

Conversation

Walter von Känel,
President Longines

Business

Cutting-Edge Energy
Bystronic Laser AG in Niederönz

Research & Development

Clean and Green
SMIXIN AG in Biel

Living

**Fairplay, Fun and
Full Throttle**
National Summer Games 2014
in Bern





The Swiss Market is waiting for you

KPMG in Switzerland supports you with experienced specialists. We provide valuable local knowledge and assist you in your market entry. We help you setting up your company and managing tax & legal requirements. KPMG is here to support every step of the way – contact us.

Hans Jürg Steiner, Partner
Head of Tax & Office Manager KPMG Bern
Hofgut, CH-3073 Gümligen-Bern
T: +41 58 249 20 57
E: hsteiner@kpmg.com

www.kpmg.ch

Conversation

- 4/5 “Staying True to Our Roots”**
Walter von Känel, President Longines

Business

- 6–8 The “Spirit of Spiez” Lives On**
60 years of the Miracle of Bern at the Belvédère Strandhotel in Spiez
- 9–11 Cutting-Edge Energy**
Bystronic Laser AG in Niederörs

Research & Development

- 12/13 Pumping Water with Sunshine**
BFH-TI in Biel
- 14–16 Clean and Green**
SMIXIN AG in Biel

Living

- 17–19 Fairplay, Fun and Full Throttle**
National Summer Games 2014 in Bern
- 20 Apprenticeships Climb the Career Ladder**
SwissSkills Bern 2014: 1st Swiss vocational championships

Competition

- 21 Wellness Weekend on Lake Thun**
Win a feel-good stay at Spiez

Bern Economic Development Agency

- 22 Relocations to the canton of Bern**
New companies in the region
- 23 Training Professionals – Boosting Business**
Networking with the business community is the key to success

Publication details

Publisher and concept: Bern Economic Development Agency (BEDA), Münsterplatz 3, CH-3011 Bern, tel.: +41 31 633 41 20, www.berneinvest.com
Text: Julia Weber **Photography:** Daniel Rihs, Bern **Design:** Casalini Werbeagentur, Bern **Translation:** Marianne Creola, lingua-communications, Thun
Printed by: Haller + Jenzer AG, Burgdorf. Printed on FSC-certified paper.
Circulation and publication method: “bernecapitalarea – magazine on business, science and living in the canton of Bern, Switzerland” is published twice a year in German, French and English and has a circulation of 5,500 copies.
Picture credits: Daniel Rihs (p. 1, 3–5, 9–16, 18–19, 23), Deutsches Fussballmuseum (p. 6–8), Fabienne Bühler/Schweizer Illustrierte/RDB (p. 17), swisskillsbern (p. 20), Strandhotel Belvédère (p. 21). All rights reserved. Articles and pictures may only be reproduced with the express consent of the publisher and the chief editor.



Dear reader,

High-skilled, high-performing and highly motivated: our well-trained young people play a major part in our region's economic success. At the SwissSkills Bern 2014 championships at the BERNEXPO exhibition grounds from September 17 to 21, 2014, young professionals will be demonstrating just how attractive our vocational training courses are.

Switzerland's dual-track vocational system plays a key role in this. Our Skills Initiative – a joint initiative by the Federal Government and the cantons – is aimed at providing the perfect framework for the advancement of high-skilled professionals. I am delighted to be involved in this initiative – throughout Switzerland, but most specifically in the canton of Bern.

Innovative spirit and top performance at all levels form the basis for a flourishing economy. Meaningful ideas and their successful implementation are often the result of contact with real-life problems in industry and commerce. As the Bern Minister of Economic Affairs and President of the Conference of Ministers of Economic Affairs, it is extremely important to me to ensure that this success factor gets the recognition it deserves and is developed further. In this issue of *bernecapitalarea* you will find out how, by working closely together, business and research and educational institutions are bringing the concentrated power of innovation to the canton of Bern.

I hope you enjoy reading our magazine!

Yours truly,

Andreas Rickenbacher, Member of the Government of the Canton of Bern, Minister of Economic Affairs

“Staying True to Our Roots”

A conversation with Walter von Känel

Tradition, elegance and excellence – Longines timepieces have been winning admirers with their outstanding qualities since 1832. Walter von Känel, President of Longines, explains how the brand from a small town in the Bernese Jura captures the hearts of watch lovers and athletes the whole world over.

Your company has been located in Saint-Imier in the Bernese Jura for more than 180 years. What is it about this location that keeps it contemporary and ideal for your business activity?

“My job and my passion are one and the same.”

“The history of Longines is closely bound up with the watchmaking tradition of the Bernese Jura. They have shaped and stimulated one another. The specialization on watchmaking has been playing an important economic role for our region since the 19th century and Saint-Imier continues to be a

promising watchmaking center on the international stage. Besides Longines, another contributory factor is the Haute Ecole Arc Ingénierie, which has a campus here.”

You began your professional life in the customs administration, then decided on a career with a renowned watchmaker. What was it that first appealed to you and still does about working in a watchmaking company?

“The watch industry is innovative and conjures up dreams. The success of Longines is attributable in part to the combination of these two factors. It’s also why the brand is equally as attractive to our customers as it is to our employees.”

What are the defining characteristics of Longines?

“Elegance, tradition and excellence have been the hallmarks of the Longines brand since time immemorial. The first Longines chronograph was produced in 1878; this also coincided with our entry into sports timekeeping, initially for horseracing. Since that time, we have launched a series of outstanding calibers. For example, some of our current models feature exclusive and unique column-wheel chronograph movements.”

How have the Longines brand and products developed in recent years?

