



FILK launches a new convention for the leather and tanning industry

Review on the 1st Freiberg Leather Days



Prof. Dr. Michael Stoll rewarding Thomas Strebost with the VGCT annual award.

The first Freiberg Leather Days convention was held on April 25-26 and was attended by 170 participants from 12 mainly European countries. After the opening words by Dr. Thomas Schröder, Chairman of the Verein für Gerberei-Chemie und Technik (VGCT e. V – German Association of Leather Chemists and Technologists), and Prof. Dr. Michael Stoll, Director of the Forschungsinstitut für Leder und Kunststoffbahnen GmbH (FILK - The Research Institute for Leather and Plastic Sheet), the mayor of Freiberg, Bernd-Erwin Schramm, welcomed the guests in his historic mining and tanning town.

The combined conference of VGCT e. V. and FILK, both based in Freiberg, offered a new forum for exchange of information and experience between experts within the tanning and leather industry.

The series of lectures extended to all process steps of leather manufacturing – beamhouse, tanning, wet-end and finishing. It also included new and improved products of significance within the automotive industry. New technological approaches for ecological or quality related challenges were discussed, and

relations between material properties and chosen technology were issues raised during the course of the conference.

Participants were also informed on inter-disciplinary issues. These included new prospects and alternatives for professional education and training in the leather industry, and changes within legal regulations.

A casual get-together was held for the participants in the evening between the two conference days. This occasion was used to introduce Dr. Beate Haaser of Südleider GmbH & Co. KG, as the new chairman of VGCT board. The VGCT annual and promotional awards were presented.

- VGCT Annual Award: Thomas Strebost, CEO and shareholder Heller-Leder GmbH & Co. KG
- VGCT Promotional Award: Alexander Dörr, Gmelich + Söhne GmbH and David Pelz, Südleider GmbH & Co. KG

It is the aim of FILK and VGCT that this conference will become established as the convention of the European tanning and leather industry. Next year the industry will meet on April 25-26 at the Technikmuseum in Sinsheim for the 2nd Freiberg Leather Days. ☺

Forschungsinstitut für Leder und Kunststoffbahnen / Research Institute of Leather and Plastic Sheet (FILK)

Since its foundation the first German Tanner's School in 1889 the Freiberg Institute has always been a centre for research and development for the country's tanning and leather industry. FILK today is a non-profit and independent research institution dedicated to applied research especially for SMEs. As material expert for flexible and/or laminar materials such as leather, collagen, coated textiles, material composites and synthetic leather, the focus is on the development of new or improved:

- material properties and functions,
- technologies and process steps,
- testing and characterisation methods,
- recipe components.

Furthermore, an accredited test lab offers a wide range of standardised chemical and physical material testing according to various standards (ISO; EN, DIN, etc.) and to technical terms of delivery of all major car manufacturers. It also offers expertise and failure analysis.

FILK also engages in professional education and training, ensuring a constant transfer of knowledge into the industry and developing skilled and qualified personnel. ☺