

Practical, Flexible, and Always in Tune with the Market

Doemens looks back on 130 years of success

This year, Doemens celebrates its 130th anniversary. In this interview, the current CEO, Dr. Werner Gloßner, highlights the key historical milestones, both highs and lows, outlines the development and direction of the academy based in Gräfelfing, and explains why the challenges for an educational and training institution will increase in the future and the crucial role flexibility will play.



Dr. Werner Gloßner took over the management of the Doemens Academy in 2016.

Image: Verlag W. Sachon

Brewing and Beverage Industry International: Dr. Gloßner, Doemens is celebrating its 130th anniversary this year. Could you introduce the academy, its umbrella organization, the board, and the management team?

Dr. Werner Gloßner: Gladly. Doemens operates like a company but is organized as a registered association with around 200 members. These members come from breweries, mineral water companies, and suppliers within the industry. The board functions much like a supervisory board and is elected by the members. It appoints the management, which is responsible for

» Our motto is: We have the expertise, and we produce beverages! «

daily operations. Since mid-2024, the five-member board has been chaired by Jens Geimer, Managing Partner of Westerwald Brewery. His deputy is Wilhelm Resanovic, Strategic Account Manager at Symrise. The position of treasurer is held by Markus Schoebel, Managing Director of Luvina Food & Beverage. Other board members in-

clude Georg Schneider, Managing Partner of Private Weissbier Brewery Schneider, and Gisela Meinel, Managing Director of the family-run brewery Georg Meinel. Georg Schneider, who served for many years as president of Doemens e.V., has now stepped back "a little" but remains a full board member until the end of the current

Interview

term in 2027 to ensure a smooth transition.

BBII: You have been CEO at Doemens since ...

Dr. Gloßner: ... the year 2016. Daily operations are divided into various areas: laboratory, consulting and technical center, seminars, the Savour Academy with sommelier training and sensory courses, as well as education. The respective department heads, along with me, form the management team. While each is responsible for their area, there are cross-functional topics that we tackle and decide on together.

BBII: What philosophy does Doemens follow?

Dr. Gloßner: Our motto is: We have the expertise, and we produce beverages! We place great value on practical relevance and a close connection to real-world implementation.

This is evident in our training programs: everything we teach theoretically, we aim to implement in practice at our technical center facilities, as time allows. The same applies to our consulting services—they are always designed to be practically applicable.

Another example is our expertise in sensory training: of course, we impart solid theoretical knowledge, but our goal is to enable participants to apply this knowledge in practice themselves.

This strong practical focus across the entire beverage spectrum is the core

of our philosophy. Moreover, we have been offering hybrid, part-time training programs for more than 20 years.

BBII: What milestones in the institute's history stand out for you?

Dr. Gloßner: In 130 years, Doemens has experienced many turning points. Without the founding by Dr. Albert Doemens in 1895, we wouldn't exist today—that was the first crucial milestone. In 1965, the Doemens School in Munich was on the verge of closing. Thanks to the initiative of Dr. Schladenhaufen, then Managing Director of the Bavarian Brewers' Association, it was converted into a non-profit association and moved to Gräfelfing. This foresight secured the future of the master brewing school, including the construction of facilities on Stefanusstraße in Gräfelfing.

From 1967 to 1997, Georg Zentgraf played a key role in its development: he professionalized the master brewer training and promoted internationalization, especially forging valuable connections in Brazil and China.

Another significant milestone was the diversification of educational content under Dr. Wolfgang Stempf, who laid the foundation for sensory training and beer sommelier education—the foundation of today's Enjoyment Academy.

The most recent milestone is the move to our new building on Lohenstraße in

"The idea of relocating had existed since 1997."



October 2021. Alongside state-of-the-art technical equipment, it represents our commitment to continuing education at the highest level in the future.

BBII: Why was the move to the new building necessary? What challenges arose, and what advantages does the new location offer?

Dr. Gloßner: The idea of relocating had existed since 1997—at that time, there were concrete plans for a new building in the south of Munich. But as often happens, the project failed due to funding. Similar scenarios played out over the years, and in the 2000s, internal disputes about the future location even led to the resignation of the then board.

