



## SONDERBORG KOKKEN

### BACKGROUND & OWNERSHIP

SONDERBORG KOKKEN is a Danish kitchen factory situated in an old Danish market town by the name Sønderborg. The factory first saw the light of day back in year 1973 and has since become a well-known brand in the Danish kitchen industry.

When Johnny Petersen, owner and CEO of SONDERBORG KOKKEN, first stepped into the kitchen industry, he was only 18 years old. As a young trainee he drew attention to his different ways of doing things. His curious mind and sense of creativity was so remarkable that shortly after his graduation, he was given the managerial responsibility for the then newly built kitchen factory, SONDERBORG KOKKEN, in 1974. In 1980 he was appointed manager of finance and sales by the board of directors. Knud Madsen was appointed manager of procurement and production. In the following 7 years they were the force behind SONDERBORG KOKKEN. In 1987 they each took 50% ownership of the company and turned it into a brand synonymous with quality and good design. 21 years down the road Knud Madsen decided to retire from his career. Johnny then took ownership of the entire company in 2008.

#### Statement - Johnny Petersen

*"The development in the kitchen industry has always been both challenging and motivational for me. 45 years in the profession has taught me, that pursuing your goals while still maintaining a reasonable attitude towards things is the key to success. It seems like a simple philosophy, but it has more power to it. In my understanding, talent is not enough. You must be passionate about your work – regardless of what task or position you once chose to take on."*

#### CV – Johnny Petersen

Year 1973 – Employed as trainee  
Year 1974 – Trainee and project assistant  
Year 1975 – Head of office and sales manager  
Year 1980 – Manager of finance and sales  
Year 1987 – 50% ownership of SONDERBORG KOKKEN  
Year 2002 – Construction of a new sales and exhibition space,  
Year 2008 – 100% ownership of SONDERBORG KOKKEN  
Year 2013 – 40-year anniversary in the kitchen industry

### STRATEGY & PRODUCTION GROWTH THROUGH THE YEARS

Up until 1980 the production scale of SONDERBORG KOKKEN was accommodated to mainly serve large building projects with simple designs. At the time there was only approx. 110 small and large kitchen factories in Denmark. In the following years the kitchen gained a higher priority among Danes. People started investing more in interior décor and the kitchen became a central room. SONDERBORG KOKKEN rearranged its production and entered a new era as a make-to-order company. From here on focus has since been on producing individual solutions with ongoing new products and designs. Around the same time SONDERBORG KOKKEN also began exporting to other countries. Our business concept is currently represented in Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Ireland, Norway, Greenland, Iceland, Japan, USA and Mexico. Through many years it has proven its worth. It stood the test during the recent financial crisis and continuous to withstand external pressure.

Since the beginning we have strived to be at the forefront of the kitchen industry. Over the years we have developed classic kitchen designs according to contemporary trends. In addition to kitchen designs, we also make solutions for bath and other rooms in the house. Our customers have always been a great inspiration to us. Their demands and wishes inspires us to constantly come up with new innovative ideas.

#### Specially known design products in our range include:

- **ANTIQUÉ LIFESTYLE**  
- Probably our most famous product. The design was created upon an incidence where a customer wanted an English country styled kitchen.

- **LINIER**  
- A minimalistic and classic kitchen design with a unique handle arrangement.
- **COPENHAGEN CLASSIC**  
- A design product that was created for our Copenhagen-based customers - a nostalgic design with a modern take on the old kitchens of the Danish capital.
- **BASELIFT**  
- A height-adjustable system invented by SONDERBORG KOKKEN and developed in cooperation with the globally known Danish company, Linak.

## KNOWLEDGE SHARING

We consider ourselves an innovative company. We find pleasure in developing new products and designs – so much that we do not know how to stop. Our driving force is our curiosity. We have an unstoppable need of constantly wanting to do better. Challenges are to be solved. That is where we make a difference. We believe that knowledge-sharing is a corporate social responsibility. An obligation we uphold by regularly educating young design students. We set tasks and evaluate answers. Our presentation film is an example of this. It is made by a group of multimedia design students from the local business academy.

We often have quests who visit us for different reasons. They are always given a guided tour of the factory and Design Center, including a lesson in the history of SONDERBORG KOKKEN. Every year we welcome visitors from Japan, but so many other exciting things has happened throughout the years. One particularly interesting experience was the time we helped DANIDA (a Danish development corporation) establish a kitchen factory in the capital of Ghana. The factory was meant as a development project and included installing machines and educating the Ghanaians in production manufacturing, advanced drawing techniques and sales management. The project extended over many years and was both a challenging and rewarding experience.

## OUR WAY OF RUNNING BUSINESS

We make customized products for both private customers (B2C) and business clients (B2B). Besides our dealers in Denmark, we also have an established network of dealers in Ireland, USA and Japan, to mention some, who all have our full support. During the difficult financial crisis, none of our dealers were forced into bankruptcy, which is a solid proof of our business conduct.

Our employment policy is based on security and trust. Among some of our health promoting initiatives are physiotherapy and a smoking policy. To foster and boost creativity and team performance we sometimes arrange study trips, team building seminars and informal get-togethers. We believe that being able to laugh with each other and having security of employment, makes the best conditions for a healthy and well-functioning work environment.

All production related activities are quality checked and carefully planned into our annual budgets. We always make sure to match our expectations with our business relations. We make demands while also keeping our end of the deal. Continuity and credibility are the foundation of a good and strong collaboration. Mutual trust and respect always have and always will be beneficial for all parties, most importantly our customers.

To sum up, our passion for creating design solutions, our business concepts, strategies and ability to dedicate and invest time in each of our customers, are what keeps us going. We have a sound business policy and the highest achievable creditworthiness among businesses – the Danish Triple AAA Rating. Through the years we have managed to build a good reputation among our clientele and the industry in general. We have become known for our high standard of service, and above all, our classic kitchen designs. Our ambitions have never been to gain large market shares. We are a small but distinctive player in an exciting industry. The aim from the get-go has always been to create and share experiences with our customers.

All of this has led us far, but we have yet to finish. We have so much more to offer and look forward to seeing what the future brings.