HUMULUS LUPULUS
AND OTHER BITTER TRUTHS

China is waiting

Actually, he should have been in China since last August, but the global COVID-19 pandemic upended his plans. Lennart Paul-Pax has been waiting with his cases packed ever since. As a graduate of Weihenstephan's brewing engineering department, he was recruited by BarthHaas last summer to commission the new concept brewery in Beijing and, together with his Chinese colleague Ding Ming Liang, to build up the BarthHaas Campus there. But China will have to wait.

Number-one beer nation

According to the 2020 BarthHaas Report, China is the world's number-one beer nation, with an output of 376.53 million hectolitres (2019), far ahead of the USA (210.884m hl) and Brazil (144.772m hl). China's biggest brewing group China Resources Snow Breweries comes third behind AB InBev and Heineken in the world brewery rankings, with an output of 114.3 million hectolitres. National beer output has declined since 2017, and beer imports to China are also decreasing. At the same time, however, a welcome trend is emerging: Chinese consumers are drinking less, but increasingly better beer. This makes the Chinese domestic market all the more important. Consequently, all the major international brewers produce in China, having acquired local brands or formed strategic alliances. China's craft beer scene is flourishing. Although it is estimated still to account for less than one per cent of sales volume, in a market worth a total of 88 billion euros, even this niche segment is significant.

Customer care worldwide

The opening of the BarthHaas Campus at the group's headquarters in Nuremberg in 2019 was a complete success. In addition to a state-of-the-art brewery, it includes a sensory training studio and high-quality conference and teaching rooms. John I. Haas in Yakima, the group's American location, has similar facilities.

The obvious next step is to offer this service at the BarthHaas location in China, too. Lennart Paul-Pax is looking forward to it: "We'll be working with customers from all over the South-East Asia region." Modelled on its western counterparts, the concept brewery will also be the centrepiece of the new campus in Beijing. As in Nuremberg, plant manufacturer Kasper Schulz is supplying the entire equipment: a fully automated five-vessel brewhouse, with mash tun, cereals boiler, lauter tun, brew kettle and whirlpool, designed for a production capacity of 2.5 hectolitres. The "special effects" for excellent hop flavour include water conditioning, fully automated hop dosage in the brew kettle and the S-10 mobile Schulz Rocket that enables dynamic hop addition at various stages in the brewing process and keeps beer losses to a minimum.

Remote assembly

In addition to producing experimental brews with Asian customers, BarthHaas wants to use the concept brewery to offer brewing workshops. Master brewer Ding Ming Liang is already developing joint projects with customers. In addition, the Beijing campus is to host BarthHaas-Hops Academy courses, such as the Hop Flavorist Course. However, that has been put on hold for the moment. As Lennart Paul-Pax tells us, the brewing plant was assembled and the wiring and piping installed without him. He accompanied the assembly process remotely – via video onference. He wasn't there for the commissioning in March either. Paul-Pax doesn't expect to relocate to China until mid-May at the earliest. Until then he'll be on the phone to Beijing every day and working hard learning Chinese. Thanks to modern communication tools, Lennart Paul-Pax can wait.

Fact sources:

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