

Big on the small things

ANNABERGER BACKWAREN NOT ONLY SELLS ORE MOUNTAIN SPECIALITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD, IT ALSO TAKES CARE OF THE LOCAL SUPPLY OF BREAD AND BREAD ROLLS IN ANNABERG-BUCHHOLZ AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS. FROM LAST YEAR, LOAVES ETC. HAVE BEEN BAKED IN THE NEW MULTI-DECK OVENS FROM DAUB



++ figure 1



++ figure 2



++ figure 3



++ figure 4

++ figures 1-4
Annaberger Backwaren has 40 branches, 10 of which have an integrated café serving all kinds of gateaux and cream slices

+ The Ore Mountains is a region with a rich tradition. The people are proud of their artisan folk art such as carvings and bobbin lace, and also of their local specialities such as the stollen at Christmas. The Annaberger Backwaren GmbH Company in the German town of Annaberg-Buchholz in the Upper Ore Mountains fits this image. The business has been here for 55 years, and General Manager Martina Hübner says this is why they know and live the mentality of the local people. “From the region for the region – and beyond it” could be her motto, since Hübner can and must look beyond her own horizons for her bakery to be and remain commercially viable. That’s why nowadays Annaberger Backwaren has many mainstays whose product ranges serve differently sized areas: the company produces bread, bread rolls and cakes for the region, has a national selection with its confectionery products, for example, bars and gateaux, and also manufactures Ore Mountain specialities such as the “Original Erzgebirgischer Butterstollen” (Original Ore Mountain butter fruit cake), “Hutzenkuchen” and the “Gutguschl” assortment,

e.g. the Annaberger Herrenriegel, which are sent as presents to many countries including Canada, America and Australia. Annaberger Backwaren sells its products in branches that are in the form of bakery shops, traditional cafés focusing on confectionery articles, and the “Gutguschl” outlets. The last of these is an Ore Mountains expression meaning “gourmet” and is the name for a wide range of hot foods, savoury salads, baked soufflés or soups. The business also has a delivery service using its own vehicles, operates a chocolate factory, the “Schokoguschl”, and organises events including a catering service. According to its own statement, Annaberger Backwaren also owns Europe’s biggest Gauge 1 model railway, the “Modellbahnland Erzgebirge” where, in addition to the railway, guests can also visit a “Romantic Railway Gutguschl”.

The development until today

This kind of broad spectrum product range has not always existed: the story of the Annaberger Backwaren business started in 1957 when a large number of small independent



++ figure 5



++ figure 6

++ figures 5+6

The loader shuttles quickly and smoothly to and fro between the two Daub thermal oil ovens

bakery operations were merged. This became a major nationalized bakery ("Volkseigener Betrieb") in 1977. Until reunification in 1989 the business was only responsible for producing baked goods and confectionery with delivery and sales being carried out by other GDR enterprises. Today Hübner explains that with the collapse of the GDR, the nationalised trading regime no longer existed, and the trading chain Konsum, as the second customer for the major bakery's products, had its own baking businesses, which meant there was an urgent need to set up their own sales organisation, including a delivery service. Associated with this was the necessary downsizing of staff from the previous approx. 250 employees to a workforce of about 80 who fought for the survival of the business, initially under the overall control of the Treuhandanstalt (the privatisation agency in the former East Germany). Together with Bernhard Götz, at that time the manager of the operation manufacturing "Delikat" products, for which there was a strong demand during the GDR era, Martina Hübner acquired the business from the Treuhandanstalt in a management buy-out. Today around 180 employees work for Annaberger Backwaren and produce an average of 2,500 t of fresh and long-life baked goods per year. The product range consists of approx. 130 articles. An important high point – both in terms of sales and production quantity – is during the months from late August to December, when stollen, baumkuchen, gingerbread etc. are manufactured, stored and sold by branches, major clients, companies and private customers as well as by mail order. At this time the number of employees also temporarily increases by about 50 to enable all the products to be produced "with loving hands".

