

A portrait series

BAUHAUS LIVES ON: REAL-LIFE BAUHAUS STORIES FROM THURINGIA

The Bauhaus legacy lives on in Thuringia. There are lots of fascinating people – with great stories to tell about their personal encounters with Bauhaus – whether they were born here, travelled here, lived nearby or just feel a connection to the region. Journalists wanting to speak with any of the four individuals featured here, or others with a Bauhaus story to tell, please get in touch with Thüringer Tourismus GmbH.



Jan Keler and his cradle

- Born: 1941 in Berlin ● Occupation: Economist
- Met at the foundation stone laying ceremony for the new bauhaus museum weimar

The Bauhaus cradle stood in Jan Keler's childhood home. A photograph, which he brought to the foundation stone laying ceremony for the new bauhaus museum weimar, shows him as a one-year-old sitting in the red, yellow and blue baby crib at went on to become design icon. The photo was taken by his father Peter Keler, a student of the Bauhaus school in Weimar, who designed the cradle in 1922 and unveiled it at the 1923 exhibition at 'Haus Am Horn'. He became known for his stylised seating designs, which are in production – faithful to the original – to this day. After a period of travel that took him around Europe, and a few years in Dresden and Berlin, where the aforementioned photo was taken in 1942, Peter Keler returned to Weimar in 1945 to teach at the University of Architecture and Fine Arts until his retirement in 1963/1964. In the 1960s, he bestowed the cradle, which is today famous from London to New York, to the collection that now belongs to Klassikstiftung Weimar. His son Jan Keler recalls how the cradle was sometimes stored in the garden shelter because there wasn't room for it indoors. He's therefore all the happier that it will be one of the star pieces in the future exhibition at the new bauhaus museum weimar. Today, Jan Keler lives in an apartment in Rostock furnished with his father's paintings and books, as well as one of his rocking chairs. His most prized possession, however, is the catalogue that was produced for the Bauhaus Weimar farewell exhibition in 1924 and features the very best works from the workshops.

What are your birthday wishes for the Bauhaus centenary, Mr Keler?

'For me, Bauhaus is the antithesis of mundanity. It might not be to everyone's taste, but it certainly makes everyone stop and think about their own beliefs and passions. I hope that the Bauhaus idea does not fall by the wayside in modern trends. The clarity of the Bauhaus objective and its crystal-clear approach – seen in Feininger's paintings for instance – will hopefully live on and bring smiles to the faces of future generations.'

bauhaus.visit-thuringia.com

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Dr Barbara Happe on living with Gropius

- Born: 1951 in Arnsberg
- Occupation: Cultural historian/anthropologist
- Met at Auerbach House in Jena

When Bauhaus enthusiasts Dr Barbara Happe and her husband Martin Fischer were looking for somewhere to live in Jena more than 20 years ago, having moved to the town for work, they couldn't believe their eyes. The somewhat run-down house for sale on Schaefferstrasse was designed by none other than Walter Gropius. Built in 1924 for the Auerbach family using the principle of modular construction, it is today considered one of Thuringia's finest examples of the Neues Bauen architectural style. And that is all down to this husband-and-wife team. The pair worked with restorers and the office for the preservation of historical monuments, and even travelled to New York to research archives, so that they could reconstruct the house to its original plans. Bauhaus lives on in every last detail of this house – and the occupants live and breathe Bauhaus too. When Dr Barbara Happe talks about all the different wooden and steel windows or the light switches and the built-in wardrobes, her enthusiasm is palpable. She was particularly thrilled, as was the whole design world, when restoration work revealed the original wall paint in the rooms, which was the work of Bauhaus master Alfred Arndt. It was not only the rich variation of the design – 37 different paint colours were applied – that made this a significant discovery. It was also important because there were previously no records to prove that this Arndt design had actually been realised. These days, the couple like to share their passion with others and host open days and guided

tours of the private rooms. Dr Happe's dedication to art and culture in Jena extends beyond the walls of her house. In 2014, she was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit for her endeavours in preserving cultural monuments and developing artistic initiatives.

What are your birthday wishes for the Bauhaus centenary, Dr Happe?

'I hope that Bauhaus is treated as more than just an ideal in a museum, and that it is seen as Walter Gropius intended. He said that Bauhaus was not a style. It was more than that – it was architecture and design for everyday life. To ensure it thrives, the Bauhaus spirit needs to be actively nurtured for the modern day. It's about mindset. Design icons are merely the chapters in a never-ending story. That's why I hope the Bauhaus creativity lives on today through exhibitions and new, inspired ideas.'

