

Changing by action



THE MARTIN BRAUN COMPANY, A SPECIALIST IN FLAVOURING AND BAKERY AIDS, HAS TURNED INTO THE MARTIN BRAUN GROUP WHICH IS INCREASINGLY ACTIVE IN THE BREAD AND FROZEN BAKED GOODS MARKETS. IT HAS ALSO DISCOVERED THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET. BAKING+BISCUIT INTERNATIONAL'S EDITOR-IN-CHIEF HILDEGARD KEIL TALKED TO **DR. DETLEV KRÜGER**, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE MARTIN BRAUN GROUP.

++ Dr. Detlev Krüger

Since 2003, Dr. Detlev Krüger has been managing director of the Martin Braun Group in Hannover, a subsidiary of the Oetker Group, Bielefeld, Germany.
www.martinbraun-gruppe.de

+ bbi: Dr. Krüger, your company group consists of a number of individual companies and brands, Martin Braun, Siebin, Rau, Agrano, Wolf Butterback, Arconsa, but the common ground is not very clear to the public. You are the managing director of all these companies. In your opinion, why isn't there the necessity to represent all the companies as a unified group?

+ Dr. Krüger: The Martin Braun Group already exists. It is the organization unit for all companies within the Oetker Group whose target customers are "large consumers from the bakery sector". The group formation mainly takes place internally to create structures and achieve synergistic effects. We are appearing in Germany as separate companies because the companies and their brands have rather independent profiles. This is a strength we do not want to dilute just by presenting ourselves under one label. Abroad we are already appearing as one unit because there are no such evolved structures.

However, Arconsa, our Spanish subsidiary, plays a special role because it represents a regional European brand. By the way this is no contradiction to the fact that Arconsa as a supplier of fruit products and toppings is a strong and integrated part of the group.

+ bbi: What progress has the internationalization of the Martin Braun Group made up till now?

+ Dr. Krüger: Right now we are in an intermediate phase of the internationalization process. The process has begun but

has not been completed. We will increasingly place our attention on the quality oriented markets in Southern Europe and also on the growth oriented markets in Eastern-Europe. Currently we are realizing about 40% of our group's sales beyond the German borders. This proportion has risen in the past years significantly and will probably continue to grow in the future as well.

+ bbi: Maybe through acquisitions?

+ Dr. Krüger: Arconsa as a regional specialist company is a good example for our growth strategy. If there are interesting and market relevant companies for sale, we will be prepared. Prerequisite is, however, that the companies are sound. We are not interested in recapitalizing a company.

+ bbi: Acquisitions require money. Your home market Germany has not shown much growth in the past few years. What can you tell us about the growth within the Martin Braun Group?

+ Dr. Krüger: The total growth figures for the Group's sales in the past year were satisfying. This applies to the entire production range from Braun and Agrano to Wolf Butterback.

We have also experienced excellent growth rates in some individual fields.

+ bbi: The brands Siebin and Rau are missing in your list. What does the situation look like for these companies?

Brands of Martin Braun Group





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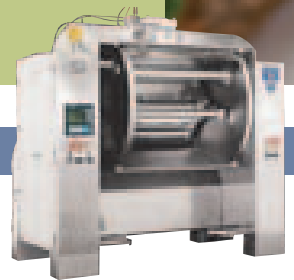
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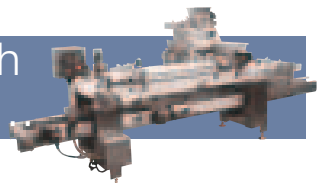


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+ Dr. Krüger: Rau and Siebin are pure basic assortment companies. In the past year, the fat market did not please any of the market participants because the prices were under a lot of pressure and the costs rose significantly. This development also affected us. Siebin on the other hand has developed satisfactorily as well.

+ bbi: We have talked about the geographical market, but what about the products' developments within your Group?

+ Dr. Krüger: We are satisfied with the development of our products as well. Let me explain this by two examples: Today, Agrano is market leader in the field of organic bread and rolls in Germany. In this segment, competency and quantity are a really welcome combination. At Agrano we are currently investing in the field of convenience products aimed at the traditional baking process, for example with our product Levafresh, a liquid wheat sponge dough with a long fermentation time and superior taste-developing properties, or with Gustissimo, a 25% premix for the production of a traditional artisan mixed wheat bread with prolonged proofing time and extraordinary taste which can be immediately used. In this segment we score a hit because of the very high expert knowledge available at Agrano.

At Wolf Butterback, we are currently in the process of setting up a new product range which will put us into the position of offering frozen doughnut-type baked goods in the future as well.

+ bbi: Agrano used to be an original Swiss brand. Will this be the beginning of the internationalization of Agrano?

+ Dr. Krüger: Agrano has been present on the German and other European markets for quite some years now. However, we would like to strengthen and expand our market position. In our opinion our organic and convenience products offer something special which is otherwise not available on the market in this quality.

+ bbi: Wolf Butterback is expanding its capacity. Does this mean the company will enter the food service market?

