



billerbeck

SLEEPING CULTURE SINCE 1921

HISTORY



| A PERFECT DAY BEGINS AT NIGHT |

NIGHT

100 YEARS OF SLEEPING CULTURE



FOREWORD TO 100 YEARS OF SLEEPING CULTURE

Dear readers,

For 100 years, sleeping culture has been the focus of the billerbeck family business.

What began in 1921 in Wuppertal with a small business has become a medium-sized global market leader that enjoys the highest level of trust among suppliers, retailers and customers.

Throughout all generations, we have succeeded in manufacturing products of excellent quality with a great deal of craftsmanship and technical knowledge.

The billerbeck brand will continue to stand for a variety of high-quality bedding products, true to our company philosophy „A perfect day begins at night!“

I hope you will enjoy this company history, our story of 100 years of sleeping culture.

Yours faithfully Friedrich Ermert

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Friedrich Ermert' in a cursive script.

CONTENT



History of the First Years

1921 Company foundation in Wuppertal	5-6
1928 The first exhibition stand	6
1929 Wuppertal, center of textile industry	7
1939 Difficult year for entrepreneurs	7
1945 New start in Wuppertal-Elberfeld	8
1954 Expansion of the production halls in Wuppertal	9



Sleep Programme "Sleep right - sleep healthy"

1955 Factory "Reformawerk Dültgen & Billerbeck"	10
1955 billerbeck Austria was founded	10
1956 Operation start in Kraichtal-Münzesheim	10
1957 billerbeck Switzerland AG was founded	11
1958 The beginning of the brand	11
1959 "Schlafreform" becomes a trademark	11
1967 The brand becomes bigger and well-known	12
1968 Large fire in Wuppertal	12



Expansion of Distribution and Marketing

1969 Brand "billerbeck for good sleep"	14
1970 Introduction of product families	14
1970 Brand establishment in two main ways	15
1972 Foundation "IBU Betten-Union GmbH & Co. KG"	15



Innovations and 75th Anniversary

1979 Brand "billerbeck my bed"	16
1982 Innovation Neck Support Pillow	16
1984 billerbeck Sleep & Health Foundation	17
1986 Partner in Japan	17
1989 billerbeck Hungary was founded	17
1990 Foundation "billerbeck Betten-Union GmbH & Co. KG"	18
1993 The billerbeck Group was formed	18
1996 billerbeck celebrates 75th anniversary	18

The New Millennium

2001 Road to a new era	20
2003 Friedrich Ermer becomes Managing Director	21
2011+2013 billerbeck receives award "Hidden Champion"	22
2014 Foundation of billerbeck Home Collection GmbH	22
2015 Foundation of billerbeck Home Stores GmbH	22
2016 GOTS Certification of organic assortment	24
2019 Corporate Social Responsibility	25
2019 Certification BLUE ANGEL	25
2020 Sustainability and environmental management	26
2020 Digitalization	26
2021 Production sites Germany, Switzerland, Hungary	27
2021 Brand "billerbeck" - for supreme sleeping comfort	28-41
Afterword – Managing Director Friedrich Ermer	42



QUALITY RIGHT FROM THE START



1921 - 2021

„100 years of sleeping culture“ From the “Rheinische Daunendecken-Fabrik” to a medium-sized global market leader.

It all started in 1921 ...

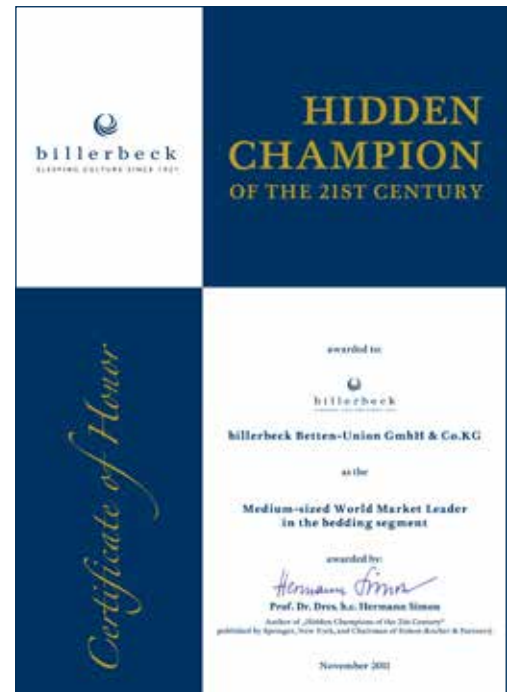


Paul Dültgen and Heinrich Billerbeck found the “Rheinische Daunendecken-Fabrik Dültgen & Billerbeck” in Wuppertal on 22 March 1921.



Advertisement of “Rheinische Daunendecken-Fabrik” from 1925

From the very beginning, the quality of products is of primary importance. All processes from raw material to the finished product are therefore carried out in the company's own facilities. The outstanding product purity in particular enables the company to set itself apart from the competition. The trademark “Rein”, introduced at that time, underlines it and thus sets the standard for the entire industry.



Since 2011, billerbeck is “Hidden Champion” of the 21st century.



The founders Paul Dültgen and Heinrich Billerbeck (born 1892) together with the later managing director Gerd Billerbeck (born 1921)

THE STORY OF THE EARLY YEARS

1921 Company foundation in Wuppertal

Heinrich Billerbeck was born in Kassel in 1892 as the son of a sculptor. He begins his professional career in a bed factory and after some time takes over a branch in Wuppertal as managing director. With the outbreak of the First World War, he was called up for military service and handed over the branch management to his wife. After his return in 1919, he convinces his comrade at the front, Paul Dültgen, to start an own company in the bedding business in Wuppertal-Elberfeld. Paul Dültgen originates from "Dültgenstahl" in Solingen, he owns a successful wine business and, as a trained businessman, has the necessary accounting knowledge.

