

KNOLL is family-oriented and open-minded.
There is a story behind this...



Two generations of one family at KNOLL? This is nothing unusual. Of around 15 % of the apprentices starting each year, each has at least one family member who already works at KNOLL.

Since September of last year, there is even an apprentice whose family has been employed at KNOLL for three generations and has thus been present during the development of the company from the very beginning. During an interview, Johann ("Hanne") and Dirk Dreher, Christian Menner, Thomas and Marco Pastuovic talk about training and employment at KNOLL. The second employee ever and the first apprentice in the company get a chance to speak and the company's story is therefore told, to a certain extent, from the perspective of employees who were there right from the start.

Hanne Dreher was the second employee ever at KNOLL. He began as a machinist in 1972 (at that time, it was at the first company headquarters in Bad Saulgau, Glockeneich). He experienced the development of KNOLL

first hand at the side of company founder Walter Knoll. He has been retired since 2012 and still enjoys attending KNOLL events. He likes to look back on his 40 years at KNOLL.

"Here, ... is already working" and now "father, mother, uncle, aunt or siblings" can also follow.

Dirk Dreher is the son of Hanne Dreher (and the uncle of Christian Menner). After completing his vocational training in 2006, he completed an internship as an engineering draftsman at KNOLL. He liked it very much but, because there was no traineeship position available that year as an engineering draftsman at KNOLL, he bridged a year as an unskilled worker in production,

during which time he learned a great deal about the products. From 2007 to 2011, he completed his education as a engineering draftsman. In 2017, Dirk Dreher decided to go back to school to take part in additional training as a technician.

After that, it was clear
that "he fit in at KNOLL."

Christian Menner is the nephew of Dirk and the grandson of Hanne Dreher. He is in the third year of his apprenticeship as an electronics technician in industrial engineering. Since the first year of training is mainly spent at school, his "real" start in the company was in 2017. He too completed an internship at KNOLL because of a family connection. After that, it was clear that "he fit in at KNOLL."

Thomas Pastuovic was the first apprentice at KNOLL. He began his training as a machinist in 1976. This decision was made after an "unforgettably pleasant job interview with Walter Knoll." At that time, the company had approximately ten employees. 42 years later, Thomas Pastuovic is still there and, as a mechanical engineer, responsible for technology and design in an interdisciplinary team with 15 employees. This year, his son Marco is also an apprentice at KNOLL.

Marco Pastuovic is the son of Thomas Pastuovic and started his training in September, 2018, as a Technical Product Designer. He gained his initial experience in a school internship at KNOLL and has also participated in various KNOLL training days. In addition, he remembers some of the family days. He is happy about the modern offices and great work centres and about the fact that "everything is controlled and in order." In addition, he appreciates that training at KNOLL means "that there are many additional training opportunities after an apprenticeship, and, of course, the KNOLL-specific talent pool."

Marco Pastuovic is now effectively the youngest KNOLL employee in the cycle: how did you start?

Marco Pastuovic: "Everyone has a mentor at his side who is a second year apprentice. In this way, all the programs are explained as well as everything else that you need to know. On the first day of training, there was a factory tour. And everyone introduced



themselves during the reception by the two heads of the company, Matthias and Jürgen Knoll – I thought that was really nice. The talent pool was also discussed at this time. Overall, you take in a great deal of information during the first week. Everything is very well organized."

"Even today, after 42
years, I can say that
I like working here."

What is it like when your son starts in the same company where you yourself were the first apprentice, Mr. Pastuovic?

Thomas Pastuovic: "I am probably responsible for the fact that Marco started here; KNOLL is often a subject of discussion at home. When I started, it was a different world. Walter Knoll personally hired me at that time. As a little reference, I brought my geometry notebook with me to the job interview; he looked through it and said, 'Thomas, we are getting together; you will be our first apprentice.' During my course of training, I received help any time that I needed it. Sometimes I just sawed or just drilled for a week. Everything was improvised and the theoretical instruction was carried out by Claas. To prepare for the exam, the required set of files

was gradually purchased during the course of the training so that 'the guy could take the final exam', as Walter Knoll said. Fortunately, I then finished the practical exam with a 'very good' and that made Mr. Knoll very happy at the time. Even today, after 42 years, I can say that I like working here. My area of responsibility involved countless customer visits and I could never imagine working anywhere else. Whenever I came back, I thought, 'you're home – now write your report.'"

Mr. Menner, what was your start like at KNOLL last year?

