JENNIFER LIEB

Barbecue Fun Anywhere

An idea that originated at a festival has turned into a new line of business: WWS Metallformen, in collaboration with FENNEK, builds mobile grills and fire pits made of stainless steel - manufactured with industrial precision on TRUMPF machines.

Managing Director Christian Weigel is immediately enthusiastic when an employee from the WWS laser department approaches him with the idea of building a portable grill. The employee needs it for a festival, but Weigel sees even more potential. As a recreational fisherman, he could really use such a grill. It would need to be compact. Light. Easy to transport. High-quality, yet stripped down to the essentials. A thought experiment turns into a concrete idea. And from that idea came a product: the FENNEK Grill.

“Our team was immediately enthusiastic,” says Jakob Haag, head of marketing at WWS Metallformen. “After all, we had the necessary machines in-house.” The team designed, tested, and finally manufactured the product—and the company’s first portable grill was well-received. First with coworkers, then with customers. Today, FENNEK is a separate brand of WWS Metallformen. The product portfolio includes portable and stationary grills, fire bowls, portable stoves, and accessories.

Jakob Haag, Head of Marketing at WWS Metallformen, is pleased with the success of the FENNEK brand. In addition to portable grills, FENNEK now offers, among other things, elegantly designed fire bowls.

With an exciting idea, WWS Metallformen has established a second line of business under the FENNEK brand.

Small, compact, lightweight, and easy to set up: FENNEK grills are the perfect companions for all outdoor enthusiasts.

Automotive Meets Adventure

WWS Metallformen, a family-owned company, is based in Hatzenbühl in the southern Palatinate and typically manufactures products for demanding industrial customers. “In addition to the automotive industry - including commercial vehicles and motorcycles - we also supply sectors such as the aerospace industry and the agricultural and construction equipment sectors,” says Haag. WWS develops and manufactures prototypes, production parts, assemblies, devices, and tools for these customers. The experience we've gained from this world of industries is now incorporated into every FENNEK product.

After all, a grill that is designed to work on the go has no room for imprecise components. The parts must be lightweight, able to be stored flat, and fit together neatly during assembly. “At FENNEK, we design the parts ourselves,” says Haag. FENNEK uses WWS's infrastructure for manufacturing. "Our production is integrated into the production process wherever it fits in terms of timing and workflow." "Our industrial customers with fixed delivery dates remain our top priority."

WWS relies on TRUMPF machines for its production. The company cuts the grills on a TruLaser Cell 7040 3D laser cutting machine and bends them on a TruBend 5085 bending machine. “After cutting, the parts are ground, then folded, assembled, packaged, and shipped to the customer,” explains Haag.

FENNEK's grills and fire bowls, which are made primarily of stainless steel, are precision-manufactured on the TruLaser Cell 7040 laser welding machine.

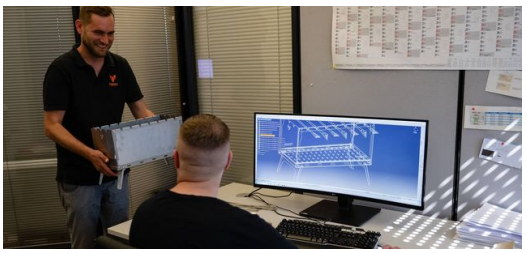
Using the TruLaser Cell 7040 3D laser cutting system, WWS Metallformen cuts complex parts for industrial customers across a wide range of industries. But FENNEK also benefits from the machine's flexibility: it cuts components for the grills ranging from two to eight millimeters thick.

The single parts of the FENNEK grills can be assembled without tools, using slots and interlocking tabs. This also requires precision during the bending process. The TRUMPF TruBend 5085 produces clean edges.

Compact, yet high-quality

The FENNEK Grill - the original grill, so to speak - consists of just a few stainless steel parts and an aluminum case. The idea behind it: compact pack size, few components, and easy setup. The single parts can be connected using slots and tabs. "We try to make everything in such a way that it can be assembled without tools." "After all, you don't necessarily have a wrench with you on a picnic or camping trip," says Haag. "For technical reasons, we also have to switch to rivets or screw connections for some models," he continues. "But that applies more to products that you wouldn't just carry under your arm anyway."

Especially when it comes to compact grills and fire bowls, the material plays a key role alongside assembly. "90 percent of our grills and accessory parts are made of stainless steel," says Haag. Stainless steel is sturdy, easy to maintain, and durable. For its mobile products, WWS typically processes thin sheets with a material thickness of one to two millimeters. Larger griddle plates, on the other hand, can be six to eight millimeters strong. "Above all, we benefit from the flexibility of the TruLaser Cell 7040. "For example, we can easily process all sheet metal thicknesses on the same machine," explains Haag. "At the same time, we can switch between cutting, welding, and cladding in no time at all." "This means that the production of our grills fits seamlessly into WWS's regular production processes."



WWS Metallformen has experience in the design and manufacture of production parts, assemblies, devices, and tools for the automotive and aerospace industries, as well as for agricultural and construction machinery. Of course, FENNEK designs all of its product in-house as well.

From design and manufacturing to shipping: For FENNEK, quality is a given.

Perfectly fitting accessories, such as bags and cases, make it easier to transport the grills.

A second source of income

The grills have evolved from a hobby project into a major pillar of WWS's business. "FENNEK now has many enthusiastic customers," Haag explains proudly, adding, "Our main advantage is that we handle production right here on-site." "This allows us to keep an eye on quality at all times and make adjustments on short notice."

When Christian Weigel goes fishing today, he doesn't just enjoy the relaxing wait for that tug on the line. He's just as excited about the smell and taste of freshly grilled fish. And about a grill that exemplifies what happens when a good idea, industrial expertise, and precision sheet metal processing come together to create a portable product.

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