spaces
Dear Reader,

The world of USM Modular Furniture is as colorful and varied as an individual’s design preferences. The unique modularity now goes hand in hand with an equally unique range of surfaces: over 55 colors and materials are available for the new USM tabletops.

Our clients show how differently this very principle is lived and realized around the world. In addition to traditional office industries, many fashion, design and architecture schools, sport brands, museums and cafés have been devoted to USM for a long time. In Hilversum, for example, Europe’s sports shoe elite gather at the headquarters of Nike Europe for coffee and meetings surrounded by bright orange furniture. At the École Duperré in Paris, USM functions as the stage for the students’ creativity. On the gastronomic level, USM Modular Furniture ultimately proves its abilities alongside other designs in the Louvre-Lens restaurant and in a magazine café in Dubai.

Immerse yourself, relax, marvel – and take a look behind the scenes with Tyler Brûlé. His interview with Alexander Schärer is the prelude to the newest issue of «spaces». Enjoy.

USM Modular Furniture
Alexander Schärer

While USM pieces have long found themselves in well-arranged apartments and houses compressed delivery times to match. I sat down with USM's CEO, Alexander Schärer, to across the streets, locals are shuffling around quickly going about pre-holiday business classics and emerging talent, Wohnbedarf is also one of the most important retailers for However, a few streets back from the lake, the mood is considerably sunnier at retailer USM. Alongside handsome wooden stools and chairs from BassamFellows, a USM It's early winter, and Zurich is not on its best behavior: there's a chilly sleet whipping around the world, there is a new emphasis on finding new homes for them, with special, and the city is generally gray and moody. However, a few streets back from the lake, the mood is considerably sunnier at retailer Wohnbedarf. Recognized as one of Europe's most respected outlets for both design USM. Alongside handsome wooden stools and chairs from BassamFellows, a USM However, a few streets back from the lake, the mood is considerably sunnier at retailer Wohnbedarf. Recognized as one of Europe's most respected outlets for both design USM. Alongside handsome wooden stools and chairs from BassamFellows, a USM

Tyler Brûlé

Tyler Brûlé: It's fitting that we're sitting in the middle of one of my favorite design retailers in the world. We happen to be sitting in Zurich, and obviously this is USM's home, or at least its home country. I want to start by talking about the idea of "Swiss-ness" – how important is provenance for your brand today? Alexander Schärer: In the late sixties and early seventies, there was not much emphasis on the product's origin. Instead, people like Fritz Haller and my father believed in the furniture's heri- tage and the flexible system that it created. In the beginning, this was seen as a universal solution that could be used worldwide – not a Swiss-made product. Over the years, the "Swiss-ness" of the furniture system has grown in our brand positioning, and there are two major reasons for that. First, mass production came early in our development strategy. Thanks to a highly automated process that we improve on a regular basis – for example, we have recently inaugurated a state-of-the-art powder-coating facility – production was never moved abroad.

Second, other values, such as responsible sourcing and work practices, have become much more important. Today, we produce a high-quality and high-precision product that is Swiss-made, and we will continue to do so for years to come. These remain the key values of our brand.

T. B. You can have all the money in the world, flip through an interior-design magazine and buy a shelving system and a sofa system. But do you think the consumer today really thinks about the whole process and how the social cost of making something in Switzerland, Sweden or Germany affects the final price? A. S. I believe you have to distinguish between the residential and commercial markets. People who select furniture for their home will probably pay more attention to these criteria than corporate customers, who might be more driven by short-term cost reduc- tion. I think the beauty of the USM product is the mixed-manu- facturing process that combines mass-automated production with handmade, customized assembly. This is the very essence of the system: an infinite number of balls, tubes and panels pro- duced by high-tech robots and carefully assembled by our fasti- dious technicians. I am sure people will welcome this idea.

T. B. Just yesterday I was visiting a new office building in Toronto, and you could see this company was in transition: They were moving in with their old furniture and inheri- ging all of this new furniture. The "old" furniture was only six years old, but you could see that nothing really mat- ched and there was no system – a lot of stuff was already going out in the bin. You can have all the certification that you want on something, but if it doesn’t last, it’s not that sustainable. So when you look at the classic nature of your system – that you can have pieces that you bought back in the seventies and eighties that you can still build from – does this become part of your sustainability story? A. S. Yes, I think that’s the basic idea of our furniture – that it grows with the needs of the user. Now that less space is required to file documents and the trend is for more inspirational spaces, maybe you will see fewer filing units and a nice library space for employees using the old furniture – no waste. Usually our clients become addicted to the system and start to love it and cherish it, and before they know it, it’s in their home as well as vice versa. They keep on playing with it and finding new configurations that look contemporary years after year. The funny part is that when you look at the pictures of my father’s office from the past, it looks even more contemporary than a lot of the pictures of the current USM installations. The only thing that makes it look old is the typewriter.

