

Press release

110 years of Zweihorn: partnerships spanning generations

Hilden, August 8th, 2022

AkzoNobel's Zweihorn brand is celebrating its 110th anniversary this year. "Since our beginnings in 1912, we have been committed to delivering not only the highest quality wood coatings, but also to producing innovations, services and partnerships that are based on a deep understanding of our industry and designed to stand the test of time. We look forward to the next 110 years!" says Magdalena Andrzejewska, Distribution Manager of Wood Finishes Europe. And it was on this occasion that master carpenter Hans-Dietmar Hayer rummaged through his grandfather's old workshop cupboards and came across something. Original Zweihorn containers with the addressee Horn & Horn from the 1920s appeared, proving the partnership has existed over generations. "Yes, even in difficult times, my father used to get Zweihorn paints in a roundabout way," reports Hans-Dietmar Hayer. In the Hayer carpentry business, the fourth generation are now using Zweihorn paints, varnishes and stains. Zweihorn's commercial partner is the wholesaler Immelen, headquartered in Trier, and Zweihorn is supported by specialist consultant Wolfgang Kotowski and has been advising Hans-Dietmar Hayer for over 36 years. Together, we recap the working methods and surface technology from our grandfather's days and then quickly bring these into the present day. A good reason for this: the operational handover to Maximilian Schiffels and today's production based on progressive digitalisation. The result is furniture and surfaces with the highest quality standards.

In changing times

The cabinets of master carpenter Hans-Dietmar Hayer contain state-of-the-art technology from the early days. "For example, you had to mix the stain yourself, and Zweihorn added the powder," explains Wolfgang Kotowski. "Brushes were used for application; the spraying techniques we're familiar with today were inconceivable in my grandfather's time," says Hans-Dietmar Hayer. AkzoNobel's Zweihorn brand has earned a reputation for its industry-leading expertise, quality and innovation over its long history. Some technological milestones mark its recent history. In 1984, the company developed the first coloured paint mixing system, Wigranit, followed by a coloured paint mixing machine in 1988. In 1991, the company introduced a spectrophotometer with its own colour shade determination software. This was followed in 1995 by the first solvent-based insulating filler and, in 1999, the first water-based insulating filler (Supercryl IF insulating filler). The Wigranit magnetic adhesive filler was launched in 2005 and the ultra-fast-drying 3K high-gloss paint system Duritan was launched in 2008. This was followed by in 2011 by the first residues filler, which can be mixed 1:1 with the leftovers of paint.

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The Hayer carpentry business has also undergone constant change. The carpentry business was founded in 1903 in the small barn where the historic paint cabinets are still stored today, on just a few square metres. Innovative grandfather Johann-Josef Hayer produced his own electricity for the joinery with a steam engine in those days and applied for a patent for the woodworking machine he developed himself in 1913. The business has stayed in the same location, and more halls have been built over the years, bringing the current production area to 600 square metres. Having completed his training as a form and interior designer, master carpenter Hans-Dietmar Hayer returned to his parents' business from Garmisch-Partenkirchen in 1991, and expanded the business. The first computer was purchased, in the next few years a new wide belt sanding machine, a veneer press, sliding table saw, as well as a computer-controlled 3-axis CNC machining centre and much more. In 2010 the hall was expanded to include a modern paint shop with a separate spraying area. Maximilian Schiffels joined the company as an apprentice in 2012. After passing his journeyman and master craftsman examinations with outstanding results, he first took over management in 2018 and then took over the carpentry workshop in 2021. A 5-axis CNC machining centre was acquired in 2019.

The Hayer carpentry business today

"We don't lose sight of our tradition, but today we are working in a completely different world," says Hans-Dietmar Hayer. Hans-Dietmar Hayer defined "over 50s" as his target group back in 1991, geared his business towards it and said goodbye to the price-competitive new building. With the young master Maximilian Schiffels, aged 26, the transformation into the present day has been achieved. "We have pushed ahead with digitalisation in our operations," explains Maximilian Schiffels. "From the office, we can supply all our machines directly with the necessary data. The individual part that is produced, regardless of whether it is manufactured on the machining centre or the sliding table saw, is labelled with all relevant data. The starting point for this is 3D planning using CAD. We do this for almost every enquiry. And with the photo-realistic visualisation, almost every enquiry turns into an order. This requires some work initially, but the photo-realistic visualisation is impressive. Our customers receive a link and can view their individual solution on their mobile phone for a limited time. When the order is placed, all production data is already available.

The current trend

"Due to our high level of digitalisation, we can take perfection and individuality to the extreme," says Maximilian Schiffels. "In some projects, grinding work is carried out by our CNC machining centre – it doesn't get more perfect." A good example is also the base cabinet of a staircase. The division of the compartments is optimised, refinements such as light sensors and LEDs are installed. "In our experience, this piece of furniture is on trend," says Maximilian Schiffels, "the combination of white lacquer and natural wood is very popular. We do the painting with Wigranit Novacolor coloured paints in white and with the deep matt clear lacquers from Zweihorn." Thus we come full circle – and on the basis of high-performance and innovative paints from the Zweihorn brand from AkzoNobel, the preconditions for a next-generation partnership have been set.

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Captions:

Wolfgang Kotowski provides support to Hans-Dietmar Hayer in the 36th year of his career. The two Zweihorn containers from the 1920s, from the founding times of Hans-Dietmar Hayer's grandfather, are on display in the carpentry business founded over 110 years ago.
Photo: Akzo Nobel Hilden GmbH