With the new board under Georg Schneider from 2007, stability returned. Investments were made in the old Stefanusstraße location to maintain operations, gaining time for a sustainable solution—ultimately realizing that renovation there was not feasible. The search for a new site led us to Lohenstraße, followed by the planning and execution of the new building.

BBII: Were you specifically looking for a location in Gräfelfing, or did you consider alternatives?

Dr. Gloßner: Naturally, we considered other options. We inspected over 20 properties in the greater Munich area and held discussions with owners and municipalities. Financial constraints

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were often the limiting factor, and no other location could match the conditions we found in Gräfelfing—also because the municipality actively supported us.

BBII: What advantages does the Gräfelfing location offer?

Dr. Gloßner: A major advantage is the network of accommodations available for our students. Additionally, the proximity to downtown Munich is a plus—many of our participants appreciate the opportunity to experience this metropolis firsthand.

BBII: The establishment of the Doemens Savour Academy was a crucial success factor—particularly the beer sommelier training. How has this training program developed, and how do you see its future?

Dr. Gloßner: The beer sommelier program was introduced at Doemens in 2004—a huge milestone. At the time, brewmasters discussed beer quality almost exclusively in technical parameters. But Dr. Stempf realized: We need to learn how to articulate sensory perception! That became the core of the training.

Initially, the industry debated the topic controversially, but it soon became clear: a solid sensory description helps communicate beer better—whether to customers or within production for quality assurance. The craft beer movement further propelled this development. Today, sensory training is an essential part of quality control in breweries.

In addition to professionals from the brewing and beverage industry, more and more private individuals, wholesalers, retailers, and restaurateurs are interested in the training. These courses not only contribute to securing skilled workers but also enhance appreciation for beer as a premium beverage.

BBII: How is the training to become a water sommelier structured?

» The Savour Academy is a central business area for us. «

Dr. Gloßner: The profession of a water sommelier has gained significant international recognition. Our English-language training program attracts many participants from Asia. Last year, for the first time, we were able to offer and successfully conduct a Spanish-language course, which received numerous registrations from South America and Spain.

BBII: Can you tell us more about the Distillate Sommelier training?

Dr. Gloßner: Doemens has been offering seminars in the field of distilling for years. In the past, many breweries also operated their own stills, but the quality often left much to be desired. That was the reason for us to acquire our own distillery and offer seminars that focus on quality. Since 2021, we have also been offering training to become a Distillate Sommelier and conduct various seminars on the topic of distillates. Participants come from the brewing, hotel, and gastronomy industries, as well as from distilleries that appreciate the added value of this education.

BBII: So, the Savour Academy is an important and versatile part of Doemens?

Dr. Gloßner: Absolutely! The Savour Academy is a central business area for us. The synergy effects with other areas, such as our laboratory and consulting services or our beverage-related training programs, play a crucial role.

BBII: Brewing and beverage technology has evolved significantly in recent decades. How does Doemens respond to technological and societal trends to best prepare its graduates for the future?

Dr. Gloßner: We see this as an ongoing task and are fortunate to be supported by the Doemens Advisory Board. It consists of experts from production and machinery manufacturing and serves as a bridge between us as an educational institution and developments in the industry. In recent years, we have focused intensively on artificial intelligence—what can these tools already do, and where are machinery manufacturers headed? This topic is also relevant in business and logistics. Another key area is "alternative beverages," such as oat milk or the utilization of spent grain.

To stay ahead of trends, we organize joint training days with our advisory board companies.

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Dr. Werner Gloßner (right) gave Simon Farnung (center), editor of *BREWING AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY INTERNATIONAL*, and Thomas Eisler, editor-in-chief, both from Verlag W. Sachon, a detailed insight into the various areas of the Doemens Academy and also explained the historical context: Albert Doemens (pictured in the display case) founded the school in 1895.

BBII: What benefits do advisory board members gain from this partnership?

Dr. Gloßner: Companies benefit from highly qualified professionals who, ideally, already establish contacts with potential employers during their time at Doemens.

BBII: How frequently does the exchange between the advisory board and Doemens take place?

Dr. Gloßner: The advisory board elects a chairman with whom I, as managing director, maintain regular contact. The advisory board itself meets twice a year. We try to hold at least one of these meetings in person. Recently, we have often scheduled this meeting to coincide with our Career Day in the spring, where students can engage in introductory conversations with companies. This is a fantastic networking opportunity that broadens the horizons of graduates and prospective applicants.

