

ERAM GROUP

JOIN OUR STORY



OUR STORY



The founders: Albert-René and Marie Biotteau.

“ — We are from
this land,
*we are from
this soil.*”

Our elders were peasants, rooted in the land of Les Mauges. Haunted by the War in the Vendée, they had been saved from poverty by priests. Eram is the product of this history, a peasant culture based on simplicity, frugality, discretion, humility and courage. We are the third generation of the Biotteau family, heirs to the values that made us, that form the very foundation of what we are today: a family business, unique and determined to remain so.

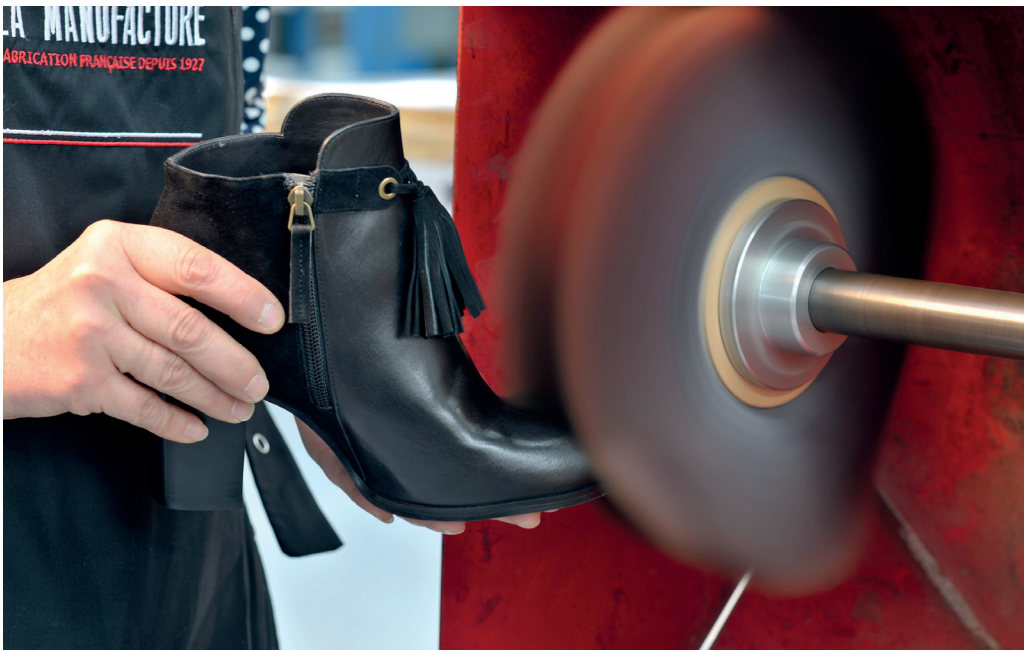
To understand who we are, you have to read our story because we get our culture and our values from our grandfather, Albert-René Biotteau, the founder of the company.

Orphaned at a very young age, he had the fierce will to succeed and the no less obstinate ambition to make his region prosper and help the people around him. For him, success could only be celebrated if it was shared. So, in 1927 Eram was born in a small workshop in Saint-Pierre-Montlimart, where our grandfather and his wife Marie had settled. Within 40 years, the company had become the largest in the region with ten factories in the *département* and employing 3,000 people, often several generations of the same families.

Long before the law obliged him to do so, our grandfather's respect for his employees led him to set up a pioneering system for health insurance and profit-sharing. These systems still exist and the private healthcare insurance is still managed by the employees themselves.

Later, when French production was swept aside by low-cost products from Asia, our father Gérard Biotteau refused to proceed with any collective redundancy plans. Instead, he made it a point of honour to reassign all factory employees to stores, warehouses and a few administrative jobs.

No one was to be left behind. This is what our grandfather used to illustrate with one of the sayings he passed on to us: *"Do good and do it well"*. *"Do it well"* because he was trained at a very young age as a shoemaker-bootmaker and was obsessed with a job well done, using the precise practices required by shoemaking. He was equally determined to make fashion accessible to as many people as possible. Throughout his working life, he conscientiously applied these founding principles, building up one of Europe's leading shoe manufacturing and retail companies. Despite this success, he never gave up his simple and frugal lifestyle that he also applied to everyone in his company. We believe that it is both his prudent approach and his attachment to his employees that made this now rare adventure possible. The result is a company guided by the common good, which develops by reinvesting all its profits.



*La Manufacture -
The manufacturing workshop
in Montjean-sur-Loire.*

OUR STORY



2nd generation: Simone and Gérard Biotteau.

