

# The History of Birkenstock

1774

Johann Adam Birkenstock registered in the church archives as "vassal and shoemaker". 1896

Konrad Birkenstock, master shoemaker has two shoe specialty stores in Frankfurt and is starting to produce footbed insoles. 1899

For about 15 years Konrad Birkenstock is holding seminars and lectures to the other masters and guilds to explain his ideas for a (graphic) custom shoe and to get license contracts for the production of his footbed shoes. He starts traveling throughout all of Germany and Austria. 1913

Carl Birkenstock, the oldest son, enters the family business. 1915

During the war, Konrad Birkenstock Sen. is hired by the hospital Frankfurt-Friedrichsheim's orthopaedic workshop to manufacture custom orthopaedic footwear for wounded soldiers. Prof. Dr. med. Ludhoff, hospital director, approves and sponsors these shoes made by Konrad Birkenstock. 1925

Konrad Birkenstock jr. enters the company. A larger factory is purchased in Friedberg/Hessen. The large customer base makes it necessary to work in day and night shifts. The product: The Blue Footbed is successfully sold into Austria, France, Denmark, Czechia, Slovakia, Italy, Luxembourg, Belgium, Norway, The Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. 1932

Start of the famous Birkenstock classes. More than 5,000 specialists are trained during the weeklong seminars in the following years. Leading doctors support the Birkenstock system. 1947

The book "Pediatric System Birkenstock" is published. 112 pages, 55 pictures, 14.000 copies. The most widely read and published text book on pediatry in its time.

1954

Karl Birkenstock joins the family business. 1966

The self-colouring footprint paper has been successfully developed. The process is patented in Germany, the U.S. and most European countries. This new self-coloring footprint paper makes it profitable to sell Birkenstocks via mail order. 1969

Birko-Cork, a malleable thermal cork, is developed for orthopaedic use. 1972

The "Book about Foot Health" goes to print. First edition 30,000 copies. 1973

The first electro-mechanical moulding machine is developed. This machine uses a single adjustable mould to produce all sizes and widths in the right proportion. This innovation puts Birkenstock far ahead in the world market. 1974

Leather cutting production begins in St. Katharinen. 1979

St. Katharinen receives additional modern cutting machines, equipped with 100-ton punch capacities. 1980

The electro-mechanical moulding machine of 1973 is replaced with a new computer controlled system. This system produces four sizes simultaneously. 1982

After three years of developing the thong sandal, it is introduced in five styles. 1983

The Birkenstock "Fuß-fibel" (foot primer) is published, first edition 360,000 copies. Two patents for Birkenstock thong sandals are registered. 1984

Alex Birkenstock joins the company. Six additional patents for thong sandals and several other patents are registered for Birkenstock. Move to a bigger warehouse to improve customer service. The goal: To ship incoming orders the same day. The patent for "Fußbett" (footbed) is extended for another 10 years. Specialty stores order approx. 14 million consumer brochures. 1985

March 8th marks the first major Junior Meet in Bad Honnef. New Birkenstock shoes are brought in-line. A new material, Birko-Cell, is introduced to the orthopaedic market. 1986

The new Birko Sport insole is offered to stores. Second Junior Meet with over 200 participants.

1987

The Birkenstock branch in St. Katharinen is equipped with additional leather cutting machines. A warehouse is added. For the first time ever Birkenstock sells large sizes up to size 50 in two widths. More than 2 million specialty catalogues are used for advertising purposes. 1988

Christian Birkenstock joins the company. Environmentally-friendly solvent-free glues are used in production. The added cost for large systems upgrades and nearly doubled costs for glue are made up by improved bonding qualities. Again Birkenstock is leading the way with its environmental efforts. Chancellor Helmut Kohl visits Birkenstock. 1989

Birkenstock takes over ALSA with its sole and footbed production. A new four-storey building for the production of insoles is built in addition to a new facility for orthopaedic production in Asbach. 1990

Stephan Birkenstock joins the company. Expansion and modernization of insole production in accordance with the environment: Energy consumption is lowered by 90%. On top of that, large heat regeneration units are installed into the ventilation system. In addition, new systems using heat for the generation of electricity and gas filtration are installed.

After the fall of the "Iron Curtain", Birkenstock is one of the first companies to commit to the Sachsen state. We are now operating three facilities with over 450 employees in the area. Birkenstock founds Tatami®, a brand for leading, orthopaedic specialty stores. First styles, crafted on a new patented footbed are well received by the public. 1991

The Papillio® brand with its zesty shapes and always current colour programmes is developed. Of course the shoes are offered in two widths. The president of the German Parliament, Rita Süßmuth, visits Birkenstock.