“Longines has remained true to its roots with regard to the design and the price segment. Continuity, consistency and purposefulness are our three guiding principles in the development. I would

Walter von Känel occupies his non-working time with shooting, hiking, regional history and politics. The one-time commander of a Swiss Army infantry regiment is a member of the Conseil du Jura bernois.



About the person

Walter von Känel (72), President of Longines, was born in Schwerin (Germany) and spent his childhood in Saint-Imier in the Bernese Jura from 1945. The father of two completed a commercial apprenticeship with Nusslé SA in La Chaux-de-Fonds, worked in the federal customs administration and for the watch company Jean Singer Ltd., before joining the sales department of Longines in 1969. Following positions as head of the sales department and head of the sales and marketing department, Walter von Känel has been President of Longines since 1988 and Member of the Extended Group Management Board of the Swatch Group since 1991.

also like to emphasize that our membership of the Swatch Group has enabled our continued growth, with the result that we currently rank among the four most important Swiss watch brands alongside OMEGA.”

What is the Longines formula for success, especially also in the Asian market?

“Alongside our high-quality products and the price segment as additional success factors, it is without doubt our knowledge of the market. The valuable contacts and information that we bring back from our travels are crucial to better understanding of our customers in the region of the world concerned.”

Longines watches are used for timekeeping at world championships, your company is a partner of numerous international sports associations and sponsor of many world-class athletes. What links does Longines maintain with the sports venues, athletes and sports competitions in the Bern region?

“We have been supporting sports competitions and athletes in the canton of Bern for decades. As official timekeeper at the Alpine Ski World Cup races in Wengen and Adelboden, we uphold our commitment to sport in the region. We are also represented in the Stade de Suisse with a Longines stadium clock. In addition, our organization was a partner and timekeeper at the 2013 Federal Festival of Gymnastics in Biel. What's more, one of our ambassadors – the internationally successful show jumper Jane Richard – hails from the Biel area.”

What would you like to be able to devote more time to?

“My job and my passion are one and the same. The time that I dedicate to my interests is thus inseparable from my working time.”

Information

www.longines.com



From his earliest childhood, Walter von Känel has had a passion for watchmaking. The President of Longines grew up in the high Saint-Imier valley, in the heart of the Swiss watchmaking industry.

About the company

Longines has been based in Saint-Imier in the Bernese Jura since 1832. The company, famous for its strikingly elegant watches and outstanding technical know-how, has been developing timekeeping technologies for world championships since 1878 and is the partner of international sports associations and athletes. Longines operates distributors in more than 130 countries. The company adopted the winged hourglass as its logo together with the Longines brand name as long ago as 1867 and is today part of the Swatch Group, the world-leading watchmaker.

The “Spirit of Spiez” Lives On

60 years of the Miracle of Bern at the Belvédère Strandhotel in Spiez

The Belvédère is marking 60 years of the Miracle of Bern with an anniversary exhibition. Hotel director Markus Schneider and exhibition curator Johann Schlüper explain how the “Spirit of Spiez” helped the German soccer national team to World Cup victory in 1954.



The magical place in the canton of Bern where football history was written: the Strandhotel Belvédère in Spiez. This year the “Spirit of Spiez” is back in an anniversary exhibition.



"After 60 years, the 'Spirit of Spiez' is once again making an appearance in our historic Salon Rouge," Belvédère director Markus Schneider tells us. Having celebrated the 50th anniversary of the legendary World Cup final at Bern's Wankdorf Stadium on July 4, 1954, in 2004, the lakeside hotel is hosting another fascinating exhibition on this momentous victory. "They couldn't have picked a better venue," says Johann Schlüper of the 1954 World Cup Museum in Germany, who is overseeing the exhibition as its curator. "This traditional hotel played a major part in the German team's World Cup success. It was here at the German eleven's team headquarters that the incomparable 'Spirit of Spiez' came into being."

From team to community

It was no coincidence that national coach Sepp Herberger's eleven stayed at this hotel in 1954. "The then German cotrainer

Albert Sing knew the area very well.

"In 2014 the Belvédère will become a place of pilgrimage for all football nostalgics."

Besides the German team he also trained the Young Boys Bern, and he also had relatives in Spiez, so

he knew the Belvédère from personal experience," football expert Schlüper explains. The players' wives and reporters were kept well away from the team's quarters. Shielded from the outside world, the idea was for the players to grow together into a strong entity. "National coach Sepp Herberger was convinced that the team could only win as a community, and this community spirit was forged at the Belvédère. Besides the rigorous training program there were group outings to local places, card games and one-to-one pep talks between Herberger and the players,



About the exhibition

The Miracle of Bern premium exhibition at the Belvédère Strandhotel & Restaurant in Spiez will run from April 28 to September 30, 2014 and will be open daily whenever possible. Featuring photographs, videos, audio, commentaries and original exhibits, this unique interactive exhibition tells the story of the Football World Cup final between Germany and Hungary at the Wankdorf Stadium, Bern on July 4, 1954.



“The heroes of Bern”: the German national football team at Bern’s Wankdorf Stadium on July 4, 1954.

Tip for visitors

From July 8 to August 28, 2014 **Interlaken Tourismus** is offering a “Summer in the City” package – a perfect match for anyone visiting the anniversary exhibition in Spiez. Included in the package are a day’s shopping in Thun, a sumptuous dinner at the famous open-air Thunerseespiele venue with its breathtaking views of the Bernese Alps, and tickets for the Thunerseespiele production of *AIDA – Das Musical*, featuring songs by Elton John and performed on Europe’s most beautiful lakeside stage. Book at www.interlaken.ch.

which all helped to strengthen the bonds between the players,” says Schlüper. What happened at the Wankdorf Stadium in Bern following the German eleven’s time in Spiez has become known the world over as the Miracle of Bern. Precisely 60 years later, in the anniversary summer of 2014, the historic finale and the “Spirit of Spiez” are to be re-lived at the Belvédère.

