

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Cherry on top

Wörwag has been supplying powder coatings to V-Zug, the leading Swiss household appliance maker, for around 30 years. The two companies enjoy a mutually beneficial partnership—and not just on the factory floor. An unusual meeting at V-Zug’s kitchen studio produced a delicious meal that featured the cuisines of both Switzerland and Swabia.

By Michael Thiem
Photos by Laurent Burst





Reliable partners: Wörwag has supplied powder coatings to V-Zug for many years.

Uwe Muster (left) from V-Zug and Daniel Seiler from Wörwag work closely together—also in the kitchen studio.



Putting teamwork to the test: Uwe Muster and Daniel Seiler work for the first time in the kitchen.

The most important ingredient—good cheer—is not listed on the recipe. But it is generated by the act of cooking itself. Uwe Muster is peeling and slicing potatoes. They are supposed to be half a centimeter thick. Some are thinner, but a good many are thicker. Muster, who heads the surfaces technology department at V-Zug, promptly attributes that to the unfamiliar knife. He is making a potato salad to go with the *Maultaschen*, a Swabian specialty that resembles large ravioli.

Next to him stands Daniel Seiler, the division head for Wörwag Switzerland. He has tackled the job of preparing the onions to be sautéed. “In Switzerland we can make all kinds of things with potatoes, like *Rösti* (a type of hashbrown),” says Muster. “Or distill them to make schnapps,” adds Seiler. *Maultaschen* and potato salad are just the first course of this combined Swabian-Swiss meal. They will be followed by filet of perch prepared in the traditional way around Zug—and accompanied by a glass of Terroir Grand Cru Champenel 2016 white wine.

Martin Auf der Maur keeps an eye on the two cooks, offers advice, and occasionally suppresses a chuckle. “That’s what happens when you put men in the kitchen—they hardly get started when they start to complain.” Auf der Maur, who directs the Zugorama showroom and consulting center, has two tasks for this unusual summit meeting. He needs to guide the two novice chefs, and keep them entertained. Muster and Seiler usually meet at an office adjoining the paint shop, or at the quality control center for coated components. Their discussions generally focus on the optimum thickness of 60 to 120 micrometers for powder coatings,

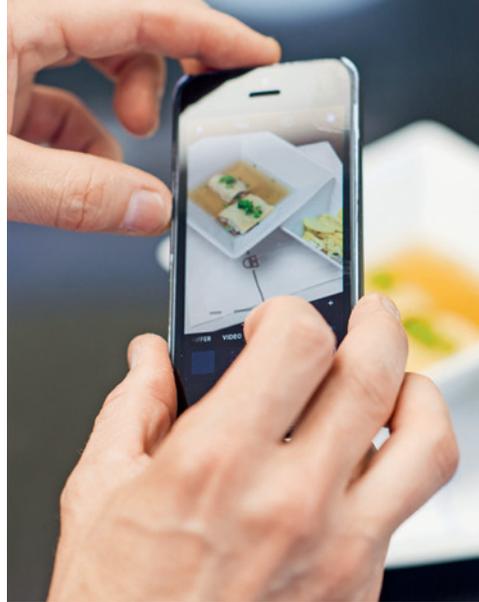
or the pros and cons of various surface characteristics. V-Zug and Wörwag can look back at three decades of fruitful collaboration, but today their partnership is being put to the test. Muster’s potato slices

measure nearly a centimeter, which is clearly too thick. And Seiler remarks, “I’ve never made my own *Maultaschen* before. I always get them from the supermarket. That saves time and people devour them quickly anyway.” →