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Bauhaus Walk with Thomas Apel

● Born: 1975 in Querfurt ● Occupation: Coordinator of Bauhaus Walks
Weimar, architect, carpenter ● Met on a walk in Weimar

Where was Paul Klee's favourite spot for lunch? Why did Gropius make the desk for his director's office out of solid wood? Who has lived in 'Haus Am Horn' over the decades? Thomas Apel has the answers to all these questions and more. He has been coordinating the Bauhaus Walks for the Bauhaus University of Weimar since 2013. Looking at his credentials, he was pretty much made for the job. Just like the Bauhaus students before him, he combined craftsmanship and artistry in his studies. The trained carpenter decided to study architecture in Weimar – the legendary place where it all began in 1919 and where innovation is still writ large at the Bauhaus University of Weimar. Thomas Apel has always been fascinated by Weimar and the Bauhaus ideas. While still a student, he guided visitors from all over the world on tours of the sites that have enjoyed UNESCO World Heritage status since 1996 – the former art school with its Bauhaus studio and the former School of Arts and Crafts, both of which are today used by the Bauhaus University of Weimar, and the 'Haus am Horn'. Apel currently trains and coordinates up to ten students: future civil engineers, designers, architects, town planners and media professionals, who provide more than just historical facts on their walking tours. This gives visitors the chance to hear ideas from the designers of tomorrow, and learn how Bauhaus has influenced them personally. Around 5,000 people a year now take this special guided tour through Weimar and see how the Bauhaus flame still burns brightly far beyond the place where it was first lit. It's a flame that shows no sign of dying out.

What are your birthday wishes for the Bauhaus centenary, Mr Apel?

'We can design the future – that was the Bauhaus motto. For my part and for Bauhaus, I hope this urge to experiment and create never disappears. Find unused space and use it – it can be a revelation to simply start, even with small steps, without necessarily knowing where it might lead. Bauhaus showed us how ideas that face strong headwinds from the outset can surprise and delight people. Through its exhibitions and its partnership with the University of Music, the Bauhaus University of Weimar operates across multiple disciplines, just as the original school did. We will be presenting a series of special events in the centenary year to show that the Bauhaus ideas live on.'

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Sweet Bauhaus dreams with Dieter Nagel

● Born: 1954 in Probstzella ● Occupation: Biomedical engineer
and hotel director ● Met at the Bauhaus Hotel in Probstzella

Dieter Nagel puts his heart and soul into running a very special hotel. Situated in Probstzella near the Rennsteig Trail and right next to 'Grünes Band', a strip of land that marks the former border between East and West Germany, his hotel is a must-see for Bauhaus enthusiasts. Originally built between 1925 and 1927 as 'Haus des Volkes', it is the largest Bauhaus construction in Thuringia. Today, travellers can not only visit the building, but also sleep in its new guise as the Bauhaus Hotel. The interior design and furnishings of much of the building have been restored to their former glory, thanks mainly to the efforts of Dieter Nagel and his wife Antje. Nagel is a qualified engineer and also an idealist. He takes his inspiration from the work of industrial pioneer and social reformer Franz Itting, who commissioned Bauhaus architect Alfred Arndt to design 'Haus des Volkes', a community centre for culture and leisure. Nagel remembers his school productions taking place there. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the building stood empty for many years. In a bid to keep this local landmark open for everyone, the Nagels bought the historical building in 2003. Following extensive research, aided by the Bauhaus University of Weimar, and a lot of hard work, they opened the restaurant in 2005 and the hotel in 2008. Visitors today can see the colour scheme that Alfred Arndt chose for the interior and sleep in beds that, like many of the furnishings, are replicas of designs by Arndt and other Bauhaus names such as Marcel Breuer and Marianne Brandt. In the park, also designed by Arndt, other Bauhaus treasures,

such as Arndt's kiosk, pavilion café and outdoor theatre, have been lovingly restored and may surprise even the most knowledgeable Bauhaus fans.

What are your birthday wishes for the Bauhaus centenary, Mr Nagel?

'I hope to see other small towns and villages discovered by lots of people, just like ours. I have always said Probstzella has the highest concentration of Bauhaus anywhere in Europe. In his 17 years living here, Alfred Arndt left a huge mark on the village, with lots of houses and commercial buildings bearing the hallmarks of the Neues Bauen architectural style. Our Bauhaus Hotel makes the perfect base for exploring them all.'

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