

About us - Schirm Oertel has been in downtown Bremen since 1890

Schirm Oertel is the oldest and largest specialised umbrella shop in Germany, and one of the oldest specialty shops in downtown Bremen. After the transition of the company into a focused and extremely specialised retail firm, we have achieved a position unique in Germany with our comprehensive product offering. We've had an Internet presence since 1998 and deliver to customers throughout the entire world.

Our Products

We carry an international line of all top products from Italy, France, England, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Germany, as well as imports from the Far East. We're also the specialists for all umbrella models made by Knirps. Our top-end price segment includes the designer products of Giorgio Armani, Moschino, Guy Laroche, Gianfranco Ferré, Gianni Versace, Fornasetti, Valentino, Pierre Cardin, Yves St. Laurent, and Brigg's of London.

We can also supply you with promotional umbrellas with your company logo, in all price ranges.

Through our specialisation with all products having to do with protection from the rain, we have been able to achieve a dominant position with our raincoat and rain boot products. Our coat line ranges from PVC raincoats to coated, breathable microfibre products made in Germany, Finland, Denmark, France, and Italy, as well as lightweight jackets and travel coats from Holland. Our specialty is rain capes made of waterproof fabrics and PVC. We offer these in elegant and attractive versions for the city, as well as sporty models for hiking and bicycling. We also offer waterproof and breathable rain jackets made of the same materials, and as suitable complements we have a large assortment of rain hats and rain shoes in our inventory.

The history of Schirm Oertel

1890 to 1984

A good 113 years ago the Rudolf Oertel Co. (today Schirm Oertel; "Schirm" is German for "umbrella") was founded in Bremen as an umbrella factory and specialist shop. The first location of this highly specialised firm was on the Obernstrasse, the most important shopping street in downtown Bremen. The retail store was located in a strikingly classic-style building next to the famous St. Ansgari church. The company's core strength was wooden handle turning and the manufacture of wooden shafts for sun and rain umbrellas. It also made shafts for walking sticks.

Through the invention of the telescoping pocket umbrella and the start of the "Original Knirps" as the first important worldwide umbrella brand, the market for umbrellas underwent radical change. The umbrella became an industrially manufactured product coming off of a production line. The successors to the founding generation recognized the changed market situation just in time before the world economic crisis began. They ceased their own manufacturing activities, expanded their main retail business in the downtown area, and opened a chain of shops elsewhere in Bremen. In 1944 the shops were destroyed, but sales continued from sheltered sites in the city. The location on the Obernstrasse was maintained up until 1984.

1984 until today

Following the acquisition in 1984 by the current owners, Dorrit and Rainer Gramke, and the decision to move the company to the more exclusive Sögestrasse, the focus shifted increasingly to offering a strong line of fashionable designer products. Nowhere else in Germany is a comparable inventory available.

In addition to all the key designer labels, sales were expanded of high-quality umbrellas under the name "Oertel Handmade" and bearing Bremen's key motif coat-of-arms. These umbrellas are made by the same factory which makes those of Louis Vuitton, Hermès, Chanel, and other top names.

The company's special position was further strengthened through an international product line of rainwear. Rain clothing from Schirm Oertel has since become a byword far beyond the city limits of Bremen. The ideas developed by Schirm Oertel can be found again in many collections of the large manufacturers.

Schirm Oertel on the Internet

The breadth of technical knowledge, the Hanseatic tradition, and the extreme degree of specialisation all have not prevented the company's management from making use of the Internet as a new sales channel. It began already in 1998 with the sites at "www.regenschirme.de" and "www.regenmode.de".

The website is updated virtually on a daily basis and continuously being expanded – and is among the best on the net according to customers.

A small company which places value on tradition has shown that it has mastered the transition to the next century through the use of modern technology. Today we're shipping umbrellas and raincoats to website customers in the USA, Australia, South America, Switzerland, and the entire EU. Internet sales are already around 10% of total sales, and 30% of total sales of our higher-priced and exclusive product lines. After 113 years of competence in dealing with umbrellas, a traditional yet still youthful company is thriving and open for business in a changing marketplace.