On 22 March 1921, Paul Dültgen has "RDF" entered in the commercial register at the Elberfeld District Court. The "Rheinische Daunendecken-Fabrik" is born and soon achieves its first successes.

Dültgen & Billerbeck take the first step towards expanding the company in 1925. They convert "RDF" into a general partnership and Heinrich Billerbeck joins as a partner. In the 1920s, the "Rheinische Daunendecken-Fabrik" already had own tearing and carding facilities. This makes it possible to precisely control the hygienic conditions when preparing the filling material for the duvets.

At this time consumers are used to buying extremely voluminous down duvets that exude the image of a luxury item. Retailers offer to regularly refill these down duvets, but this does not meet "Dültgen & Billerbeck" quality standards. Heinrich Billerbeck demonstrates entrepreneurial courage and places the highest priority on bedding with virgin wool and horsehair, both are still part of the range today.

1928 The first booth at a trade fair



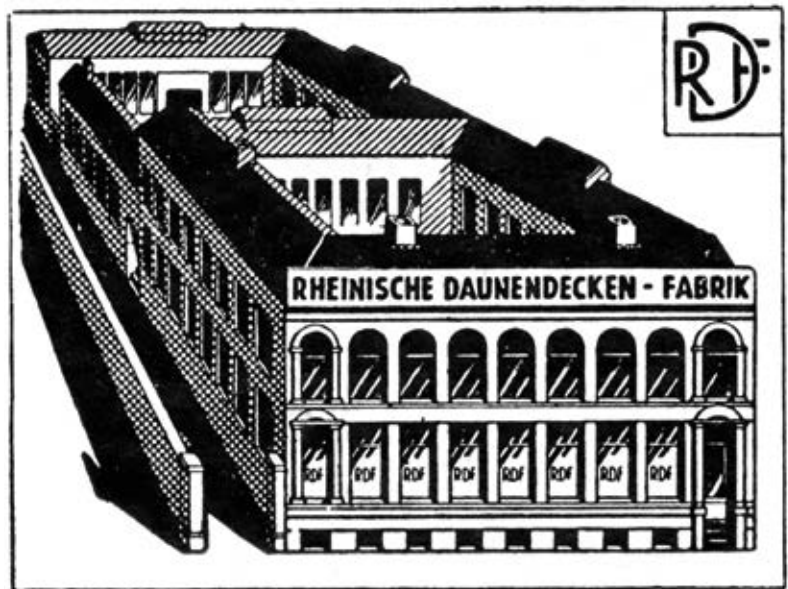
Heinrich Billerbeck (left) and sister-in-law Paula Venker (right) at the first trade fair booth in Cologne in 1928.

1921 - 1945

1929 The center of textile industry is Wuppertal

In the 19th century, the Wuppertal region developed into one of the largest economic centers on the European continent. As one of the first industrial regions in Germany, Wuppertal contributes significantly to the rise of the Ruhr area and brings wealth and growth to the region.

Weaving mills and production halls are lined up next to each other. There is a permanent world textile fair in the center of Elberfeld for many decades, locally produced fabrics of all kinds are presented and negotiated. During this time, Wuppertal is one of the most important textile locations in the world.



*Already at that time, billerbeck is of great importance in the industry
»Ludwig Erhard visits Heinrich Billerbeck«*

Ludwig Erhard (1897-1977) since 1928 assistant at the Institute for "Economic Observation of German Finished Goods" at the Nuremberg School of Economics visits Heinrich Billerbeck in 1929.

In the years 1945-1946 Ludwig Erhard is minister for economic affairs and is considered to be the father of the "German economic miracle" and the social market economy in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Ludwig Erhard is Federal Chancellor from 1963-1966.



Ludwig Erhard (right) visiting Heinrich Billerbeck (left) in 1929.

1939-1945 Difficult years for entrepreneurs

At the beginning of the Second World War, the success of "Rheinische Daunendecken-Fabrik" ends abruptly due to the difficult times. There is little demand for high-quality bedding. Therefore, quilted winter jackets, rape and straw mattresses as well as gas masks are now produced. Due to the war the procurement of raw materials becomes increasingly difficult and in the final phase of the war, production comes to an almost complete standstill.

The founding building was completely destroyed during a bombing raid in the world war.

RECONSTRUCTION

1945 New beginning in Wuppertal-Elberfeld

After the war, the company begins with the construction of a new building in Wuppertal-Elberfeld. Quilting machines are bought from Sweden to restart production. Gerd Billerbeck (born 1921), Heinrich Billerbeck's son, joined the company in 1944 and took over more and more responsibility. He previously gained a vocational baccalaureate diploma in economics and finished a trading apprenticeship at a large home textiles shop in Braunschweig, learning how difficult it is to sell bedding.



Gerd and Heinrich Billerbeck

With the introduction of the "Deutsche Mark" in 1948 (devaluation of the Reichsmark), the difficulties of procuring raw materials with worthless money disappear. The liberalisation of prices sets the course towards a market economy and makes entrepreneurial activity possible.

Gerd Billerbeck builds the company's strategy on solid scientific findings. His ambition is to investigate and further develop the furnishing and composition of sleeping rooms.

