortunately, the furniture industry scaled back production using lightweight boards during the economic and financial crisis.

*“ We must be very careful with our most important raw material Wood is getting more and more expensive. ”*

Michael Egger

But wood, energy, petroleum products and chemicals are all getting more expensive. That’s why I think lightweight boards have a bright future.

**MORE: Does EGGER consult other people before it makes a major investment?**

Michael Egger: We talk a lot among ourselves: with the group management, with our suppliers and partners. It’s also important to ask the staff and listen to their answers. For example, a technician who works on the same machine day in day out can often come up with a good idea. But I discuss a lot with my brother in private, especially when it comes to strategic decisions. We complement each other perfectly. I’d say I’m the one with the better instincts, he’s the one with the better intellect. And I’m the one who always wants to do things immediately, while my brother always wants to think about it first, do the sums and weigh up the pros and cons. We don’t always agree, things can get heated at times. But that’s the way it should be. We talk and argue until we reach an agreement. It’s important for the staff and the company that there is only one official opinion. This was something we always did with my late brother Edmund and my father. And that’s the way we do it today. Complete with handshake afterwards.

PORTRAIT

MICHAEL EGGER

Born in 1947, Michael Egger and his brothers Fritz and Edmund took over the EGGER family firm in 1982. At the time, the company operated three chipboard factories and a brewery. In 1984 the company took over its first plant abroad, the factory in Hexham (GB), marking the beginning of its international expansion. Michael Egger moved to the advisory board in 2009.

FIVE THINGS ABOUT

# Cork

This bark is durable yet soft, and grows back after harvesting – a timeless natural product with a rich cultural heritage.



## 1 THE MODEL-BUILDER

Antonio Chichi (1743–1816) can be regarded as the original model maker. Chichi’s passion was reproducing reality in miniature. Working on commission for German royalty when Italy was all the rage in the 18th century, he built fascinating models of ancient architecture in incredible detail.

## 3 THE FLOOR

Warm, soft, silent – three qualities which, along with its unmistakable look, have made cork a natural alternative to parquet floors. The latest development in floor aesthetics is Cork+, a pleasant surface made of high-density cork laminates pressed onto HDF boards.



## 5 THE TREE

In its first twelve to twenty years, the cork oak (Quercus suber) produces what is known as male cork (“liège mâle”). This virgin cork is cracked, brittle, inflexible and of limited use. It is removed so that, over the following decade, a layer of female cork (“liège femelle”), up to ten centimetres thick, can form. From then on, this cork is “peeled off” with an axe. It takes about fifty years for a tree to yield high-quality cork (light brown, watertight, elastic). The best cork trees are to be found in Portugal and along the Mediterranean coast of Spain.



## 2 THE SOLE

Sturdy yet flexible, cork was the alternative of choice to the leather shoe sole long before humankind discovered rubber. Cork has also gone down in fashion history thanks to the wedge heel and has also settled in comfortably in the form of the deep footbed, patented in 1961 by Birkenstock.



## 4 THE WINE CORK

To many gourmets, the cork belongs to wine culture just as much as the “plop” it makes when the bottle is opened. It allows infinitesimal amounts of air in and out, just right for maturing fine wines. Some of the bigger châteaux will even replace the corks in older wines for their customers.







Driven by the force of knowledge: Felix Finkbeiner addressing the United Nations in New York.

E\_NATURE

#### JOIN IN

##### PLANT FOR THE PLANET

The children of the school project “Plant for the Planet” have set themselves the goal of planting a million trees in every country in the world and to fight for climate justice. They aim to create a global network of activists and already have people in 91 countries.

To join in, visit  
[www.plant-for-the-planet.org](http://www.plant-for-the-planet.org)

# Stop Talking, Start Planting!

At the age of nine, Felix Finkbeiner decided to do something about the dramatically changing climate. Within two years, he had planted a million trees in several countries and received an invitation to address the United Nations in New York. MORE caught up with this young chap who wants no less than to save the world.

BY Yvonne Vavra

Maybe it takes a child to reach for the stars like this. Felix’ eyes light up as he addresses the students of the United Nations International School in New York. He’s just had an idea. “Does anyone here know how to get in touch with Barack Obama?”, he asks the audience. The adults in the crowd cast sceptical glances at him. But then a few arms go up. Emily’s mother was a school friend of Obama’s. Sho’s father knows someone who works in the White House, another kid’s father went to college with one of the government spokesmen. By the time he’s finished, Felix can list five possible ways of getting in touch with the President of the United States. Maybe one of them will result in a meeting sometime.

Afterwards, outside on the street, he still looks somewhat incredulous: he never would have thought that a joint effort would get him so close to Barack Obama.

And Felix Finkbeiner is no longer someone who is easily astonished – a 14-year-old who has just received the Oscar of advertising, the Effie, for his environmental campaign “Stop talking. Start Planting”, who has secured the enthusiastic support of Prince Albert II of Monaco, supermodel Gisele Bündchen and countless heads of government and Nobel laureates and who, on 2 February 2011, addressed the United Nations in New York to mark the Year of the Tree. But this lad is also just a curious, witty teenager with the gift of youthful enthusiasm.

It all started with a bright idea. One Monday in 2007, the nine-year-old Felix gave a presentation at his school in the Bavarian town of Pähl on the topic of climate change. He had watched Al Gore’s documentary film “An Uncomfortable Truth” and was appalled by the fact that his future appeared to be at stake and that hardly anyone one was

doing anything about it. His research had also brought his attention to the Kenyan Nobel Peace Laureate, Wangari Maathai, who had planted 30 million trees to protect her native land. And at the end of his presentation, Felix burst out with the words: “let’s plant a million trees in every country in the world”.

