



Myriam Staude Etienne Aigner

Modern creations and timeless style

It all began with fine burgundy leather and the creative energy of Hungarian entrepreneur Etienne Aigner in the 1930s. The brand is thriving today, and experienced healthy sales growth in travel retail in the second half of 2010. With a vibrant new collection for 2011, Travel Retail Manager for Europe, Myriam Staude, is upbeat about performance this year.

During the 1930s, Etienne Aigner had his first successes as a handbag designer at the Haute Couture shows in Paris. This was followed in the 1950s by the presentation of his own collection in New York, when the horseshoe-shaped 'A' logo was first used. This marked the start of a success story that is still continuing today. Esteemed luxury goods brand Aigner continues to trade on its heritage of quality and distinctiveness, selling fine leather handbags, wallets and lightweight travel bags, across Europe, Asia and the Middle East. The 'A' logo is still incorporated into designs, symbolizing the brand's unique character, quality and style.

Duty-free accounted for 13% of Aigner's total turnover in 2010, and duty-free achieved double-digit sales growth in 2010. The company has a specially-designed range of lighter-weight nylon bags for travel retail – sales of which do well on flights as well as in terminals. The current best-seller in travel is the



Piccolina bag in purple – a medium-sized bag that offers style and practicality at an attractive price point. At ground level the prime collection of high-luxury leather handbags and totes are incredibly popular too. The main customer groups in travel retail come from Japan, China and Korea, says Aigner.

Like its peers, Aigner experienced sluggish sales in the travel retail channel during 2009, but last year trading took a welcome turn for the better. "In the third quarter of 2010 we achieved a 21% increase in sales across European travel retail," says Myriam Staude, Travel Retail Manager, Europe. "And growth was also excellent for the fourth quarter." The company will be striving to maintain double digit growth during 2011.

Munich-based Staude has been in the role for two years, and says she is looking forward to developing the Aigner offer in new airports, and growing the brand's profile internationally in the next few years. She oversees travel retail for the brand across Europe, while Amanda Garbarino heads up inflight sales. Staude explains that Aigner already enjoys representation in the leading airports in Europe and has had much success further afield, for instance with Dubai Duty Free, and in Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan and China. "Airport locations with highest turnover are Frankfurt, Dubai Duty Free and Incheon in Korea," she says.

In most cases Aigner takes concessions with the duty-free operators. "It's very effective for

Aigner ranges to be displayed alongside other high quality brands, as shoppers on the move like to see an edited selection of brands presented in this way," says Staude.

"We have achieved high brand awareness in Asia and the Middle East, but we will keep building on that and exploring new markets," says Staude. New partnerships are "in development" but Staude says Aigner will focus on growth in existing countries this year, with new country locations being announced in 2012.

The aim is to keep refining the ranging and merchandising in line with customer demand. "We know, for example, that the soft-coloured bags are preferred in Asia, while European customers tend to purchase the basic colours – black, brown and beige." New product development – moving into iPhone cases for example – will provide a means of growing sales, and exciting new bag designs also stir up fresh interest in Aigner says Staude. "We have high hopes of the new Summer Collection which features really colourful, flowery bags, and matching purses, key fobs and bracelets."

In-flight sales account for a small percentage of total sales but are growing fast. Aigner is listed with Singapore Airlines, ANA, Asiana, Qatar and Etihad and has recently signed contracts with four new airlines. As recognition of the brand extends further afield, Etienne Aigner looks set to be heading into a very healthy period of growth. **DM**

PERSONAL FILE

Born Stuttgart, Germany

Now lives Munich, Germany

Gadget iPhone, in a leather Aigner iPhone holder

Relaxes For a treat I stay a few nights at a charming small hotel in the Alps. It's the perfect place to enjoy the mountains, do some skiing, and recharge my batteries.

Most rewarding part of the job

I love the fast pace of travel retail, and I really enjoy meeting new people in the industry.