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Cool Cities Cologne

Interviews Lena Terlutter & Leonard Dobroshi, □

Lina Miccio, Felix Staeudinger & Mark Grütters, □

Marco Lanowy, Björn Gericke, Oliver Frielingsdorf

After focusing our research on the South American market for our last issue, this time we wanted to draw a direct comparison with the fashionable offers on our own doorstep. And our destination of choice was the wonderful city of Cologne, which, due to a regional long-standing rivalry, is pretty much out of bounds for us Düsseldorfers. Until the turn of the century, the city was renowned in the fashion industry as a strong trade fair location, but then the spotlight turned to Berlin, whose tradeshow industry blossomed as a consequence.

The question that we asked ourselves on our travels up and down the A57 motorway in the first week of May was: 'What can Cologne still bring to the table?' 'A lot!' was our answer after just a few days spent visiting the Rhine metropolis. And the best proof of this is our encounters there, like the one with Lina Miccio, who with her PR agency The Edge has close links to the Cologne art and culture scene and is deploying her extensive network of musicians, actors, sports personalities and artists in the PR work for denim label Replay. Another case in point is the talented Lena Terlutter who, together with her husband Leonard Dobroshi, is showing the retail trade how to do extremely successful business in times of Facebook and Instagram. Read both interviews in our Cool Cities Cologne special from page 60.

But with all this talk of Cologne, of course we didn't want to totally turn our back on our hometown of Düsseldorf. Mark Grütters from Fashion Factory by MG and his business partner Felix Staeudinger from Panorama Distribution have recently relocated from Düsseldorf's city centre to the nearby district of Flingern. An old, light-filled carpenter's workshop is their new domicile where we met them to find out what the two fashion pros think about traditional brands and the current male image, as well as what is so appealing about being located in an old industrial area.

Björn Gericke can also be proud of his impressive Dußseldorf headquarters. The owner of jacket label G-LAB is the son of motorcycle clothing specialist Hein Gericke. Björn is making the most of his skills in technical finishing and details, combined with his own high aesthetic standards to create an urban jacket collection of unrivalled quality.

From jackets to trousers: Marco Lanowy, who we visited at the Alberto HQ in Mönchengladbach, is an expert in this field. And he also has a clear vision of how bricks-and-mortar fashion retailers can play out their strengths in a more targeted manner. From page 68 you can read all about why he is forecasting major changes on shop floors for the next five years.

So much concentrated fashion know-how in a radius of not even 40 kilometres is certainly remarkable – but as far as this issue's fashion shoots are concerned we chose to go global again: John Gripenholm shot the 'L'Heure Bleue' editorial for J'N'C in New York, while Eduardo Miera impressed us with his pictorial take on The Talented Mr Ripley, shot on the beach of Cala Margarida, not far from Barcelona. We're looking forward to seeing you at this summer's international tradeshows, as well as the upcoming events on our home turf, and wish you all the best for the new season!

Ilona Marx