

Essential kitchen & bathroom business

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HALCYON INTERIORS

Joint MD Stephen Gobel on what Alno has to offer retailers

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Roberto Palomba's mission to bring colour and joy to the bathroom

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Highlights from the newly titled hotel design event

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FUN, FESTIVE & FABULOUS

The winners of the ek&bbusiness Awards & Review 2018 were unveiled on 29 November at a glittering ceremony, held at The Brewery in London.

Around 500 guests were treated to a champagne reception upon arrival, sponsored by Rotpunkt UK, plus a three-course lunch, and fantastic entertainment from pop violin trio Ember Trio, dance act Frobacks and top comedian Ed Byrne.

Our host Clive Tyldesley – ITV's chief football commentator – then took to the stage to kick off the rest of the afternoon, and former KBSA CEO Graham Hayden gave the industry Review of the Year.

Tyldesley presented the 15 winners with their trophies, with ek&bbusiness publisher Darren Summerfield and editor Leigh-Anne Roberts. Britain's Got Talent semi-finalist Sarah Ikumu closed the event with an outstanding performance including Purple Rain and Young Hearts Run Free.

"Thank you to all of our guests and sponsors for joining us at this year's festive extravaganza and making it our best awards yet!" said Roberts.



Darren Summerfield & Leigh-Anne Roberts



Ed Byrne



Sarah Ikumu



The winners of the ek&bbusiness Awards & Review 2018

- ★ Best Online/Social Media Campaign, sponsored by VitrA
InSinkErator – 4NI Touch taps campaign
- ★ Best Surface, sponsored by Masterclass Kitchens
CRL Stone – Renaissance Collection
- ★ Star Kitchen Product, sponsored by Cosentino
The 1810 Company – Axis Seamless Technology
- ★ Best PR Campaign
The Connection for Franke's Refill Not Landfill UK campaign
- ★ Best Appliance Innovation
Samsung – QuickDrive Technology
- ★ Best Bathroom Retailer, sponsored by Frontline Bathrooms
Stone & Chrome
- ★ Best Installer, sponsored by Impey
Liberty Fitting Service
- ★ Star Appliance
Novy – Cloud 110cm ceiling hood
- ★ Best Kitchen Retailer, sponsored by Classic Interiors
- ★ Best Distributor, sponsored by 2020
PWS
- ★ Best Bathroom Innovation
RAK Ceramics – RAK-Feeling shower tray
- ★ Best Kitchen Retailer, sponsored by Classic Interiors
- ★ Best Bespoke Kitchen Maker, sponsored by Häfele
Martin Moore
- ★ Star Bathroom Product
Crosswater – Union Brassware Collection
- ★ Outstanding Contribution to the KBB Industry 2018
Yvonne Orgill, CEO, Bathroom Manufacturers Association
- ★ Best Kitchen Innovation
Blum – Blumotion S

FRESH THINKING

Neue Alno head of global sales, Michael Spadinger, and Halcyon Interiors' joint MD, Stephen Gobel, reveal what the new incarnation of the German brand has to offer

Words Amelia Thorpe Photos Rowland Roques O'Neil



Halcyon Interiors joint MD, Stephen Gobel, and, right, Neue Alno head of global sales, Michael Spadinger

“PRICES ARE ABOUT 30% LOWER THAN BEFORE. DIRECT PRICING FROM

When leading German kitchen manufacturer Alno slid into administration in 2017, shockwaves of debt and the industry's

incarnation. In January 2018, private equity firm RiverRock, based in London, bought Alno in its entirety – except for its debt, said to be more than its turn over in the year before administration