1992

Birkenstock delivers the first hand stitched comfort shoes.1993

Construction of a large distribution center in Vettelschoß has started. Founding of Birki® , CEO Alex Birkenstock.1994

Christian Birkenstock founds Betula®, a new brand of affordable,alternative sandals and new footbed shapes. The attraction of Betula®: New classic and fashion colour combinations every month.1995

Birkenstock's hand-stitched comfort shoes are now marketed by the newly founded company Footprints®, which is registered as an independent brand worldwide. Construction of a new warehouse in Asbach. The company also develops a system of incorporating the upper material into the PU-foam footbed. Birki's® is the first brand to use this new system to produce sandals without the use of glues.1996

New high-rise rack warehouse begins operation in Asbach. Groundbreaking ceremony for a new shipping facility in Vettelschoß takes place in July.1997

The first orders are shipped from the new Vettelschoß facility in Spring of 1997. Leading edge technologies in logistics are applied in this new facility.

1998

The Birkenstock administration and sales offices move from Bad Honnef to Vettelschoß. In spring of 1998 the Retailer Meetings hosted by Birkenstock are resumed. Betula® purchases the castle "Burg Ockenfels" and transforms it into it's customer service center. In October, the new, fully automatic box storage unit with a capacity of 10.000 cartons is put into operation. Computercontrolled processing enables shipping and receiving of 80.000 pairs of shoes per day.1999

Birkenstock is celebrating its 225th anniversary. Rising out of a shoemaker's shop in 1774, Birkenstock now supplies customers the world over. The planning stage of a second L+L Shipping facility in Vettelschoß is beginning to take shape with the removal of trees on the proposed site. The company Birkenstock presents itself for the first time with a Homepage on the Internet: www.birkenstock.de. The second international dealer meeting with more than 200

participants takes place at the customer service center in Vettelschoß. The company Footprints® extends it's programme with a trekking collection as well as a ladies' and men's dress shoe line. By way of a specially developed process the company Birki's® is able to produce the world's first super lightweight EVA clog.2000

The brand Tatami®, founded in 1990 by Alex Birkenstock celebrates its 10th anniversary. The brand Footprints® now offers an elegant men's dress shoe collection. The brand Birki's® introduces an EVA sandal collection manufactured without any glue whatsoever. Future plans include a new automatic box storage system. In the future, this new system will enable staff to ship individual pairs of shoes even faster than before. Should an article not be available in your size or width, we will supply you with this article or an alternative style as soon as possible!2001

Our production unit, S.S.P., is celebrating its 10th anniversary in Bernstadt/Saxony. The new automatic order-picking machine has been completed, offering the possibility for 6000 individual pairs to be added or removed from warehouse stocks by computer each day and makes it possible to supply customers within 24 hours.

2002

The popular classic, Boston, worn by so many people, is celebrating its 25th anniversary. An exclusive anniversary series is being presented.

2003

30 years Arizona. Birkenstock celebrates the jubilee of one of the most successful sandals. We would like to congratulate L+L Lieferservice und Logistik GmbH on its 10th anniversary. A company which stands for innovation and state-of-the-art logistics to afford you the best service possible.2004

In England, Birkenstock receives the Drapers Award as "Best Shoe of the Year" in acknowledgement of Birkenstock products'™ timeless design making them suitable for every age group, any occasion and all types of people.

2005

A new L+L\* logistics hall is set up next to the Birkenstock company headquarters in Vettelschoß, Rhineland-Palatinate.

\*These firms are independent of the Birkenstock company; they are owned by the Birkenstock family, however.

2006

The Birkenstock brand was awarded the Cleo Fashion Award 2006 in the category "Best Shoes of Walking" in Singapore.

2007

This year the Birkenstock brand once again won a prize in the "Best Walking Shoe" category at the Cleo Fashion Award in Singapore. The three owners of Birkenstock Orthopädie GmbH & Co. KG, Stephan, Alex and Christian Birkenstock are took over their longstanding distribution partner Birkenstock Distribution USA (BDUSA). Immediately BDUSA will trade under the name Birkenstock USA, LP. The registered office is at the previous location of BDUSA in Novato (California).

2008

Starting in 2008, SAC Footwear GmbH & Co. KG, which was founded 2007 by the owners of Birkenstock Orthopädie GmbH & Co. KG, will take over the marketing of Birkenstock insoles. The company is based in Vettelschoß, Germany.

2009

A new and larger footbed manufacturing facility in Goerlitz, Germany is due to commence operations in the spring of 2009.

