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ABOUT

The Founders

Ebi Schilling grew up in a town just outside of Cologne where he was born in 1984. After school he brought his famous warm-hearted Rhineland spirit over to Vienna where he studied politics and communications. In his free time he got to know some handy bike hacks from his russian flatmates who he explored the city and its surroundings with. Cycling became a common passion as well as fixing and customising their rides.

2010 Ebi finally ended up in Berlin in order to conclude his masters degree in political sciences at the renowned Otto-Suhr-Institut of the Freie Universität Berlin. At his part time job bartending in a hostel he then met his now business partner and friend Antoine Capeyron. Antoine's approach to bicycles was as practical as it was puristic, but the smart design aspect he pursued was truly fascinating to Ebi in many ways. It led him to founding a start-up instead of pursuing a career in the political field.

Antoine Capeyron, born 1982 in Bordeaux, found his way to Berlin in 2009. Before settling down and becoming father of an adorable kid, he took a detour through Ireland where he studied product and graphic design. Paired with his mechanical skills he had attained during his early years after school, he laid the ideal foundation for Happarel Bicycles, probably without knowing it by that time.

It comes with no surprise that the creative scene back then found a great playground in the city of Berlin where you could experiment and bring ideas to life. So it happened that the above mentioned hostel bar turned out to be a place where new enterprises saw the light of day.

Bringing an idea to life

Ebi and Antoine shared the passion of riding and building bikes. In a backyard of the district of Kreuzberg they were offered to use a garage where they started to upcycle vintage bikes they bought on ebay. Since then, the goal of their customising efforts followed the intention of making the perfect urban bike for a city like Berlin. Simple, safe, enduring. The driving question was how to make cyclists visible in urban traffic, especially at night, without having to wear circumstantial gadgets such as yellow vests. Combining safety with style, so to speak.

Research and development began in 2013 with experiments using reflective sprays, paints, glass beads and other reflective substances. Finally, a unique film was selected for it's adaptability and durability over the course of many months of road-tests. Although the result regarding safety aspects was convincing, the handling of the material turned out to be quite tough. Trial and error, careful alteration of environmental conditions and application techniques and of course years of experience led to a reflective frame treatment that takes the form of a high-end custom design modification.

All custom ...

Each frame design is a custom project where design elements are developed side-by-side with the

customer to include a full selection of colors, logos, text and design aspects. Precise mechanical cutting techniques matching frame size and geometry and state of the art digital printing solutions are followed by a meticulous application by hand. The resulting artworks are either customisation and upcycling of older frames or the complete build of a custom bicycle using hand-picked parts originating from a network of suppliers from all over the world. The reflective components are designed to outlast standard paint applications, mechanical systems with as few replaceable parts as possible are chosen. The goal, next to being visible, is to minimise the frequency of maintenance and to increase the lifespan of a bicycle.

... or DIY

The feedback from the bike community has been exceptionally great. Daily commuters, road cyclists, messengers, the local urban bike scene, worried parents... all kinds of target groups brought ideas forward how to meet their particular needs. That is when Happarel started to develop reflective decals and sticker kits for DIY use. Easy to use solutions for small money allow for increasing ones visibility in the most simple and yet creative way. Today's range of nifty reflective products offers every road user to individualise its ride while being seen at the same time.

Collaborations

The special approach, combining safety with design aesthetics, prompted established bicycle brands such as Schindelhauer, VIKS or Stringbike to request one-off custom designs for some of their models. Even one of the leading manufacturers of rehabilitation aids, Meyra, initiated the design of the world's first fully reflective wheelchair. Corporate bike fleets, one-off pieces for concept stores, and restoration of rare vehicles belong to Happarel's portfolio as well as the brand has been awarded as design newcomer at the renowned „DMY Design Festival“.

Happarel's reflective products can be found in selected bike shops all over Europe.