



## RICHARD SELLMER VERLAG

### Home of the Advent Calendar

Stuttgart-based Richard Sellmer Verlag Ships World-Wide

A Christmas card from Bill Clinton to say thank you for the design and production of a special Advent calendar with the White House as its motif is among the most important souvenirs from the over 60-year history of Richard Sellmer Verlag. As early as in the 1950s, the German family-run business, founded in 1946, was known in the USA as the "Home of the Advent Calendar". The US Presidents Nixon and Eisenhower had let themselves be photographed for a charity campaign with the attractive products from Stuttgart, which had been unknown in the United States previously.

Advent calendars are to the pre-Christmas period what the Christmas tree is to Christmas Eve. The publishers Richard Sellmer Verlag supply millions of them every year to more than 30 countries. The curiosity for the daily surprises behind the 24 doors continues even in this age of SMS and the Internet. The product became universally popular in the 1950s, when it became an affordable mass-produced item. Richard Sellmer Verlag, which is the only publishing house in Germany that concentrates exclusively on the production of Advent calendars, has the lion's share of the market.

The company's range today consists of about 120 motifs in the most varied formats. There are also customized special products, for example for advertising purposes. About 50 percent of the business is from the international market; the company even has its own sales office near Birmingham that looks after about 400 British customers. For buyers from the USA and the United Kingdom, an independent shop has been set up in the corresponding currencies of those countries, as a part of the online range on offer. The demand is growing continuously even in countries without many Christian traditions worth mentioning, like Japan or Saudi Arabia.

Even the very first Advent calendar with the motif "The little Town", which Richard Sellmer made in his living room by hand, demonstrates painstaking attention to detail and a sophisticated, artistic design. The American authorities, who were responsible for Stuttgart at the time, granted permission to print them on 9 December 1946. Since those times, Richard Sellmer Verlag has replaced handcrafting by automation in many areas, but there is no change in the loving design of the popular products: whatever is hidden behind the doors must, as before, match the motif of the front page. And as different as the motifs of the Advent calendars and the preferences of the customers all over the world may be, sparkling silver dust and nostalgic romanticism are simply a must. Since the death of the founder of the company in 1969, it has been run firstly by his son Tim and now by his grandsons Frank and Oliver Sellmer. The publishing house has eleven employees and around 15 agents. The production of the "paper jewels" goes on the whole year – from visits to the Trade Fairs – this also includes the Spring Fair in Birmingham – and dispatches abroad to printing of the new calendars.