



# The power of gloves

**B**ernd Michael Ostwald regards himself not as a fashion designer but as a craftsman.

Under the name of OWA Moden, he runs one shop—or showroom—in his home city, Nuremberg, but also takes the bags and gloves he creates to trade fairs such as GDS in Düsseldorf and Mipel in Milan.

"Designers can design anything," he says, "but it's a different matter actually to create the object you had in mind. And sometimes, even after you've created it, it's hard to know if it will really work until you bring in a second person to see it and try it on."

That's what happened to him with some amazing open-backed long gloves he created recently as a new complement to a veg-tanned Italian bovine leather concertina handbag he launched four years ago. Once on, it was clear the new gloves were a good idea.

Earlier gloves that matched the bag attempted to mirror the effect by ballooning up at the wrist and halfway down the forearm. The open-backed pair offers something fresher. Mr Ostwald explains that they are for "a special kind of woman", but that does not mean a woman of any particular age or look.

"It's about her spirit more than anything else," he says. "If these gloves fit in well with who she is, it makes no difference if she's 20 or 120. In this particular case she would have to be powerful. I don't think the gloves would work on a woman who wasn't powerful or

*Long gloves, showing plenty of bare arm, offer a fresh complement to a concertina bag in Italian veg-tanned leather that Bernd Michael Ostwald launched four years ago.*

didn't at least feel powerful about herself."

He points out that a person can feel lacking in power at one stage in her life but, after a particular experience, change completely in this regard. Something could happen to make her feel powerful. She may even invest in a pair of Ostwald gloves to celebrate.

His collection also includes a series of fingerless cabriolet gloves in the darkest blue with sea-themed shapes (a starfish, a scallop, a sea-horse) in white leather partially filling the gap on the back. "The fingerless idea wasn't mine," Mr Ostwald admits, "but it's an interesting fashion concept, especially for summer collections and especially to

complement some full-shell and half-shell bags we've been offering."

If this seems to hark back to simpler times when beauty was the number-one criterion for any woman choosing any accessory, he makes no apology. Handbags, he complains, are turning into satchels, and he doesn't like it. "Bags are produced like T-shirts these days," he says. "I work the bags I produce the way traditional bag-makers did."

It is his unshakable belief that beauty outlasts functionality. He recalls a recent incident in his shop that served to strengthen this belief.

Two young women, in their early twenties,

## THE LOOK of LEATHER



came in early on a Saturday morning. They were just browsing their way along the Hauptmarkt in the centre of the city. "I could tell from their accents that they were from London," Mr Ostwald says. "They were very casually dressed, wearing jeans, but it was clear that they had an air of sophistication about them."

They took a liking to some ballerina shoes he had on show, shoes of a classical design with rounded toes. Later the same day, a woman in her seventies came into the shop and picked out the same shoes. She told him that these were exactly the style she had worn in her twenties and she bought a new pair there and then, the same pair, the same style, the same colour as the young women from London had loved. 🌐

CREDIT: ALL IMAGES FROM OWA MODEN. PHOTOGRAPHER: FRAUKE BÖNSCH

*Bernd Michael Ostwald works bags "in the traditional way". He is worried by the trend he has observed at the big fashion houses to produce bags "like T-shirts these days".*

