

## LOVE & PASSION

An interview with *friendly hunting's* CEOs Michaela and Christian Goldman:

### **What's it like when your life partner is also your business partner? What is the secret of your successful cooperation?**

**Michaela Goldman:** We met through our mutual interest in beautiful objects and are used to working together professionally. We make sure to respect each other's creative freedom and accept each other's decisions 100 per cent.

### **Is there any time left for your personal life at all?**

**Christian Goldman:** Yes, every day for lunch, the family gathers. That means a lot to us, no matter how busy we are. Only during times when we are travelling, we unfortunately have to skip this ritual.

### **How important is sustainability to you?**

**Michaela Goldman:** Sustainability should form an important component in everyone's life. We train and sensitize our staff in Nepal to become more aware of it; and we train ourselves – starting with the small things at home, for example how we behave in front of our children. It's important that we remain role models for them.

### **How many children do you have?**

**Christian Goldman:** My wife and I have three children together. They are our top priority, which automatically ensures the best kind of sustainability. Showing responsibility for your tasks in life is essential and keeps you grounded.

### **Why fashion?**

**Christian Goldman:** Fashion is our second skin, a beautiful surface. It's supposed to be fun for the wearer and should accompany her or him like a friend. It's not so easy to find true friends, and one should take great care when selecting them. The same is true for any objects you surround yourself with. *Keep your sense of beauty* is my motto.

### **How long have you been working in the fashion industry?**

**Christian Goldman:** I've never worked in an 'industry,' I usually work with people or spend time with them. When they inspire me or I inspire them, something special can evolve. That special 'something' is the result of an earlier process, and when we feel that it's 'good,' it will be confirmed and will become a success. My urge is to constantly improve what was before. The time I spend doing that comes with a strong feeling of creativity and being alive. Nowadays, I can afford the luxury to focus only on people who are good for me, and I consider that to be a great gift. But to get back to your question: I've been working in fashion for more than two decades.

## How would you define your own "job"?

**Christian Goldman:** You can't really call what I am doing a 'job.' Making optimal use of my time and being completely absorbed is a huge challenge and responsibility. *friendly hunting* is very close to my heart, and we have long-term plans with it. The 'job,' if that's what you want to call it, is to remain aware and perceptive. At the same time, it's crucial to remain open towards the people who are involved in the *doing* of this together with you.

## What is the philosophy behind the *friendly hunting* brand?

**Christian Goldman:** The claim "for people with positive attitude" refers to the core of our brand and to our personal view of the world. Circumstances are not always ideal, but everyone is in a position to change their own attitude. Life is constantly changing.

## What's behind the name?

**Christian Goldman:** *friendly hunting* is a modern word combination that unites and balances polarizing forces, just like the Hindu symbol of Shiva Lingam or the Yin Yang.

## How many collections do you create?

**Christian Goldman:** *friendly hunting* is developing and creating collections all the time. Apart from four clothing collections per year, we have additional home- and beauty programs; we are basically always working on something new.

## How do you identify new trends?

**Michaela Goldman:** We just walk around with our senses wide open. Often, it's the little things that trigger the larger ideas.

## What turns a *friendly hunting* customer into a loyal customer?

**Christian Goldman:** superb quality, excellent design and the unique nature of our products.

## How do you ensure your high quality, and where do you produce your clothing?

**Christian Goldman:** Anyone who has ever been to Nepal will be fascinated by the highly developed craftsmanship of the people there. Whenever I take someone along to visit our manufacturing plants, they are awed by the fact that everything we produce in Nepal is 100% handmade.

All our processes are coordinated very well among each other; otherwise, we would not be able to consistently deliver such high quality.

As far as I know, we are also one of the last businesses that actually work like this - every step handmade. It's a huge challenge to work like this - to craft every single product by hand. It requires a long tradition of know-how being passed on from generation to generation - turning out the best possible craftspeople available.

I am both proud and grateful that I have the opportunity to produce our garments in this very special way.

**What is your brand's special mix? How do you connect trends and timeless elegance for example?**

**Michaela Goldmann:** A lot of that happens automatically when cashmere is your main material. I don't really like the term 'timeless elegance' though, because that is exactly what's different at *friendly hunting*. We emphasize little details and include small modifications that distinctly place us outside of the traditional cashmere context.

**Christian Goldmann:** I think it's important to be tuned in to subtle currents if you want everything to feel 'right' in the here and now. I'm careful with the word *trend*, which to me seems to focus a little too much on the surface. A *trend* doesn't really *understand* and there usually hasn't been enough research. Elegance is something that you have or you don't have; it's an attitude.

**What is so special about the *friendly hunting* cuts?**

**Michaela Goldmann:** We try to do justice to 'women in general.' Knitwear tends to be comfortable for example and is supposed to gently envelop the wearer. That doesn't mean that we want to cover up a woman's figure; there are always more closely fitting garments and elements as well.

**And how do you create that huge feel good factor?**

**Christian Goldmann:** I am convinced that a lovingly handcrafted garment just has –and *lends*– an enhanced aura.

**What do you yourself prefer to wear?**

**Michaela Goldmann:** That depends on the circumstances, but I do spend most of my time in cashmere of course. I combine my clothing to match the occasion and make sure that I always hit a kind of "comfortable-but-fashionable" note. Luckily, that is not so difficult with cashmere garments that are distinctive per se. Additionally, I find it easy to 'upgrade' any kind of outfit with one of our shawls or scarves.

**How would you describe your own style?**

**Michaela Goldmann:** I make sure to include contrasts, which is nothing new or revolutionary. A slim pair of pants for example goes well with a bulky top, and the combination of cashmere and leather or cashmere and silk will always work as well.

**Do you have a vision for *friendly hunting*? How will the brand develop?**

**CG:** the brand will definitely stick to its motto "*for people with positive attitude.*" We will strengthen the brand with our own stores that we've opened in Munich, Düsseldorf and Hamburg. The stores display the entire *world of friendly-hunting*. But cooperation with strong partners in the retail sector is also important and valuable to us in order to enhance and strengthen the brand awareness.

**You've founded the association *Namasté*. What is the goal that you want to reach with *Namasté*?**

**Christian Goldman:** *Namasté e.V.* supports children in Nepal so that they can obtain a better education. Nepal is among the poorest countries in the world, and what the country needs the most is a new generation of well-educated young people. Democracy and peace can only work when the people are educated. And Nepal has a huge potential: Water! When it comes to water, Nepal is the second richest nation in the world. This will sooner rather than later draw the attention of its strong 'tiger state' neighbors China and India. So Nepal urgently needs all the expertise and cleverness it can get so that this potential turns into benefits for the people in the country. Since the spring of 2014, we also run a small orphanage that offers a home for children.

**Your engagement in Nepal shows a lot of compassion for the coming generation there. What is it that you like so much about the country?**

**Michaela Goldman:** The unique diversity of the countryside, the remarkable warmth and hospitality of the people, the respect towards others, the rich traditions and the peaceful co-existence with -and acceptance of- other religions.

**Christian Goldman:** I've never experienced such warm-heartedness and openness of people towards me anywhere else. That is what I love the most about Nepal.