The central company philosophy from 1945: "Natural sleep, on and under pure new wool".



Gerd Billerbeck inspecting the raw material



Production in Wuppertal

1945 - 1954

1954 Expansion of the production halls in Wuppertal

The demand for high-quality bedding increases enormously. Therefore, a two-shift operation is started and a further production site in Wuppertal-Langerfeld is added.

The "Rheinische Daunendecken-Fabrik" introduces modern multi-needle quilting machines, to cope with the high volume of orders.



Exhibition stand in the 50s / 60s

SLEEP RIGHT – SLEEP HEALTHY

1955 Renaming "Reformawerk Dültgen & Billerbeck"



Due to the company philosophy, the company was renamed "Rheinische Daunendecken-Fabriken Dültgen & Billerbeck Reformawerk" in 1955.

The main product is the "Reforma" virgin wool quilt.

1955 billerbeck Austria

On 1 August 1955, the first branch office was opened in Vienna under the name of "Reforma-Werke Wien".

From 1959, the company has been named "billerbeck Rheumalind Traumalind Ges.m.b.H".



The Vienna branch has its own distribution and production. In 1965, about 70 employees are working there and produce 500 beddings a day. In 1969, due to the large fire in Wuppertal, twice as many parts are produced per day. In 1982 billerbeck Vienna achieves a turnover of around 90 million Austrian schillings. In 2002, production is relocated to Kraichtal.

1956 Start of operations in Kraichtal-Münzesheim

In order to shorten the delivery routes, in the mid-fifties planning begins for the company's own production facility for southern Germany. Kraichtal-Münzesheim turns out to be the ideal location due to its connection to the railway line and is put into operation on 20 August 1956. Today, the site is the headquarters of billerbeck Betten-Union.



The billerbeck administration building in Kraichtal in 1958

1955 - 1959

1957 billerbeck Switzerland AG



A further location was opened in Basel in 1957. Today, billerbeck Schweiz AG is based in Fischbach-Göslikon near Zurich.

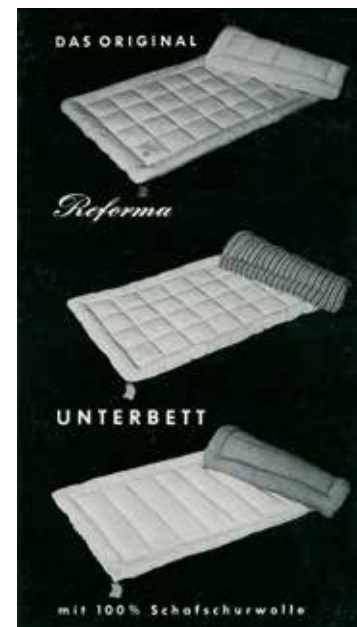
In addition to the billerbeck core range, billerbeck Switzerland also sells high-quality bedding products under the "Dauny" brand. The "Dauny" brand established well in the Swiss market and became market leader.

Until today billerbeck Schweiz AG is an important part of the billerbeck Group.



1958 The beginning of the brand

Gerd Billerbeck focuses his marketing concept on pure new wool products. The advertising budget in the 1950s is DM 4 million. Scientific findings are part of the company's press and public relations work and often act as door openers to get into popular magazines.



1959 "Schlafreform" becomes a trademark

Gerd Billerbeck registered the term "Schlafreform" as a trademark in 1959, "Sleep right - sleep healthy" is the objective.

1960 Renaming to Reforma-Werke Dültgen & Billerbeck Rheinische Daunendecken-Fabriken

UPS AND DOWNS

1967 The brand becomes bigger and better known

75% of German housewives know "Reforma" a pure new wool quilt. The company becomes one of the best-known German manufacturers in the bedding sector.



Promotional campaign with a Swedish airline in 1967

1968 Large fire in Wuppertal

On Friday, 13 December 1968, a sudden explosive fire breaks out in a fleece drying oven in Wuppertal's Spitzenstraße. It cannot be fought with fire extinguishers and quickly spreads to a major fire. Huge flames break through the roof and the whole Wuppertal-Langerfeld area is covered in a dense cloud of smoke. It takes five hours for the volunteer fire brigade to suppress the fire.

Fortunately, no one is seriously injured. What is serious and threatening, however, is the loss of production due to destroyed machines and halls. Purchased products from other manufacturers are a poor alternative because they cannot meet the quality standards of Reforma-Werke. The damage adds up to a total of about DM 3.4 million.

In this emergency situation triggered by the fire damage, the decision is made against rebuilding in Wuppertal and in favour of a new extension on the large site that is already owned by the company in southern Germany. The factory in Kraichtal-Münzesheim (today's headquarters) was expanded from 9,000 to 13,000 square metres.



1960-1968



"Gisela" The first model (1959 - 1968)

DISTRIBUTION & MARKETING

1969-1978 billerbeck for good sleep

The name "billerbeck" becomes an umbrella brand.

Healthy sleep continues to be the key issue of billerbeck "Schlafreform".



Advertising photo from 1965

1970 Introduction of product families

In order to clearly structure the range, the different fillings are divided into 3 product families.



»Natural virgin wool«

For health- and nature conscious sleepers

»Synthetic fibre«

For sleepers who attach particular value on hygiene and washability

»Cosy down«

The voluminous bedding.

At that time, down was less important and therefore appeared last in the range.

Down is considered to be a conservative bedding option, as the duvets are often heavy and plump.



