

**From 9 June until 4 November, 2001 the Doll's House Museum in Basle will be presenting a special exhibition entitled "Historical sweet moulds rediscovered". In addition to a display of numerous tin chocolate moulds, there will also be moulds for marzipan and biscuits as well as many others. A forgotten world rich in imagination.**

### **Chocolate's success story**

Chocolate was one of the first products for which target-specific marketing contributed to successful increase in sales. Nobody could have foreseen in 1528, when the first chocolate beans were brought back to Europe by Hernando Cortez, what a glorious conquest chocolate would have in the following centuries. Chocolate was not available in a solid form until the nineteenth century, which is also the time when the Swiss chocolate barons Suchard, Sprüngli, Tobler and Lindt embarked on their successful market expansion.

### **An abundance of moulds during two centuries**

The height of production of these much-appreciated sweet moulds was in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The main producer was Anton Reiche in Dresden, who at one time employed up to 1800 workers. Reiche introduced tin moulds, which replaced the copper moulds. Copper had been used extensively, but was problematic due to rapid oxidation. The firm possessed a collection of 30,000 different moulds, which is difficult to imagine nowadays. A visit to the special exhibition gives an idea of the delight once taken in the creation of sweets.

### **A rich variety of motifs**

Motifs were inspired by the most varied sources. Alongside the traditional and beloved Easter and Christmas themes there are, for example, different types of vehicles, which represent a chapter in industrial development. The assortment is also enhanced with animals, musical instruments, craftsmen's trades and tools. There are even moulds weighing as much as 25 kilos with a height of up to 90 centimeters.

### **Designed and used by craftsmen**

On studying these moulds closely the visitor will see that they have been designed and modelled by expert craftsmen. Each mould is a little sculpture in its own right. Each piece was hand-made. Great skill and finesse was needed to use these moulds. If they were removed too soon the chocolate would break and time-consuming work was lost. It sometimes took up to one hour to complete one item.

Plastic moulds were introduced on to the market in 1950. They in turn replaced the tin moulds. The special character of the old moulds and the care given to detail, which still delight us today, slowly disappeared as they could only be guaranteed by items carefully made by hand. These old moulds represent an important part of the history of chocolate.

### **Various other moulds for pouring sweets**

Chocolate, which could only be poured after the discovery of "conching", was not the only product to be poured into hinged and hollow decorative moulds. Many different moulds are on show in the special exhibition, for example, sulphur-based moulds with plaster-coating for marzipan, lead moulds for sweets and ice-cream, hinged moulds for hollow figures and clay moulds for biscuits. Items, which are nowadays made by machines, were in those days a work of craftsmen. The craftsmanship was not only in creating the mould, but also in producing a perfect tidbit, which was a joy to the eye as well as the palate.

This special exhibition could not have been realized without the generous cooperation of Mr. and Mrs. Gerber from Zürich. The visitor can experience the forgotten art of pouring chocolate live in the Doll's House Museum. Mr. and Mrs. Gerber will demonstrate the art of producing sweet sculptures with their own private collection of moulds. The demonstrations will take place between the hours of 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. on the following days:

Saturday 9 June  
Sunday 10 June  
Wednesday 20 June  
Sunday 15 July  
Sunday 29 July  
Wednesday 22 August  
Sunday 2 September  
Sunday 23 September  
Sunday 7 October  
Wednesday 24 October  
Sunday 28 October

### **Opening Hours**

Museum/Shop: Daily, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursdays until 8 p.m.  
Café: Daily, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursdays until 9 p.m.

Admission: Fr. 7.-/5.-, children up to 16 years are admitted free of charge if accompanied by an adult. No additional charge for the special exhibition.

The whole museum is accessible to wheelchairs.

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