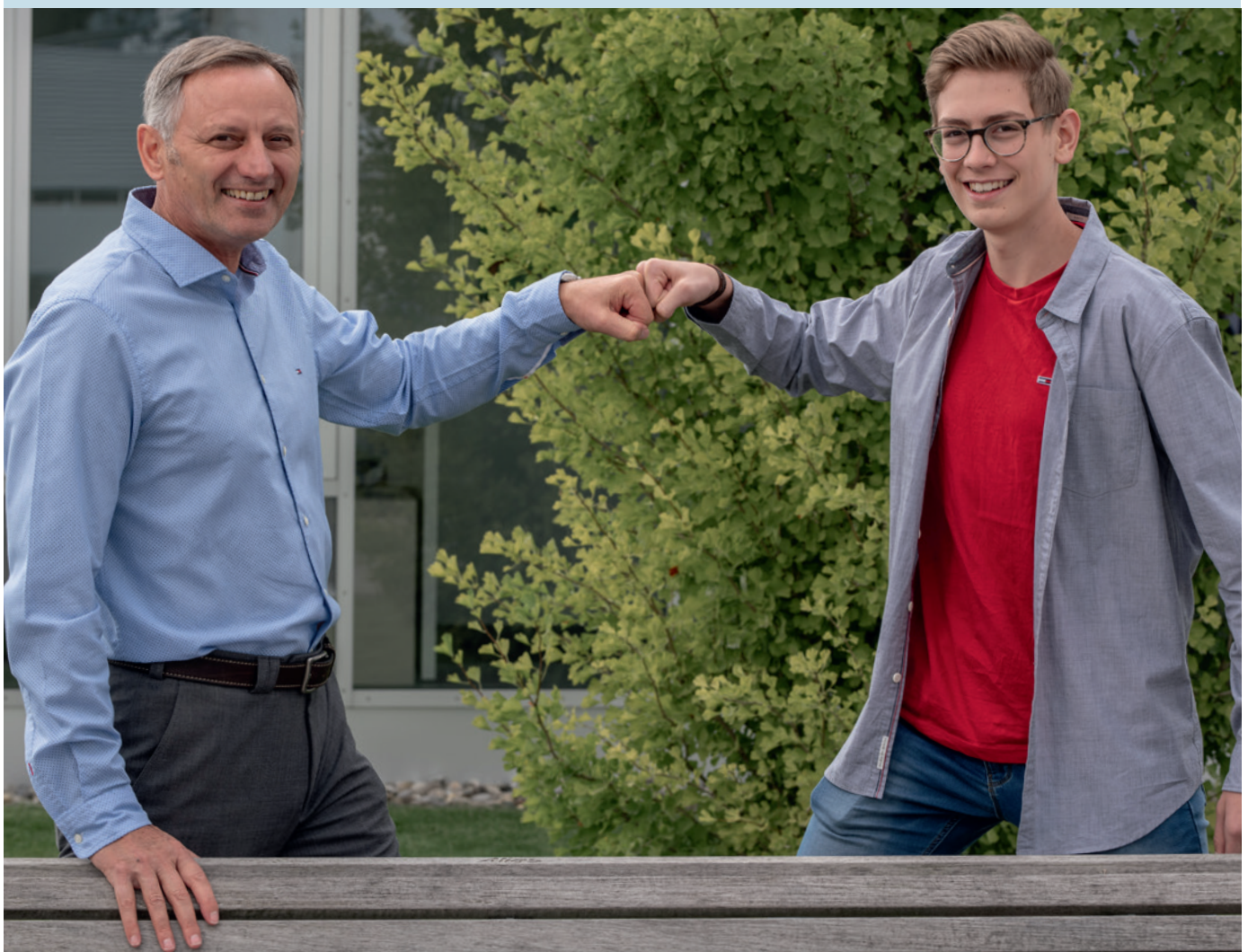
Christian Menner: "I knew about KNOLL from my grandfather, my uncle, my father and from my mother who worked here until she had children. What I find to be particularly good as an apprentice is that you do not have to do typical apprentice work, but are properly involved in the various processes. And as an apprentice, you rotate through the various departments at KNOLL. For this purpose, the instructors make individual rotation schedules for every apprentice every year. And there is also the

opportunity to participate in the inclusion program, where KNOLL employees forge a sponsorship with an employee with disabilities from OWB."

"And once a week, all the machines were cleaned. KNOLL is a neat and tidy company."

Mr. Dreher, you accompanied the company as the second employee ever from the very beginning; what do you think of the company from today's perspective?

Hanne Dreher: "The change from two employees to 1000 and more is just incredible. And a lot has changed since my retirement in 2012. Today, I am really not familiar with what is going on. It was a nice time to work here. And, of course, I had a special connection to Walter Knoll. Even when the company had gotten big, he always stopped by when making his rounds. And one thing has never changed: order and cleanliness have always been important. It all started when, in the beginning,





Walter Knoll wrote on a sheet of cardboard, 'A tidy house, a tidy mind.' Then he hung it up. And once a week, all the machines were cleaned. KNOLL is a neat and tidy company."

"At the Christmas and holiday parties, it's almost like a family celebration since everyone from the family is here."

Your nephew and brother-in-law work here, your father worked here; how is it for you to work here surrounded by family members, Mr. Dreher?

Dirk Dreher: "I liked the family environment. Before starting my training course, I worked with my dad in production and learned some things, for example, that you should deburr parts, so that seals are not damaged. And he has always said, 'use the ratchet and not the cordless screwdriver, so that you have a bit of feeling when you tighten a screw.' Today, however, only compressed air is used during the course of process optimization. Otherwise, it would not be appropriate for the size of the company because certain conditions are required. I like to work here; it is varied

and fun. Since completing my training, I have been working in the standardization group. Since my interest in new programs is great, I am involved in design with all the program introductions. In addition to my daily work, I also like to be the point of contact for colleagues when problems or questions arise involving CAD, ECTR or SAP. At the Christmas and holiday parties, it's almost like a family celebration since everyone from the family is here."

The last question is particularly directed to Mr. Dreher and Mr. Thomas Pastuovic: all of you have been familiar with KNOLL for a long time - what advice would you give apprentices and employees starting at KNOLL?

Thomas Pastuovic: "You have to be willing to change. For me it was like jumping on a moving train: in the old days, it was moving slowly but now you are on board an ICE. If you realize that, then it's fun."

Hanne Dreher: "Yes, you have to be open to new things."

Dirk Dreher adds: "If you're ready to work and are open to change, then you have the right requirements."

