

RETAILER OF THE WEEK



Martin Bruch, Managing Director of
Sankthorst in Frankfurt

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MARTIN BRUCH, SANKTHORST, FRANKFURT

Sankthorst, our retailer of the week, is located on the top floor of Frankfurt's shopping mall "Zeilgalerie", offering a great view on the city's famous skyline. The store has not been operating for much more than two months now, yet Managing Director Martin Bruch has a clear idea of what his customers want. Trend labels which cannot be found on every corner, a range of complementary lifestyle products and setting up the right atmosphere are his key to success. Here, Bruch reveals trend prognoses (including the end of metrosexuality), bestsellers and why "Sankthorst is a statement". *Interview by Maria Hunstig*

Which labels are your current bestsellers? What are your personal favorites?

Our current bestsellers regarding fashion are adidas SLVR and 5Preview, in terms of accessories and gadgets, the bright and jazzy watches by Fullspot and all Urbanears headphones sell very well. Moreover, Berlin designers Milla Miyahara and Address are very popular.

Our personal favorite is adidas SLVR. The clothing simply reveals excellent quality and has refined details. We also really like the shirts by young German fashion company Peace of Cake, whose claim "Grow Up. Stay Child. Be Human" perfectly matches the Sankthorst identity.



Which jeans labels have sold best? What is your trend prognosis for next year?

Our jeans portfolio is still at its beginning stage. We currently have Denham and Dr. Denim in our assortment, since these are both labels which offer high standards of craftsmanship combined with trendy styles. Colorful chinos will be of great importance next year, along with jeans in light washings. But classic shapes will of course always be in demand.

Do your customers rather buy individual pieces or complete looks?

It depends. There are customers who like to buy complete outfits by one particular brand. The majority, though, mixes styles and labels and we think that's perfect. It's the way to create an individual look.



Where do you purchase your merchandise? What inspires you? Where do you get information on the latest trends? How important is the communication with (regular) customers for that?

We get informed by attending diverse fashion trade shows such as Bread & Butter in Berlin, for example, or Pitti in Florence. But also fashion blogs, magazines or store checks in interesting cities are very informative and inspiring. We simply walk through life with our eyes wide open. The trade shows mainly serve to get an overview of the multiple labels and to draw up the necessary contacts. The purchasing is then done directly in the showrooms. The steady dialogue with all our customers is of course generally very important, since, after all, it is our customers we wish to satisfy.

What is the most important garment for summer 2012 – and what can we expect for winter 2012/13?

First and foremost, colors will be back again in summer. For the ladies, shorts will be absolutely essential items. Whether made of jeans, silk or another material - they will be must-haves for fashionistas. Color-blocking is a big theme in any case. It will also be a colorful season for men, however more masculine. We are moving away from metrosexuality. In summer 2012, men can be men again. Leisurewear will be more sportive with a less formal flair.

What are your most important product categories?

This depends on the season. But product categories such as jeans or shirts are very important because one purchases these throughout the entire year. Being a concept store, gadgets and accessories are certainly very important for us, since it is these products that make an additional difference between a "normal" retailer and a concept store.

Are there new labels in your assortment? Would you consider your assortment a generally experimental?

Sankthorst calls itself a "District for Contemporary Lifestyle". We offer everything – except mainstream. This is why we are of course always looking for new products. Therefore, we lately included, the '70s label Ellesse in our assortment, as well as Native Shoes and Fixie Bikes. We have several products that can't be found just anywhere and which stand for a particular individual attitude towards life.

Tell us a bit about your most interesting labels.

One of the main labels in our current portfolio is SLVR, adidas' relatively new fashion line, which is Frankfurt-wide exclusively sold at Sankthorst. We're proud of that! SLVR combines comfort, lightness, technology and luxury. Many interesting details, great materials and is simply perfectly tailored. SLVR offers a whole new facet to what one has thought about adidas until this day. You really have to see it and try it on.



Sankthorst concept store

Why does your store stand out from others?

Sankthorst has a broad collection with diverse product categories. From fashion and accessories to fragrance, design, lifestyle gadgets, books and magazines, bikes...one can even buy an iPod ghetto blaster in our store. Besides that, we regularly host events at our store, like exhibitions, live music, DJ sets etc. Sankthorst is located at a very unique location. On the top floor of the Zeilgalerie, you get a breathtaking view over Frankfurt's city skyline. It's always worth a visit.

What do you like about your location and your customers?

The great thing about Frankfurt is the extreme development the city has gone through during the last years. Frankfurt is international and urban. It's a city with lots of potential. Today, Frankfurt is not only a banking city, but also residence to several creative people, multitudes of individualists and a very vivid scene that is open to new concepts. Sankthorst is the spot-on address for exactly this target group.

How important are the interior and the store's overall atmosphere?

What matters to the customer is not only the shopping aspect, but the experience as a whole is very important. This naturally includes the interior, the address of welcome, the choice of music and the general "feel good" factor. That's what it's all about. A concept store like Sankthorst is a statement. We stand for an urban, individual attitude towards life. We of course transfer this through the overall experience in our store, but also through our communication in the digital world.

In your opinion, towards which direction is the purchase behavior going? Rather classics or a more individual/special style?

In this case, one as much as the other - both will be purchased. Sankthorst stands for favorite show pieces, therefore our assortment rather tends towards the unique. We are a concept store and here the expectations are also quite different. Brands or products like Fullspot watches or Native shoes are so popular, because one can't buy them in every store. Brands like adidas SLVR are very interesting for customers because they have never seen adidas in this style before. That is the uniqueness of it.

Are there plans for an online shop? Do you buy online yourself? Will we have actual stores in the future at all?

An online shop is definitely interesting for the future, but it's not a topic for Sankthorst at the moment. Since we have just recently opened, we are primarily concentrating on our store in the real world. But the online market is an important one which we are keeping in mind. We are convinced that actual stores will survive in the future, since the shopping experience is totally different. Shopping in a real store is a sensual, inspirational, overall experience that no online store can make up to.

Is there a role model of a store that inspires you? Any shop (worldwide) that inspires you?

We were of course inspired by Colette, the mother of all concept stores. Also Voostore in Berlin is a great concept store. But I wouldn't exactly call them role model stores for us since both stores have their own distinct style. At Sankthorst, we are pursuing a completely individual line and, of course, wish for ourselves that our customers see us exactly in this way – and love us for our uniqueness and creativity.