Ninety legendary minutes

“In our premium exhibition, visitors can follow the world champions step by step through ten games, from qualification to their final tournament fixtures and their 3-2 victory over Hungary in the World Cup final,” hotel director Schneider explains. Exciting audiovisual presentations will transform this retrospective of the 1954 Football World Cup into an all-round experience. “This time we’re digging even deeper into our treasure chest and showing our most valuable exhibits,” curator Schlüper reveals. And the Belvédère will be awash with color: fourteen shirts in green, blue, red, and, of course, the black-and-white of the famous Herberger’s eleven, along with eight original match pennants, will be on display at the exhibition, the highlight of which is the unique picture gallery, “Bern’s ninety legendary minutes.” “Ninety minutes, ninety football moments – there’s a picture for every minute of the final in Bern,” Schlüper says. And the exhibition wouldn’t be

complete without Herbert Zimmermann’s famous radio commentary, which provides an acoustic backdrop to the film about the final along with commentaries from Hungary, Austria and East Germany. Opposite a large screen showing the most unforgettable moments of the final, there is a panoramic photograph of Bern’s Wankdorf Stadium. “An overwhelming sight,” hotel director Schneider enthuses. “In 2014 the Belvédère will become home and a place of pilgrimage for all football nostalgics.” From April 24 to 27 the premium exhibition in Spiez will also be marked by a particularly “tasteful” anniversary event: in honor of the football heroes of the Miracle of Bern, the hotel will be serving the original champions’ menu – a culinary reinterpretation of the world champions’ menu served on July 4, 1954.

Information

www.belvedere-spiez.ch

www.interlaken.ch

Cutting-Edge Energy

Bystronic Laser AG in Niederösterreich

Bystronic Laser AG is a world leader in systems and machines for processing sheet metal. Among the products it develops and manufactures are water jet cutting systems that can cut straight through a material as tough as steel like a hot knife through butter. CEO Alex Waser and Product Manager Georg Scheiba explain how it's done.

How do your water jet cutting machines work?

Georg Scheiba: "A high pressure pump forces up to three liters of water per minute through a 0.28-mm nozzle, creating water pressure of up to 5,300 bar. With this concentrated energy, the water is accelerated in a fine jet to many times the speed of sound and can even cut steel like a hot knife through butter."

What materials are your water jet cutting machines used on, and in which industries?

Georg Scheiba: "Our machines can cut virtually any material without damaging it: ceramics, foam, rubber, high-strength special alloys, compounds – even bullet-proof glass. Water jet cutting has become an indispensable manufacturing technology in many different sectors around the globe, such as aviation, automotive and plant construction, the food sector, glass processing and medical engineering."

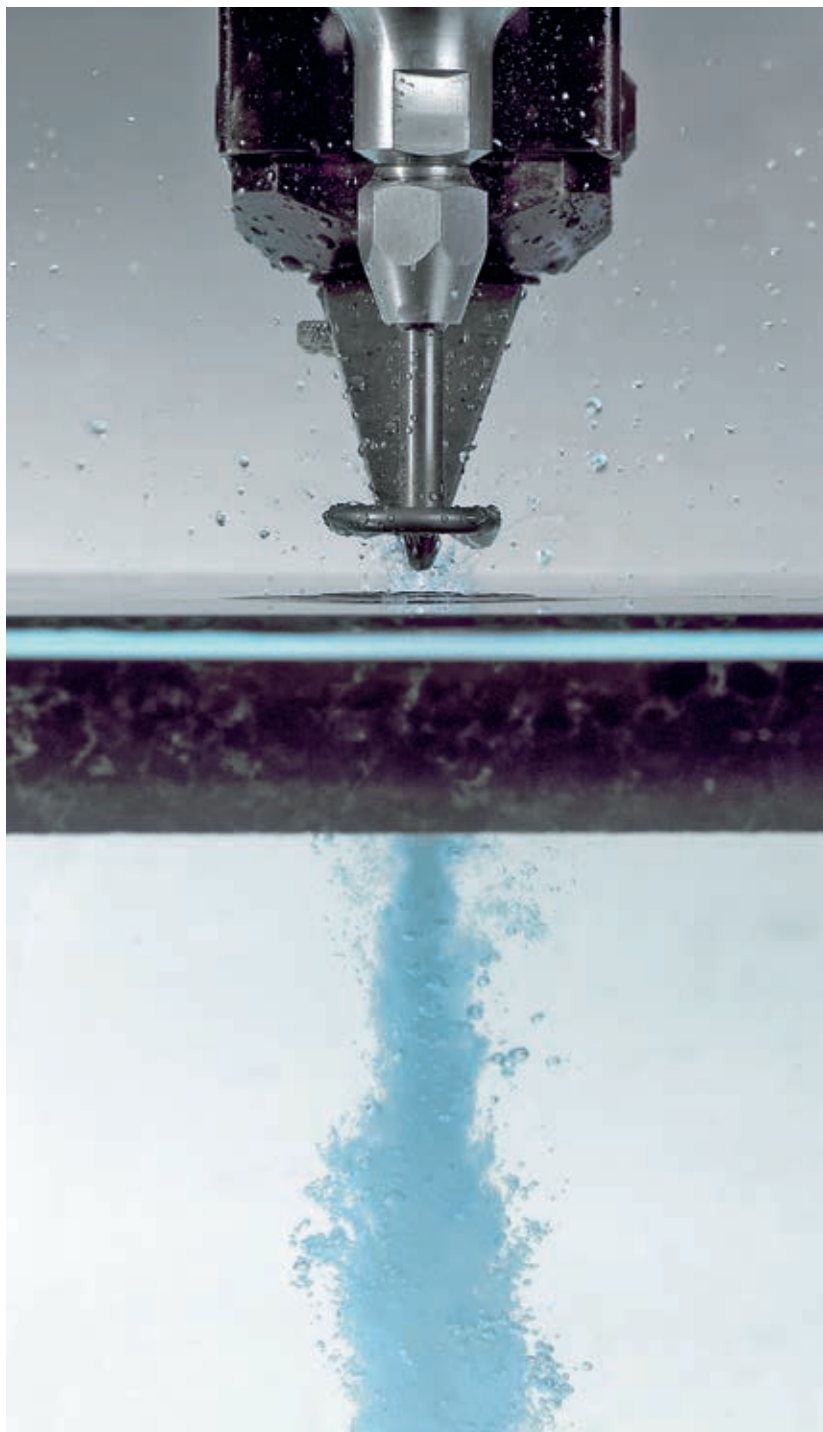
"The cutting process gets the most out of the material."