1969 - 1978

1970 Brand Establishment in two main ways

- Sales training

billerbeck invests a lot in training the retail sales staff and in the provision of information material.



- Advertising measures

The target group strategy is: "The right bedding for every type of sleeper". The company develops numerous and successful advertising campaigns.



1972 IBU Betten-Union GmbH & Co. KG



Administration in Wuppertal from 1972 - 1981

In 1972, after the large fire in Wuppertal, a new administration building was built in Wuppertal, Spitzenstraße.

The company is now called "Internationale Betten-Union" (IBU), the aim is to become a major European group.

The founding generation retires and shortly before his 82nd birthday, the senior Heinrich Billerbeck passes away in 1974. The Dültgen family has already left after Paul Dültgen's death. Production in Wuppertal was closed in 1981. Since then, Kraichtal has been the headquarters with production, warehouse and administration.

INNOVATIONS

1979 billerbeck my bed

In the seventies, the world of advertising becomes more colourful.

The brand logo was adapted to the spirit of the time and a new advertising slogan "billerbeck - my bed" was created.

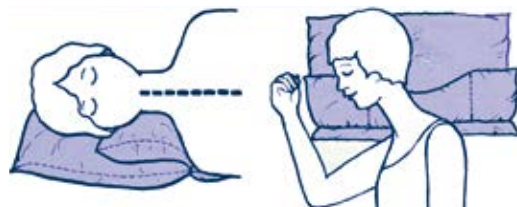


Logo von 1979 - 2001

The coloured stripes symbolise the individual product families.

1982 Innovation "Neck Support Pillow"

More and more people suffer from pain in the neck area due to the modern way of living or work-related over-exertion. By extensive series of measurements of the head position data has been generated and filed. The data evaluation showed that a straight spine during sleeping is important and that the height of a pillow must be adapted to the sleeper. billerbeck develops one of the first neck support pillows that provides pleasant relaxation and further to that is also durable and dimensionally stable.



1979 - 1992

1984 billerbeck foundation "Sleep & Health"

As early as the beginning of the 1950s, Gerd Billerbeck placed research contracts with well-known institutes and scientists to find out more about people's sleeping habits. Knowledge gained was: Every third bedding is more than 35 years old, feather beds are heavy and plump. On this basis, billerbeck's material and product development is continued and further developed.

In 1984, these activities result in the foundation "billerbeck Sleep & Health". The foundation's task is to create the conditions for a healthy sleep. In order to be able to offer excellent sleeping comfort to everyone billerbeck's product range is influenced until today by the latest technological findings.



1986 Partnership Japan

With founding K.K. billerbeck, the Japanese subsidiary in November 1986, the company paves the way to sell on the Asian continent.

Until today, the business relation is a successful one.



Hiro and Masao Uchiyama

1989 billerbeck Hungary



Contract signing on 7 December 1989 in Hungary.
Gerd Billerbeck (centre), Zoltan Kincs, Managing Director Hungary
(outside right), Klaus Billerbeck (left)

With the expansion of down duvet production, Hungary turns out to be the best choice for purchasing high-quality down and feathers: A cooperation partnership leads to the establishment of billerbeck kft. Budapest in 1989.

Through regular investment in state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities, the site has become a showpiece in the production of down bedding.

Today billerbeck Hungary is an important part of the billerbeck Group.

NEW GENERATION

1990 billerbeck Betten-Union GmbH & Co. KG

From IBU (Internationale Betten-Union) arises billerbeck Betten-Union GmbH & Co. KG

1993 The billerbeck Group

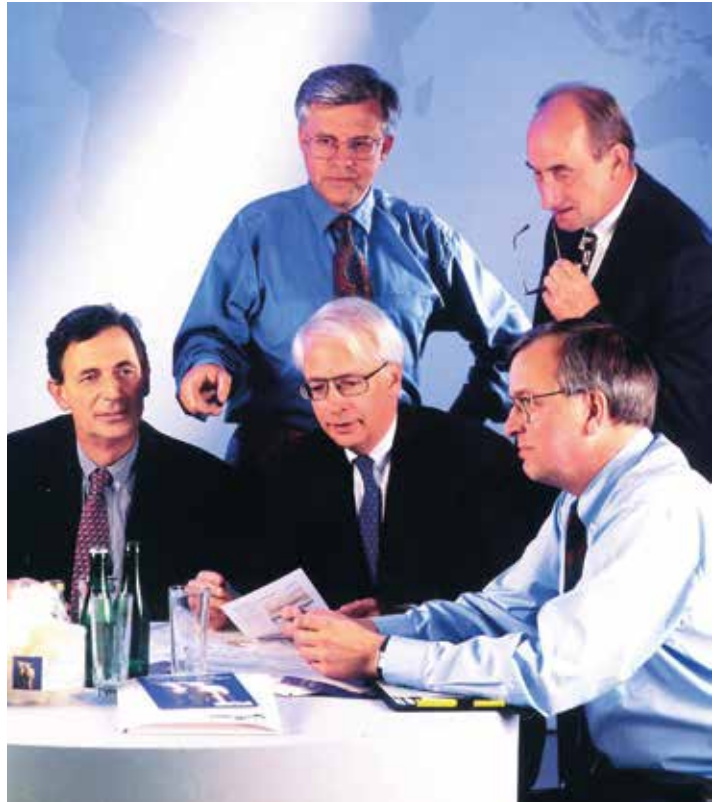
In 1986, Gerd Billerbeck retired from the management and handed over to his sons Klaus and Gerd-Heinrich Billerbeck.

