



# GRAND DESIGNS

Erismann is one of the world's most established wallpaper manufacturers with nearly two centuries of expertise and trading to call on. Managing Director Maximilian Bercher is focused on the future, though, and is engaging new customers through innovation.

## MAXIMILIAN BERCHER

MD @ Erismann

**W**hat makes Erismann stand out from the rest? Anyone who works for the company will tell you that the answer is simple: they live wallpaper. This has been the case for more than 180 years. The Germany-based company combines zeitgeist and durability, picks up on international trends, develops highly expressive products, and designs sophisticated wallpaper collections for every style of living. The organisation has grown from a manufactory to an industrial operation over the last two centuries and always has a finger on the pulse of the times. It's forever trying to inspire its customers with unique products, solutions, and customer-oriented service offers, individually tailored to suit markets around the world. Erismann's current product range covers more than 5,000 different items.

The wallpaper manufacturer employs around 570 staff in Germany and Russia who produce wallpapers using cutting-edge systems. All of the wallpapers that leave its factory fulfil the highest standards of quality. Erismann's head office is in the picturesque German town of Breisach in the Rhine Valley and its production facilities in Russia were set up in 2013 just outside Moscow in

Voskresensk, from where all of Eastern Europe is provided with wallpaper. The group also has a distribution company in the French city of Strasbourg and a sales office in the UK.

"We are a family-owned business and one of the leading wallpaper manufacturers not only in Europe but also in the world," says Erismann's MD Maximilian Bercher. "I've been here for seven years and started out on a two-year training programme to get an overview of operations. I was involved in product management, production, and finance and sales so I know the company inside out. I jumped at the chance to become MD because it meant taking on more responsibility and having greater influence in the decision-making process. Personally, it's now much easier to push an idea

from conception to delivery, but it's the same for every department – if there's a convincing idea, we just do it. The process is really hands-on and I really appreciate this."

### Rich history

Founded in 1838 in Breisach by Johann Baptist Hau, Erismann is one of the world's oldest wallpaper manufacturers. The company started making wallpapers in the town's famous Rhine Gate building (designed by Louis XIV's favourite architect Marshal Vauban) and remained there until 1858, when space became too tight. A larger factory was built in town as Erismann expanded operations and became increasingly mechanised. When the end of the 19th century came around, business was booming as the company's wallpapers – inspired by France's finest interior designers – were selling all around the world. State-of-the-art technology enabled the factory to keep up with demand and a new printing hall was built in 1993. Things were good and they still are: today, Erismann's export share is approximately 55% across 70 countries around the world and the company achieves annual sales in excess of €100 million. →

*"We are working with influencers to help get our brand noticed by younger people"*



**Collective spirit**

“Everything we do at Erismann is about teamwork,” says Maximilian. “We have two production sites, one in Germany and one in Russia (the world’s largest market for wall coverings), so making sure the business is synergised is a daily challenge but we’re making it happen. We are also trying to optimise all the departments and improve how they cooperate – our employees are communicating better and learning how to find solutions to problems.”

The company’s comprehensive range of designs comprise diverse materials and patterns: textured and vinyl wallpapers on paper or non-woven carriers, wallpapers in embossed paper, textile wallpapers, and wallpapers in a direct non-woven print. It uses the latest rotary screen printing, gravure printing, and register embossing systems in the manufacture of these high-quality products, while the company’s own laboratories and independent test methods guarantee the highest product quality. At Erismann, there is also a particular focus on environmental protection and sustainability. Most of its wallpapers are phthalate-free, RAL-tested, and carry the European “Indoor Air Comfort” certificate. What’s more, the



**On a roll: the company’s annual sales top €100 million**

print colours used are all water-soluble.

However, there’s always room for improvement, as Maximilian explains: “We are looking to improve customer-specific solutions like packaging, licences, testimonials, and adapting and designing customer-specific designs. In short, we want to get closer to our customers. Differentiation is important, we want to expand into markets outside Germany so we are working with influencers to help get our brand noticed by younger people. We also want to improve operational excellence and make our supply chain more flexible, especially in the face of the coronavirus – it’s important to be able to easily swap one major supplier for another if necessary.”

**Reliable partners**

Erismann has built several very strong and stable relationships with its suppliers over the years and has worked with many of them for decades. Maximilian explains that it’s all about cooperation and that when it comes to building ties, trust and reliability outweigh pricing: “Of course, cost is important, but it’s about being open and starting a dialogue with our suppliers to fuel innovation and make our products better by choosing the right partners. We have around ten key suppliers and during our annual meetings with them we always plan six months ahead to make sure our new products are ready and our purchasing strategy is in place.”

The wallpaper market is a shrinking market, which is why Erismann is forever innovating its strategy and products. Digital printing is becoming more important for the business and it’s also looking to grow into the hotel and restaurant markets. “Every hotel and restaurant has individual requirements, so we are helping them to create unique designs and for this, digital printing is becoming a major technique,” Maximilian adds. “We are also helping out trade partners to grow their online businesses to make them more competitive.”

And Maximilian’s final business message? “Everything is done by our employees, so we need to find the right people,” he says. “We need to match the right people to the right projects and put together cohesive teams. Prototyping is also very important – we need to find solutions to the problems we face and learn from our mistakes. Teamwork is vital.”



**Erismann’s wallpapers are made using state-of-the-art technology**

*“ We have been working with Erismann for decades – together we developed our wallcover base solutions focused on new market trends and quality requirements. Glatfelter highly appreciate the trusting and fruitful cooperation with Erismann “*

Stefan Buchstaller, Product Line Manager, Glatfelter

**EVERYONE**

**CAN BE**

**CREATIVE**

**NONWOVEN WALLCOVER BASE**

- Excellent dimensional stability
- Brilliant colour retention



**READ MORE AT:**

<https://glatfelter.com/solutions/segments/building/wallcover/>