

Germany's forged

MASTERPIECE

WRITTEN BY SUZY FEINE
PHOTOS COURTESY OF WÜSTHOF

Solingen, Germany, birthplace of the world-famous Solingen steel, was chartered in 1374 and to this day is heralded as the source for exceptional German cutlery. The natural surroundings, including plentiful iron ore, timbers for charcoal and water to drive the grindstones, led to Solingen's establishment as a metalworking center. Its close proximity to the town of Cologne, which was Germany's richest trading center, assisted in the distribution of these fine quality blades. >

(Below) 10-Piece Deluxe Block Set
#8100 Classic (\$399 retail price)
(Right) 3-1/2-inch Paring Knife –
Classic #4066.9 (9 cm blade)
8-inch Chef's Knife –
Classic Style # 4582.20 (20 cm blade)



By the early 20th century, electricity and the invention and refinement of stainless steel transformed the industry. Since World War II, many large blade manufacturers in Solingen modernized operations and became leaders in the industry. Today, Solingen is home to hundreds of blade manufacturers, many still in existence from the early era. And while we can't attest to the quality of each, here are a few worthy of recognition.

Ed. Wüsthof Dreizackwerk of Solingen, is one of the world's leading manufacturers of quality cutlery – known the world over as WÜSTHOF. With more than 120 different precision-forged knives to choose from, WÜSTHOF delivers perfection to professional chefs and cooking enthusiasts seeking the finest in German cutlery. Look for the Trident logo (the legendary Spear of Neptune) – its internationally-acclaimed symbol of perfection.



Where to buy authentic Solingen cutlery

WÜSTHOF CUTLERY:

Available at most fine department stores and specialty retailers throughout the United States including Marshall Field's, Crate & Barrel and Dillard's. For more information, contact WÜSTHOF at 800-356-0281 or visit www.wusthof.com.

MESSERMEISTER CUTLERY:

Available at specialty retailers across the country. For more information, contact Messermeister at 800-426-5134 or visit www.messermeister.com.

EDACO CUTLERY

Cutlery manufactured by EDACO is sold through various companies, including Chesapeake Knife & Tool (www.chesapeakeknifeandtool.com), Zabar's (www.zabars.com) and Gracious Home (www.gracioushome.com).

ZWILLING J.A. HENCKELS

For more information, call (914) 747-0300 or visit www.zwilling.com.


Messermeister Cutlery, established in 1800 in Solingen, is another favorite among professional chefs and home cooks. Its new Meridian élité line of forged knives go through a three-step sharpening and hand-polishing process, making them ultra-sharp. Messermeister offers more than 30 items in the Meridian élité line, one of five cutlery lines under the Messermeister name.

Established more than 80 years ago, EDACO is a family-owned blade business in Solingen. In the beginning, EDACO produced straight razors with ornate handles, however they quickly moved into the production of fine kitchen knives. Purely a supplier, knives manufactured by EDACO are imprinted with competitors' logos, such as Chesapeake Knife & Tool, Zabar's and Gracious Home, to name a few.

Founded in 1731 in Solingen, Zwilling J.A. Henckels cutlery has been distributed and sold in the

United States since 1883. The premium standards are the same now as they were 271 years ago, but the assortment has gone from just cutlery to a variety of cooking-related products.

QUALITIES OF GREATNESS

Fine German cutlery embodies many distinguishing qualities. Above all, balance is key. A properly-balanced knife cuts cleanly, easily and uniformly. The blade should be precision-forged and constructed of X50CrMoV15 high carbon steel – regarded as one of the finest steels used in cutlery. The edge should be skillfully honed by hand. The handle should be ergonomically correct and encase a full tang – the steel that extends from the tip of the blade through the entire length of the handle. Finally, the knife should have a lifetime warranty. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: *Suzy Feine is an enthusiastic cook who prefers German cutlery.*

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