

LIVINGCULTURE



A jewel in paradise

The holdings of the IronLibrary contain not only books, but also a valuable stove.



An unusual showpiece in the GF collection: the Winterthurer tiled stove

Warmth, craft and life lessons

More than 350 years ago a precious tiled stove was built in Winterthur that teaches us about life. It is the most impressive item in the inventory of the Iron Library.

Schlatt, Switzerland

After a long cold clammy autumn day, to sit and relax on the stove bench and lean back against the tiles. To feel the pleasant warmth spread through your frozen limbs and climb up your spine as you doze to the crackling and popping of the fire. What pleasure. Yet it would be a sin to turn your back on an old tiled stove such as the one standing in the Iron Library. For the real pleasure in this case is what meets the eye.

ALLEGORY OF LIFE

For three centuries, the Swiss town of Winterthur was the centre of a flourishing stovemaking industry. Stove-fitters passed their knowledge about the best clays and the best firing techniques used in the craftsmanship of warmth from generation to generation. Each sought to excel in designing the most magnificent stoves for grand reception rooms. One such showpiece of the stove-fitter's craft now stands in the conference room of the Iron Library at the Paradies Estate, a former Clarissan convent. Every visitor who wishes to consult the most valuable books in the Iron Library, which are housed in the Ernst Müller Room, must pass the towering tiled stove that stands two metres high, one metre wide and almost two metres deep. An opulent abundance of painted and relief tiles, each a unique,

hand-made specimen, illustrates an allegory of life, the virtues and the seasons of the year as well as Biblical scenes.

THE LONG ROAD TO PARADISE

The tiled stove was built by Hans Heinrich Graf II, scion of one of the best-known families of Winterthur stove-fitters, in 1653 for the Steig mill in the town. As the coat-of-arms and the date on the upper cornice document, the stove was ordered by the then owner of the mill. For more than two hundred years the stove fulfilled its



At 10 a child
Was hat das Kind
betrübt Zytt
Die wyl es in der
wiegen lydt,
Syn schmerzte kan es
niemandt klage,
Wil es nit schwygen,
muss mans tragen.

How dreary does
infancy sound,
While the child is
cradle-bound.
Something is sore,
we all can hear it;
But ignorant we must
just grin and bear it.

functions as a source of warmth for the Steig mill. At the end of the nineteenth century the stove was sold for the first time, and then auctioned before finally

finding a new home in Hollenburg Castle in Lower Austria. But even this abode proved temporary: in the turmoil of World War II it was removed to a safe place and in 1948 returned to Switzerland. Through the mediation of the Swiss National Museum (Schweizerisches Landesmuseum) the



At 20 a youth
Es ist jetzt und warr-
lich der sitt,
Wan einer gaht zun
gsellen nit,
vnd ist nit tag vnd
nacht bym wyn,
So halt man in fur
ein schluffin.

It was always so and
still is right
That one who does not
with others sip
Or sit over wine by
day and night,
Is generally held
to be a drip.

stove ended up at the Paradies Estate. This grand Winterthur stove is one of the few precious examples that has survived virtually intact. The fitter used green and coloured relief tiles and painted tiles in the stove's construction. Glazed relief tiles depict personifications of the continents, surrounded by the figures representing the virtues. The four seasons are also presented as reliefs of scenes with a man and a

woman on the front of the stove. The foundation of the stove is covered with tiles illustrating scenes from the life of Mary, Mother of God. Painted tiles on the hexagonal stove tower shows allegories of the ages of man from the tenth to hundredth year, accompanied by explanatory verses. Thanks to the richness and abundance of motives and ornamentation, the stove is the focal point of the room, although for its protection it is no longer lit.

OLD JEWEL

The valuable Winterthur stove is currently awaiting restoration at the Paradies Estate, packed up so to prevent any of the fragile tiles from cracking. Once restored, it will once again adorn the conference room in all the grandeur of its more than 350 years. ■



At 80 a greybeard
Wie der neuntzigist
Psalmen guott
Von diesem allter
melden thuott.
Wan wir erreichen
Achtzig Jahr,
Sind wir erst arm
mueselig gar.

As Psalm 90 presages
About advanced ages:
When we reach our
80th year,
Life is really hard
to bear.

My city: Stockholm



Håkan Rosander,
Logistics and
Service Manager at
System 3R
International in
Vällingby, lives in
Stockholm, the capital of Sweden.



The island city

YOU ARE NEVER FAR from the sea in Stockholm. This wonderful city is built on 25 islands; another 25,000 islands in the immediate vicinity of the Swedish capital make it an Eldorado for water-sports enthusiasts.

The parts of Stockholm that are not at the water are green—the city is full of parks. I like to go walking on the island of Skeppsholmen, which offers charming views of the city and the old boats. It is also the site of the Museum of Modern Art and the House of Photography. Some 100 museums are spread around the city. The most famous is the Vasa Museum, erected specially for the wreck of the ship of the same name that sank on its maiden voyage 400 years ago.

Stockholm is also a multicultural city, as its restaurant scene makes clear. Immigrants have introduced specialities from the four corners of the earth. ■



Imposing: The 400-year-old wreck of the Vasa in the museum built specially for it



Island hopping: Riddarholmen, site of the city's old centre, is one of 25 islands that make up Stockholm.

MUSEUMS IN STOCKHOLM

- Vasa Museum:** Focus on ships—the museum with the imposing, perfectly preserved Vasa is a must for any visitor to Stockholm.
- Photography museum:** The House of Photography presents high-quality contemporary photography.
- Tobacco and Match Museum:** A curiosity cabinet of smoking and a mirror of industrial culture—with its own factory making tobacco products.

Lady Charmilles

Parents name child after company.

Bangkok, Thailand

Many founders of companies view their own firm very much as their "baby". It makes them particularly happy when one day a son or daughter steps up to carry on their life's work. In Thailand, the owners of a company have given their daughter a very special name: Charmilles. The girl's mother, Chontida Tharadol, and father, Verasak Porvattanakit, both in their forties, had virtually given up hope of ever having a child. Hence their joy was all the greater when Chontida gave birth to a healthy, beautiful daughter in January 2007. Their one dream in life was to build up a successful business: their other, to start a family.

With their happiness now complete, the parents hit on the idea of combining their two dreams. Machinery from Charmilles helped them to build up their company, which produces tools for the automotive industry. The word, which is not only the name of a machine tool manufacturer, but also the French for hornbeam, a species of beech, also sounds pretty as a girl's name. Thus, the parents forged a link between their company and their long-desired daughter by naming her Charmilles. Tony Johansson, Head of GF AgieCharmilles in Thailand, is proud of their decision: "We feel honoured that one of our customers has decided to call their only child after us." Of course, the company's employees will follow Charmilles' progress closely. She is already part of the GF family, as it were. ■



Father Verasak Porvattanakit and mother Chontida Tharadol, owners of the A-Precision Co. in Thailand, are delighted with their charming daughter. The little girl is called Charmilles.