**Planting 500 million trees by 2050 may not stop climate change but it can slow it down.**

And while everyone else was just talking about what had to be done, Felix got down to work. Two years after he had given his presentation, a million trees had been planted in Germany. In the meantime, more than 2,400 ambassadors for a healthy climate in some 91 countries from China to Mexico have signed up for his project, “Plant for the Planet”. The organisation goal has revised its targets upward and now aims

to plant 100 million trees: four million have already put down roots.

“Children, let’s talk about mosquitoes and monkeys”, said Felix in his speech to the United Nations. He then explained his analogy. Monkeys, he said, can do lots of things but don’t think too far ahead. Given the choice of one banana now or six bananas later, he said, a monkey would always choose the single banana. “A mosquito, on the other hand, can’t do anything to stop a rhinoceros, but 1,000 mosquitoes can make it change direction.” Shortly afterwards, he posed for a photo with the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations, giggling as he put his hand over the president’s mouth. “Stop talking, start planting” is the motto of his campaign and people get it immediately.

The taxi winds its way between steaming vents, honking cars and hassled





→ New Yorkers as it takes Felix to a place that claims it will offer an alternative to Central Park. Exhausted, he chews on a bagel. “I know that planting trees alone will not be enough to stop climate

to do it from other people, for example from Africans, who only emit a quarter of a tonne every year. You can tell how much Felix enjoys his mission. He is driven by the force that is created when somebody has understood something.

There is not much left of the bagel when the cab pulls up near a very special patch of nature in the middle of the asphalt jungle in the trendy district of Noho. Behind the entrance to the gallery where he has his next appointment, is the enticingly perfect green of a plastic pop-up park. Trees made of plastic foil, photo wallpaper, artificial turf and piped birdsong. Suddenly, he is a small boy in a big city. Curious, incredulous. These are the moments when the child in Felix comes out, a child that is easy to overlook when he stands at the lectern in the glow of his Power Point presentation.

Is his role as saviour of the world the result of training or natural talent? The young audience hangs on his every word. His prognosis for the climate stuns even 16-year-old students from Harlem on this cold February morning. And when he talks about climate

ambassadors, he speaks as if he is one of the kids, a perfectly normal teenager who cares about the environment. That is the moment when he says “Plant for the Planet has not got started in the US, that is your responsibility now.”

**Actions speak louder than words: the campaign posters combine the determination of role models with child-like enthusiasm.**

The script was good and the desire to join this army of young climate savers is palpable. Immediately, concrete suggestions are made and developed: planting communal gardens, developing a video game, establishing a new public holiday, appearing in popular TV shows, designing a clothing collection! These are the children’s projects, the adults are reduced to the role of observers. Alluding to the Kenyan Nobel Peace Laureate Wangari Maathai, the school director, James Cole, says “Felix was inspired by a woman from Kenya. I hope that we can get a little bit of inspiration from Felix”. Certainly, what is happening around him gives the impression that that is very much the case: Felix and his newly-recruited

brothers and sisters in arms have already embarked on their quest for a way out of the crisis. The walls are adorned with portraits of Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy – and Barack Obama. Maybe Felix will get to plant a tree with him one day soon. And maybe it takes a child to make the most powerful man in the world dig a hole in the ground and plant a tree.

*“ A mosquito, on the other hand, can’t do anything to stop a rhinoceros, but 1,000 mosquitos can make it change direction. ”*

Felix Finkbeiner, Teenager

change. But by planting trees, we children are taking action, doing something together to sustain our future.” They may not stop climate change, but they will certainly slow it down.

The children also want to fight for what they call climate justice, to help people in the world’s poorer countries. “Everyone is allowed to emit the same amount of CO<sub>2</sub> every year, namely 1.5 tonnes. Anyone who wants to emit more, has to pay. If Europeans continue to emit more than ten tonnes each, then they should have to buy the right

FOR THE SAKE OF TREES

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

EGGER is doing its bit to protect the world’s forests. Sustainable use of the resource is one of the company’s guiding principles. The FSC/PEFC-certified factories use neither illegally felled timber nor genetically modified timber. They also reject the use of timber from uncertified or protected forests and regions in which traditional rights or basic human rights are abused.



1 Nobel Peace Laureate Wangari Maathai inspired Felix to launch his campaign Plant for the Planet. 2 At the United Nations International School in New York: wherever Felix speaks, the young audience hangs on his every word. 3 Natural stars: celebrities such as Gisele Bündchen and Harrison Ford support the campaign.







PICTURE PUZZLE

# Tree-Huggers’ Corner

Its name is synonymous with the most coveted and expensive instruments in the world. Its sound has been compared to the flickering dance of candlelight. The reason is a combination of fine craftsmanship and high-quality wood. When it was first produced about three hundred years ago, average temperatures were colder than now. What scientists call the Little Ice Age changed the way spruces grow, greatly reducing its latewood content. The less latewood – the dark rings in the tree trunk, the lower the bulk density of the wood. That, in turn, has a positive effect on the sound of

the instrument. Our mystery personality is especially famous for one particular instrument, but he/she also built other instruments, such as cellos, guitars and a harp. What wood-working genius is hiding behind the tree in the picture above?

If you know the correct answer, write to **MORE@egger.com**. For every correct answer we receive, we will plant a tree as part of the campaign “Plant for the Planet” (p. 46–49).

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