



Tasty "Bella Italia" from Saxony-Anhalt

Happy "marriage" between Zuegg and Zörbiger

The Chairman of the Zuegg group with its headquarters in Verona, Italy, raves about the speciality. He believes it is the most interesting product offered by the "Zörbiger" brand. This accounts for almost every other jar produced under this logo, making the sugar beet syrup undisputedly the number 2 on the German market.

Zuegg prioritises tradition, including its commitments abroad. 120 years ago, Maria and Ernst Zuegg started selling apples and exporting them to St. Petersburg in the Russian Empire. In 1923, the company started to produce jam. Oswald Zuegg directs the company now in its fourth generation and the fifth generation is already actively taking part in what goes on in the business. He does not like snap decisions and prefers continuity, a born-and-bred self-employed businessman with vision. In East Germany, the concept works without any ifs or buts. "Just after the turnaround we looked to see where we could implement our plans to expand the company", he explains. At the time there were said to have been plans to invest in Spain. The political climate enabled new concepts to mature. In Werneuchen near Berlin, Zuegg finally took over a former state-owned business in 1991. Since then, the so-called fruit preparations have been produced here for the European market. These are used in yoghurts among other things.

Then came the second step in Germany. The decision to take over the jam producer Zörbiger was made in 2002. With the privatisation of the company after the turnaround, there were insufficient finances for a stable expansion of the production. At the time, there were many arguments for this purchase, remembers the Chairman of Zuegg. The small town was convenient due to its transport links and the surface available for an expansion. In addition, the business had a very well trained base of employees with the necessary competence for producing jams and other specialities. More than 60 men and women currently work there, and the classic sugar beet syrup was the first product from the company that was founded as early as 1873. A "juice boy" monument has even stood in the centre of the town for over 50 years. Oswald Zuegg could not simply ignore so much tradition. The concept developed. Since then, all of the group of companies' jams are produced here. The sweet spreads made in Saxony-Anhalt obviously go down a treat in Italy.

In 2013, Zörbiger made a turnover of 30 million euros: 21 million abroad and 8,000,000 in Zoerbig. The investment of almost six million euros in the Zörbig site has paid off. Further investment is planned; in particular the storage areas are not sufficient. With the Zuegg expansion towards Russia - an individual factory was built there in Afanasow for unfinished goods - in addition to exports to Australia, Austria, Switzerland and France, there will also be deliveries of jam to Brasil and the USA. Zuegg is positioning itself throughout Europe, maintaining production sites in Avellino (Southern Italy), France and Germany. "Our family now has 500 employees", explains the company's chief executive.

The prospects for the factory in southern Saxony-Anhalt are excellent, assures Oswald Zuegg, who values the good quality of its raw materials. For example, the fruits are partly cultivated in southern Italy in contractually bound areas, exclusively for the group of companies.

New products are continuously being developed. It is not possible to survive in this sector without innovation. Currently, a total of 60 different jams are produced in Zörbig. Last year it were around 117 tonnes, and 10 tonnes of beet marmalade syrup – a record for the production site. Apart from that, the range is characterised by classics such as jams from strawberries, blueberries or bitter orange. In addition, there are also fruit preserves without added sugar and specialities such as fig and chestnut purée.

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