

Künzli has to close the doors due to lack of successor

The traditional Swiss shoe manufacturer Künzli will cease its business activities by the end of the year. Despite careful and professionally supported succession planning, no adequate solution was found – even though the company is healthy and growing.

The “Künzli shoes”, medical shoes for treating ankle and ligament injuries, will disappear, as will the iconic premium sneakers with the five Künzli stripes. A traditional Swiss brand will be lost.

Owner Barbara Artmann (63) deeply regrets this: "I have always seen my role as the guardian of the Künzli brand. It was not easy to prepare Künzli for the future and make it fit. We have succeeded in doing this in recent years. Having to close now is more than bitter."

Künzli SwissSchuh AG has a long tradition: in 1927 Werner Künzli founded a company to manufacture sports shoes. In 1955 his son Kurt Künzli took over the business and developed Künzli into the epitome of Swiss sports shoes. One of his key inventions was the patented 5-stripe-fit-lacing system in the 1950s, which not only gives the foot special support, but also quickly became the trademark of Künzli shoes with its distinctive 5 stripes. In the 1970s the stability shoe with lateral stabilizers was developed, continued as Künzli Ortho®, which is now the leading therapy for ankle and ligament injuries. In 2005, the Künzli sneaker line was created, iconic leather sneakers with the well-known 5 Künzli stripes in a captivating design – born of an idea for equipping the Swiss Olympic team 2004 - 2012. In 2012, Künzli lost its very own trademark due to an attack by the US company K-Swiss, which had itself emerged from Künzli.

In 2020, the famous five stripes returned to the sneakers, and the line has been very successful. The ortho shoes are an indispensable part of modern therapy, especially for Achilles tendon and ankle injuries. This area is also growing due to superior performance, e.g. faster healing, and through an innovative implementation of products. Künzli operates its own factory in Albania, where the very special, sophisticated shoes are manufactured.

Orderly closure

Künzli is striving to shut down operations in an orderly manner. This means that the core Künzli Ortho products can be purchased until the fourth quarter, if necessary by pre-ordering if raw materials are available. Surplus stock and remaining stock as well as sneakers are expected to be available or sold off until the first quarter of 2025. Historical items and memorabilia such as historic sports shoes or pictures will be auctioned at a later date.

For the 11 employees of the excellent team at the headquarters in Windisch, layoffs are unavoidable. Künzli regrets this very much, supports the affected employees in their new orientation and is also hopeful that other employers will be pleased with the well-trained specialists. A solution is being sought for the factory in Albania that preserves the well-established team as much as possible. Given the shortage of skilled workers, there are unlikely to be any hardship cases there either.

Thanks, and what a pity!

Künzli would like to thank customers, cooperation partners and fans for the good cooperation, the constructive help and the trust in the special competence but also the love for the special shoes.

Künzli has often swum against the tide and has successfully mastered the complex marketing of medicine and fashion as well as the demanding production of the uniquely designed shoes. However, this and the current market situation have probably largely prevented a transfer of the business. The high level of recognition and the quality of the traditional Swiss shoes could not compensate for this.

Windisch, 12 September 2024

For more information:

Künzli SwissSchuh AG
Ms. Barbara Artmann
Hauserstrasse 47
5210 Windisch

Tel. 056 200 85 00
Fax 056 200 85 20
info@kuenzli-schuh.ch
www.kuenzli-schuhe.ch

You can find further information about Künzli at www.kuenzli-schuhe.ch. Image material – also in electronic form – is available there or at the above address.

