

Albert Berner reaches the age of 75

Rooted in the region, international success

Entrepreneur Albert Berner, founder of the Combined Berner Group and chairman of the supervisory board celebrates his 75th birthday on July 12. The whole town of Künzelsau is invited to take part in the festivities: To coincide with his special birthday, Albert Berner is giving a huge children's party on July 31.

When you talk to him about his business, his eyes light up. He is known as a realist with both feet firmly on the ground. He likes to try out new things and follow up his plans with action. At the age of 21, on April 1, 1957, he opened his own small screw business. With untiring energy and constant new ideas he has continued to expand his firm ever since. Today the Combined Berner Group is represented in more than 20 European countries and in the Far East. In the last fiscal year, around 8000 employees – 5000 of whom are in field sales – achieved sales of 856 million euros. But Albert Berner has not yet achieved everything he wants: He wants to breathe new life into the traditional Caramba brand and make it internationally successful.

Berner in private – family, social life and sport

Although the development and expansion of the Combined Berner Group is his life-long ambition, Albert Berner spends a lot of quality time with his family and friends. He is a

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passionate sportsman and he has always enjoyed the friendship and competitiveness associated with this. He was passionate about football from an early age. Later his interests widened to include athletics, golf, swimming, walking and cycling. "I was talented but I had to train hard," he said about himself.

Give something back to the region

Entrepreneurial spirit but also responsibility and commitment to his employees and Society what characterize the actions of company founder Albert Berner – both at the headquarters in Künzelsau and at the group companies throughout Europe. "We are responsible for our employees and for the region in which we live and work," was and remains his motto.

With the founding in 1995 of the charitable Albert Berner Foundation, chaired by his wife Ursula Berner, the company's founder sponsors social, cultural and sporting activities in the Hohenlohe region. He wants to give back something to the people in the region who through their friendship, service and corporation have helped him achieve what he has done.

Thus for the third time, to coincide with his special birthday, Albert Berner is putting on a children's party in Künzelsau with many attractions, games and lively entertainment.

Albert Berner has received many honors not only for his exceptional entrepreneurial skills but also for his social and cultural commitment.

Besides the 'Bundesverdienstkreuz' (Federal Cross of Merit) which he received in 1995, on his 70th birthday he was awarded the 'Bundesverdienstkreuz 1. Klasse' (Cross of Merit, First Class). In 2004 the French president made him a "Knight of the Legion of Honor" – an honor accorded to very few non-Frenchman.

Family business on the path to success

Albert Berner, who since 1997 has no longer been involved in the day-to-day running of the company, is optimistic about the future: "We will do everything we possibly can to ensure that it continues its successful development in the future." Berner is an independent family business and will remain so: "We will continue to grow responsibly with the aim of ensuring long-term, sustainable success."

The handover to the next generation is a challenge, but not an insoluble one: My son and my daughter are ready in the wings, I have a management I can depend upon – these are good premises for ensuring that things will succeed," says Berner.

But Albert Berner is not planning to retire completely for a long time to come: "I'll continue to play my part," he says reassuringly. Thus, in the coming years, he hopes above all that he will remain in good health.

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