T.B. How much is USM driving the discussion when you think of the contemporary workplace? Whether you’re going to a big bank or you get a contract for a major hotel group to do three, four, five hundred units – is it still the architect who is installing the USM system? What is the tension between the architect specifying what they want versus you saying, “Here’s a solution: We’ve had this system for almost 50 years, it’s still innovative and this is how we think people need to organize themselves”? A. S. We have been working hand in hand with architects for years, but the relationship may have changed a little in recent years. The flexibility of the system has proven its strength. At USM, we have been living with this idea that you can virtually do anything with the system, but we might have been over- confident that this idea was also clearly understood by all archi- tects. Competition has become fierce, and some companies have developed specific types of furniture supported by drum- roll marketing activities that appear to be an office revolution. This gives them leverage on architects and trendsetters. The truth is that most solutions could be realized with USM, too. But if people don’t know it, they won’t choose your products for these projects. We have to show solutions, even futuristic ideas for our product, more proactively.

T. B. You can go into a company in Tokyo and it tends to be very open, with few barricades to be found on floors, if plenty of very large platforms. The U.S. is still in cubicle land. You go into offices in some parts of Scandinavia to find that they are open, but a lot of them still have doors, which is interesting to see. But is the world starting to flatten out when it comes to workspaces, or are there still zones that are very specific?
A family-owned company, USM is one of the driving factors, even in difficult economic times. You gain much more this way, because rent in cities remains high. So we are looking for solutions that reduce the footprint per capita. Square footage per employee was reduced, and thus reduce the footprint per capita. The financial crisis of 2008 brought new rules, because big corporations needed to heavily cut costs. Square footage per employee was reduced, and most big companies resorted to the good old cubicle solution to cut as many employees as possible into limited space. But I think there are many more creative and comfortable solutions that achieve the same result.

With the right investment in furniture, you can find a perfect solution for your staff and thus reduce the footprint per capita. You gain much more this way, because rent in cities remains the driving factor, even in difficult economic times.

T. B. Over the last five or six years, we’ve seen USM doing more advertising in a domestic setting: perhaps a shelving unit in a very nice hallway, which might be in a very nice apartment in Hamburg. That move to domestic advertising is obviously intended to build market share, but was bringing these items to this context also driven by the change in office spaces over the last decade? We’ve seen a lot more offices become warmer and more domestic – in part to make people feel like they are at home so that they work later. Was it because you recognized that trend that you started moving toward the domestic market, or was it simply a case of seeing a market-share opportunity and focusing on home publications? A. S. I think there are three reasons. Some people think USM is a cold product. It’s always black or white, very office-oriented and mainly for lawyers and engineers. By showing the product in a homier environment, we want to appeal to a wider range of people. This interesting development was driven by Vitro, the American producers, who initiated this homey feeling at the end of the nineties where it’s difficult for a newcomer to present its product. As Rimowa opening up more flagship stores around the world to get their message across, to explain their baggage to people. In many ways, we see the same thing with you. Suddenly, in the center of Berlin, an incredible space; in New York; in Marunouchi in Tokyo. Have global flagship stores become a large part of the business strategy? Because you really have to come in and touch it, look at the colors, hopefully not kick anything – but you really have to be immersed in that environment. You have to build your own temples, in a way.

A. S. Yes, it’s almost like a chicken and an egg question. In some parts of the world, we rely on great distributors who support our brand. Japan is one of these countries. There are other markets where it’s difficult for a newcomer to present its product.

If you go to a big design shop and you have a very little corner with one piece of furniture, people are not able to understand the modular concept because it’s just another piece of furniture in a big store. That’s one of the reasons why we opened these mono-branded showrooms all over the world – to provide the consumer with a real USM experience, discovering various solutions developed by expert staff.

T. B. It’s remarkable: We are sitting here discussing a product that is approaching its half-century anniversary, and yet, as you said, your brand is still unknown in certain parts of the world. I guess it’s exciting on one side, because it’s a world of opportunity. We’ve seen a company such as Rimowa opening up more flagship stores around the world to get their message across, to explain their baggage to people. In many ways, we see the same thing with you. Suddenly, in the center of Berlin, an incredible space; in New York; in Marunouchi in Tokyo. Have global flagship stores become a large part of the business strategy? Because you really have to come in and touch it, look at the colors, hopefully not kick anything – but you really have to be immersed in that environment. You have to build your own temples, in a way.

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T. B. There’s a big season of major trade fairs coming up. What are you looking at over the next 18 months? On the one side, you are not being blown by the main trends of the market. So if everyone wants crystal, your showroom is probably not the main place to come if you want that on your shelving system. Nevertheless, you have to follow color directions and what’s happening with residential trends. What are we going to see from an innovation point of view from USM?

A. S. We have been collaborating with atelier oï to develop new tabletops, introducing new colors and materials for all types of customers. Atelier oï has worked for Louis Vuitton and Bulgari, among other brands. We value their expertise and believe that the art with which they combine the hard and cold metal panels of the system with the warm and natural materials of the tabletops will help adapt our strategy to increase market share in the residential sector.

Brief answers to quick questions

T. B. Favorite color in the system?
A. S. Right now, orange.

T. B. Favorite tabletop system in the range?
A. S. For the working office, it’s the black linoleum, just because it’s nice to write on.