+ Dr. Krüger: Nobody will be able to ignore this market in the future. However for Wolf we will also offer a product range which is exclusively reserved for the artisan bakeries. Next to that, we will set up a product range for the out-of-home market with the brand name "Frosteria exquisit".

+ bbi: Talking about Frosteria. This brand was up to now known for frozen products for the pastry range at artisan bakeries. What will happen to that brand?

+ Dr. Krüger: Braun has been distributing its own frozen product range for about ten years under the Frosteria brand. This product range is very different from the Wolf Butterback products and the distribution is handled by a special frozen goods distributor. Therefore, the customers are different and both companies occupy their own market terrain successfully without touching the development of the respective other company.

After a two-year test phase, we did not continue the special frozen pastry products with cream, crème and cream cheese. Within the bakery trade, there is still the demand to make such baked goods individually and with an individual finish. This thesis is supported by the success of our cream stabilizers and fillings. Therefore, we will continue to focus on traditional baked pieces in the frozen goods segment.

+ bbi: This sounds like a number of construction sites that you have to manage currently, with one right here in Hannover. It seems that a bakery forum is emerging. What can the industry expect from that?

+ Dr. Krüger: I try to keep our "construction sites" at a reasonable number and to design the individual steps so that our Group can handle them. Therefore, some topics will be left for the future. The baking forum will presumably be opened in October. It will include an open bakery and all departments with customer contact will be moving in there as well. Next to seminars which we will organize, the baking forum will also be open to our customers for their trials. When the forum is complete, we will invite the industry for a tour.

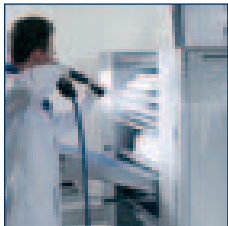
+ bbi: Dr. Krüger, thank you for this interview. +++

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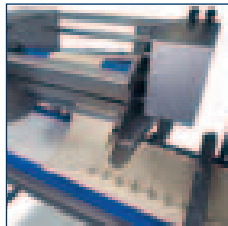
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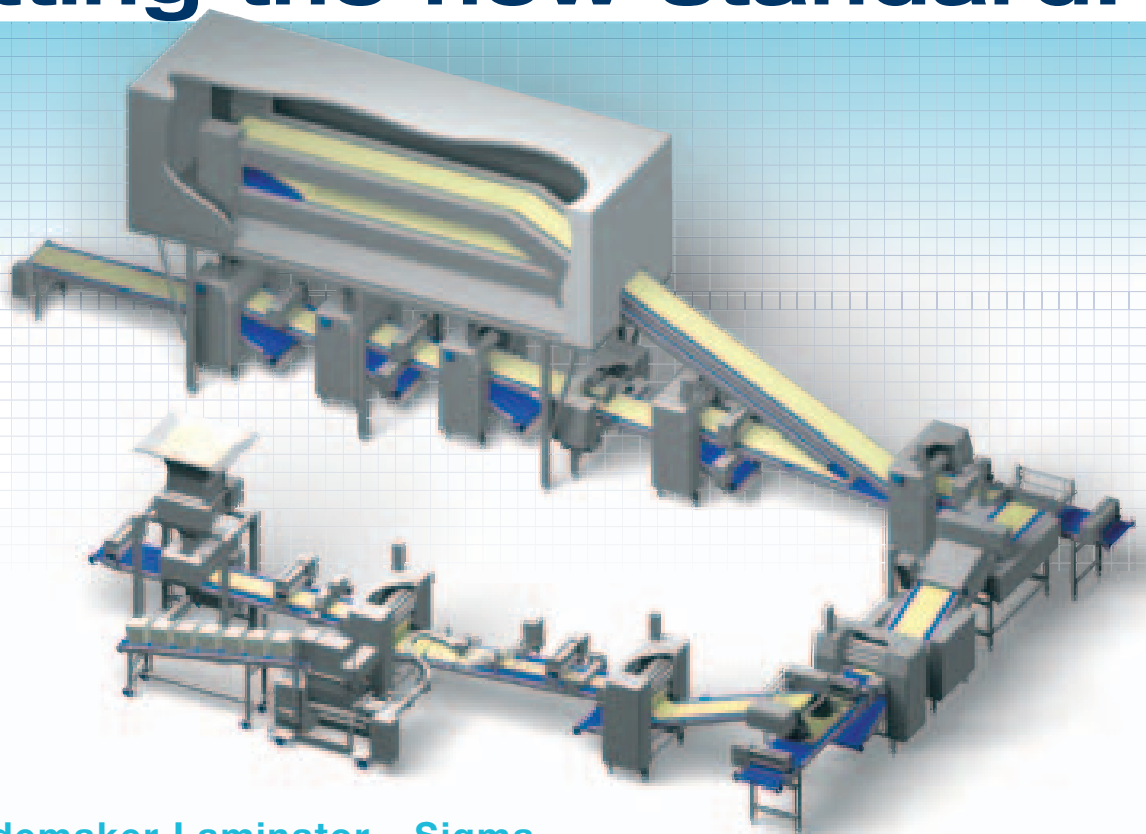
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