

Umzug in ein neues Leben

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Austin to Autobahn — Exporting American dreams

German TV network films reality show in Four Points

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Hill Country News

What would a Texas highway be without dually pickups and Hemi muscle cars? According to Klaus Borrmann, the answer to that question might just be: Germany.

Borrmann, a Hamburg native and recent transplant to the Four Points area, exports American cars, trucks and motorcycles to a Germany he says is hungry for the freedom of the American open road. Through his website, CarGate48.com, Borrmann connects his overseas customers with the rides of their dreams, and ships the vehicles through the port of Houston.

His new life in Texas has also attracted the attention of a reality television show which followed

his family to America for an episode of "Umzug in ein Neues Leben" (or "Move into a New Life"), a production of Germany's RTL Television.

"We have a lot of crazy people that like American stuff," said Borrmann. "Most of my old clients in Germany are all people that have a dream to go through the United States and have things from the U.S. They want to drive [an American car] around Berlin like it's their own American way."

Despite Europe's reputation for producing excellent automobiles and having roadways without speed limits (autobahns), Borrmann said many options taken for granted by Americans are unavailable in Germany and other countries. He said eight-cylinder engines are rare, and the practical pickup truck is an unfamiliar site. Borrmann has exported Ford, Chevrolet, Dodge, Harley-Davidson and other prod-



Courtesy Photo

"Umzug in ein Neues Leben" German native Klaus Borrmann, far right, talks to a German film documentary crew at his apartment at Sonterra in Four Points. Borrmann, who deals in exports to Germany, brought his family to the United States in January. The reality TV show hits the German air waves in September.

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ucts, but the Ford F150 pickup has been his biggest hit.

"To Germans, the goal is an American truck with eight cylinders," he said. "American motors are powerful. It means freedom. The U.S. is a country with lots of freedom."

Borrmann moved to the Austin area in January 2009 with his son Maximilian, 8, and fiancée Marylin. The couple was married at the top of Mount Bonnell in Austin, with a wedding date sure to prevent forgotten anniversaries — 2:22 p.m. on Feb. 22.

Klaus said he loves the natural beauty of the Hill Country, but it is the friendliness and helpfulness of the people of Central Texas that has most impressed him. When asked who had helped him most in his transition to Texas, he said, "I can make a list of a hundred."

The Borrmanns will have to return to Germany in about 18 months to renew their visas. In the meantime, they will call Austin home. Maximilian, or "Maxi," attends Grandview Hills Elementary, where Klaus said the teachers and students made Maxi feel right at home.

"It's a wonderful school with wonderful teachers," Klaus said. "They are very helpful and friendly, and have a lot of patience with our bad English."

Klaus added that Maxi has picked up English faster than his parents.

The "Umzug in ein Neues Leben" crew also arrived in January to document the challenges of setting up a home and

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— Klaus Borrmann, a Four Points resident who exports cars to Germany



new business in a foreign country. Crew members returned again in June to complete filming.

While here, the crew followed the family through everyday activities such as Maxi's school picnic and shopping for wedding dresses with Marylin. The show will share with its German audience trials such as the Borrmanns applying for U.S. Social Security numbers, necessary for getting electricity and telephone service turned on in their new home.

The film crew particularly focused on Klaus' business interests and how he was able to set up a successful company overseas in the midst of a global financial crisis and a crumbling U.S. auto industry.

"We got in middle of [the] biggest crisis in [the] world right now to start a new company in the U.S., in middle of the biggest car crisis in 30 years," Klaus exclaimed. "They wanted to look how we set up the company and how we are very successful."

Life with a camera crew in tow can take some getting used to, Klaus said. "Business goes a little slower with a film crew, but after the first or second day we are in training and we don't feel it anymore," he said.

Although the crew tried to

keep the action as natural as possible, multiple takes were sometimes necessary. "Take another bite of the hamburger, Maxi. Take another bite of the hamburger, Maxi. Take another bite of the hamburger, Maxi," Klaus reminisced, chuckling.

The Borrmanns' documentary episode will be shown in Germany in August or September, but the family will not get to see it yet here in America. They will have to wait for a DVD to arrive sometime after the broadcast. However, their friends and family back in Germany are excited about Klaus, Marylin and Maxi's new celebrity status.

"I think that they are very excited to see us on TV," Klaus said. "Our friends in Hamburg have planned a party."

A Texas-sized party, no doubt.



Courtesy Photo

Hill Country wedding! Klaus Borrmann married Marylin on Feb. 22 at Mount Bonnell with their son Maxi there. At top, Marylin and friends chat in front of the crew.