T. B. Favorite city?
A. S. New York.

T. B. Favorite airline?
A. S. (Laughs) Still Swiss – but with some reservations.

T. B. If USM were a car, what would it be?
A. S. A Porsche.

T. B. Favorite architect?
A. S. Fritz Haller.

T. B. Favorite city in Switzerland?
A. S. Zurich.

T. B. And finally, if you thought of USM as a fashion brand in terms of construction, architecture and focus on materials, what would it be?
A. S. Loro Piana: nice material, nice workmanship. They have been bought out now, but that’s fine by me.
Working with USM

Lend structure to offices – USM Modular Furniture is the framework that promotes creative work.
Inspirational space  In the world of business consulting, Weave has been a mover and shaker since 2001. A business strategy consulting company, it offers a client-centered point of view and promotes innovative solutions. Work methods and office life thus stray from the beaten path at Weave. Here, space serves creativity: Open offices foster easy communication, user-friendly boxes collect new ideas, lab space provides room for invention. Simply put, imagination is given free reign.

Completed in June 2013, the new 1,300-square-meter site, located in the heart of Paris, was designed around existing USM furniture. Having been used at Weave since 2003, USM was chosen not only for its clean lines but also for its sustainability and function. The modularity of the system was essential for Weave to grow from 120 employees in 2009 to 240 in 2014, just as it was essential for the company to move three times in seven years. Now arranged on the same floor, the company’s various departments are able to cross-pollinate their ideas, which flow across pieces of USM furniture that elegantly furnish the space without closing it off. And when the units collide with the walls, they bounce off the inspired words of the famous graffiti artist and calligrapher Tarek Benaoum. Inspiration, the driving force at Weave, is now taking the form of an in-house scent – a move that makes sense for a company that always has an avant-garde idea.
Combining USM furniture and wall calligraphy, the workspace promotes efficiency and inspiration.

One of the three large conference rooms, predominantly steel, furnished with USM Haller gray lacquered glass tables.
time
for
education
aac Academy for Architectural Culture, Hamburg (Germany)
Campus at the water's edge  For 250 years, sailors have been trained in the nautical academy in Hamburg-Altona. Today, this historic site allows architecture and design students to discover new horizons. The Maritime Academy has become part of the Rainvilleterrasse campus, in which the Academy for Architectural Culture (aac) plays an important part. The school was founded by Gerkan, Marg and Partners (gmp), the largest German architectural firm, which finances the training facility with its own foundation. The three-part main building from the 1930s has been renovated and professionally expanded for its new use. The academy’s commitment to sustainability is also reflected in the interior. “For decades, USM Haller has proven itself to be the most sustainable furniture in our gmp offices around the world,” says aac Director Enno Maass. In addition, the system is highly flexible, which allows for continuous adaptation to keep up with changing workplace requirements. The black color of the furniture provides a clear contrast with the maritime white of the walls and the warm tones of the historic oak parquet, creating a powerful environment for a future-oriented approach.
Professional Engineering Company, Wellington (New Zealand)

Comprehensive consultation  This multinational engineering and design firm has 150 offices and 14,000 employees distributed around the globe. The company, founded in New York more than one hundred years ago, is now active in the fields of strategic consulting, engineering, construction management and infrastructure/municipal planning. Plans were made to transform the branch in Wellington into a state-of-the-art office that could meet the demands of today’s world. And since the Auckland and Christchurch branches recently integrated USM Modular Furniture, the same was done in Wellington. This decision was made due to the firm’s consistently positive experiences with USM and as a way to strengthen the company’s corporate identity throughout New Zealand. Primarily light colors have been used to visually brighten up the somewhat dark offices. The reception desk and shelves are also pure white, beige or golden yellow. In addition, light and friendly shades prevail in the conference rooms. The golden-yellow glass plates of the USM Haller tables radiate a sunny ambiance, ideal for lively discussions. On one wall, a series of original Swiss train station clocks displays local times on the different continents – “global” can’t be illustrated any more impressively.
IBF – International Basketball Foundation c/o FIBA, Mies (Switzerland)