What advantages does cutting with a water jet bring your customers?

Georg Scheiba: "Water jet cutting protects the material because the workpiece is exposed to no thermal load at all and very little mechanical load. It can be processed with the highest-possible precision. And with the common-line cutting technique, you can

About the company

Bystronic Laser AG develops and produces pressbrakes, laser and water jet cutting machines, and related automation systems and software solutions. Its headquarters in Niederösterreich are home to its development, manufacturing and assembly divisions, its apprentice center and its customer demonstration and training center. Established in Bützberg in 1964 as Bystronic Maschinen AG, the company has been owned by Conzeta AG since 1994. Bystronic Laser AG employs more than 1,500 people worldwide, of which 500 in Switzerland, and achieved sales of CHF 530.6 million in 2012.



From 0.01-mm plastic film to 20-cm titanium sheets: the Bystronic Laser AG water jet cutting machines are truly universal.



minimize material wastage. What's more, the process is extremely safe and environmentally sound because no toxic emissions are produced during cutting."

What makes Bystronic Laser AG water jet cutting machines stand out from the crowd?

Alex Waser: "We provide our users with efficient, practical processing solutions. Basically, we offer top-level expertise in all aspects of water jet cutting. After all, our customers' manufacturing processes don't start on the cutting machine; a lot of planning goes into developing the parts on the computer screen well

before cutting starts. So we provide them with support and advice throughout their production process from the initial job file right through to the finished workpiece."

How important is it to you to work with universities and promote young talent?

Alex Waser: "We work closely with universities and research institutions like the University of Bern Institute of Applied Physics (IAP), the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETH), and the Institute for Applied Laser, Photonics and Surface Technologies (ALPS) at BFH-TI in Burgdorf. Here in Niederönz we



"We offer our customers a product system tailored specifically to their needs. And we supply all the components ourselves." Georg Scheiba, left, product manager, and CEO Alex Waser.

About the person

Alex Waser (46), CEO, graduated in automotive engineering at HTL Biel Technical College, and gained a post-graduate qualification in business management in Lucerne followed by an MBA in Zurich and New York. Waser worked in leading roles in Europe and the USA for the SPX Group and Ecolab Europe GmbH before joining Conzzeta AG as head of the sheet metal processing systems division in April 2013. The father of two lives in Sarnen in the canton of Obwalden and likes to spend his leisure time with his family and outdoors, particularly hiking or skiing.

currently have 74 trainees in eleven different professions. Practical on-the-job training and international professional experience are important to us. So we recently sent four trainees who had just completed their apprenticeships on a six-month secondment to our subsidiary in Tianjin, China."

How does being based in Niederönz in the canton of Bern benefit your business?

Alex Waser: "We are in a rural but central location midway between several attractive cities. The infrastructure is excellent, and the social and cultural environment is good too. All these factors

enable us to attract people from Switzerland and abroad. We also very much appreciate the outstanding support we receive from local and cantonal authorities and economic agencies. Being so close to so many industrial companies and, in particular, the BFH-TI institutes in Biel, Bern and Burgdorf, we are able to recruit extremely high-skilled people. Many of our former trainees go on to study at BFH-TI and come back to us as engineers after taking their bachelor's or master's degree."

Information

www.bystronic.com

Pumping Water with Sunshine

BFH-TI in Biel

There is an easy, cheap and environmentally sound way to supply people in developing countries with water. Prof. Dr. Andrea Vezzini, Karin Imoberdorf and Lukas Menzi demonstrate how it's done with their powerful solar water pump.

An intelligent system made up of a solar panel, a permanent magnet motor, electronic controls and a pump attracted much attention at the Swiss Energy and Climate Summit in Bern in September 2013. Together they form a solar water pump that has been making the lives and work of many people in agriculture and health care in developing countries much easier since the beginning of this year. "The motor of the solar water pump is

"The solar water pump is helping our budding engineers develop as well."

powered straight from the solar panel without the need for a battery. With our carbon-neutral system for drinking water abstraction or irrigation, diesel- and human-powered pump systems are a thing of the past," explains master's degree student Lukas Menzi, who personally over-

saw the production of the solar water pump in Bangalore, India, this winter. Menzi, an electronic and communication engineering graduate from the BFH-TI in Burgdorf, has chosen to focus on energy and environment in his Master of Science in Engineering (MSE). Besides their practical value, all MSE projects undertaken at BFH-TI are characterized by international and interdisciplinary teamwork that extends well beyond the walls of academia.