In 1993, the billerbeck Group was integrated into Valora Holding AG (Merkur AG). and the sleep comfort division was affiliated with the Slumberland Quality Group.

Klaus Billerbeck is the managing director and responsible for sales and marketing, while his brother Gerd-Heinrich Billerbeck is the managing director in charge of administration and finance.

Picture right:

(Seated from left) Dr Norbert Meinl, billerbeck Austria, Klaus Billerbeck, Chairman of the billerbeck Group Management Board and Gerd-Heinrich Billerbeck, billerbeck Germany. (Standing from left) Paul Konrad, billerbeck Switzerland, Zoltan Kincs, billerbeck Hungary.



1996 billerbeck celebrates 75th birthday



In 1996 billerbeck looks back on its 75th anniversary. The employees in Kraichtal celebrate a company party, various promotions activities as well as a campaign in German TV ZDF has been carried out.



1993 - 2000



THE NEW MILLENNIUM

2001 Way to a New Era



In order to be prepared for future tasks, the company decides to set a sign by developing a new corporate design. The new billerbeck logo is made up of three parts. There is a signet, the lower-case letters "billerbeck" and the subclaim "Sleeping culture since 1921".

The signet is made up by four crescents arranged in a circle, it symbolises the quality seal for supreme sleeping comfort. With the segments Down, Fibre, Nature, Care and Kids new colours for better recognition are associated and like this create a modern look. True to the company philosophy the slogan is:

| A PERFECT DAY BEGINS AT NIGHT |

As a member of Slumberland Group billerbeck becomes in 2001 part of the Hilding Anders Group (Sweden).



Brochure and segment colours



Example of an emotional advertising picture and photo of the new shop design



2001 - 2010

2003 Friedrich Ermert becomes Managing Director

In 2003, Friedrich Ermert, who has been with the company as production manager since 1981, becomes managing director. Through management buy-out, Friedrich Ermert, together with Paul Konrad (billerbeck Switzerland), succeed in returning billerbeck group to family ownership. In new optimistic mood and being aware of its history and tradition, billerbeck continues on its journey into the future as independent company.

Ingrid and Friedrich Ermert



Jörg Ermert



Thomas Ermert



Carmen Ermert

In the family holding the Ermert family holds 100% of the shares The shareholders are Friedrich Ermert, his wife Ingrid Ermert, née Billerbeck, responsible for Human Resources, their sons Jörg and Thomas Ermert.

Thomas Ermert, Managing Director of billerbeck Betten-Union, supported by his wife Carmen Ermert, will succeed in the coming years. Thus, the basis for a successful future of the company is established.

MEDIUM-SIZED WORLD MARKET LEADER

2011+2013 billerbeck awarded as "Hidden Champion"

In order to stand up to international competition, billerbeck pursues together with consistent brand management as well a quality-oriented product policy. Since the beginnings of billerbeck, the brand's public face changed time after time, but one thing never changed: Customer confidence in the quality of the billerbeck brand. In 2011 and 2013 the brand image and the extensive product range was awarded the prize "Mittelständischer Weltmarktführer im Bettwaren-Segment" (Medium-sized world market leader in the bedding segment).

The award is presented by Prof. Dr. Dres. h.c. Hermann Simon, the author of the book "Hidden Champions of the 21st Century", published by Campus-Verlag, Chairman Simon-Kucher & Partners.



Managing Director Friedrich Ermert at the award ceremony.



Picture right: Certificate Hidden Champion of the 21st Century.

2014 Foundation of billerbeck Home Collection GmbH

With the foundation of "billerbeck Home Collection" brand, the company has expanded its range with mattresses and bed frames. Thus, Billerbeck offers a complete bedding range for naturally, healthy sleep that leaves nothing to be desired.