playing

top league
The antithesis of the ivory tower  Whenever the conversation at the headquarters of the International Basketball Association (FIBA) comes around to USM, the stories about happy coincidences and successful cooperation are quick to flow. For example, it’s been a long road to Mies; the organization has moved five times over the past 17 years. After the third complete renovation of the facilities, one thing became clear: “We needed a furniture system that can play along with change and growth, just like when our best players hit their shots,” says Florian Wanninger, the International Basketball Foundation’s director. “Since USM products are well thought out and elegant all at the same time, the game was already decided by the first quarter.” And it was a good decision, as the two subsequent moves have shown. Today, at the headquarters in Mies – the construction of which was completed in 2013 – every time the table and furnishings are used, they attract attention. From the exterior, the building is in the shape of a hand, framed by a white metal structure resembling the net of a basketball hoop. Inside, glass dominates the scene. A selection of materials symbolizes the transparency that FIBA is striving for: ditching the ivory tower and embracing an inviting openness. There is even a basketball hoop that hangs at the main entrance that is explicitly accessible to everyone, even the youth in town.
**Featuring raw materials**  The primary component of USM Modular Furniture is steel. It is a very energy-intensive material, from its manufacture to its final form. Nevertheless, USM products can be described as sustainable because they have a very long life cycle and can be adapted and reused continuously. We know that the longer a product lasts, the smaller its impact is on the environment. This is one reason why the swisscleantech trade association opted for furniture from Switzerland. The fact that USM is beautiful and practical was yet another reason. swisscleantech is committed to sustainable and liberal economic policies and represents the interests of the green economy. Its new offices in Zurich, near the Europa Allee and a few short minutes by foot from the central train station, are fully optimized for sustainability. Floors, ceilings, colors, lighting and furnishings have thus been selected according to ecological criteria. The unfinished wood fiberboards for the industrial ceiling, the light oak parquet on the floor and the simple, clean lines of the black USM Haller shelving give the room a very pleasant, open and stylish atmosphere ideal for generating smart ideas and strategies for the responsible use of our environment.
A beautiful school  The École Duperré was founded in 1864 to train young girls in sewing and the arts. One hundred fifty years later, the École Supérieure des Arts Appliqués Duperré (Duperré Academy of Applied Arts), as it is now known, is one of the most renowned schools for fashion and textiles as well as interior and graphic design. Its campus, in downtown Paris, welcomes 500 students across those disciplines.

In recent years, the school has upgraded its equipment, eager to emphasize its art-school curriculum. USM was chosen for its purity, lightness and modularity. The fashion workshop was the first to be furnished with USM; the computer room was next the following year, then the sewing workshop, the principal’s office, and so on – each according to very particular specifications. Just as fabrics cannot be organized like spools of thread, computer screens cannot be used as sewing machines. “USM’s attentiveness, its understanding of our needs and the relevance of its proposals were all crucial to the success of each workshop,” says Ms. Touil-Dubois, the school’s facility manager. She adds that the storage units are regularly used as exhibition displays for student presentations. The neutrality of the furniture, then, is an additional asset, as it does not upstage the projects on view. This is also why white was preferred over any other color.

Using USM, the school creates a harmonious aesthetic in keeping with the Duperré image – an image that never rivals the creativity of its students but rather fosters and highlights it.
A unit specially designed by USM allows clothing from the fashion workshop to be displayed. The fashion workshop above is furnished with USM storage furniture and a sewing table created specifically for this room.
In the computer room, each piece of furniture is sized to accommodate the screens and is accompanied by a keyboard table. In the sewing room (right), the sturdiness of USM furniture is proven on a daily basis through the use of the flap doors supporting the sewing machines.
Inspiration in green and orange  USM always has a place wherever tradition and innovation intersect but especially in multifunctional spaces. That is why USM’s modular systems fit Nike’s European headquarters in Hilversum like a glove, just as the shoes that are developed and designed here perfectly fit athletes’ feet. Hilversum is where Europe’s sports-shoe elite meet for exciting exchanges of ideas, meetings about trends and relaxing coffee breaks. This scene, which seems at first glance dedicated exclusively to catering and relaxation, is in truth a meeting hotspot and thus the office’s creative heart. It features extra-deep sofas and a Starbucks named after Nike founder Bill Bowerman with wooden panels featuring current and past Nike slogans as well as grass-green table and chair ensembles for smaller groups. Along the sides are M, L and XL meeting rooms. Right in the middle of everything: USM furnishings in bright orange like the world-famous swoosh. Workshop of Wonders, which furnished this space, could think of no better furniture combination to match the brand DNA.
Big Bird, Elmo, Bert and Ernie The stars of Sesame Street are known around the world, teaching (and entertaining) millions of children in over 150 countries. But the brand is more than a TV show. Its nonprofit arm, the Sesame Workshop, extends beyond the ABC’s of traditional education, with international programs tailored specifically to address relevant issues in individual countries. Initiatives include bringing early education to India’s poorest neighborhoods, providing information about HIV/AIDS in South Africa, and promoting respect and understanding for children of all backgrounds in Northern Ireland through “Muppet diplomacy.”

In 2012, the Sesame Workshop moved into this renovated 12,350-square-meter space, which embodies the organization’s playful approach to learning. The interior architects at HLW worked closely with Sesame’s internal creative team to create original wall murals that allow visitors to see and interact with the Muppet characters “in a contemporary way that felt appropriate to the brand.” Here, in the office’s common meeting areas, the artwork forms a backdrop for brightly upholstered seating in mismatched sizes and shapes. A USM Haller display case in pure white with glass shelving focuses attention where it should be: the cast of fuzzy characters who deliver important lifelong lessons to children across the globe.

