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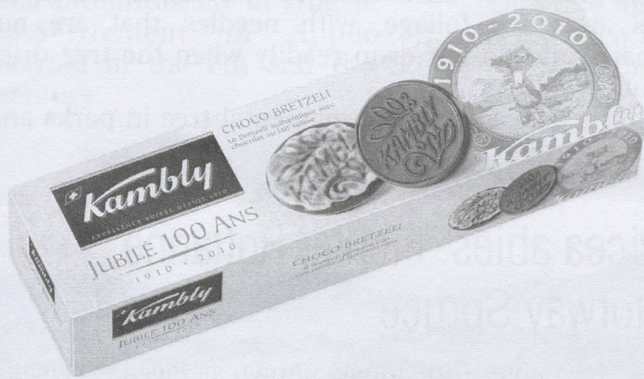
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Kambly biscuits celebrate centenary with pride

It would be fair to say that Kambly is to biscuits what Lindt is to chocolate. It all started 100 years ago with a romance and continues with the third generation of Oscars.

"My grandfather (Oscar I) founded the Kambly company in 1910. He happened to meet a girl from Trubschachen at his commercial school in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. They fell in love and he decided to come here," chairman Oscar Kambly III says. "He came here as a baker and he started to bake Bretzeli - that was a family recipe - for his friends and for the village. It was such a success in the region that he decided to start a business."



The Emmental Bretzeli - wafer thin waffle biscuits - are still going strong, but over time Kambly has introduced a wide range of specialties to tempt its customers. Kambly's father, Oscar II, had the idea of joining the art of chocolatier and the industrial production of biscuits. The company's ingredients are sourced whenever possible locally. The local cows play no small part in the story.

When asked whether Trubschachen isn't a little bit in the middle of nowhere, Kambly III smiles and puts the picture straight: "It is wonderful farming country, pure air, pure water, lovely forests and meadows and yes, it is 40 minutes from the next highway entry but it is right in the middle of Switzerland."

The firm has been celebrating its 100th anniversary proudly. For example, early in the year a 100-metre long Emmental speciality, a plaited loaf, was baked and was divided into 420 pieces, one for each of the firm's employees. Kambly III has nothing but praise for his staff. Some of them come from families who have worked for the company for three generations - rather like the Kambly family.

from swissinfo

Bircher muesli's forgotten champion

Bircher muesli, developed by the Swiss doctor Max Bircher-Benner, is famous throughout the world, but few remember his niece who carried on his legacy.

Dagmar Liechti-von Brasch was a woman ahead of her times: the charismatic doctor took over Bircher-Benner's Zurich clinic in the 1940s after his death.

Liechti-von Brasch was born in Estonia in 1911, the daughter of a Baltic German aristocrat Allo von Brasch and Bircher-Benner's sister Alice, they had met in the clinic. Alice's death in 1916 and the tensions in the region after the outbreak of the First World War resulted in the three eldest von Brasch children being sent to their uncle in Switzerland for their safety.

The children's stay was supposed to be short-term and indeed, at the beginning the young Liechti-von Brasch struggled to adjust to her new family and surroundings. But in 1921 she decided to remain with the Bircher-Benners, while her siblings returned to their father. One reason was her deep admiration for her "Onkelpapa" (uncle father). Bircher-Benner had built up a clinic in the exclusive Zürichberg area on a philosophy of healthy living - a diet of raw vegetables, including the apple-based muesli, and strict daily regime with exercise before breakfast - and a holistic approach to medicine, which encompassed both body and soul.

It was perhaps hardly surprising that in this atmosphere Liechti-von Brasch decided that she, too, wanted to be a doctor.

Her uncle, although fully supportive, was worried that matrimony would interfere. Liechti-von Brasch thus resolved not to give up her profession should she have a family. She was soon assisting him at the clinic.

Bircher-Benner had three sons who studied medicine and he had hoped one of them would follow him as clinic director, but all three did not manage. So in a way, he appointed her as his successor. Bircher-Benner died in 1939.

She continued to work in the clinic, finally taking over as medical lead in 1947. Her position was highly unusual for a woman in Switzerland. Until the 1960s, only ten per cent of doctors were women and they rarely rose up the ranks.

Liechti-von Brasch married childhood friend Eugen Liechti, and they eventually had four children. A working mother was still unusual for the time, but they lived near the clinic and had household help.

Liechti-von Brasch retired from the clinic in 1980, aged almost 70, but continued to practise medicine. She died in 1993. In 1995 the clinic was closed and sold.

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