

Press release

No. 5

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125 years of Erbslöh - in the beginning...

...was kaolin and Carl Hugo Erbslöh's purchase of china clay pits in Geisenheim.

At just 26 years of age, Carl Hugo Erbslöh, one of Carl Julius Erbslöh's six sons, founded the firm C.H. Erbslöh, a chemicals wholesaler, in Düsseldorf. He supplied the west's paper and ceramics factories, amongst others, with kaolin, a mineral which at this time was mainly imported from Great Britain. At that time there were only a few, small, kaolin pits in the German Reich, in Bavaria and Saxony. The geographical location meant it was possible for him to supply western Germany with English china clay by waterway.

Carl Hugo Erbslöh's goal was to source kaolin in Germany, resulting in supplies independent of the British Isles. At the same time, however, his goal represented a considerable risk for the company because he first had to find usable raw material. There were very few mining, treatment and processing plants, or warehouses, available. Also the clay's suitability for paper and ceramics manufacturing and other uses first had to be tested and proved. There was a choice of three kaolin pits and he opted for the pit at Geisenheim. Its good transport location, just one kilometre from the railway station, plus the option in those days of shipping kaolin on the Rhine from Oestrich-Winkel, were the decisive factors in Erbslöh proceeding with the plan. Being roughly equidistant, the South German and Lower Rhine-Westphalia sales territories were easily reached. Consequently, on 2 September 1892, Kaolinwerke Erbslöh & Co. was founded and entered in the Commercial Register. The company could now commence excavating kaolin in Geisenheim.



Kaolin mining

The young company still had a long and difficult road ahead of it; kaolin mining in Geisenheim was carried out using horse-drawn tipper lorries. The material soon proved to be unsuitable for

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fine ceramics, though, due to its yellowish colour when fired. The paper industry also had high expectations of the goods supplied. It required tireless work and respect is due the tenacious founder for overcoming these teething problems and obstacles. He overcame all the prejudice against the German product, so that by the First World War the healthy company was firmly established. The company's development was severely restricted by two world wars and the global economic crisis of the Great Depression. Even given the events of these difficult years, Erbslöh's courage and creative enthusiasm did not desert him; new pits were bought and product quality improvement measures of all kinds undertaken. The experience garnered over decades was used to market a first-class German ceramics kaolin. Foreign trade was carefully nurtured and the circle of international customers grew steadily. The company's successful development is regarded as being based on three essential foundation stones: ceaseless hard work, a persistent work ethic and solid creative enthusiasm, loyal collaboration by every employee working together, and suitable framework conditions within a strong nation.

The breakthrough came in the 1930s, with bentonite. A patent was filed for the mineral activation process. At this time bentonite was used in foundries as a moulding sand binder. The first signs that bentonite could be used to remove protein in wine came from the USA around 1940. Bentonite, a mineral which, like kaolin, also consists of aluminium silicate, but unlike kaolin swells a lot and exhibits a great ability to exchange cations, was predestined for clarification of wine. Erbslöh started to receive enquiries as to whether it could also supply bentonite for wine making. This was a new area of business. A new company, Erbslöh Geisenheim Getränketechnologie GmbH & Co. KG, was founded for this purpose in 1964. Erbslöh now conquered the beverages world with bentonite, known as "Geisenheim earth for wine fining".



Geisenheim earth

"Geisenheim earth for wine fining" was first marketed in 1966. Less than three years later Erbslöh established the first branded product, "NaCalit®", a granulated bentonite, on the international beverages market. It soon emerged that the company felt completely at home in the world of beverages. After this the family-run company marketed the Trenolin®-brand high specificity enzymes - a big family of products synonymous with increased juice yield and improved press capacity utilisation. It also achieves better wine clarification and filtration. It was Trenolin®'s special pectin-degrading properties that first made the production of Süßreserve possible. This represented another milestone in the history of Erbslöh

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beverage technology. Further developments soon came along. In 1977 the modern company's innovative spirit led to development of various yeasts from the "Oenoferm[®]" strain. These yeasts include Oenoferm[®] Freddo, Oenoferm[®] Klosterneuburg and Oenoferm[®] Bio, to name just a few. Creativity was not limited to wine making, though; new product lines "Fructozym[®]" and "Fructamyl[®]" were developed in-house for the juice industry.

It was now necessary to separate the business into three different units - wine, juice and beer. In keeping with their creativity and delight in experimentation, Erbslöh Getränke-Technologie's employees now developed an unusually effective tannin adsorption product, "Gerbinol[®] Super". It includes special proteins such as isinglass and dairy protein. These substances are applied to a selectively acting adsorption agent. Gerbinol[®] Super can be used in particular as a "final fining" before bottling. After this, at the end of the 1990s, the company launched yet another new Erbslöh brand, under the name "Kupzit[®]", on the international beverages market. Kupzit[®] is a copper citrate preparation for removing off flavours in wine, fruit wine and other fermented products. Kupzit[®] contains 2% copper citrate and is applied to a support, particularly pure, high-quality bentonite, and granulated. This product development also remained true to the clay mineral, bentonite.

Erbslöh's employees once again demonstrated their innovative skills with the creative "AnGus[®]" anti-gushing product, to solve excess foaming in beer caused by raw materials. This creative ability was once again highlighted last year when, in keeping with its slogan of "Research provides advantage", Erbslöh announced that it had been awarded two prizes for innovation by the German Winegrowers' Association, in cooperation with the German Agricultural Society. The independent, international jury awarded Erbslöh's new yeast nutrition concept Oenoferm[®] LA-C (low alcohol concept) using Oenoferm[®] LA-HOG yeast the special prize in the "Products to counteract the effects of climate change" category. Erbslöh received the second prize for innovation - a silver medal - for development of Trenolin[®] Bouquet^{PLUS}, a special, depsidase-free, aroma-releasing enzyme. It promotes the release of typical varietal aromas to a previously unknown extent.

Erbslöh's scientists also closely follow the various food industry trends towards vegan and organic products. Employees are tackling these trends head on with beverage treatment developments in all three sectors.

Erbslöh employees also cooperate with German and international universities and research institutions, in order to offer beverage industry specialists new, customised solutions.

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Not only has the Rheingau beverage specialist expanded at product level, the company's decision-makers have also successfully responded to the challenges of increasing globalisation. The Erbslöh Group's international outlook and expertise have been enhanced by the purchase of La Littorale France in southern France in 2003 and the founding of Erbslöh España, S.L and Erbslöh Geisenheim Inc. in New York. The family-run company now numbers 140 employees and is represented in more than 70 countries worldwide. It has also proffered a solution to the fast-paced changes in communication and digitalisation, by successfully launching a craft beer product online shop in 2016.

This is how the present Erbslöh Geisenheim AG has expanded since the end of the Second World War, from a mining company, to become a global presence and to achieve numerous, widely varied milestones.

Carl Hugo Erbslöh would surely approve of the company's proficiency, its internationalisation and its innovative ability.