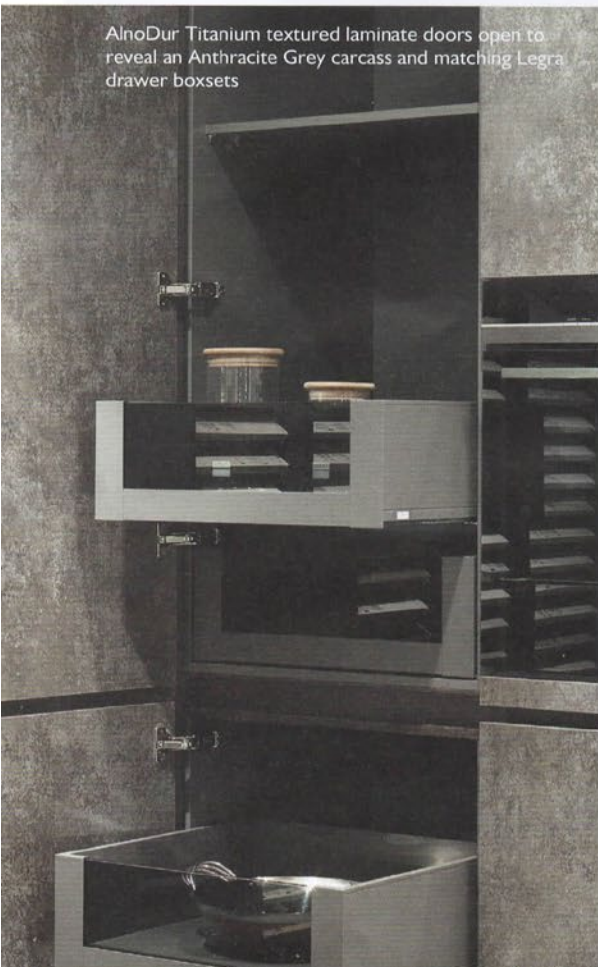
PROFILE

► “UK retailers will deal with us directly – no more expensive structures in different countries,” says Spadinger. The four factories spread across Germany have been combined into one at Pfullendorf to make operations more streamlined, and there has been further investment in machinery to make production “faster and more efficient”. In place of the Alno, Wellmann, Pino and Impuls brands (“too much crossover”) comes just one – Alno.

The result? “Prices are about 30% lower than before,” says Gobel. “Direct pricing from Germany to the UK makes it a lot more competitive, and that’s taking into account the weak pound. At the moment, the pound is about 1.14 and we are still paying the same price as when it was 1.46, so if you take that into account – together with no annual increases – current prices are probably nearer 50% less than they were before.”

Before administration, Spadinger says that Alno had about 130 dealers in the UK – most were lost in the six months when the company couldn’t deliver. Now Alno has some 25 retailers as of November 2018 and launched its Premium Partner scheme in December, with extra incentives for retailers committed to the brand. “We want to position the brand at a decent mid-to-high level, rather than luxury, although we can produce kitchens that edge into that sector,” says Spadinger, revealing that his target is to get to a total UK number of 60 to 70 customers within a year, something that he says is achievable once retailers understand the debt-free status of the company. “Alno has never been in as good a condition as it is today,” he says. ■

AlnoDur Titanium textured laminate doors open to reveal an Anthracite Grey carcass and matching Legra drawer boxsets



AlnoDur Titanium textured laminate display with Caesarstone Rugged Concrete island on wheels



Alno floating box shelves in Graphite finish

“ALNO HAS NEVER BEEN IN AS GOOD A CONDITION AS IT IS TODAY”

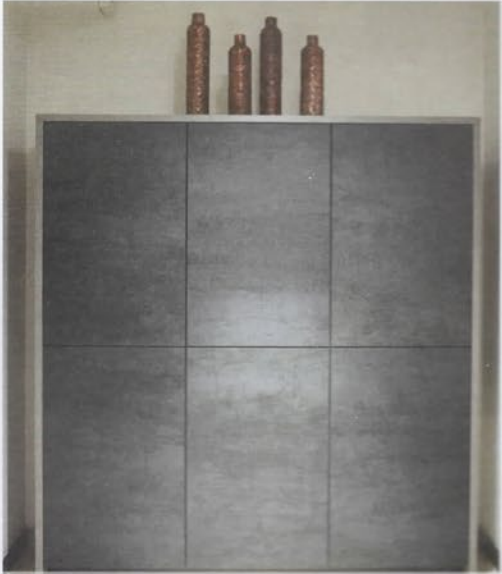
Michael Spadinger,
head of global sales, Neue Alno



PROFILE



A Warendorf Concrete cantilevered island catches the eye in the front window



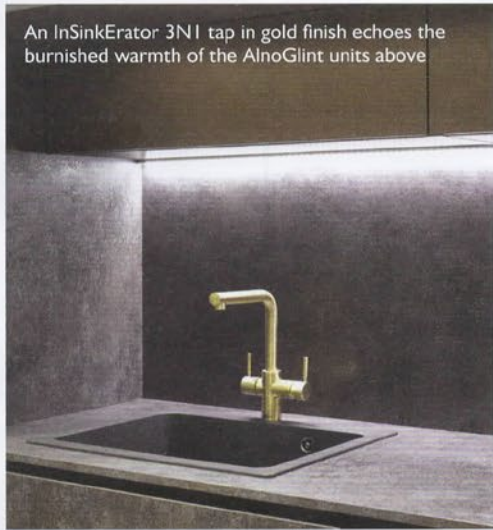
AlnoCera Convinta ceramic mid-height unit



A Miele wine cooler, coffee machine and combi-microwave housed in AlnoSign Anthracite high-gloss lacquer mid-height units

What happened to Halcyon Interiors when Alno went into administration, and how you have regrouped?

