

Press release



Centrepiece of the family enterprise sets new standards with sustainable building

Schwalbe moves into hybrid building – sculpture greets visitors

New centrepiece at headquarters in Reichshof: Schwalbe has moved into its hybrid building, which has been constructed over the past three years on a 2,200 m² site and with four levels. During construction, the family enterprise has been following the Cradle-to-Cradle principle for sustainable building construction as much as possible. According to this principle, all materials cycle within closed loops, just like in nature.

Frank Bohle, executive partner of Ralf Bohle GmbH: “Sustainability has been playing a major role at Schwalbe for many years and continues to do so. Therefore, it was very important to us that we value humanity and nature with a healthy and adaptable building. We have created an inspiring and innovative work environment with spaces for communication, to motivate and which, already today, comes with a positive footprint for the future.”

Ralf Bohle GmbH invested approximately 20 million Euro into the new building, designed by architect Ralf Janz. The exterior exhibits straight lines in recyclable Alucobond panel cladding, while the interior is dominated by tall spaces flooded with natural light, warm beige colours of rubber tree wood and extensive greening of the walls.

The architecture offers a creative space for Schwalbe’s research and development department as well as for marketing and company management. A large exhibition of cycle industry brands will enhance the experience of ‘bicycle culture’ and Schwalbe’s passion for bicycle tires. Meanwhile, a roof garden gives space for relaxation and a view of the Oberbergisch hills – fresh fruit and vegetables as well as herbs are also grown here for the canteen.

To apply the Cradle-to-Cradle principle step by step to its products, processes and the new building, Schwalbe has been working with the renowned consulting institute EPEA (Hamburg, Germany) since 2013, whose founder Prof. Michael Braungart has developed this concept. In accordance with Cradle-to-Cradle, the new building is, besides its main purpose, also a resource sink for future use. Even after decades, one will be able to easily track which materials were used for the building, as all components used carry a material pass — even the disassembly and separation of building elements into homogeneous raw materials are part of the concept.

New sculpture at Schwalbe's headquarters

All visitors to Ralf Bohle GmbH are greeted by a new sculpture in front of the building, a real eye catcher which is called "Grand Tour": 15 metres tall, multi-angled and with a colourful design. The four colours reflect the history and philosophy of the company.

The base of the sculpture is red. Frank Bohle explains: "This colour represents our unique Schwalbe spirit that is lived every day by our employees: their passionate dedication and strong will to continuously strive for top performance."

The next colour, blue, symbolises long journeys across the ocean to Asia. About 50 years ago, Ralf Bohle began importing tires of the Swallow brand from Korea. There, he found production partner Hung-A who he started a joint venture with, that still exists today; the two family enterprises have now been friends for decades.

The third colour – green – symbolises commitment to sustainability. For many years now, Schwalbe has been continuously striving to become more environmentally-friendly and responsible in its actions, and by developing its own tube recycling system and Fair Rubber initiative, the company has already achieved major milestones.

Right on top, the colour orange completes the sculpture's appearance as a symbol for creativity and innovative thinking which, during the company's history, has always been, and will continue to be, the basis for a successful future.

Brief company profile

Ralf Bohle GmbH, with its Schwalbe brand, is the European market leader for bicycle tires. The company has subsidiaries and distribution partners in about 60 countries. More than 180 members of staff are employed at Ralf Bohle GmbH in Reichshof, and 60 additional employees are working at five subsidiaries in Europe and North America. With a turnover of 225 million Euro in 2020, Schwalbe has, once again, set another company record. The third generation family-run company has been a forerunner with innovations such as the first "flat-less" bicycle tire: Schwalbe Marathon Plus. Also, in the area of sustainability, Ralf Bohle GmbH has implemented several green milestones, for example the first recycling system for bicycle tubes and Green Compound, a type of tread rubber made of renewable and recycled raw materials.