

If you get thirsty for a cool Pepsi-Cola on a train journey within Germany, then it certainly comes from Moers. More precisely, from the Union Getränke Zupancic bottling plant. As part of his company visits, Mayor Norbert Ballhaus visited the traditional Moers-based company. "I want to visit as many companies in our city as possible to get a comprehensive picture of the local economy. I also like to ask if there are any wishes or if there are any problems," says Ballhaus.

The family business on Rheinberger Strasse has been licensed as a bottling plant for Pepsi-Cola for 40 years. However, the company also produces its own mineral water varieties "Altbürgerbrunn" and "Kronen Quelle". The springs rise not far from the bottling plants on the Moersbach. They are the only mineral springs on the left bank of the Lower Rhine. Union also uses the mineral water for its own lemonades, fitness drinks and the iced tea "Cair", which will be launched on the market in spring. The company also supplies all Pepsi products for Deutsche Bahn. Zupancic also maintains a network of 21 beverage stores. "In this day and age, several mainstays are necessary," explains Managing Director Helmut Blondin, who is the third generation to run the company with his brother Horst. But the fourth generation is already involved in the business. Horst Blondin's sons Ralph and Claus are responsible for beverage stores and controlling respectively. However, there is never any family friction: "Everyone has their own business area, so we don't get in each other's way," says Claus Blondin. "And everyone has to take responsibility for their own part," adds Helmut Blondin. The company currently employs 230 people, around 90 of whom work in the beverage stores.



Claus and Helmut Blondin, Mayor Norbert Ballhaus and Ralph Blondin are delighted with a freshly filled bottle of "Kronen Quelle" during the company visit to Union Getränke Zupancic. (Photos: City of Moers)

In order to keep the "store running" and remain competitive, the technical area

-Pepsi from Moers travels all over
Germany

continuous investments are necessary. For example, bag-in-box or KEG bottling. The "bags" are filled with syrup, which restaurateurs pour on with water. This turns 10 liters of thick syrup into 60 liters of cola or soda. With the KEG system, on the other hand, pubs can tap the ready-mixed drinks from a 20-liter metal container.



This is not potting soil, but syrup that is later turned into 60 liters of delicious cola in the pub.

The company recently invested 3.5 million euros in a filling line for 1-liter PET returnable bottles. "The trend is increasingly moving towards PET bottles," says Claus Blondin. Their low weight makes them easier for consumers to handle, but they are more difficult to produce and fill. For example, a "sniffing device" has to check whether the empty water bottle has been filled with soda or juice by the consumer. "PET immediately absorbs odors and tastes," explains Claus Blondin. Due to the sensitivity of the material, deposit bottles must also be checked for scratches and damage.

A total of two million liters of mineral water and seven million liters of Pepsi products in PET bottles left the bottling plants last year. Not bad compared to the early days in Meerbeck in 1912. Back then, great-grandfather and company founder Josef Zupancic was still supplying customers with a horse-drawn cart.

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