- » "Alno was our only brand and, until it had its problems, it was a very reliable supplier," explains joint MD Susan Gobel. "The boxes arrived on time and what was in the boxes was what we wanted. The only problems we had up until that point was that the product was more expensive than it should have been to pay for UK overheads, to no great benefit to us. It was a problem, but Halcyon was strong enough to continue selling Alno. After the collapse, in the end, we had to give three deposits back, but we managed to keep all the other orders on our books, and that was down to the relationships our designers had with their clients and the belief in Halcyon. About 50 orders in process were affected, and we coped with help from other suppliers. But the real fall out happened after that, because we had no product to sell. We had to find alternative suppliers and started looking almost immediately"
- » Stephen Gobel adds: "We didn't want just one supplier, because we didn't want to be caught again. We have now settled on Neue Alno, Warendorf and Eggersmann. Alno is for the mid-to-upper sector, Eggersmann for the luxury end, and Warendorf in between the two. In volume terms, I think we should do more business with Alno, because everybody understands the product. It fits what a lot of customers want, and that's the reason we've sold it for more than 20 years. And now it is easier to deal directly with Germany, and the offer is much more competitively priced. Before the collapse, our turnover was about £3.5m. Since then it has



An InSinkErator 3NI tap in gold finish echoes the burnished warmth of the AlnoGlint units above



AlnoPlan units in Cashmere Oak with AlnoCera Convinta ceramic wall and mid-height units

PROFILE

Neue Alno

Who are we? Michael Spadinger, head of global sales

Where are we? Heiligenberger Strasse 47, 88630 Pfullendorf, Germany. Tel: 0208 901 8724. www.alno.de. www.alno.co.uk

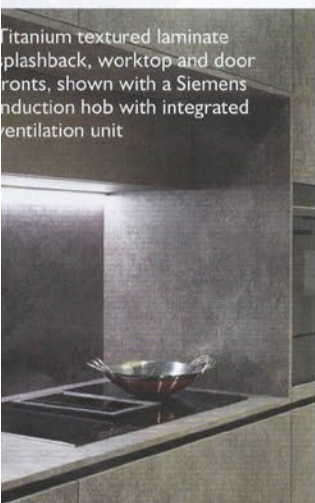
What we do Kitchen manufacturer

Business history Alno has been producing kitchens at its 82,000sq m factory in Pfullendorf, Germany, since 1927. Neue Alno GmbH was formed when private equity firm RiverRock bought the Alno company, excluding its debt, from administration, for €20m. MD of Neue Alno GmbH is Thomas Kresser. Michael Spadinger joined Neue Alno as head of global sales in October 2018, having previously worked at the MHK Group and, most recently, as export director for Nolte. In September, Alno launched a range of non-fingerprint AlnoPure doors and will introduce four more colours in this collection this spring. It is also promoting its ability to offer custom sizes and doors in any NCS or RAL colour, offered at no extra cost to Neue Alno's Premium Partners. Kitchen prices from £25,000



AlnoFine Light Grey lacquer islands, shown with a cooling wall by Gaggenau

AlnoFine units in Light Grey lacquer, one island with bespoke teal-coloured shelf units, with Caesarstone Statuario Maximus worktops, Gaggenau appliances and three Westin ceiling hoods



Titanium textured laminate splashback, worktop and door fronts, shown with a Siemens induction hob with integrated ventilation unit

WHAT MAKES YOU WANT TO SELL ALNO?

“THE PRODUCT IS FAMILIAR, IT’S RELIABLE, IT’S COMPETITIVELY PRICED AND IT’S GOT EVERY FINISH WE NEED”

Graham Robinson, Halcyon Interiors showroom and design manager



Left to right: Halcyon Interiors sales director Ashley Collins, showroom and design manager Graham Robinson, joint MDs Susan and Stephen Gobel



Used as the staff kitchen, this display features a Miele coffee machine tucked away in a stainless steel tambour unit



PROFILE

Halcyon Interiors

Who are we? Stephen and Susan Gobel, joint MDs, and Graham Robinson, showroom and design manager

Where are we? 120 Wigmore Street, London, W1U 3RU. Tel: 020 7486 3080. Also at Pinner and Beaconsfield. www.halcyoninteriors.com

What we do Independent kitchen retailer

Business history Founded by Stephen and Susan Gobel in 1981, the business remains owned and run by the couple today. Kitchen prices start from £25,000, average about £40,000; most expensive to date, £140,000. Appliances by Siemens, Miele, Gaggenau, Westin, Falmec, and Barazza. Sinks and taps by Blanco, The 1810 Company, Dornbracht, InSinkErator, Quooker, and Zip