Berlin/Bietigheim-Bissingen, Germany, 05 December 2016: Today Shoepassion GmbH and Heinrich Dinkelacker GmbH announced that the Berlin-based start-up has merged with the traditional shoe brand based in Bietigheim-Bissingen, effective immediately. This represents a joint venture between one of the oldest German shoe brands with one of the youngest — a merger involving experts who have held top management positions in other sectors as well, representing a unique development in the realm of German e-commerce.

Founded in 2008 in Berlin, Shoepassion has been impressing with its proprietary collection of Goodyear-welted shoes since its online store launched in 2010. The company got off to a highly successfully start in the dynamically growing market of online shoe retail. What was once purely an online shop has since become a true multi-channel provider over the years, opening a number of brick-and-mortar stores in several countries.

Heinrich Dinkelacker numbers among the most exclusive Goodyear-welted shoe manufacturers worldwide. Based in Baden-Württemberg, Germany and founded in 1879, the company has been meticulous handcrafting footwear in the world capital of cobbler expertise — Budapest, Hungary — since the 1960s. Fittingly, Dinkelacker is known for its Budapester shoes and remains strongly associated with them in Germany to this day. When the traditional, formerly family-owned German company found itself without an heir in 2004, the reins were handed over to the three shoe lovers Norbert Lehmann (a former IBM Manager), Dr. Wendelin Wiedeking (the former CEO of Porsche AG) and Anton Hunger (the former Head of PR at Porsche AG).
After spending eleven years driving the luxury shoe brand’s success and taking the plunge into international markets, the new owners sought a forward-thinking solution for their beloved brand. “I had been following Shoepassion for several years,” recounts CEO Norbert Lehmann. “The men behind it brought a breath of fresh air into the extremely traditional shoe industry and also showed how nowadays, with a great deal of passion and expertise, you can not only continue to champion a classic handcrafted product, but also market it in an appealing and contemporary way.” Dr. Wendelin Wiedeking concurs: “Shoepassion and Heinrich Dinkelacker combine classic craftsmanship with digital expertise. This merger shows us that our brand is in good hands and leaves us well-equipped for the commerce of the future.”

This merger is of great significance, and not only to the young start-up from Berlin. The union of the two companies also sends an important signal to traditional retail in general and shoe retail in particular, which is currently facing a momentous structural change. It is not guaranteed that everyone on the market will pass through these dynamic upheavals unscathed. “I am very proud of this historic deal and of the level of trust that has been placed in us,” declares Tim Keding, founder and CEO of Shoepassion. “Being entrusted with a celebrated luxury brand with its own factory is a great honour, and demonstrates that even traditional companies can thrive in contemporary retail without sacrificing their core identity,” Keding continues.

Until now, the Berlin-based entrepreneurs behind Shoepassion have primarily been known for their stitched premium shoes wholly made in the EU. Now, they can supplement their range with meticulously handcrafted luxury footwear. “As a shoe fan, I have always known of Heinrich Dinkelacker — they represent the absolute pinnacle of quality. Combing the premium segment with the luxury segment opens up many possibilities for us, and I am extremely happy to be able to continue the Dinkelacker legacy,” reports Keding.

While Shoepassion will now hold 100 per cent of the Heinrich Dinkelacker company shares, the former owners Norbert Lehmann, Dr. Wendelin Wiedeking and Anton Hunger will become shareholders in Shoepassion. This is a merger of historic proportions in German e-commerce, in that a traditional company with more than a century of history and its own factory has been absorbed by a start-up — and quite a young one at that. The newly formed group of shareholders has agreed that Shoepassion’s digital expertise will introduce entirely new customer demographics to Heinrich Dinkelacker.

You can now buy luxurious Heinrich Dinkelacker shoes in all Shoepassion stores. The new Dinkelacker website will launch in early 2017.
ABOUT SHOEPASSION

Shoepassion began as a purely online shop in 2010, and has always focused on its passion for premium, Goodyear-welted shoes, sophisticated shoe care items and elegant accessories. The Berlin-based shoe brand now operates online shops geared towards seven countries, brick-and-mortar German retail locations in Berlin, Munich, Hamburg, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt am Main and Cologne as well as international outposts in Warsaw, Poland and Zurich, Switzerland. Starting from the design process in Berlin, proceeding to sourcing and processing the leather, through to manufacture in Spain and delivering its quality products worldwide, Shoepassion relies on the greatest possible degree of sustainability and transparency, promising to keep everything made in the EU.

ABOUT HEINRICH DINKELACKER

Heinrich Dinkelacker, founded in 1879, is one of the most exclusive manufacturers of handcrafted, Goodyear-welted men’s shoes worldwide. Their luxurious footwear is produced in the Heinrich Dinkelacker factory in Budapest, at the experienced hands of over 40 specialist shoemakers. As such, Dinkelacker is synonymous with Budapester shoes, and has made a name for itself with these in Germany. Their premium shoes are made without conveyor belts and stifling efficiency standards – each pair takes around 300 steps to produce, from cutting the leather to the final finish. Heinrich Dinkelacker shoes are true works of handcrafted perfection.

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