a sunny day
This is where Dubai’s bustling business activities stand still for a moment. The coffee is fair trade and roasted locally, the baristas undergo intensive training, the independent magazines are sourced from around the world for their thought-provoking, alternative and intelligent perspective, and the furniture is from USM: In the Magazine Shop, only the highest quality in beverages, publishing and design will do. Located in Dubai’s International Financial Centre, the small café offers an oasis of coffee and literary culture uniquely separated by USM furnishings from the hustle and bustle of its surroundings. The height of the white furniture is arranged such that the café is set apart but still visually connected to the environment, appearing isolated and inviting at the same time. The function of USM is twofold: Used as freestanding walls facing outward that can be easily adapted and rearranged if necessary, the modules serve as a magazine rack on the inside and seamlessly transition over to the bar and counter area, thanks to a custom design made especially for the Magazine Shop. The result is one small world in the great big one, a perfect place for reading breaks, culinary reveries and inspiring hours of reflection.
Welcome to the museum!
**Furniture set** The Musée d’Orsay, housed in the former Orsay train station on the left bank of the Seine, opened in 1986. Its metal structure, built by Gustave Eiffel for the 1900 World’s Fair, holds the masterpieces of the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th centuries. With more than 3.5 million visitors in 2012, it is one of the most frequented museums in the French capital.

Not far from the works of Renoir, Van Gogh and Gauguin, USM furniture has been installed in various places since the museum’s beginnings. It is mainly used in the administrative offices, and has even become a second skin, perfectly adapting to permanent changes in the space. “Here, everything changes all the time,” says Catherine Bony, the museum’s logistics manager. “We have to change the furniture almost daily and, with this system, it only takes a few hours.” The Musée d’Orsay has an in-house technical department specializing in USM. Whether it is renovation work, continuous rearranging or setting up individual storage needs, the furniture follows the lead of Patrice Bugras, who prevails over his workshop full of thousands of separate components. Every day for 20 years, he has masterfully handled tubes, walls, doors and mechanisms in order to craft a piece of furniture, enlarge another or disassemble a third.

Backstage at the Musée d’Orsay, this collection is constantly changing.
In 1955, when a local company accepted 28 automobiles from Toyota at the port of Dubai, the region’s auto industry was born. That business, Al Futtaim Motors, is now the focal point of the industry. The showrooms, warehouses and service centers distributed throughout the United Arab Emirates make up the foundation of Al Futtaim’s triumphant progress. The company provides seamless quality service throughout the car buying process, and because of this, Al Futtaim, along with its sales figures, have been steadily growing for years. To adjust to this growth, the spatial and technical design of its offices is built with room for expansion. So, once again, USM was the magical solution when the company went in search of a flexible and yet aesthetically appropriate system in Dubai. Here, the office spaces complementing the local warehouse of the Al Futtaim Motors Parts Division feature ceiling-high windows providing clear, uninterrupted views of the desert and skyline – a spectacle of light and nature that is continually reflected in the white USM surfaces. The combination of high-design and nature makes it the perfect setting for visionary thinking.
once around the world
Once around the world  Ghiora Aharoni opened his multi-disciplinary studio for art, architecture and design in 2004, inspired by the principle of *gesamtkunstwerk*, the synthesis of multiple disciplines to create a total work of art. That concept extends to his New York headquarters, where his six-person team work side by side in an open-plan office. “The studio is an expression of our sensibility: purity of form; the combination of natural and industrial materials; craftsmanship; and technology,” says Aharoni, who chose USM Haller in graphite black to help establish flow and define the 140-square-meter space without detracting from the feeling of expansiveness. “It has the presence of a sculptural installation,” he says, “which forms an engaging counterpoint to other site-specific elements and furniture that I designed or selected for the studio.”