2015 Foundation of billerbeck Home Stores GmbH

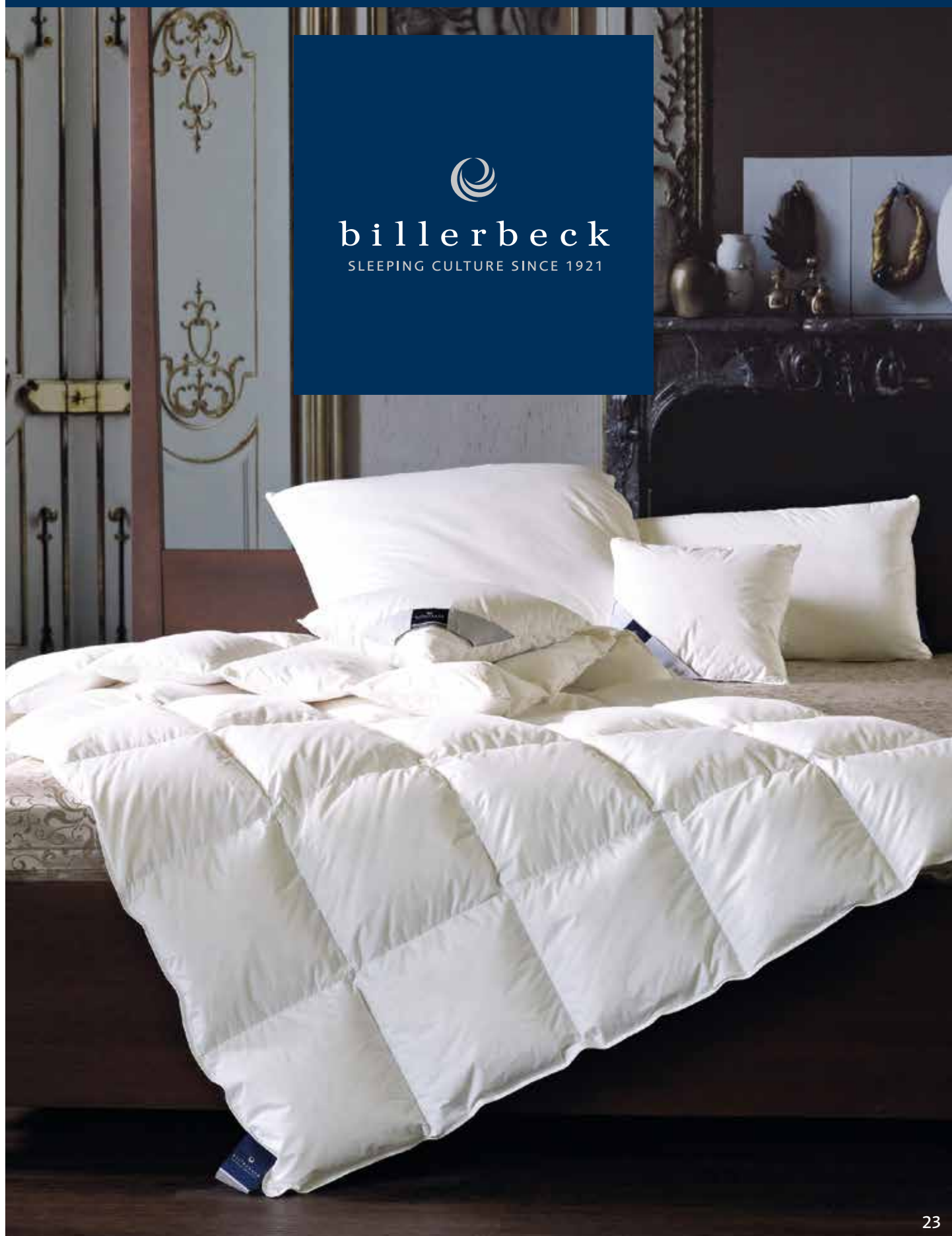
In 2015, the first two flagship stores under "billerbeck Home Stores" were opened in Kraichtal and Stuttgart. Everything for a cosy, comfortable home can be found there. In addition to a large selection of bedding such as duvets, pillows, neck support pillows there are as well offered mattresses and bed frames which complete a cozy bedroom.



2011 - 2015



billerbeck
SLEEPING CULTURE SINCE 1921



SUSTAINABILITY

2016 Organic range – GOTS certified

With the introduction of a sustainable ORGANIC range, billerbeck is doing pioneering work in the bedding sector. Only natural materials such as down and wool from controlled organic cultivation and controlled organic animal husbandry are used.

The GOTS certified organic range, which is manufactured in a resource-saving production process, includes duvets, pillows and neck support pillows as well as a mattress topper and a mattress.

The "Global Organic Textile Standard" (GOTS) is one of the highest certification levels that a natural textile can achieve. It stands for best organic quality along all stages of the textile production and supply chain and requires at the same time compliance with socially responsible conditions during production.



2016 - 2019

2019 Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR is the responsibility of companies to integrate social concerns and environmental protection into their business activities on a voluntary basis. For billerbeck, this means responsible entrepreneurial action that goes beyond legal requirements. Conscious, active management along the value chain, with respect for employees, customers, suppliers and environment, nature and animals is a matter of course.

"It is not enough to know, one must also apply; it is not enough to want, one must also do."

Quotation by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



Presentation of the CSR Report at Heimtextil 2020 trade fair stand

2019 "E14 GRETA®" down range Certified with BLUE ANGEL

Another milestone in billerbeck's sustainable actions is "E14 Greta®" series, certified with the German government's BLUE ANGEL eco-label since 2019.

The following criteria stand for the billerbeck down duvets and pillows of "E14 Greta®" series.



www.blauer-engel.de/uz154



- Environmentally conscious
- Tested for harmful substances
- Without optical brighteners
- Sustainable
- Cover 100 % cotton, controlled organic cultivation
- Guaranteed traceable certified down and feathers



Presentation of the BLUE ANGEL certificate at Heimtextil in Frankfurt 2020

SUSTAINABILITY

2020 billerbeck Kraichtal Sustainability and regional commitment

Our company headquarters are located in the beautiful Kraichgau area, a wine-growing and hilly region in the north-west of Baden-Württemberg. Surrounded by meadows and forests, it is our special concern to support the local NABU Kraichtal (Naturschutzbund - league for nature conservation).

However, our regional commitment also benefits many other associations such as "Lebenshilfe Bruchsal", the Kraichtal volunteer fire brigade and the "Autismus Zentrum Bruchsal", to name but a few.



2020 Environmental management

Environmental protection is an important part of billerbeck's corporate policy. The installation of a photovoltaic system on the roof of the production facility in 2020 is an important step towards becoming a CO₂-neutral production site.

Energy efficiency is achieved through insulation of buildings, intelligent heat regulation in the offices during core working hours and regular modernization of machines. We avoid packaging waste by using reusable and durable branded bags in which our products are packed. Our transport routes are bundled to avoid CO₂ emissions.



billerbeck DIN ISO 14001 certified

With the internationally recognized environmental management certificate DIN ISO 14001, billerbeck meets the highest ecological and climate-relevant standards.