Interdisciplinary teamwork

Another member of this team is Karin Imoberdorf, who has also been studying solar water pumps in field studies in Bangladesh since her master's degree in international affairs and governance at the University of St. Gallen. At present she is providing business and sales advice at Bernese partner company msd consulting. "Next we will be looking to bring on board more committed

About the university

Bern University of Applied Sciences, Engineering and Information Technology (BFH-TI), which has sites in Bern, Burgdorf and Biel, is part of Bern University of Applied Sciences. Its Automotive, Electrical and Communication Engineering, Computer Science, Medical IT, Mechanical Engineering and Micro- and Medical Technology divisions have a total of around 1,200 bachelor and master students. The results of their research form the basis for innovations in promising areas of the Swiss economy as well as in developing countries. In 2013 alone, more than 180 bachelor students working with companies from all over Switzerland and abroad graduated from the BFH-TI.



"Our solar water pump helps boost agricultural production in developing countries." Dr. Andrea Vezzini, Professor of Energy Technology at the BFH-TI

partners in various countries who can help us build up local structures and distribute our solar water pump sustainably,” explains Prof. Dr. Andrea Vezzini, who has overseen the project since its inception at the BFH-TI in 2006. Using the powerful technology from an earlier successful R&D project at the BFH-TI – the Spirit of Biel/Bienne Solar-mobil – they have been able to make the size of the panel on the solar water pump smaller than that of similar systems, which makes it significantly cheaper. “We are constantly improving the electronics and optimizing the control technology. Two of our bachelor students are currently working on a more powerful version with a 960-W pump instead of the previous 80 and 320 W ones,” Prof. Dr. Vezzini explains. A micro credit system is being set up to enable peasant families on low incomes to access this new technology.



From the roof of the BFH-TI to destinations the world over: Lukas Menzi, Karin Imoberdorf and Prof. Dr. Andrea Vezzini demonstrate that the solar water pump works perfectly even in cloudy weather.

Innovative Swiss technology

During visits to India and Bangladesh, Karin Imoberdorf, Lukas Menzi and Prof. Dr. Andrea Vezzini have seen for themselves how popular the Swiss solar water pump is proving among users on the ground. “It is extremely motivating to see how an innovative, environmentally friendly Swiss technology and our team’s wide-ranging know-how can make such a difference to the lives of countless people all over the world,” Karin Imoberdorf sums up. Prof. Dr. Vezzini adds: “As scientists we believe we have a duty to support businesses and individuals in developing countries alongside the work we do for local Swiss businesses. In India, for example, our solar water pump is creating new jobs in renewable energies. What’s more, by using locally available materials we are ensuring a good supply of spare parts to secure the long-term maintenance of the pump systems.” But it is not just BFH-TI’s customers and partners who are benefiting from

the results of this research work, as Prof. Dr. Vezzini points out: “Our budding engineers themselves gain a huge amount from working on a product like the solar water pump. It is a perfect chance for them to study the opportunities and challenges inherent in a product development project with international backing.”

Information

www.ti.bfh.ch

www.msdconsult.ch

About the product

Work started on the **solar water pump** at the BFH-TI in 2006. Following comprehensive testing in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Ghana, Honduras, Mali, Haiti, Zambia and Djibouti in conjunction with development cooperation partners like CARITAS Switzerland and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), 5,000 solar water pumps are set to be produced and sold in 2015 with a further 20,000 to 30,000 per year from 2017 onwards. The Solar Pump Association Switzerland (SoPAS), which was established in October 2013, handles the promotional, sales and technical development aspects of the solar pump.

Clean and Green

SMIXIN AG in Biel

Saving water is a topic on everyone's lips the world over. SMIXIN AG's practical hand washing systems achieve great results in this respect. Co-CEOs of this Biel start-up, Carlo Menotti and Denis Crottet, tell us how and why.



The team behind the environmentally friendly smart hand washing systems: Ismael Düscher, Carlo Menotti, Denis Crottet and Vincent Vaucher of SMIXIN AG.



“Our hand washing systems use 10 times less water.”

What inspired you to get involved in hand washing professionally?

Carlo Menotti: “I love the challenge of using our innovative technology to deal with two of the major issues of our times. Firstly, more and more people are living in ever

smaller spaces right across the world. This makes it much easier for infectious diseases to spread. The easiest and cheapest way of combating this is with thorough hand hygiene. Secondly, there is a shortage of clean water in many parts of

the world. We offer an innovative system that uses just half a glass of water per hand wash.”

How do your hand washing systems work?

Denis Crottet: “Our hand washing systems measure out and mix soap, water, and air in a perfectly balanced ratio. This produces a pleasant soapy foam that spreads quickly and easily on the skin and is easy to rinse off again. This cuts down water consumption by 90%. We also offer mobile hand washing stations that can be set up anywhere where it makes sense to wash your hands. Like in the restaurant area of fast food chains, for example, so customers can wash their hands immediately before or after eating.”

Why should customers use your hand washing stations?

Denis Crottet: “The whole system from dispensing the soap to drying your hands is contact-free. Our hand washing stations are not just clean and green: they are also compact and extremely versatile in use. They bring hand hygiene to the customer, not the other way round. With their electronic controls they measure out a precise amount of soap each time, which produces more consistent results. Another bene-

fit is that our hand washing systems use 10 times less water than washing hands under a conventional faucet.”

What target groups are your innovative systems aimed at?

Carlo Menotti: “We are targeting business customers such as fast food chains and facilities services with a high hand wash frequency. Another key customer segment is transport companies. An airplane or cruise ship equipped with our systems has to carry far less water, which impacts directly on fuel consumption and cuts costs. The market for our hand washing stations is huge. Just think how many people worldwide wash their hands every day, whether they are on the move, at work, or in restaurants.”