Inside the storage units, one can glean a more complete understanding of Aharoni’s *gesamtkunstwerk*. Behind any given door or inside any drawer, one will find an array of materials for the artist/designer’s many creative projects: antique Judaica, for a group of sculptures entitled the Genesis Series (pictured on the previous page); architectural drawings and balsa-wood building models; vintage travel snapshots from India used in his recent museum exhibition in Mumbai; a selection of wines; and, in Aharoni’s words, “all those other essential yet pedestrian things a studio needs but doesn’t need to see on a daily basis.”
Drive with passion  One of the world’s most modern automobile test tracks opened in the heart of Germany in 2013. The Bilster Berg Drive Resort spans 84 acres in Westphalia, a site formerly used by the British army as a munitions depot from 1973 to 1993. Entrepreneur and automobile lover Marcus Graf von Oeynhausen-Sierstorpff had the idea for its current use in 2004, when he crossed the area on a bicycle tour with its then-owner. With exemplary planning, in which some of the most renowned automobile sports experts participated, the former NATO site was transformed into a circuit and driving club. The facility provides the most ideal conditions for testing and presenting vehicles, for both the automotive industry and interested private parties. In addition to the 4.2-kilometer racetrack, a few new buildings have been built, forming a counterpoint to the monolithic character of the existing military structures, with their steel, glass and concrete facades. Only high-quality products were considered for the interior design. Says Managing Director Hans-Jürgen von Glasenapp: “USM was recommended to us. We saw an office that was perfectly furnished to our needs, and we were thrilled.” Cars are a passion. So is USM Furniture.
“We wanted a timeless, high-quality decor,” says Hans-Jürgen von Glasenapp, Bilster Berg Drive Resort’s managing director. USM Haller Furniture was the first choice. The black color is stylish and blends seamlessly into an ambiance that often includes the engine music of beautiful, fast cars.
Dental hi-tech  The Watanabe Dental Center in Kanagawa, Japan, cares for the health of its patients with absolute professionalism. Its team includes specialized anesthesiologists, oral and maxillofacial surgeons, dental technicians and hygienists, who work in an interdisciplinary manner to find collaborative solutions for dental ailments. The center also offers micro-dentistry, a cutting-edge, largely painless treatment option. For aspiring dental specialists, the center is a popular training environment. The design of the room is also comprehensively thought out. The color-coordinated equipment relaxes the customers and motivates specialists as they work. “To look at a Japanese garden and simultaneously be treated in a contemporary space, characterized by the design sensibilities of USM Haller, is the ideal treatment plan for patients,” says Mr. Watanabe. The modernity, functionality, color scheme and high degree of flexibility have made USM Haller his first choice. “To continuously keep changing details while keeping the same basic design for nearly 50 years is fascinating.”
Bernese landmarks  The city of Bern has more than just the Bear Pit, the Cathedral of Bern and Federal Palace. LOEB has also become a widely recognized name in the federal city – and not just because you can arrange to meet at the “loeb corner,” or “Loebegg,” as the locals say. For generations, Loeb has simply been the department store for the residents of Bern. For over a century, the family-owned business has been cultivating its traditions as much as it has been impressing us with new ideas. As such, the legendary shop windows are always decorated in surprising ways and are reason enough for many to pay a visit to downtown Bern. Another trend-setting step was taken with the recent renovation of the offices for the administrative and graphics staff. An open-plan setup, adapted to today’s requirements with regard to ergonomics, lighting, as well as communication and presentation technology, now provides for the well-being and productivity of the employees. The space needed to be bright and sleek. The white USM Haller furniture meets this challenge perfectly, with its light and elegant appearance. Thanks to the cooperation between Loeb and USM, the histories of these two traditional Bernese family-owned businesses have been enriched with yet another great chapter.
a showcase for treasures
Louvre in the north  The opening of the Louvre-Lens in December 2012 at a former mining site in northern France caused a great stir. With 900,000 visitors in its first year, the gamble on attractiveness has been more than won. The glass-and-steel casing, whose designers, Sanaa, describe as “simple but not harsh,” won the Japanese studio the Équerre d’argent.

It is this beautifully simple spirit that led to USM being chosen for the museum shop and restaurant. “USM furniture matched our specifications for the shop in terms of its fluidity, lightness, modularity, and the glass and steel echo the building’s structure,” says Catherine Ferrar, the Louvre-Lens’ general manager. USM’s modularity is a major advantage in this space, where everything changes from one season to the next to accommodate new products and furniture layouts.

Not far from the shop is the culinary art featured at L’Atelier de Marc Meurin. To accompany the choreography of plates, chef Marc Meurin was looking for a sideboard that was just as stylish as it was functional. His exchanges with USM gave rise to a piece of furniture accessible on all four sides, extremely convenient for service. On a visual level, its clearly defined structure and bold yellow color create a unique aesthetic that personalizes the space.

From the shop to the restaurant, these two dimensions of a single project reveal the intelligence of furniture that has the ability of combining design with function.
Suor Orsola Benincasa University, Naples (Italy)

**Toys of knowledge**  Naples boasts some of the world’s best opera houses and theaters and is often called an open-air museum because of its many historic statues and monuments. In addition to the historic center, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, other must-see attractions include the city of Pompeii, buried under ash in 79 AD, and the volcano responsible for its destruction, Mount Vesuvius. The Suor Orsola Benincasa University’s main office is located in a former monastery on the city’s slopes, with a wonderful view of the gulf and the metropolis. Founded in 1864, the university today has three faculties, with seven undergraduate programs, as well as schools starting from the elementary level up to high school. The institute also houses the Toy Museum of Naples, whose curators have chosen USM Haller display cases to showcase the precious items in the collection. With their transparency and lightness, USM furniture is a worthy stage for the exhibits, artfully illuminating the toys with integrated LED lighting. The “Principessa” meeting room and the “Villani” conference space, with its impressive boiserie panels, are both furnished with USM Kitos tables that can be joined together. Their technically sophisticated design promotes creative dialogue between scientists when they get together to “toy” around with ideas.
Historic dolls, puzzle games and many other toys from the 18th–20th centuries are presented in USM Haller display cases. The LED lights provide targeted lighting, while the locks protect the valuable exhibits from unauthorized access. Roundtable discussions and seminars are held in the “Princessa” room, the historic library. The large meeting table in black oak veneer forms a beautiful contrast to the neoclassical bookcases made of Italian walnut.
The sound of silence  Feeling comfortable in a building is an essential part of modern living. This is achieved through sophisticated designs, including thermal insulation and proper sound insulation. The Schöck Group, headquartered in Baden-Baden, has made a name for itself around the world by developing such high-quality construction components. These materials are not the only things at Schöck that come together: The corporate spirit binds more than 600 employees, who benefit from a culture that fosters respect for one another, places a premium on personal responsibility and gives everyone the freedom to play an active role in the process of innovation. Even in the newly renovated office buildings, these values come into play. With the height-adjustable USM Kitos tables, employees get ergonomically flawless and customizable work surfaces. The acoustically active USM Haller sideboards provide exemplary sound insulation and an ideal atmosphere for staying focused on work. Along with the board of directors, a group of employees who had the opportunity to test various office systems also spoke in favor of using USM Modular Furniture in the space. The adaptable modules, timeless quality and lasting durability convinced everyone.
wonders behind walls
**The wonder behind the wall**  Stuffed animals and lots of little accessories and objets d’art on the shelves, wall and staircase give the premises a naturalistic-artistic flair that sparks creative work. In this setting, USM Haller draws a clear line. Masamichi Katayama, director of Wonderwall Inc., opted for white, the most neutral color that does not distract from anything. But he also appreciates the furniture’s signature functionality: “I have always been impressed by the excellent design and the flexibility offered by the system.” Wonderwall produces design concepts with bold ideas without neglecting the importance of tradition. The company, located in Tokyo, specializes in interior and architectural design, though it has recently expanded its purview with a new graphic design department. In urban metropolises such as Tokyo, Paris, New York, Sydney, Hong Kong and Shanghai, Wonderwall Inc. ensures that stores, shopping centers, restaurants, bars and offices provide atmospheres that are not only comfortable but inspiring. For its own five-story office complex, Wonderwall Inc. has privileged simplicity and function.
The employees were involved with the design of the workstations, down to the accessories. Rather than opting for standard furnishings, Ebner chose pieces of furniture and color schemes according to personal work situations. The USM Haller makes it easy to combine the individual components to suit new work conditions and styles.

