



At the age of 53, Inge van Liempd-Rijkers from Zijtaart made the switch to her own business, INGENaaimachines, after working for Rijkers Naaimachines in Veghel for 35 years, 14 of which as a manager. © FotoMeulenhof

Forget the old-fashioned image; Inge makes sewing hightech

ZIJTAART/EINDHOVEN, Netherlands

Students from the TUE and the Design Academy come with their ideas to the sewing machine shop of Inge van Liempd-Rijkers from Zijtaart. For clothing with built-in solar collectors, heat sensors or heart rate monitors, for example.

Kirsten Rietbergen 04-02-20, Bron: BD

Inge van Liempd-Rijkers' sewing machine shop on the Geldropseweg in Eindhoven officially opens at 10.00 a.m., but an hour earlier it was already busy. Two ladies are discussing a design, someone is ironing a piece of fabric, others are already behind the sewing machine. The interior is inspired by the Apple Store in New York.

"The Apple Store has islands of Ipads, laptops and phones everywhere you can try. We do the same here with sewing machines," says Inge van Liempd. The furniture comes from the demolished UWV building on Frisselsteinstraat in Veghel. The chairs have been provided with new fabrics, with embroidered texts and images. Each chair in the shop tells its own story. "Made by two women who like to come here. Wonderful, the way they carry the business on their hands."

From family business to own business

At the age of 53, Inge van Liempd-Rijkers from Zijtaart made the switch to her own business, INGENaaimachines, after working for Rijkers Naaimachines in Veghel for 35 years, 14 of which as a manager. Together with her brother and sister, she formed the third generation in the family business, which celebrated its 100th anniversary last year. For Inge, the festive year was a moment of reflection.

"I saw that my brother Leo's family also wanted to continue in the company. So I thought it was a good time for me to move on. I'm 53, but I certainly still have 15 years to go. And now I can do it the way I have it in my head. Not that that's a better way, it's just my way."



Early in the morning it fills up at INGENaaimachines in Eindhoven. People come for a workshop, or sit behind a sewing machine to try something out or test a machine. © Kirsten Rietbergen



The interior of Inge van Liempd-Rijkers' store is based on the Apple Store in New York: islands with different devices where everyone can test and try. © Kirsten Rietbergen

Forget that old-fashioned image

To show how much fun sewing can be, to take that old-fashioned image off, that's what Inge likes to do. She also gave workshops in Veghel and taught students of the Sint-Lucas in Boxtel. At INGEnaaimachines she goes much further. She likes to work with students of the Eindhoven University of Technology (TUe), Summa College and the Design Academy.

"They think up all kinds of new applications in clothing at school, but how to make it, they often don't know. For example, you can make heat wires in clothing, which you can use for medical purposes. Suppose you always have neck problems, then you can make a jacket with a nice floral pattern of heat wires on it, which lie exactly where you have problems. Or you can provide a shirt with wires that you can use to measure your health via an app; what is your heart rate, your blood pressure, your circulation, your stress level".

An app controls the sewing machine

Van Liempd has sewing machines, computers actually, where the thread is picked up at the push of a button, where an app on your cell phone controls the ma-

chine and with which special fabrics and threads can be processed. With which you can build in heart rate monitors in running clothes. Or put solar panels on your jacket to charge your phone.

"There are so many fun applications to think of. A group of students made a bag with a special pocket for your cell phone. When you put your phone in there, it automatically stops. Handy if you go into a meeting or get in the car. But how do you make that bag, which stitch do you use, is there a foot that automatically guides that thread? They have the idea, we have the knowledge."

Not on an industrial estate, but a pleasant walk-in

Ultimately, it is this connection between knowledge and practice that ensures that Inge also sells sewing machines. "People are allowed to try out machines, sit down to work and discover what's possible. Then the sale actually goes by itself. That's why I didn't want to sit with my business on an industrial estate, it has to be a pleasant walk-in."



The furniture in the shop comes from the former UWV office in Veghel, but has been completely pimped out by customers and staff. Each chair has different upholstery and embroidery. © Kirsten Rietbergen



Inge van Liempd: "You just control a sewing machine with an app." © Kirsten Rietbergen