MEDIA INFORMATION

The History of Europa-Park

Europa-Park can look back with pride on a very successful business history. In 1975, the first season of Europa-Park, 250,000 visitors came to the park. Today, 31 years later, the family business is the most popular tourist destination in Germany, apart from the Cologne Cathedral. With 3.9 million visitors last year, Europa-Park is by far the biggest theme park in Germany and the best-attended seasonal leisure park worldwide. Almost 70 million people have visited Europa-Park during the past 31 years. More than 100 attractions and international shows offer fun and entertainment for the entire family on an area of 70 hectares. In 2005 the business magazine "Forbes? has elected Europa-Park among the TOP TEN theme parks worldwide. Meanwhile, Europa-Park developed from a being "just? a leisure park into a renowned address for conferences and a popular location for TV productions. Moreover, Europa-Park has become a popular short-break destination for guests from all over Europe, because of its three 4-star hotels.

1975 - 1985: years of foundation, growth despite initial resistance

The history of Europa-Park, which today is considered one of the most beautiful leisure parks in the world, is a typical success story. In the 18th century, the workshops in Waldkirch were famous for their skills in the construction of stage coaches and carriages. In 1870 the company moved on to the fairground business. By 1915, MACK Rides was a preferred supplier of the "Circus Krone? and in 1921 the first roller coaster was built. As of 1930, the family business specialised in the construction of saloon caravans for travelling showmen, carousels, ghost trains and rollercoasters. In 1951, MACK built the first wooden bob run and just one year later risked the leap across the Atlantic to enter the US market. It was Franz Mack who lead the company on to become a well-known international business. This success was built on innovative conceptions for rides and on the company's entrance into the amusement park industry.

In 1975 Europa-Park was opened in Rust as a "showcase? for the

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products made by MACK. Under the direction of Franz Mack and his sons Roland and Jürgen, an ideal combination of park facilities, entertainment, culture and attractions for the entire family, almost all of them designed by the parent company MACK Rides in Waldkirch, was created.

But not everyone believed in the concept: In the beginning the Mack family had to face up to great scepticism. "Rust is on the brink of disaster!? or "What happens to the leisure ruins in Rust?? are just some of the headlines, which followed the idea of building a leisure park in Rust/Baden. But the attendance figures confirmed the success: 250,000 visitors came in 1975, one year later already 700,000 and in 1978, 1 million people visited Europa-Park. An important step was the opening of the Italian themed area and the realisation of the European themed concept together with the stage designer and film architect Ulrich Damrau in 1982.

1985 - 1995: European orientation, rise to market leader, first awards

The European themed concept is being developed consequently with much love and attention being paid to detail, in succession Holland (1984), England (1988), France (1990), Scandinavia (1992), Spain (1994) and Germany (1996) are created. On the background of the political development in Europe, the concept turns out to be visionary. Signed in 1985, the Schengen Treaty opens the internal borders between the Schengen Member States during the following 10 years until 1995.

The high quality standards set by the Mack brothers can be realised throughout the park: Europa-Park offers gastronomy, attractions, gardens and shows at its best. Already in 1990, the highly respected German product testing organisation "Stiftung Warentest? gives Europa-Park a "very good? (Europa-Park is the only German leisure park to get this mark). In 1991, two million people visit Europa-Park.

In 1996, the "Stiftung Warentest? draws the conclusion that "Europa-Park in Rust offers the best entertainment with the highest quality at a fair price - especially compared to Disneyland Paris?. And one of Germany's leading experts in the field of tourism, Prof. Horst W. Opaschowski from Hamburg, signs Europa-Park's visitors' book with the following words: "Experience your life - this is the prognosis for the future. The future has

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begun a long time ago here in Rust.?

1995 - 2005: Development into a short-break destination, differentiation, opening up new markets

The opening of the "El Andaluz?, the first hotel in a German leisure park, marks the beginning of a new era. Because of the larger variety of entertainment possibilities and the resulting longer duration of stays, the demand for hotel rooms is increasing. Already during the first year, the occupancy rate of the hotel reaches 87 %, consequently the "Castillo Alcazar? is built in 1999. But the demand stays enormous: the total occupancy rate in 2000 is 97.7 %. Europa-Park draws a record attendance of 3 million visitors.

In 2001/2002 Europa-Park is the first German leisure park to introduce a winter season. 180,000 people visit the park during the opening period of six weeks. With Europa-Park becoming an increasingly important visitor magnet, an own motorway exit is opened in spring 2002 after a long lasting struggle with state bureaucracy.

The construction of a third 4-star hotel is merely a matter of time. The new hotel "Colosseo?, designed in Roman-Italian style, is the largest individual hotel in Baden-Wuerttemberg and together with the "El Andaluz? and the "Castillo Alcazar? the largest hotel resort in Germany. Already during the first year, the hotel "Colosseo?, which is open year-round, reaches an occupancy rate of 95 %. With the higher capacity in hotel beds, the number of visitors who stay at Europa-Park for several days increases. In 2005 Europa-Park registers approximately 461,000 overnight stays. Up to 3,000 employees work at Europa-Park during the season, which makes the park by far the largest employer in this region.

Also the business with corporate clients is increasing because of the large offer of conference and function rooms. More than 1,000 events are organised each year by the "Confertainment?, which was founded in 1998. At the same time, Europa-Park is becoming a more and more popular location for TV productions.

Future and succession of generations

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But also for the years to follow, the Mack family has made plans. In addition to the improvement of the existing attractions, this means particularly the continuous expansion with new attractions and themed areas. Also the next generation has to find their challenges. Leisure industry of tomorrow - invented, developed and realised by Mack today - a concept, which guarantees success also in the 21st century. A satisfied guest is one of the most important factors for success, this means to keep the main focus on quality and innovation also for the years to come. Managing director Roland Mack: "Our guests only deserve the best, and this is what they get at Europa-Park.?

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