

AHOJ | THE FIZZY DRINK POWDER



Even Goethe, that great man of letters, was fascinated by the “airy sharpness”, as he termed the fizz of carbonated drinks in his famous work “The Elective Affinities”. With this term, as so often, he hit the nail right on the head. It’s not, however, Goethe but the businessman Theodor Beltle that we have to thank for inventing one of the best-known of fizzy drinks. By experimenting with sodium bicarbonate and tartaric acid, Beltle discovered that these two components somehow come alive in water, since the addition of water leads to the formation of carbonic acid – the thing that adds the “fizz” to fizzy drinks. So fascinated was he by this discovery that the inventive businessman hit upon the idea of developing and marketing a “splendidly mouth-tingling popular beverage”. “Fizzy lemonade powder for every social class” was the name given by Beltle to his new concoction, as he founded Robert Friedel GmbH – or “Frigeo” for short – in Stuttgart. The year was 1925.

It didn’t take long for the drink to become successful, enabling the business to move into new and larger production facilities in the early 1930s. This was also the time that the company devised the little sachet with its logo of a friendly sailor waving so merrily at the consumers of the product and greeting them with a cheery “Ahoj”. This word, derived from the Czech and basically meaning “hello”, was a snappy branding device, as to German ears “ahoj” sounds just like “ahoy!”, the well-known nautical greeting.

The cry from the little sailor met with a warm response from consumers, and from 1932 the product bearing his image and known as “Frigeo Ahoj-Brause”, or lemonade powder, quickly became a popular drink across Germany. During the Second World War the shortage of materials caused production to be suspended for a time. From 1948, though, it was once again full steam ahead for Frigeo, and before long “Ahoj-Brause” was on everyone’s lips – in more ways than one. The range of fizzy drink powders was continually broadened. The variety of products has grown ever wider to extend, nowadays, from drink powders

to fizzy cubes through to puffed rice and lollies – in fact, virtually anything that can be made from the tasty fizzy drink powder. One high point – quite literally – was enjoyed by the Ahoj-Brause brand in 1965, when the German Himalayan expedition made sure they carried a supply of sachets, with the cheerily waving Ahoj sailor, to enjoy at every refreshment stop.

Even before then, the company had enjoyed steady growth, causing it to up sticks once again. In 1952 it moved into a modern factory in Remshalden in order to meet increased demand with appropriate production facilities and technology. 1975 saw the company celebrate its 50th anniversary, an occasion used to bring the first “fizzy” lollipop onto the market. The mouth-tingling lolly soon became a big hit with children, opening yet another successful chapter in Frigeo’s history.

The Ahoj-Brause brand has continued to expand and is now practically a cult product for many. Over the last few years, party-goers and clubbers in particular have been rediscovering the little sachets, and using the happy sailor to pep up their drinks with its famous fizzy taste. Children, however, have remained the main market for the product. The Frigeo website, in fact, offers its younger consumers a light-hearted and interesting place to meet, based around the cult brand of Ahoj-Brause. In the “Brause Club”, young visitors are invited to tell each other mouth-tingling stories and report on their experiences of enjoying both the older and newer Ahoj-Brause products.

Since 2002, the company has been part of the Katjes Fassin GmbH group. This represents a strong brand combination, since just as Ahoj is known for fizzy drink powders, Katjes is renowned for its famous liquorice and fruit gum products – a perfect association between brand and product, in fact. What a pity that Goethe isn’t around to discover how wonderful his “airy sharpness” tastes in the form of Ahoj lemonade powder – a man with his taste for the classics would surely have enjoyed it.



Company name
Katjes Fassin
GmbH & Co. KG

Classic product
“Waldmeister” lemonade
powder (since 1932)

Established
1925 in Stuttgart/
Germany

Inventor
Theodor Beltle

Distribution
worldwide

Main production sites
The Frigeo factory,
Remshalden near Stuttgart