→ Muster and Seiler are enjoying themselves. Cooking together is a welcome change of pace, and it illustrates the friendly quality of relations between the two companies. V-Zug and Wörwag are both family-run businesses with similar values: tradition, innovation, an international orientation, and top-notch quality. Located in the heart of the town of Zug around 18.6 miles (30 kilometers) from Zürich, V-Zug's 914,932 sq ft (85,000 qm) production site makes a full range of kitchen and bathroom appliances. Founded in 1913 as Verzinkerei Zug ("Zug galvanizer"), it initially specialized in galvanized metal items for homes, farms, and construction companies. Trash cans in many parts of Switzerland still sport the striking V-Zug logo. In the early 1920s, the company produced its first washing machines with laundry drums, which were operated by hand. It added automatic washing machines, dryers, and dishwashers to its product range in the early 1960s. In 1976 Verzinkerei Zug merged with Metallwarenfabrik Zug ("Zug metal goods factory"), the leader on the market for stove tops and ovens. Today V-Zug has around 1,400 employees, and justifiably considers itself the high-end expert studio among appliance makers. Its staff still works by hand wherever possible, which accounts for

Expert craftsmanship
lays the foundation
for V-Zug's superb Swiss
quality.



V-ZUG AG

Founded: 1913

Employees: 1,400

Product groups: ovens, steamers, microwave ovens, stove tops, vapor hoods, dishwashers, refrigerators, washing machines, dryers, and fabric care cabinets

Locations: Zug (headquarters and production) and more than 16 service centers plus numerous showrooms worldwide.





The reward comes at the end: after cooking, Uwe Muster and Daniel Seiler toast their jointly prepared three-course meal.



the company's high level of Swiss quality valued the world over.

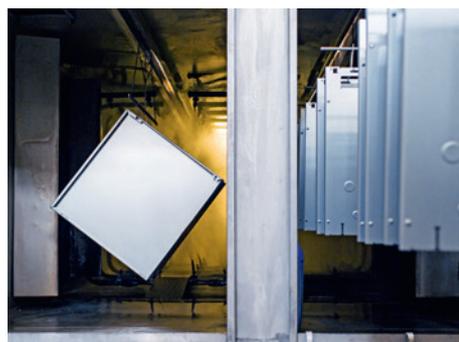
Paint products from Wörwag have been part of this focus on quality for around 30 years now. V-Zug's electrostatic powder-coating facility evokes a familiar sight in the Alps. Its conveyor chain, which carries the components, resembles a chairlift. It is 1,050 feet (320 meters) long, and runs at a speed of around six and a half to nearly ten feet (two to three meters) a minute. Hanging from it are the front panels of dryers and washing machines, or the edge guards of fitted kitchen appliances. Their first stop is a degreasing bath of around 140°F (60°C). After being cleaned, they enter one of three coating cabinets—black, grey, or white. Following the fully automated coating process, the components are oven-cured at 428°F (220°C) for 15 to 20 minutes. "One hundred percent of our powder coatings come from Wörwag," says Muster. "That has historically been the case, and we see no reason to change anything about it. We place a premium on quality, so we need a robust coating system and a partner like Wörwag." Before the coated components leave the conveyor chain for further processing, they undergo quality controls. Meticulous quality assurance is one of V-Zug's keys to success. Before its appliances are delivered to customers, they have to pass as many as 600 controls.

Strong commitment to the location

The company works on enhancing its quality every day. The motto of its shop-floor management is "Zug um Zug gemeinsam besser" ("Striving for improvement together step by step"). The production managers meet every morning for a status report. And they put continuous improvement into practice. "We don't just talk about problems," explains Muster. "We also highlight the things that are going really well." After all, motivation is crucial when it comes to making improvements. In addition, the company is clearly committed to its location. It has launched major expansion and restructuring projects that are expected to run until 2033. Although growth markets like Asia and North America are playing an ever more important role, V-Zug continues to be anchored in the most important economic region of Switzerland. It is working on making its production facilities, which feature very high →



Clear commitment to the location: V-Zug has its home town in its name—and will be investing heavily in its production site there until 2033.