BBII: Doemens is internationally recognized and well-established. How has global networking positively impacted education and industry exchange? Are

there any further plans for international projects?

Dr. Gloßner: Our international cooperation with the Siebel Institute in Chicago, USA, has been highly successful. A highlight is our Master Brewer program, which is based on the same technical and scientific foundations as the German brewmaster training. The first part of the program takes place in Chicago, where the Siebel Institute covers most of the theoretical instruction. However, we also send Doemens lecturers to teach on-site. The second part takes place here in Gräfelfing and includes practi-

cal topics such as laboratory work, microbiology, brewing technology, and bottling, culminating in a final exam.

Our international consulting services are also thriving, with projects across South, Central, and North America. Our sommelier training programs are in high demand worldwide. We collaborate with external partners who are well-connected locally while we provide the expertise. This setup is comparable to a distributor with a strong network, while Doemens delivers the knowledge.

BBII: How does sustainability factor into education and training at Doemens, and how do you prepare the next generation for this challenge?

Dr. Gloßner: Sustainability is a crucial topic for us – beyond mere marketing slogans. Our employee, Florian Huber, is a certified sustainability consultant, enabling us to offer high-level sustainability consulting.

We have been offering sustainability seminars for two years, covering relevant aspects and upcoming regulatory requirements. Starting this year, companies of a certain size must submit sustainability reports, and in the coming years, threshold values will be lowered, affecting many mid-sized businesses. Those who fail to adapt may struggle to secure favorable bank loans in the future.

» It is no longer realistic to assume that a training concept can remain unchanged for 15 years. «



Doemens today: Since 2021, the school has been in the new Doemens building on Lohenstraße with an attached technical center.

Image: Doemens

While the industry is still somewhat hesitant on this topic, some breweries are already ahead of the curve and actively seek our expertise. Sustainability is naturally integrated into the training of our master students and other learners. Our graduates are well-prepared for future challenges.

BBII: One key to Doemens' success is adapting content, even in part-time courses. How do you assess the current situation, and what future developments do you anticipate?

Dr. Gloßner: The key insight is that future demands are evolving faster, more dynamically, and with greater fluctuations. It is no longer realistic to assume that a training concept can remain unchanged for 15 years. We must react much more quickly to new training needs and integrate emerging topics. In the coming months, we will initiate a strategic planning process, focusing on key aspects: What new topics must be included in training programs, such as AI or automation? How can we offer complementary, specialized training courses? We need to become even more flexible and responsive than we are today.

BBII: How does Doemens reach potential students and apprentices? What marketing strategies are in focus?



Image: Doemens

Doemens in the past: The first school building at Linprunstraße 74/75, where the school was located until the building was destroyed on January 7, 1945.

Dr. Gloßner: Following the motto "Do good and talk about it," public relations is a central task, managed by media expert Andreas Hofbauer. Adapting to changes in media is essential. We naturally use social media today. The goal is to reach and inform young people through all available channels about what Doemens offers, the educational opportunities available, and how they can benefit from them. Simply printing flyers is no longer sufficient. Once a year, we host a digital information day to provide interactive, in-depth insights and support interested individuals in making informed decisions about a career in the beverage industry.

BBII: What are the biggest challenges for an educational institution like Doemens today?

Dr. Gloßner: One major challenge is the shortage of skilled professionals. Our lecturers and consultants must not only have extensive knowledge and practical experience but also strong rhetorical skills to speak in front of large groups.

Another challenge is our location in Munich. While the city offers a high quality of life, finding affordable housing is difficult. Retaining and developing qualified staff is a key challenge for us.

BBII: What are Doemens' medium- and long-term goals?

Dr. Gloßner: Our goal is to maintain Doemens' strong reputation in training technical leaders, such as brewmasters. If, by 2030 or 2035, we can say that we have upheld this status, we will have done a great job.

BBII: And on a personal level?

Dr. Gloßner: I love my job! Working with young people and staying connected to practical applications is exactly what I want to do.

BBII: Dr. Gloßner, we wish you continued success and thank you for this interview. (eis/far)