Looking forward Ebner Publishing in Ulm is renowned for its numerous specialty publications targeting narrowly defined interests. These include Chronos, the world’s largest magazine dedicated to luxury watches, which is also published in New York under the title WatchTime. By gaining a foothold in the United States, the company has identified pioneering American ideas and applied them early in German-speaking markets. At the same time, digital growth is becoming increasingly important to the company, whose forward-looking focus is reflected in its ultramodern media building in Ulm. The showpiece captivates people with its architecture, energy efficiency and spacious office environment, which includes both work and relaxation areas. Each workstation was individually customized to satisfy specific requirements. Capable of being adjusted at any time to various ways of working, USM Haller Modular Furniture is perfectly suited to the task. The basic furnishings are light gray, while different colors were chosen for the conference rooms. Together with the contrasting hues, USM creates a thoroughly harmonious ambiance and inspire innovative ways of thinking.
Living with USM

Display collections, store your personal items – USM Modular Furniture is a special part of home.
When it was first built in 1857, this landmarked building in SoHo’s historic cast-iron district was a premier department store called Arnold, Constable & Co. Renamed simply the Constable Building, it is now full of converted residential lofts like this one, home to Glenn Elliott and his partner, Kristian Sibast. The building’s history was a selling point for the couple, who have a deep appreciation for solid construction, enduring quality and endless versatility. An engineer by training, Elliott says those qualities also informed their decision to outfit their apartment with USM Haller: “I love the way it can be built and deconstructed again and again to fill various purposes over its life. It is that sense of permanence that appeals to me.” Here, the furnishings serve two very different purposes: In pure white, it contributes a sense of calm in the airy, uncluttered bedroom (left). In steel blue, it provides a pop of color in a living room decked out for entertaining.
Some things are so clear they require no further explanation. For Raëd Abillama, the nature of his relationship with USM is one such case. "I am in love with USM," he says. Short and sweet, and yet anyone who has had the pleasure of roaming through the house that he built and furnished for his brother Karim’s family can see that they are much more than just sweet words. A symbiosis of old and new that couldn’t be more effortless, the home perfectly honors both tradition and modernity equally. Constructed on the foundation of an old Beirut townhouse once marred by civil war, the structure has been spectacularly resurrected and is now more beautiful than ever. It is here, in the connection between the original and new walls, that Abillama’s love of USM is on display. In the hallway, a USM Haller table in bright orange complements a bold work of art. In the children’s rooms, shelving acts as the perfect stage for princesses’ dreams, while another shelf is the point of departure for imaginary safari expeditions.
Housed in an ultramodern building designed by famed French architect Jean Nouvel, Sherry Matthews’ home office comes alive with colorful Cuban posters and an eclectic assortment of tribal masks that she has collected around the world. “I have been to 80 countries and hope to hit 100!” says the globe-trotting marketing executive. Her agency, Sherry Matthews Advocacy Marketing, focuses exclusively on public-service work for government and non-profit organizations seeking to publicize everything from the dangers of drunk driving to the benefits of regular dental visits.

