

Franc service

With the euro going up and mainly down, and the Swiss franc playing the honourable but uneasy role of safe currency, many national and local businesses have taken a hit as the exchange rates between Switzerland and the euro zone have translated into customers looking – and going – more and more across the borders in search for better deals.

Cosmopolitan Geneva has been revealing its darkly provincial side lately. In the well-stocked shops, one can frequently eavesdrop on frank discussions between irate clients and uneasy shopkeepers, with the former openly threatening to go to *La France* to buy anything from staples to more substantial items, like houses. It's more than just a case of being penny-wise. Most of the local high street brands now blatantly encourage their customers to remain loyal by displaying signs asserting that the prices have been adjusted downward to reflect the euro's dramatic plunge. But some well-established houses have chosen to put their faith in that very Swiss vision of making business with service and quality.

Moyard, the interior design company based in Morges, is one of those that follows service philosophy. As co-director Jean Winkler explains, what truly sets the company apart and preserves its quality aura is the fact that Moyard, a respectable business born some seven generations ago, is completely integrated, not only a basic retailer of some great furniture designs. "We are informed of everything that comes in and everything that goes out," he says. "We really know what we are talking about when a customer enters our showroom." Moyard's vision of doing

business fast surpasses that of a simple reseller; the company's founders and collaborators are able to intervene on an ongoing construction site if the client feels some help is needed, and even if it is not Moyard's primary business. Clearly here, what the client needs and wants is paramount, as the other co-director, Mathieu Winkler, explaining that the company is proficient in a wide range of areas, from architecture to interior arrangements. "It is naturally part of our job for important worksites, but also for clients who suddenly think about us

because they encounter some difficulty with their worksite or in their plans for interior decoration," he points out. He underlines that each and every client benefits from the same consideration whatever the final amount of the purchases made. "What we really care about is the quality and service reputation that is attached to our house name." To maintain that reputation, Moyard is ready to go the extra mile, especially in a period where the loyalty of clients keeps being tested by economic hardship and attractive exchange



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1. A family affair, Mathieu and Jean Winkler, heads Moyard
2. Le Corbusier, a touch of timeless industrialism
3. Swiss design, Indonesian crafts, wood from sustainable forestry

with an offering that is both broad and edgy. "Minotti, Edra, and Moroso are the Italian brands we love to represent and propose to our clients. We are also very much aware of what is going on in the Nordic countries, and we are introducing a Nordic brand called Muuto." Any tips for this interior design season? "Well, you should not forget about the Swiss," laughs Mathieu Winkler, "because they are quite gifted..." Moyard is in fact launching a brand called Inch Furniture, which was in charge of the Swiss pavilion in Shanghai, and has the particularity of having a very talented cabinetmaker on its team, who works with the best cabinetmaker school in Java." Java is bound to give the Morges-based company an exotic twist. <<<<<

rates for those buying in neighbouring countries. "We know that clients have a very different way of buying today. Even when they have the means to do so, they do not necessarily go for expensive buys because furniture life expectancy has dramatically shortened."

Easy come, easy go

People buy faster, and get bored faster too, a radical change in consuming habits that has affected even dignified family businesses. Moyard's answer is nonetheless to remain true to its service tradition, a particularity sure to please demanding and short-attention spanned customers. "We know that customers go here and there to shop," says Jean Winkler, "but it does not deter us".

A profound respect for this customer service tradition does not mean, however, that Moyard should be deemed a traditionalist business in the least appealing meaning of the term, i.e., old-fashioned. On the contrary, the company remains at the forefront of what is up and coming in the world of interior design, and hopes to keep its customers fan base happy and win new ones



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