→ vertical integration, fit for the future. In 2009 it opened a highly modern logistics complex with 5,297,200 cubic feet (150,000 cubic meters) of storage space, 21,000 pallet berths, and a 1,345.50 square-foot (125 square-meter) solar power system on the roof. Preparations are currently underway to expand production, which will take place on several floors instead of just one. This will shorten the distances that components have to travel, and make the overall system more effective.

Eleven-minute party program

As is the case for Wörwag, part of V-Zug's success derives from its power of innovation. The company listens carefully to its customers, and has 150 engineers working on product development alone. Their ideas frequently make waves. One example is the "Refresh-Butler" fabric care cabinet that needs just two hours to remove odors from clothing that has been exposed to smoke or greasy vapors. Or a dish-washing machine with an 11-minute party program. While guests are still enjoying their main course, it washes the appetizer dishes in preparation for dessert. It's always possible to improve on things, or to come up with original ideas. In early June V-Zug launched something like an innovation department, with offices in an industrial park in the city. It has hired mathematicians and physicians to help make innovations in its digital business processes. Lateral thinking with a dash of courage are additional elements of the company's quest to systematically expand its horizons.

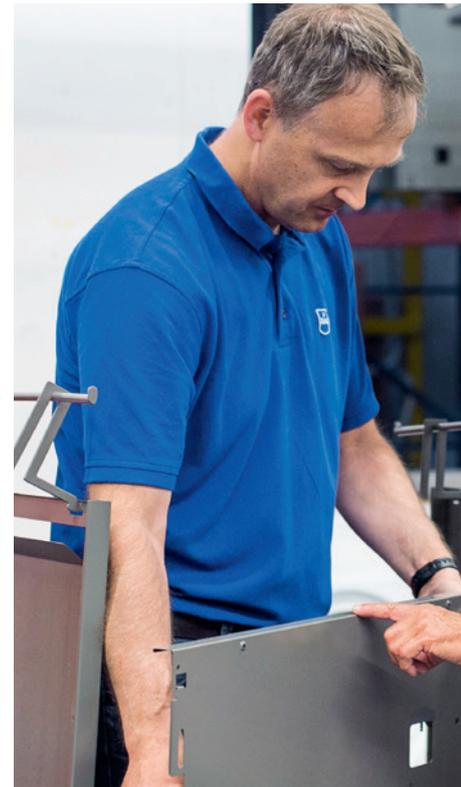
Ideas arise while enjoying a meal

Muster and Seiler, who are painstakingly chopping herbs such as estragon and marjoram for the fish, are expanding their culinary horizons. V-Zug's "Combi-Steamer" needs just a few minutes to cook the potato salad and the perch. The two chefs are pleased with both the fish and the *Maultaschen*—as is Martin Auf der Maur. He has never combined Swabian and Swiss specialties in one meal before. He contributes a dessert consisting of vanilla creme with cherries—real *chriesi*, as they are called in Zug. The town and

The project even triggers the idea for an innovation: how about giving washing machines a *Chriesi* button?



Quality control:
Uwe Muster (left) and
Daniel Seiler carefully
inspect the coated
surface of a front panel.





Making the cut: the color chart for assessing adhesive strength is coated along with the components in the powder-coating cabinet.

its 30,000 inhabitants are crazy about *chriesi*. They organize an annual *Chriesi* race, have a Cherry Cake Museum, and make Zug's famous *Kirsch*, a type of cherry schnapps, which was listed on the register of protected geographical indications in 2013. "But it's almost impossible to get cherry stains off a white shirt," says Seiler, which then prompts him to suggest an improvement. "You should add a *Chriesi* button to your washing machines, which activates a very intensive cleaning program." Muster grins and nods in agreement. There are so many improvements yet to be made. And it's best to tackle them together. ■



Try out the recipes yourself

If Uwe Muster and Daniel Seiler can make them, so can you. You'll find the ingredients and instructions for these Swabian and Zug specialties online on the *finish* website at:

www.woerwag.com/vzug

