

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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In Memoriam: Wolfgang Engelmann

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Less than a year after reporting the death of his father, Hermann, *GrowerTalks* has the sad duty to report the death of our good friend Wolfgang Engelmann, from cancer, on March 30. He was just 55.

Wolfgang Engelmann enjoying one of his passions: fast cars.

A sixth-generation nurseryman and CEO of Engelmann Greenhouses, Wolfgang came to the U.S. from Germany in 1961. His father founded Engelmann's in Apopka, Florida, a decade later, quickly building it into one of the largest and most-respected houseplant operations in the world, with 3 million sq. ft. of greenhouses and 350 employees. Its "Exotic Angel" brand has been a staple of every retailer large and small for years.

Wolfgang leaves behind his wife, Amy, daughter Lauren, son Andrew, mother Anneliese, stepfather Joe, brother Hermann, sister Victoria and extended family in the United States and Germany.

As for Engelmann's future, *GrowerTalks* spoke to company president Bisser Georgiev. He told us that just before his death, Wolfgang had convinced an old friend of the family, Chuck Romagnoli, to join the company as CEO. Chuck has extensive foliage brokerage experience with Angel Plants of Long Island, founded by his father (and since sold to Kurt Weiss). The similarity in name to Engelmann's brand is not a coincidence and shows how close the families are.

Bisser will continue in his role of president, focused primarily on strategy, sales and marketing. And Sandra Kitain will continue as COO/CFO. Bisser says Engelmann's will continue on the path set by the founder more than 40 years ago.

And good family business news! Wolfgang's son Andrew, who's just finishing up a degree in accounting, will be joining the company as the seventh generation of Engelmann to grow plants, Bisser says. (Meanwhile,

daughter Lauren, the medical doctor, is finishing her residency). **GT**