“— This curiosity and open-mindedness have led the Group to constantly search for new avenues to explore to ensure its development, often with great courage.”

Among all the attributes that bring us together, there is one of a different kind that has been just as much a part of the Group's success for nearly a century and that is curiosity. Inseparable, of course, from humility, this curiosity and open-mindedness have led the Group to constantly search for new avenues to explore to ensure its development, often with great courage. As early as 1947, our father, who was sent by our grandfather to the United States to find new innovations, came back with ideas for modernising our industrial processes. Similarly, in 1954, the Plastifor patent revolutionised shoe manufacturing by injecting the soles directly on the uppers. Millions of French people had shoes thanks to a dozen factories in the region that produced up to 50,000 pairs of shoes a day. At the end of the 1960s, our father developed a brand new franchise system that made Eram one of the very first French groups to use this now widespread concept. Then, in the 1980s, he began to make adverts that became cult references. 30 years later they still are; they are remembered by everyone and studied at university for marketing degrees. Not forgetting 1991, when Xavier and his wife Catherine, unfortunately no longer with us today, created Gémo. At the start it was an innovative family concept for clothes and footwear and today has become one of the leaders in affordable fashion in retail parks everywhere.

We are three brothers, Luc, Marc and Xavier, the children of this story. We have become its custodians. Simplicity, a sense of responsibility and open-mindedness are the values that structured the actions of our grandfather, then our father, and formed the entrepreneurs we are today. We have a duty to pass these values on to our children, of course, but also to every employee who works with us.

Our Group has never stopped adapting and progressing. But today, in an environment that is changing so very fast, fundamental trends are challenging the model of established companies. Changes in consumption patterns,

the hyper-globalisation of retail brought about by the Internet, the growing awareness of sustainable development issues and the public's expectation of more responsibility from companies are challenges that simply must be met.

We do not want to adopt a defensive strategy whereby we cope with huge changes in retail solely by mechanically adapting to the market, reducing our scope and refocusing on a few activities. We want to turn this crisis into an opportunity. We want to find new paths and devise a strategy to continue this wonderful adventure that began in a small shop 93 years ago. We are fiercely determined to remain independent, the masters of our future, close to and supporting our customers and our employees.

“— Our mission is to promote the development of each person at every moment of their life. *We want to be recognised for our responsible performance.*”



Gémo store in Basse Goulaine.

OUR STORY



3rd generation: *Xavier and Luc Biotteau.*

We have thought long and hard about what Eram should be, and we have come up with a definition that is faithful to what we believe is right and adapted to today's challenges. Our mission is to promote the development of each person at every moment of their life. We want to be recognised for our responsible performance.

For its management and development approach, we are convinced that our company needs to integrate factors that go beyond traditional checks and balances. Despite being fundamental, these factors must first of all help ensure the independence of our Group. But they must also consider and stimulate the development and fulfilment of our customers, employees and the employees of our subcontractors, with every decision we make.

We want to invent a more virtuous, sustainable and responsible business model and share our humanist values with all our employees.

This is why we encourage internal promotion for our managers and recruit professional people from very diverse backgrounds, people who cultivate our values and share our vision for the future of our company.

Our entire Group must embrace this mindset. It establishes the company in and of its time and leads us towards virtuous innovation, ensuring the sustainability of our products and a lesser impact on the environment as well as evolving our managerial practices. We have integrated the notion of sustainable performance in all areas, both internally and with our suppliers. We are not yet exemplary, but we aim to be.

Today we are preparing for the future. It is therefore essential that the company's values are deeply rooted and passed on from generation to generation, long after we are gone.

The Board of Directors, which includes our mother Monette, our brother Marc, three members of the fourth generation and others from outside the family, represents the governance for this transmission. This is also reflected in the recently created Albert Marie Endowment Fund. Its purpose is to "produce, support and finance any general interest initiative of a philanthropic, educational, social or cultural nature in the field of ecological and community transition in the fashion industry," which our children are managing.

We are what we are today thanks to the Group's roots in this very special place that is Les Mauges, to the personality of this company's founder and that of our father. We are proud of who we are and thanks to these roots, we work hard to ensure that this story will continue long after we are gone. We are preserving the spirit in which Eram was born, grew and evolved by adapting to the times without nostalgia for the past. Instead, we are drawing on the strength that this company, this formidable human adventure, has handed down to us.

“— Share our
humanist values *with*
all our employees.”

ERAM GROUP



The great-grandchildren of the founders (4th generation):

Caroline, Charlotte, Édouard, Étienne, Hélène, Juliette, Louise, Nicolas, Pierre and Thomas Biotteau.