“We have to be clear, concise and focused in our messaging,” Matthews says. “I don’t like clutter and ambiguity in my business, and that is reflected also in my office space.” She chose black USM Haller furniture for its neutrality, efficiency and organization: “My USM system is so multipurpose and versatile that almost every file and record I maintain is kept there.”
Lukasz and Magda Zagala (Medusa Group), Gliwice (Poland)

Architect Lukasz Zagala and his wife, Magda, took the medical principle of “first, do no harm” to heart when they began renovating this old building, taking care to preserve the spatial genius of the former Prussian army stable. The masonry, wood construction and even the old, rusty barn doors were restored as faithfully as possible to their original state. The last now hang in the living area and dining room as enormous pieces of wall art. This is one way that the authentic character of the building was honored. Since more or less everything is painted white, the rooms, despite their age, look contemporary. As a central element, room divider and sculpture all in one, the black metal staircase winds from the cellar to the living room and up to the bedrooms. Its rustic design in raw steel harmonizes beautifully with the rooms. The owners chose the USM Haller Modular Furniture system in black and white because of its simplicity and elegance and as a way of complementing the distinctive space. In addition, these neutral colors provide maximum flexibility for the next interior redesign, which happens every now and then in the creative Zagala home.
Ronni Molinari’s 1810 home may blend in with the other New England–style houses in this suburban Connecticut town, but the interior is anything but traditional. Nowhere is that more evident than in her family’s “studio,” which the architect describes as a “playroom for the creative soul.” Below the dramatic vaulted ceiling, Molinari, along with her husband and two sons (aged 4 and 7), work on their respective artwork and design projects, ranging from Lego structures and 3-D-printed objects to photography and video. Spanning an entire wall, USM Haller furniture organizes all of their supplies – books, fine art materials, tools and assorted hardware. Molinari chose pure white to complement the room’s sculptural furniture and artwork, which includes a three-dimensional wall hanging by the Japanese-American artist Jacob Hashimoto and a photographic print by Henri Cartier-Bresson. “With the floating volume of closed compartments at the center, I felt that a color other than white would draw the eye to the center, and I wanted the piece to register as one volume,” the designer says. “I like the way you see the shelving system as a whole first, then discover the floating volume as an afterthought.”
After their children moved out, Chantal and Dominique decided to give the house they had lived in for 30 years a radical make-over, abandoning the farmhouse style for a more contemporary feel. On the second floor, they created an expansive office-library, where the impressive collection of books, once scattered throughout the house, finally found a showcase suitable for its size. USM’s furniture design enticed the couple, and its modularity was the convincing factor. Their library project was developed as an ensemble of functional parts: a reading table, cabinets of various sizes, the integration of doors to create storage space – and for color, a warm, bright yellow. “A very playful experience,” Chantal says. In addition, various base units fill the room, creating a pleasant space to relax or work. Alongside the majestic old beams, USM furniture enhances the old architectural details while appearing to have always been there. The contemporary challenge was a complete success.
New from USM

Whether it is new table surfaces, new online tools or new projects, here you will learn what is going on at USM.

Tables with character
Are you a purist whose heart sometimes beats to a Bohemian rhythm? Do you love the outdoors but still want to flirt with luxury? Styles, looks and personalities change, grow and evolve, and with them the ways we live. This is the reason why you can now choose elegant, new USM table surfaces in over 55 colors and materials and define your very own individual style. With personally created environments to live in, USM proves that living is a matter of personal character.
A secret just for you
The product developers at USM are constantly working on future-oriented projects. But you don’t need to take a look into a crystal ball to see what they are up to. We snuck into the highly secure test workshop and spied on secret papers. That is why we are able to disclose exclusive information to you here about what the next launch on the market will be. In 2015, the Kitos E Table range will be expanded with two additional products. One is an electrical standing table for successful meetings while the other is a mechanical height-adjustable table entirely free of hydraulics and springs. Privacy panels will not only ensure that employees have discrete spaces in large open-plan offices, they will also reduce noise levels and provide visual highlights.

USM on Facebook
USM Modular Furniture does not just present a classic product in the physical world. Virtually, the clean shapes and strong colors are also presented in the best possible light.

The design of USM’s website, redesigned in the summer of 2013, features strong images and text. Immerse yourself at www.usm.com.

For background information and surprising news about USM, find us on Facebook. Like us at www.facebook.com/usmmodularfurniture.

If you are more the visual type, you will find those powerful USM images you have been missing on Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/usmfurniture.

Would you like to receive regular news updates? Sign up at www.usm.com under “Contact” and you’ll receive our Newsletter 3 – 4 times annually.
workspace for 3 people
Furniture: USM Haller in pure orange, USM foam
Sales partner: Giraffe Concept Store, (Lublin, Lubelskie Region)
Architect: Biala Arkitekta Architekti, Biala (Lublin, Lubelskie Region)
Sherry Matthews, New York (USA)
workspace for 4 people
Furniture: USM Haller in graphite black, USM Tabi in black laminate, pearl grey laminate, USM custom furniture in pearl grey laminate.
Sales partner: ASEM DESIGN, (Luzern) (Switzerland)
Lukasz and Magda Zagala (Medusa Group), (Gdansk) (Poland)
Living space for 2 people
Furniture: USM Haller in pure white, USM kitos tables in pearl grey laminate.
Sales partner: IDM, (Nantes) (France)
Beppe Raso, Carenno (Italy)
Jean-Marc Palisse, Paris (France), p. 28
Simon Opladen, Bern (Switzerland)
Steve Tomlin, Woking (UK)
All other countries
contact USM Switzerland.