

## 1756 – 2021 265 Years of Riedel Glass

The history of the Riedel family is just as animated as the history of Europe, and what's more it is inseparably linked with it.

1756 – The genius Mozart is born, the first wine region in Portugal is registered, and Casanova escapes from the Doge's Palace in Venice. In this bygone age Maria Theresa ruled as Empress of the Austrian empire and in Europe there were signs of an impending storm. During the Seven Years' War Austria-Hungary tried to win back Silesia and the battles in which the great powers were also involved shook the whole continent. In the following years governments across Europe forged ahead with agricultural modernization and industrial development in order to get the economy moving again.

It was during this spirit of optimism that a company was started, one which would come to epitomize high-quality glass products over the next centuries. In 1756 Bohemia was a part of the Habsburg Monarchy, and it was here that Johann Leopold Riedel (third generation) started the story of this dynasty, which to this day remains inseparably connected with glass.

The tradition of the Riedels as glass makers is rich in touching legends and unbelievable success stories. But also economic crises and personal tragedies. The Riedel company managed to withstand the end of the monarchy, the social upheavals of the newly established Czechoslovakia Republic, and the effects of the global economic crisis through skill and creativity. After the Second World War the Riedel family was dispossessed, lost all their property in Bohemia, all their factories and the entirety of their private assets. Walter Riedel, eighth generation of the company, was imprisoned in Russia for ten years. The future prospects seemed to have evaporated. But the story played out differently thanks to the enormous courage and effort of Walter Riedel. It is his legacy that the bohemian Riedel tradition began anew, in Austria - Kufstein Tyrol. The rest is history...

### An overview of 11 Riedel Generations:

**1st Generation:** Even before Johann Leopold Riedel (third generation) had set up the first entrepreneurial glassworks thus establishing the tradition, his grandfather **Johann Christoph Riedel** (born in 1672), "Great grandfather Riedel", and the first generation travelled around Europe as a glass merchant.

**2nd Generation:** **Johann Carl Riedel** (1701-1781) continued the business as a glass painter and gilder, manufacturing and decorating hollow glassware.

**3rd Generation:** **Johann Leopold Riedel** (1726-1800) has gone down in history as the founder of the entrepreneurial dynasty. On 17 May 1756 he put the first Waldglas works into operation.

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In the same year the Seven Years' War started. Empress Maria Theresia made a reparation fund available to her Bohemian subjects. This enabled, for instance, the windowpanes in the severely damaged city of Zittau to be financed. He produced not only plate glass, but all kinds of hollow glasses.

**4th Generation: Anton Leopold Riedel** (1761-1821) expanded his father's business, as well as consolidating and enlarging it. The product range was transformed. It was no longer focused on plate glass, but much more on luxury articles.

This led to the development of new and lucrative sectors: the production of hollow glass and refinement through surface finishing, and the production of chandelier crystal.

**5th Generation: Franz Xaver Anton Riedel** (1786-1844) was a famous engraver and glass cutter of considerable talent and craftsmanship. He signed his artworks, which are highly sought after at auctions today.

He was able, for the first time in the history of glass, to melt different colors of glass: two fluorescent colors – yellow and green. The two colors have been recorded in literature as Anna Yellow and Anna Green, being named after his daughter.

**6th Generation:** The son of his brother, Josef Riedel, was employed as an assistant at the age of 14. In 1840 at the age of 24 Josef married his cousin Anna, Franz Xaver Riedel's daughter.

**Josef Riedel the Elder** (1816-1894) not only showed great talent, but he was also lucky to have lived at the start of the industrial age. He has gone down in history as the "Glass King of the Jizera Mountains".

Josef Riedel the Elder left the Waldglas works and shifted production to the valley. He took advantage of the newly opened train line in 1875. It provided access to the most important sales markets of the industrialized world and laid the foundations for further expansion of his business.

His first wife Anna died at the age of 36. His son, from his second marriage to Johanna Clementine Neuwinger, took the Riedel dynasty into its seventh generation.

**7th Generation: Josef Anton Riedel the Younger** (1862-1924) was a gifted chemist and extremely talented engineer.

In his glassworks 600 precisely defined colors could be melted in order to produce glass beads and gifts. As a mechanical engineer, he developed the finishing and automatization of the production of glass beads and registered numerous patents for this.

**8th Generation: Walter Riedel** (1895-1974) inherited his father's talents. He brought about many technical developments in the glass industry and came up with numerous inventions, such as spinnable glass fibers, signal colors, reflectors, elaborate laboratory glasses and much more.

He steered the company towards technical glass production and in doing so reacted to the needs of the interwar period.

In 1944 the German Ministry of Aviation set up a secret project called "Tonne", a ground-based system of air reconnaissance using radar. At the time the monitors used for this measured a maximum diameter of 38 cm, however Walter Riedel and his glass engineers were able to double both the dimensions, and as a result also the resolution. They produced a monitor with a diameter

of 76 cm – a real global revelation at the time.

