

History of Julius Meinl

Ambassador for Viennese coffee house culture since 1862

The name Julius Meinl has stood for enduring entrepreneurship for more than 150 years. The company has epitomised Viennese coffee house culture since 1862 and has brought it to the world, initially to the frontiers of the Austro-Hungarian empire and today to more than 70 countries around the globe.

Julius Meinl I - Businessman and gifted inventor

Julius Meinl I was one of the first people in the world able to offer pre-roasted coffee beans. He was not only a capable businessman but also a gifted inventor. In 1877, he developed his drum-roasting technique, thereby launching the company's success story. Previously, coffee beans were taken home green. They were roasted in a pan and often burnt. Their very high price also made coffee a luxury product. However, mechanical roasting brought coffee to a large number of people. Numerous coffee houses appeared. The demand was great and the tiny grocers shop in Vienna's Köllnerhofgasse was transformed into the largest coffee and tea producer in the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Julius Meinl II - Manufacturer and innovative visionary

Julius Meinl II took over management of the company in 1892 and continued the expansion. Like his father, he was a good businessman and an innovative visionary. He developed a technique for the industrial production of the finest table and drinking chocolate, thereby continuing the family tradition. He began to establish a branch network and by 1928 was operating 353 grocers shops in Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland and Romania.

Julius Meinl III – Entrepreneur and social pioneer

Julius Meinl II and his son, Julius Meinl III, were not only successful entrepreneurs but also among the social pioneers of their time. By the turn of the century, they had already founded their own academy for apprentices. Training took place in the morning rather than after a long day's work. This was tantamount to a revolution at the time. In addition, the training was not limited to knowledge of merchandise but also extended to deft social skills. In 1931, the company introduced the five-day week in its production plants, with 43 hours of work instead of 48. Employees were paid for 45 hours. Employees above the age of 60 also received a pension supplement in the form of money and groceries. In 1936, Julius Meinl III offered all unemployed people a discount of 5 percent on their purchases. As a fierce opponent of the National Socialists, Julius Meinl III and his family were forced to emigrate to England in 1938. His father died in 1944. Two years after the war ended, Julius Meinl III started rebuilding the company, which had been downgraded to a food distributor by the National Socialists.

Julius Meinl IV – Foresight and concentration

Julius Meinl IV joined the company as Vice-President of the Supervisory Board in 1953. Before that, he had graduated as chartered accountant in England. As an internationally recognised coffee expert, Julius Meinl IV personally took over coffee purchasing. It was on his initiative that the business was promoted in Central and Eastern Europe in the 1980s.

Farewell to the grocery trade and refocusing on coffee and tea

In 1998, he and the family decided to leave the grocery trade and concentrate on the strengths and roots of the company: premium coffee and tea. The reason was the Europe-wide, share-driven development of the grocery trade. This was not a long-term option for a company that had committed itself to a culture of the highest quality. Julius Meinl IV steered the company successfully into the new era by virtue of his entrepreneurial experience and international expertise in coffee purchasing.



More than a moment

Today: Enjoying the fifth generation of Julius Meinl coffee worldwide

With its new focus on coffee and tea, the fifth generation of the family began the international expansion of Julius Meinl coffee and tea. Starting in Austria and Italy, the company expanded its market to Eastern Europe, Russia and Turkey. At the same time, the family began to move into the USA from its base in Chicago.

It soon became established in the Middle East and in recent years has expanded successfully in East Asia and Australia. The fifth generation of Julius Meinl plays a hands-on role in the company's activities. Christina Meinl has experience in leading Innovation, was elected President of Specialty Coffee Association in 2020 and became Managing Director Austria in October 2020.

Today, Julius Meinl is on the road to becoming a global brand for coffee and tea in more than 70 countries. It has its own subsidiaries in 15 of these and exclusive distributors in the rest.

On the road to becoming a global brand

The Viennese traditional roaster is already among the top 3 coffee brands in top-class restaurants. The company has epitomised Viennese coffee house culture for more than 150 years. As its ambassador, Julius Meinl not only restricts itself to bringing a unique culture of enjoyment to the world. It also represents what Viennese coffee house culture stands for: its soul, the way it inspires people. Even in fast-paced cultural circles in China, Taiwan, Dubai, London or Chicago, people appreciate the Viennese coffee house culture. They are looking to slow down, to enjoy the moment in chaos of everyday life.

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More than a moment