About the company

SMIXIN AG was set up in December 2009 as a spin-off of the innovative ideas company Creaholic SA in a former soap factory in Biel. Creaholic SA also produced the basic technology behind the hand washing systems, which SMIXIN AG is refining, piloting internationally and preparing for the market launch. The hand washing systems will be on sale internationally from June 2014 onwards. The six-strong SMIXIN team is made up of creative and experienced engineers and business economists. The seven members of the start-up's board of directors include Elmar Mock, the founder of Creaholic SA.



“Our hand washing systems are practical and comfortable – and use ten times less water as well.” Carlo Menotti and Denis Crottet, co-CEOs of SMIXIN AG.

How many different hand washing stations do you offer?

Denis Crottet: “At present we have three models that can either be permanently installed or are free-standing. Other models are in the pipeline.”

In which countries are your products already in use?

Denis Crottet: “In 2013 we piloted our models in Hong Kong, Germany, Romania and Switzerland, in companies such as Migros and Kentucky Fried Chicken. Our first hand washing stations will be available in June.”

What is the most exciting aspect of your job as co-CEO of this start-up?

Carlo Menotti: “I’m fascinated by the fact that a small team can launch useful products with unique potential for international success. Our company was set up as a spin-off of the innovative ideas company Creaholic SA in a former soap factory in Biel. It’s very exciting and enriching to set up a company to take products all the way from idea to market launch in this creative bilingual environment: no two days are ever the same. I’m passionate about traveling, and I’m looking forward to the day when I can wash my hands at Heathrow Airport in London or at a Tokyo fast food restaurant in one of our systems for the first time.”

Information

www.smixin.com

About the people

Carlo Menotti (39) and **Denis Crottet** (37) are co-CEOs of SMIXIN AG. Carlo Menotti studied business economics at Bern University of Applied Sciences and has a master’s degree from the London School of Economics. Before joining SMIXIN AG he was head of corporate services at an international Swiss group of companies. Denis Crottet is a physicist and was a partner in Creaholic SA before SMIXIN AG was set up. He acquired his subject expertise at EPFL (Ecole polytechnique fédérale Lausanne), where he gained a master’s degree in physics, a PhD in biomedical engineering and an MBA in management of technology.



Fairplay, Fun and Full Throttle

National Summer Games 2014 in Bern

Bern is to host yet another top sporting event in 2014: the National Summer Games. Special Olympics Switzerland director Bruno Barth and athlete Koni Schmid report on what makes this major tournament so special, and why Bern is the ideal place for it.

"Bern is the perfect home for the National Summer Games 2014. The city and the region are famous for their top sporting events. Right from the start we have received massive support from politicians, the media and local residents. Luckily, most of the venues for the 13 disciplines and the supporting program are very close to one another, so people will be able to savor the Olympic atmosphere right in the city center. It is also easy for our athletes to get here and find their way around. The epicenter of the games and the central meeting point will be the Olympic Town on the BERNEXPO grounds, where we are planning a series of attractive events and entertainment including live music, food stalls and an obstacle course. Other activities will include a Family Program in which family members can share experiences, and the Healthy Athletes health check. There is also a certain symbolic significance to the fact that the National Summer Games are being hosted here in Bern, our capital city at the heart of Switzerland: we are very keen to raise awareness among the general public of the value of sport for intellectually disabled people and to promote their acceptance, equality and integration into society as a whole. What better place to do so than the Bundesplatz (Federal Square) in Bern?"

Bruno Barth, director Special Olympics Switzerland

"Intellectually disabled people have the right to integrate and be celebrated and accepted."



Special Olympics Switzerland ambassador Koni Schmid (right) accompanied director Bruno Barth to the Credit Suisse Sports Awards in December, where he chatted to Swiss sports personalities like Giulia Steingruber, Sportswoman of the Year 2013.

About the event

The **National Summer Games** are a major tournament for sports fans aged 8+ with an intellectual disability. The 2014 edition is being held in Bern from May 29 to June 1. There are no elimination heats at the National Games but events and matches in various ability groups for between three and eight athletes each. The National Summer Games in Switzerland will feature basketball, boccia, football, golf, judo, track and field athletics, pétanque, cycling, riding, sailing, swimming, tennis and table tennis. The National Winter Games offer Alpine skiing, snowboarding, cross-country skiing and floorball (known as unihockey in Switzerland).



"You have to use your brain in pétanque – I love that." Koni Schmid, 43, competitor in the National Summer Games 2014 in Bern.

"We have been able to take part regularly in a wide range of sports here at the Sunneschyn Meiringen foundation since 2005. We have around 50 athletes at the moment. Thanks to the great dedication and commitment of our coaches, many people in our sports group have learned how to ride bikes and ski. When we're training, we all get as much individual attention and support as we need, because we all have very different abilities and individual needs. We all love playing sports, but it's hard on your own or in a club.

In the summer there is cycling and pétanque training once a week, and in the winter we all head out to the ski slopes. From mid-December to the end of March you'll find us on our Alpine skis on the Meiringen Hasliberg or Gadmen slopes just about every Saturday. I myself discovered pétanque about a year ago. I love this sport because it takes concentration, precision and team spirit. We play in two three-man teams, with one coach per team. At the Trimbach tournament in November 2013 we discovered which lineup works best for us. We will be competing in this lineup at the National Summer Games in Bern.

