

Successful producer of specialty cookies

THE COOKIE FACTORY, WIKANA KEKS UND NAHRUNGSMITTEL GMBH, WITH MORE THAN 100 YEARS OF HISTORY, HAS RECENTLY TURNED TO SPECIALIZING IN THE PRODUCTION OF BISCUITS FOR NICHE MARKETS



++ figure 1

++ figure 1
The original “Wittenberger Lutherbrodt”, based on a traditional recipe, as well as the specialty product “Kalter Hund” are produced with several rollers

+ “Wikana – my favorite cookie” is the motto of the “Wikana KekS und Nahrungsmittel GmbH” from Lutherstadt Wittenberg, Germany. The beginning was quite different. The company, founded more than 100 years ago, initially produced chocolate articles. After World War II, when there was a shortage of cocoa and chocolate, Wikana turned to the production of cookies. During the time of the socialist worker’s and farmer’s state, Wikana was the second largest producer in the GDR, employing more than 500 people. After the political changes, the Treuhand agency dissolved the company and Wolfgang Fischer, responsible for the sales department at that time, took over what was left and started all over again with a staff of just 12.

Today, the staff has grown to 86; the cookie production is about 4,500 tons each year with three or four new products launched annually. Wikana is mostly present on the East German market and only selectively in Western Germany. About 50% of the products are sold under the name Wikana, the other part is marketed as private label products.

The traditional cookies include Luther bread, Othello cookies, Hansa cookies and butter cookies embellished with the Luther rose. “Our company’s success is based on the combination of tradition and innovation. Wikana produces high quality pastry products from selected ingredients”, explains Managing Director, Yvonne Böhm. Recently the company has launched new bakery variations such as

sugar-free Winner sandwich cookies, fair trade quinoa sandwich cookies with dark chocolate crème and cranberry orange fruit cookies.

Since 2001, Wikana has produced organic cookies such as the organic sandwich cookie with cocoa crème and the organic wholegrain wheat butter cookie. The fair trade range was introduced two years ago. Cane sugar and cocoa powder in fair trade quality are turned into delicious cookies. "Fair trade improves the working and living conditions of the raw material producers in Africa, Asia and Latin America and it enables us to enter another market niche successfully", reports Yvonne Böhm. The company strategy is to further expand the organic and fair trade ranges.

The company is also exporting its products. The export share is currently 15%. The company produces Halloween cookies for the Japanese market, for example.

The production facility

The six story historical building houses three cookie lines. 50 employees are usually employed on two shifts. For the Christmas production (June to September), the cookies are produced in three shifts. The product range comprises more than 80 different recipes. This is a specific challenge because the products are only made in small batches thus requiring frequent product changes. Most raw materials are delivered in bags with the introduction of big bags planned.

The crème fillings for the sandwich cookies are produced in the company; in this way the quality can be monitored and the necessary flexibility is ensured.

Two older tunnel ovens, with working widths of 800 and 1,000 mm, were modernized in 2008. Among others, the gas-heated ovens with a length of 38 and 42 m respectively, were equipped with a new control.

The third oven is the newest one; a Conny convection oven by Aasted-Microverk, Farum, Denmark. The Danish oven manufacturer was convincing with its concept. The design and construction of the convection oven are both sophisticated. It all starts with the hygiene features. Two doors at the side can be opened for easy access to the inside of the oven thus making cleaning, repair and maintenance easy and quick.

The belt that moves through the oven is driven by a frequency-controlled electro motor. The belt speed can be invariably adjusted. One special feature is the automatic belt tensioning system. Electrically powered spindles adjust the steel belt and make sure that it does not slip. The process is constantly monitored by a sensor and a light barrier.

Three burners generate the required heat and provide for a fast oven reaction time if the required baking temperatures need to be changed.

The air is heated in the heat exchanger and then distributed via aerodynamically optimized channels as top and bottom heat. The optimized air flow improves the distribution of the heat and reduces heat losses. Added to that, the oven is equipped with the energy recovery system ReConny. This system can pre-heat the air for the burners and also produce ►

History



+ **1906** – Foundation of the "Kant Chokoladenfabrik AG" in Wittenberg, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany. The company produces chocolate and cocoa products; one of the specialties is the "Kant Chocolate".

+ **1939** – Preparations for production during World War II begin. Most parts of the machines and equipment are relocated to Tangermünde. The staff is delegated to work at the "WASAG Sprengstoff AG" (a German company that produced explosive material) and at the "Arado Flugzeugwerke" (aircraft company) and up until 1945 they worked in the armaments industry.

+ **1945** – Restart of food production under the company name "Kant" providing the products most urgently needed in the first post-war years: artificial honey, rolled oats, coffee substitute and pasta.

+ **End of the 1940s** – Production of confectionery products: candies, fondant, jelly articles, liquorice articles and Marshmallow-type sweets

+ **1950** – Acquisition of the Nadena-Auerbach company. This was the basis for today's product range. Kant produces dry baked goods and expands its range later by pudding products and butter cookies.

+ **1953** – The company becomes public property of the GDR and the company name is changed to "VEB Süßwarenfabrik Nadena Kant"

+ **1954** – The name Wikana is introduced. It is composed of WI for Wittenberg, KA for Kant and NA for Nadena.

+ **1970** – Focus of production is now exclusively placed on dry baked goods.

+ **1990** – Renaming of the company "Wikana Süß- und Dauerbackwaren GmbH"

+ **1992** – Wikana is about to collapse. The Treuhand agency liquidates the company. The privatization takes place under the name "Wikana Keksfabrik"

+ **17. June 1997** – The company changes its name to Wikana Keks und Nahrungsmittel GmbH. The annual output of biscuits and cookies increases to 4,500 tons. Each year, Wikana introduces between three and four new products.

+ **2006** – Wikana celebrates its 100th anniversary. In terms of cookie sales in the new Federal States, the company is amongst the TOP 5. For sandwich cookies, it ranks second behind the market leader. +++



++ figure 2

++ figure 2
The production takes place on six floors in this historical building



++ figure 3

++ figure 3
The belt is continuously cleaned with a rotating steel brush

++ figure 4
The latest equipment is a Conny oven with a heat recovery system and automatic belt tension device

warm water. According to the manufacturer, 80% of the energy used can be recovered in this way. Wikana uses only part of the recovered energy; the other part is used for air conditioning later on. The pre-warming of the burner air supports the quick and precise control of the oven temperature.

The oven, with a length of 38 m, was delivered in December 2008 in two modules that had to be transported via lift to the first production floor. It took a total of four weeks until the oven was complete. "The cooperation was per-

fect; the time frame was kept with the technicians all speaking German. We now have higher performance levels, lower energy costs and the burners are clearly less noisy than the former ones and added to that the technicians are available for remote maintenance." Yvonne Böhm is very satisfied.

She reports that, "The change in production from radiation to convection heat did not alter the quality of the baked goods. We just had to modify the recipes slightly and adjust the amount of leavening agent and water." +++



++ figure 4

Our Industry Proven Pan Coating Technology has the
**World's Longest Release Life & the
World's Best Release Characteristics**

GUARANTEED



**DuraShield Europe offers the most effective
pan coating removal and recoating process in existence today.**

- Proprietary coating removal process does not degrade the strength or integrity of pan
- Exclusive nanotechnology provides unparalleled corrosion protection

**DuraShield coating consistently delivers more releases,
sometimes twice the releases, than all other competitors worldwide.**

- Thousands of releases without recoating
- PFOA Free Fluoropolymer
- Excellent dough flow and bake characteristics

TÉL +33 (0)3 27 84 23 38
WWW.DURASHIELDEUROPE.COM