Responsible use of resources, the development of environmentally friendly and sustainable products and continuous improvement of energy efficiency are just as important to billerbeck as respectful treatment of its employees and suppliers. Supporting social and cultural projects is also an important component.



2020 Digitalization

Thomas Ermert, a 4th generation family member, has been with the company since 2009 and becomes Managing Director alongside Friedrich Ermert in 2020. He heads the IT department and leads the company into the digital future. The DMS - Document Management System introduced in 2012 made it possible, for example, to convert delivery notes into a paperless, digital form. The introduction of new warehouse management software improved delivery quality and enabled employees to work much more efficiently. He also developed the billerbeck PIM - Product Information Management System, which forms the technological basis for making product data available and networking information.



2020 - 2021

2021 Our production sites

billerbeck Germany



Administration and production Kraichtal

billerbeck Switzerland AG



Administration, production and billerbeck advertising on the Postbus in Switzerland



billerbeck Hungary



Production Ungarn

BILLERBECK



2021

2021 billerbeck – the brand for quality, variety and maximum sleeping comfort

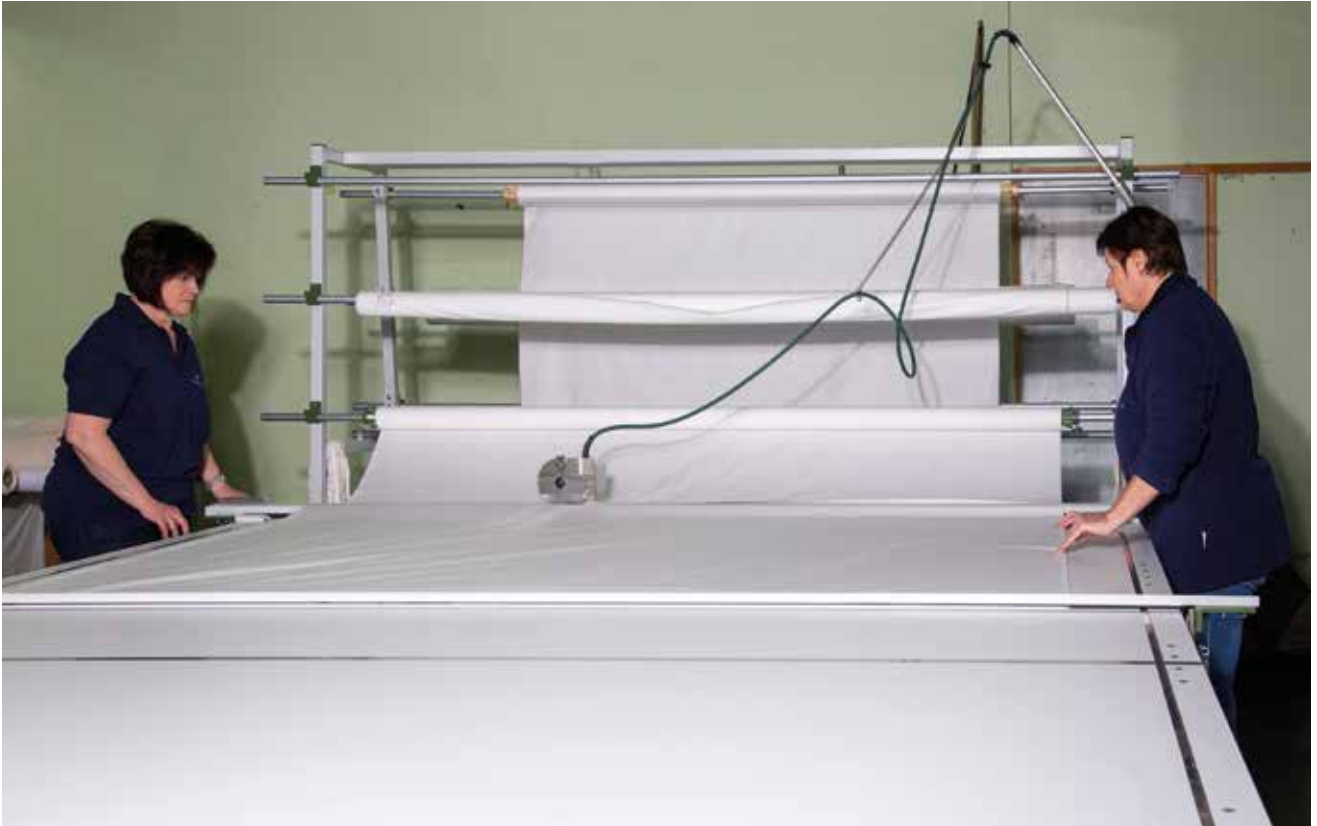
We manufacture our quality bedding with a high proportion of manual work in the manufactories belonging to the group in Germany, Switzerland and Hungary.

The demands on quality standards are very high and require the use of the best raw materials as well as careful processing. It goes without saying that every product is subjected to a strict quality control after production and packed in a billerbeck brand bag.

The billerbeck brand stands for a full range that is divided into the segments Down, Organic, Nature, Fibre, Care, Kids and Junior. Each product stands for an exclusive filling, the finest cover fabrics and individual properties that set standards for future generations of sleeping culture. The mattress and frame range realize the idea of good sleep in a complete billerbeck bed system.



BILLERBECK



Cutting, frame and continuous production

In the cutting department, the fabrics are cut to the right size.

An employee stretches the fabric and puts filling into a frame and starts the quilting pattern on the SNA 7. The quilt is then sent for finishing to one of our seamstresses.



