

GMG Makes Design Statement with Child Seats

HAARLEM, the Netherlands - Just three years ago the Dutch bicycle child seat manufacturer GMG was acquired by product designer Michel Krechting. He reorganised the company and transformed it a sales organisation. It always has been common in the Netherlands to take your children to school or kindergarten by bike in a front or rear child seat, resulting in large volumes, mainly sold via IBDs. The Dutch market for child seats had always been dominated by a few companies, among them GMG.

By Jan-Willem van Schaik

In January 2009, Michel Krechting surprised the market with the launch of the Yepp child rear seat, made from the same material as the famous Crocs shoes. This completely new concept in child transportation by bike was the result of Michel Krechting's experience with product designers and product development. He also outsourced the production.

"We don't want to be bound to specific raw materials, production facilities, or capacity," said Krechting. "Outsourcing gives us the maximum freedom in product development."

After the Yepp rear seat, GMG launched a front seat last February, followed by the Tipp this autumn. This model is the successor to the popular Classic. An important feature of the budget-priced Tipp is that it is only available in dark grey, but can be styled by the customer with cushions in many different colours. The concept saves the IBD from carrying a lot of items in stock.

"Our home market is most important for us to create a strong base, but we also have international targets," said Krechting.

"Our presentation at Eurobike 2009 gave the expansion of our international sales network a tremendous push. Outside the Netherlands Denmark is our leading export market. Our Yepp child seat is very popular among the Danish, who are very enthusiastic for well-designed products. For the same reason we have started in UK, France and Japan, although still on a small scale. Recently, we have even started on the US market, although it is not our prime target. The Yepp seat is imported by Gazelle Cycle Imports USA, an agency who runs warehouses in the East and on the West Coast. Part of our strategy is always to find ways to distinguish ourselves in product design and brand image. For that reason we have made a design statement with partners like Van Moof and Biomega."



Michel Krechting (right) took over GMG, reorganised the company and transformed it from a production company to a sales organisation. And not without success. Left is sales director Sven Willems.

Photo Bike Europe

As a company GMG has changed completely since the acquisition by Michel Krechting. "It has been an exiting adventure to revitalise the former family owned factory with a strong image among the Dutch IBD and a large wholesaler's network. To start in this business my plan has been from the beginning to take-over an existing brand with a distribution network and it worked out well." Michel Krechting even got the 'acquisition award' in 2009 from the Dutch organization for accountancy SRA.