We were thrilled when we won second place in Trimbach. But what I love almost as much as winning is meeting like-minded people at every competition I attend. I've even been proposed to by several women athletes! Plus the tournaments are a great opportunity to get to know new cities and countries. The National Winter Games 2013 took me all the way to Korea, although I wasn't able to compete as a skier because of a foot injury. I'm particularly looking forward to our 'home game'



Concentration, precision and physical exertion: Koni Schmid training at Sportgruppe Sunneschyn pétanque court in Meiringen with coach Peter Lehmann.

at the National Summer Games 2014 in Bern – after all, I live and train in the region and my roots are here. To prepare for sporting events I often watch sports programs on TV. The more I compete, the less nervous I get. When I'm not playing sports, I like to relax by painting – particularly mandalas – and listening to pop or folk music.”
Koni Schmid, Meiringen, competitor in the National Summer Games 2014 in Bern

Information

www.nationalgames.ch

www.specialolympics.ch

About the Special Olympics

Special Olympics International is the largest international sports movement for people with intellectual disabilities. More than 244,000 coaches and 805,000 volunteers across 170 countries and in more than 30 sports make it possible for about 4 million athletes to progress in their sport and attend sporting events together. Special Olympics was founded in the USA in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy-Shriver, the sister of former President John F. Kennedy. Special Olympics Switzerland was established as a foundation in 1995 and organizes the Swiss National Games, which take place before the World Games. Participation in this major sporting event for disabled athletes – the largest of its kind in Switzerland – is a must for those hoping for selection for the World Games. Like the Olympics, the World Games take place every four years; the next edition, the World Summer Games, will be in Los Angeles in 2015.

Apprenticeships Climb the Career Ladder

SwissSkills Bern 2014: 1st Swiss vocational championships

High-level competitions and multi-faceted vocational demonstrations: the best young Swiss professionals will meet at SwissSkills Bern 2014 from September 17 to 21, 2014 for the first ever centrally held Swiss vocational skills championships.



On show: the young professionals will be dazzling around 200,000 visitors with their skills at SwissSkills Bern 2014.

About SwissSkills Bern 2014

SwissSkills Bern 2014 will showcase Switzerland's dual-track education and training system at the BERNEXPO exhibition grounds from September 17 to 21, 2014. More than 1,000 of Switzerland's most talented young people from over 130 professions will showcase their skills at the first ever Swiss vocational skills championships. Besides the competitions, a wide range of the 250 or so apprenticeship trades and professions available in Switzerland will be on display, with practical demonstrations and information booths. There will also be special displays on niche professions and continuing professional development.

In today's world, an apprenticeship no longer marks the end of a vocational training course but the first rung on a successful professional career ladder. With so many opportunities to transfer between different training and professional development courses, it paves the way for a successful career. Two thirds of young people in Switzerland take an apprenticeship: a successful model involving a dual system of practical work experience and vocational education attracts great interest worldwide. What's more, Swiss youth unemployment is among the lowest in the world.

Just how diverse and high-quality Swiss vocational education is and what opportunities it opens up will be showcased at SwissSkills Bern 2014. This informative platform for young people about to choose their career paths is all the more important since the number of school leavers is set to drop by 7.6% by 2018, according to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. This will only serve to exacerbate the polarization between a grammar school education and the dual vocational education system, many be-

lieve. In addition, the apprenticeships on offer do not always meet the needs of young people or lead to professions that are actually in demand in the labor market several years down the line. So a flexible labor market is more important now than ever before.

Next rung on the career ladder

After taking an apprenticeship, young people have various professional training options open to them. A higher vocational diploma teaches specialist skills and prepares people for leadership roles. Around 400 professional and advanced professional education and training (PET) exams and eight subject areas with 52 courses at higher educational institutes bear witness to the diversity and quality of the Swiss education system.

Information

www.swisskillsbern2014.ch

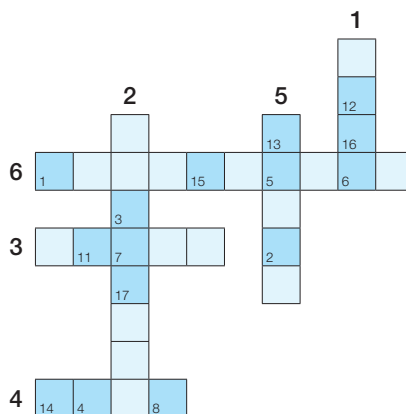
Win a Wellness Weekend on Lake Thun

Welcome to the Belvédère Strandhotel & Restaurant: www.belvedere-spiez.ch

Take part in our prize draw and win a wonderful weekend break for two (one night in the elegant ****Superior double room, including sumptuous breakfast buffet, free use of wellness facilities, and evening meal) at the Belvédère Strandhotel & Restaurant in Spiez on the shore of Lake Thun.

At the heart of the Bernese Oberland, just a short distance away from the world-famous Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau Top of Europe mountains, and just a short distance from Switzerland's capital city Bern, the historic and recently renovated Belvédère Strandhotel & Restaurant with its extensive gardens and private lakefront has been renowned for its delightful ambience and outstanding hospitality stretching back more than 100 years. Relax in the enchanting spa facilities and enjoy regional cuisine in a unique ambience looking out over the picturesque Spiez bay – you are very welcome at the Belvédère Strandhotel & Restaurant.

Taking part couldn't be easier. Simply find the answers to the clues and enter them in the appropriate places in the grid to find the mystery word. Send the mystery word along with your completed entry form to the address below by September 30, 2014. You can also enter online at www.berneinvest.com/chance. Tip: every word relates to a subject covered in this issue of bernecapitalarea. Good luck!



1. 60 years of Miracle of ...
2. Sport played by Koni Schmid
3. ... Hand Washing Systems
4. Location of ALFEA-Consulting SA in the canton of Bern
5. ... water pump
6. Head office of Bystronic Laser AG

Extra questions (optional): Which article in this issue of bernecapitalarea did you enjoy most?

How do you obtain your copy of bernecapitalarea?

Answer

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	G	A	12	13	14	15	16	17	2	0	1	4	21
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---	---	---	----

Name: _____ Address: _____

Telephone number: _____ E-mail: _____

The winner will be drawn by lots and notified in writing. Employees of the Bern Economic Development Agency are excluded from entering the competition. The judges' decision is final. There is no cash alternative to the prize.