2021



BILLERBECK



2021



Continuous production on the V6/K6



BILLERBECK



2021



Sewing and cleaning

After having sewn in the edging strip and billerbeck logo ribbon by the seamstresses in the finishing department, the final check is carried out.

A staff member cleans the quilt, removes any protruding threads and packs the product in a billerbeck brand bag.



BILLERBECK

Pillow department

In our pillow department, seamstresses sew the pillow cases and fill them with selected fillings. The pillows are packed then in a billerbeck brand bag.



2021



BILLERBECK



2021



BILLERBECK

Packing station and shipping – The journey to the land of dreams can begin!

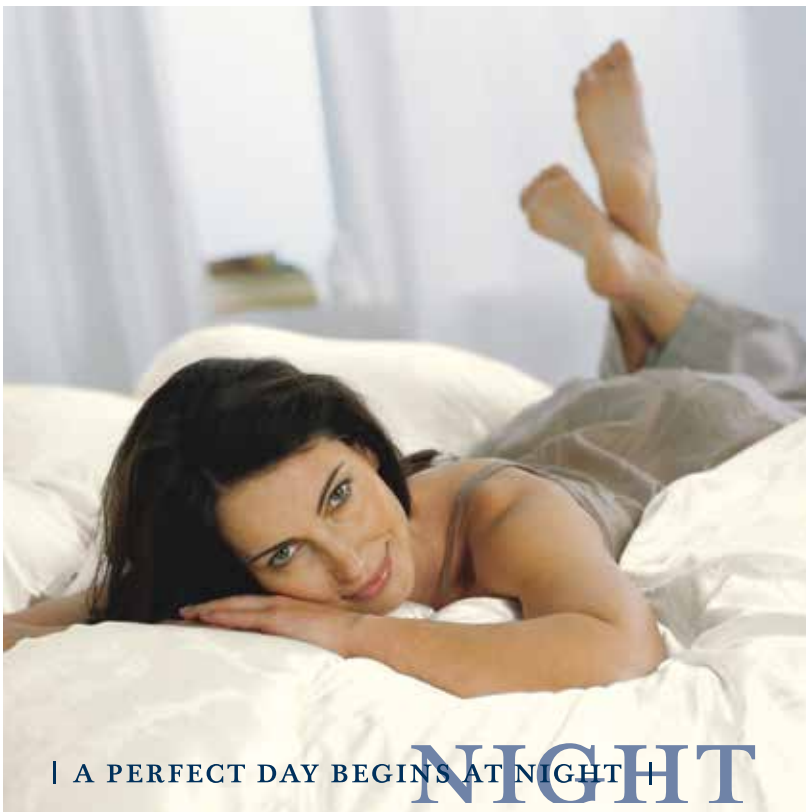
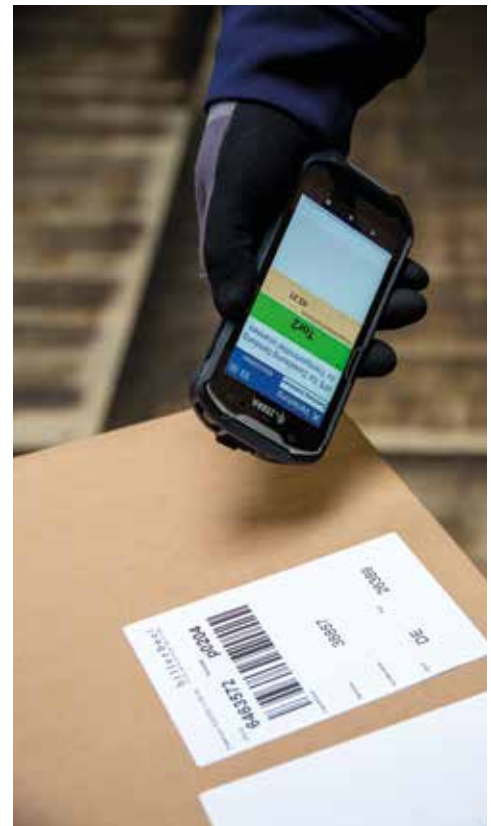


Finally, all the bedding is packed in billerbeck branded bags and prepared for dispatch.

Now all those cosy duvets, cuddly pillows and soft toppers are ready to be sent off and take you to the land of dreams.



2021



| A PERFECT DAY BEGINS AT NIGHT |

NIGHT

We are pleased if you have a billerbeck product at home so that you can enjoy highest sleeping comfort every night.



AFTERWORD

Dear readers,

An exciting century of sleeping culture lies behind us.

My heartfelt thanks go to all our employees, who have strengthened and developed the company through their commitment and team spirit.

I would like to thank our suppliers, trading partners and customers for trust and good cooperation throughout many years.

The idea of good and restful sleep continues to define our centre of life and I am looking forward to working with you towards a sustainable and successful future!

Yours faithfully Friedrich Ermert

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Friedrich Ermert' in a cursive script.

100 YEARS OF SLEEPING CULTURE



Date of publication: 22. März 2021

Publisher: billerbeck Betten-Union GmbH & Co. KG,
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Photos : page 2, 26, 28-42 Sabine Meier, focus fotostudio, 75015 Bretten; page 20, 22, 23, 43 Matteo Manduzio, photographer, 80469 Munich; page 24, product photos, Ronald Huber, photographer, 76689 Karlsdorf-Neuthard; page 24, image photos, We Are Nerdish, Digital Media Agency, 75053 Gondelsheim

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