GERSTEL celebrates 40th anniversary with grand opening of new company headquarters

GERSTEL now resides in new headquarters at 1 Eberhard-Gerstel-Platz in Mühlheim an der Ruhr, Germany, the town where the company was founded 40 years ago. The inauguration took place in early October, 2007, exactly 40 years after the company was founded. 140 employees as well as 150 invited guests from all over the world took part in the celebrations.

Several international dignitaries from the world of analytical chemistry took the time to honor GERSTEL in speeches, among them Shanya Kane, Vice President and General Manager of the GC business for Agilent Technologies, Heinrich Scherrer, Owner and General Manager of CTC Analytics AG, a leading producer of GC- and LC autosamplers worldwide, the internationally renowned chromatography expert Professor Pat Sandra from the Research Institute for Chromatography (RIC), as well as Peter Dawes, owner and president of SGE Analytical. The Analytical Chemistry Section of the Society of German Chemists was represented by Professor Werner Engewald from the University of Leipzig.

The audience that had gathered in front of the stage in the entrance hall of the new GERSTEL headquarters had travelled far to take part in the festivities, some coming literally from the other side of the planet. The occasion was the inauguration of the new headquarters coinciding with the 40th anniversary of GERSTEL. Eberhard G. Gerstel, Holger Gerstel and Ralf Bremer, managing directors of GERSTEL, took the audience through a program highlighting the milestones of the company from its humble beginnings in a remodeled garage to the impressive new buildings encompassing almost 50,000 square feet.

Among the speakers, Professor Pat Sandra, internationally renowned chromatography expert from the Research Institute for Chromatography in Kortrijk, Belgium stressed the impressive development of GERSTEL.
Mr. Peter Dawes (chairman of SGE Analytical Science, left), Andreas Hoffmann (GERSTEL) and Kevin Mac Namara (Irish Distillers, right).

Heiner Scherrer, owner and General Manager of CTC Analytics AG.

Development that GERSTEL has undergone since its founding. "What began in a garage in 1967 has developed into an internationally successful company with an excellent reputation," Prof Sandra said. He described the founder, Eberhard Gerstel Sr., as a visionary with missionary zeal and an excellent sense of the needs of scientists in the laboratory who delivered first class systems. "The products and services from GERSTEL have contributed to making the world a little better," Prof. Sandra said.

"The instruments and systems that GERSTEL has developed and brought to market are used successfully by analysts worldwide to analyze chemical, pharmaceutical, food and environmental samples among others. The list is expanding and will in future include the fields of biomedicine and biotechnology, among them the new so-called "omics"."
According to Prof. Sandra, GERSTEL is especially well placed to provide solutions in the extremely promising field of metabolomics, in which smaller molecules are determined.

In her speech at the inauguration, Shanya Kane, drew parallels to Hewlett-Packard (HP), the original parent company of Agilent Technologies, which was also started in a garage. Ms. Kane also talked about the Agilent-GERSTEL cooperation that started in the mid-1980’s.

“Agilent is a company with extremely high standards for integrity and customer satisfaction as well as for quality and reliability”, Ms. Kane stated. “We carefully select our partners, ensuring that they meet our high standards. The fact that GERSTEL has been a respected partner of ours for over 20 years bears testament to the integrity of the company and the high quality of GERSTEL products”. Today, GERSTEL is the leading world-wide partner of Agilent Technologies for customer focused solutions, officially recognized by Agilent Technologies as Premier Solution Partner Platinum Level.

Heiner Scherrer, who recently became sole owner of CTC Analytics, referred to the slow beginnings of the GERSTEL-CTC partnership in his speech: “At first we discretely moved about each other’s exhibition booths, admiring the competence of the staff and the high quality of the solutions displayed. At some point we then had the first contacts and concrete steps towards cooperation were discussed. CTC Analytics is a leading worldwide producer of autosamplers for LC and GC. Heiner Scherrer expressed admiration for GERSTEL solutions: “During our cooperation, these clever people have again and again shown their ability to develop new solutions based on our platform and getting the absolute maximum out of the possibilities at hand.” Mr. Scherrer praised the
Life starts at 40. For Eberhard Gerstel Sr., this statement held true, at least in terms of his business career. Less than two months after his 40th birthday, the master precision mechanics craftsman founded his company “Laboratory Precision Mechanics Gerstel”. The first home of the company was a remodelled garage in Mülheim an der Ruhr, Germany. Mr. Gerstel’s analytical solutions were well accepted and success brought welcome growth to the company. The limited space available could not accommodate such growth for long and the first of several moves had to be undertaken. The second address for GERSTEL was a former small supermarket in Mülheim (2). GERSTEL continued to expand and was changed to a Limited Liability Company (German: GmbH). The next expansion soon had to be planned, moving the company to a former cabinet-making workshop where GERSTEL continued its path of steady growth. In 1989, a former printing plant became available. The premises were expanded significantly before GERSTEL moved in. It was thought that the space available in the Aktienstrasse (4) in Mülheim an der Ruhr would be sufficient for at least a generation, and plans to sublet parts of the building were initially considered, but were soon dropped. Already in 1997, production had to be moved to new facilities in nearby Duisburg to make room for new employees. In 2004, the Software Development and Technical Documentation departments were moved to a site nearby. Finally, less than two decades after moving into the Aktienstrasse facilities, the fourth move was completed in September of 2007. The company founder passed away on August 30th, 2004 and so, unfortunately, was not around to experience the inauguration of the new headquarters and the 40th anniversary of GERSTEL. He will be ever-present though, the company now resides at 1 Eberhard-Gerstel-Platz in Mülheim an der Ruhr. The shiny new company headquarters offer plenty of space for the time being. The facilities were planned with a view to accommodating long-term growth. An additional floor and even an additional wing can be added to the building if and when the need arises.

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From a garage to No. 1 Eberhard-Gerstel-Platz

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