The daily bread in the Daub ovens

However, important as the Christmas business is for Annaberger Backwaren, the "daily bread" is not forgotten either, since together with the white goods it comprises about 50 % of the total production volume. This is why in the last few years the business has invested in new ovens, among other

things, because the old ones had become uneconomical. The bakery purchased two thermal oil ovens, each with six hearths and with a total area of 52 m², from the Daub Backtechnik GmbH Company, Hamburg, Germany. They are intended to complement the two remaining wire mesh belt continuous ovens, thus yielding greater flexibility, especially in bread production, in the form of smaller batches, more pan variants, and products with a higher dough yield. The new multi-deck ovens are no longer continuous and instead they are fed by loaders from the front, where the loaves are also taken out again. A Daub oven has six decks with a baking area of 4.3 m² per hearth, on which the loaves are baked on stone. Hübner explains that, "The ovens are heated by thermal oil, which brings a gas saving of approx. 20 %. However, the main factor that decided the purchase was the automatic loader, which impressed us with its robustness." The loader, whose dimensions are 4.6 x 1.8 x 3.96 m (H x W x D), loads the two ovens fully automatically although it is supplied with bread by hand, using scrabblers. This is performed by two employees who take the scrapper with 800 mm boards from the rack trolley and position it at the top end of the loader table. The reversing movement of the scrapper causes the ►

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++ figure 7
The loaves are given their finishing touches by hand on the rack trolley ...



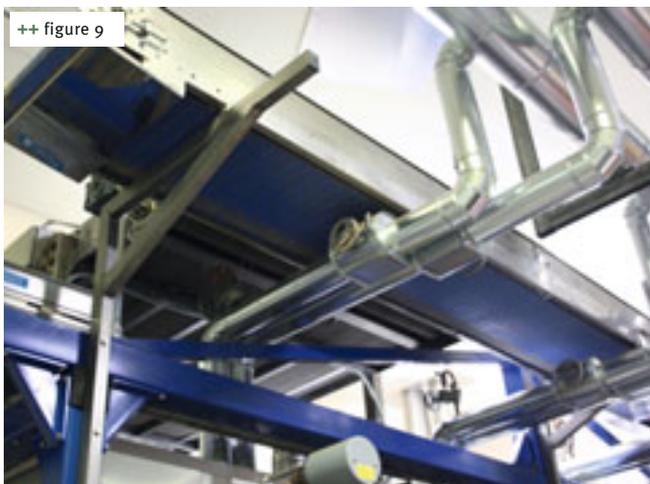
++ figure 8
... before two employees peel-off the loaves onto the loader's cloth belt

loaves to slide off the boards and onto the loader's conveyor belt. In this process, three scrabblers loads yield one hearth depth, i.e. 1,875 x 2,400 mm. Three hearths in turn make up a hearth group and thus one temperature zone. This subdivision thus allows four different articles with different temperature requirements to be baked simultaneously. Karsten Glander, Master Baker and Daub's business economist, says that although the loading already takes place very quickly (only around 1 min is needed to load an entire hearth), he could also operate one more oven. Another plus point of the oven design at Annaberger Backwaren is the sprayer, which is positioned on top of the right-hand oven. Hübner says, "This allows an additional oven to be set up alongside the existing ones, and to use the loader to feed it as well." The loader transfers the baked loaves to the sprayer, and the loaves then move via conveyor belts to the delivery area, where after a spiral chute they are removed from a conveyor belt by hand.

Baked goods distribution

The 15 varieties of hearth-baked loaves produced at Annaberger Backwaren now all pass through the new Daub ovens, whereas the pan breads, the 15 kinds of bread rolls and the cakes and stollen are still baked using the continuous ovens.

Annaberger Backwaren manufactures mainly hearth-baked rye bread loaves with a ratio of 60/40 or 70/30 and a sour-dough pre-dough; these are baked in the production department and then distributed to about 40 branches. Production Manageress Wiebke Augustin says, "The 4,000–6,000 loaves per day are only the start," alluding to the 40 % oven capacity still remaining unoccupied. The situation with bread rolls is exactly the opposite: after these have passed through the bread roll plant built by the Fortuna Maschinenbau Holding AG Company, Bad Staffelstein, Germany, they are supplied, either as frozen dough pieces or via an extended-time dough process in recovery rooms constructed by the KOMA company, to the branches for proofing and baking in their in-store ovens. Only about 10 % of the bread rolls are baked directly in the bakery. Baking as much as possible in the branches is also another of Hübner's points that she plans to expand further, because ultimately she knows her customers' preference for the aroma of fresh, warm baked goods in her branches. The General Manageress also wants to expand further the bakery's various mainstays, thus scoring points with the customers through even more service and quality in every area. She says, "That is especially important in a difficult region such as the Ore Mountains, situated at the very edge of the Republic of Germany." +++



++ figures 9 + 10

The fully baked loaves are transferred onto a conveyor belt at the back of the oven which carries the loaves at ceiling height into the adjoining room for packing





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