Walter Riedel recognized the potential of this invention and secured the rights to use the development for civil purposes. However, this plan was thwarted by the Russian occupying forces. In May 1945, the scientist Walter Riedel was arrested and conscripted. This ended the Bohemian Riedel family history. After the Second World War the family was dispossessed, lost all their property, all their factories and the entirety of their private assets.

Walter Riedel finally returned in 1955 from imprisonment.

1956 – 200 years after the founding of the first Waldglas works in Bohemia - the new Riedel story was started up in Kufstein, Austria. With the support of the Swarovski family, Walter Riedel and his son Claus took over the ailing Tirol glassworks. A hand-blown glass production firm – as it was before in Bohemia – was established.

Walter Riedel represents both the Bohemian past and the start into a new future in Austria.

#### **9th Generation: Claus Josef Riedel (1925-2004)**

He was a great visionary. Thanks to his considerable artistic talent and his extraordinary feel for form and proportion, he came up with a pioneering invention by defining the wine friendly wine glass. This revolutionary move defined him as the “father of the modern wineglass”.

Claus J. Riedel was the first in the history of glass who could determine the interplay between form, size and rim diameter of a glass for the optimal enjoyment of wine.

His glasses had a long stem and smooth, undecorated thin-blown bowls. In the 1950s and 1960s they were awarded numerous design prizes. In 1973 he created the pioneering innovation whose discovery was to once again turn the name Riedel into a leader in the world of glass: the first line dedicated to wine-enjoyment. They are known all across the world today under the name *Sommeliers*.

**10th Generation: Georg Josef Riedel (born 1949)** used his world vision to take Riedel glass to global success. In as early as 1979 he recognized the importance of the American market and founded the subsidiary company “Riedel Crystal of America”.

In 1986 he introduced the first machine-made glass based on wine varieties in history – *Vinum!* With *Vinum* Riedel has been able to turn the philosophy of the functional wine glass developed by the company into something affordable and therefore also well-known around the world.

As a means of consolidating the business, Georg Riedel took over the German Nachtmann company in 2004, laying the foundations for further growth. Today Riedel has a 97% export rate confirming their position as world leader in the production of functional glasses.

Georg Riedel, in his long career as a glassmaker and glass designer, has shaped many functional glasses, each specifically designed to enhance the enjoyment of the liquid flow. As the leading mind behind varietal specific wine glasses, Riedel strongly believes that a finely tuned glass shape enhances the perception of all aromatic beverages. His latest creation - Riedel Winewings (2020) and Riedel Winewings SL(2021) – continues to push the boundaries of the conventional wine glass shape with its striking design.

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As the company owner he continues to be in daily support of his management. Specifically looking after the North American market, improving manufacturing and efficiency of machine-made production in the core Riedel factories in Bavaria Amberg and Weiden. His hobby and love are figures and developing new software to improve operations.

**11th Generation: Maximilian Josef Riedel** (born 1977) has been working for the company since 1997.

At age 25, he became CEO of Riedel Crystal of America, and proved his talent for management, building up North America to become the largest export market for Riedel.

In addition to his function as CEO, Maximilian has also made an excellent name for himself across the globe as a designer of decanters and glasses.

In 2001 he kicked off the Riedel focus for the on premise by creating Riedel Restaurant which has become one of two primary foundations on which Riedel's ongoing success is built on.

In 2004 he showed his creative talent when he designed the "O" Series, consisting of stemless, varietal specific wine glasses. He designed the "first free" formed Riedel handmade decanter Cornetto which was the birth of a wide collection of "free formed" decanter designs. He has since been awarded numerous design awards.

Maximilian Riedel was instrumental in developing the Riedel strategy for online sales, which have become the brand's most important sales channel for "direct to consumer" business.

Maximilian Riedel is a person that connects people, he initiated many valuable partnerships including high end German manufacturer Miele and various charity organisations.

Maximilian Riedel is very socially engaged and started to give back by supporting Cancer organization, Aids organization and many local partnerships including The Napa Valley wine auction.

Since the emergence of social media, communication with end consumers has become significantly stronger, and consumers now have access to other platforms. Maximilian Riedel recognised this development early on and took advantage of it. The company now uses social media to cultivate direct contact with consumers through daily communication, regular competitions and comments from the managing director himself.

On 1 July 2013, Maximilian was handed the management of Tiroler Glashütte and its worldwide subsidiaries by Georg J. Riedel.

Since then he has been leading the company through challenging times with great finesse and success and meeting the requirements that range from sustainability to increasing the efficiency of production and logistics through to Covid-19.

**11th Generation: Laetizia Riedel Röthlisberger** (born 1974) is an attorney and sits on the family board. She is advising on legal matters for the family, the companies, the Riedel headquarter and the Riedel subsidiaries. She specializes in business law, design protection and copyright. Laetizia, mother of three boys manages the worldwide brand names and rights of the Riedel Group.