Tear out this page and send it to this address by September 30, 2014.

Bern Economic Development Agency, Münsterplatz 3, CH-3011 Bern, Fax +41 (0)31 633 40 88, or by e-mail to www.berneinvest.com/chance.

Many congratulations to Jean-Marie Risse of Pont-la-Ville, the winner of our competition in bernecapitalarea 2/2013.

Relocations to the canton of Bern

New companies in the region

The Bern Economic Development Agency helps innovative, international companies with their decisions to relocate and settle in the canton of Bern – like i-Lumica AG in Bern and ALFEA-Consulting SA in Biel.



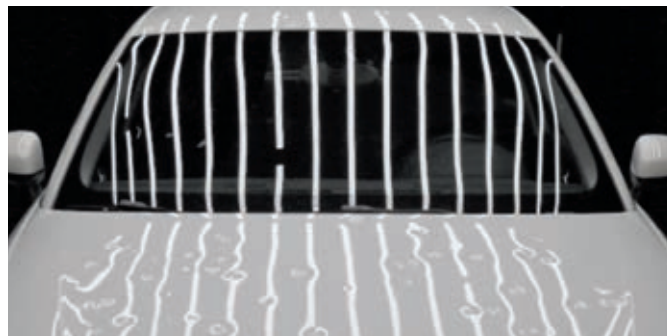
ALFEA
CONSULTING

ALFEA-Consulting SA Switzerland opened for business on Rue Général Dufour in the center of Biel on August 1, 2013. The company's core business is testing, evaluating, networking and developing local, customized Business Intelligence, Electronic Document Management (EDM), and Business Process Management (BPM) solutions. In addition, ALFEA-Consulting SA Switzerland supplies technologies, services and tools for creating and editing documents. The team of sales executives, engineers and consultants in Biel has a range of interdisciplinary technical and operational skills such as in-depth knowledge of PL/SQL, Java, J2EE and .net for industrial companies, retail businesses, insurance companies and financial service providers.

Established as a family company in 2004, ALFEA-Consulting SA employs more than 120 people in France, Belgium and Switzerland. Founder and CEO Eric Volcher and his international team are delighted with their new base – set up with the assistance of network partner Greater Geneva Berne Area – in the largest bilingual city in the canton of Bern, which is the perfect location from which to service the European markets in both geographical and strategic terms.

Information

www.alfea-consulting.com



saica ■

i-Lumica AG moved into its headquarters in the Hardegg area of Bern in February 2011. The company, which operates international R&D activities and has several locations in Germany, focuses on developing SAICA systems (Systems for the Automatic Inspection of Car bodies and Automobilities). SAICA is the world's first fully functional vehicle scanner. Another innovative product is the self-learning multimedia database iLEG for ongoing documentation and verification of damage on all motor vehicle bodies. The iLEG database, which was developed in collaboration with Bern University of Applied Sciences in a Commission for Technology and Innovation (KTI) project, is based on measurements from the SAICA systems. i-Lumica AG is currently preparing for the market launch of these systems.

Established in 2011 by CEO Hubert Kammer, the company's customers are mainly insurance companies as well as logistics companies, vehicle rental companies, leasing companies, vehicle workshops and car wash service providers. The main reasons for choosing to locate its headquarters to Bern were its proximity to industrial and higher education partners specializing in ICT and micro and electrical engineering, and the support offered by the Bern Economic Development Agency.

Information

www.saica-systems.ch

www.i-lumica.com

Training Professionals – Boosting Business

Networking with the business community is the key to success

With its MINT (maths, IT, natural sciences and technology) project entitled “Education and Technology,” the canton of Bern aims to inspire young people to go into technical and scientific professions. The spotlight will also be on the next generation of skilled workers at SwissSkills Bern 2014.

What role does SwissSkills Bern 2014 play in relation to the current skills shortage?

“SwissSkills Bern 2014 is a source of guidance and a platform for everyone facing career choices. The Swiss skills championships are the perfect opportunity for young people considering going into apprenticeships to get a first-hand impression of around 130 professions. Organizations like ICT Berufsbildung Schweiz and the Login training network will provide information on careers and professional development along with live demonstrations. We are expecting around 200,000 visitors, many of whom will be members of Switzerland’s high-skilled workforce themselves in 10 years’ time.”

The dual education system is regarded by many as a successful model. Do you agree?

“Yes. With the dual system of practical work experience and vocational education, basically our education system is supplying businesses with well-skilled personnel. On the other hand, jobs in industry have changed dramatically in recent years: technologies and work processes are constantly evolving and quality standards are high. Luckily, universities and universities of applied sciences are networking more and more effectively with industry. There is a thriving knowledge and technology transfer in the canton of Bern, which is vitally important for an innovative economy.”

What challenges does our education system face today?

“We – and by that I also mean companies – must invest in and develop professional training even further. And the apprenticeship market must be geared towards the needs of the labor market. This means that in an internationalized labor market, for example, there is high demand for skilled workers with a good general education and who speak foreign languages. Apprentices in the Canton of Zug can already take their entire apprenticeship in English. At the same time, the general parameters of the dual vocational education system must remain attractive to businesses, particularly SMEs.”



Contact

Bern Economic Development Agency
Denis Grisel, Director
Münsterplatz 3
CH-3011 Bern, Switzerland
Tel.: +41 31 633 41 20

Robert-Walser-Platz 7
CH-2503 Biel/Bienne
Tel.: +41 32 321 59 50

www.berneinvest.com
info@berneinvest.com

Elegance is an attitude

Simon Baker
Simon Baker

LONGINES®



Conquest Classic