



syngenta



The History of the Rosental site in Basel

The history of the Rosental site in Basel

Rosental is the site of the oldest chemical facility in Basel. When it was built in 1858, the facility was still located outside the city limits, and produced natural dyes for textiles. Over its 150-year history, the site has been transformed from a dye production center to group headquarters. Prominent researchers and managers have written chemical and business history on this site, with projects of international importance for industry, medicine and agriculture. Today, Rosental is the main headquarters of Syngenta, a world-leading agribusiness.

The Beginnings

1758 Johann Rudolf Geigy founded a trading company for medicines and related products. The company was located in the “Zum Reischenberg” building, at what is now Basel's Freie Strasse 42.

1758





- 1| Portrait of the Geigy family, 1758
- 2| Map of the Premises in 1863
- 3| Workforce Photo, 1896
- 4| Chemical extraction plant,
the so-called Rosental "outer factory", 1870



1815 Hieronymus Geigy-Sarasin,
son of Johann Rudolf Geigy,
changed the company's name to indicate
that it traded in dyes and materials.

1793 Geigy moved to
Lichtenfelser Hof, Münsterberg.

1793

1815



1833 The company acquired a dyewood mill in Basel's St. Alban-Tal, where dyewoods were ground into powder dyes.

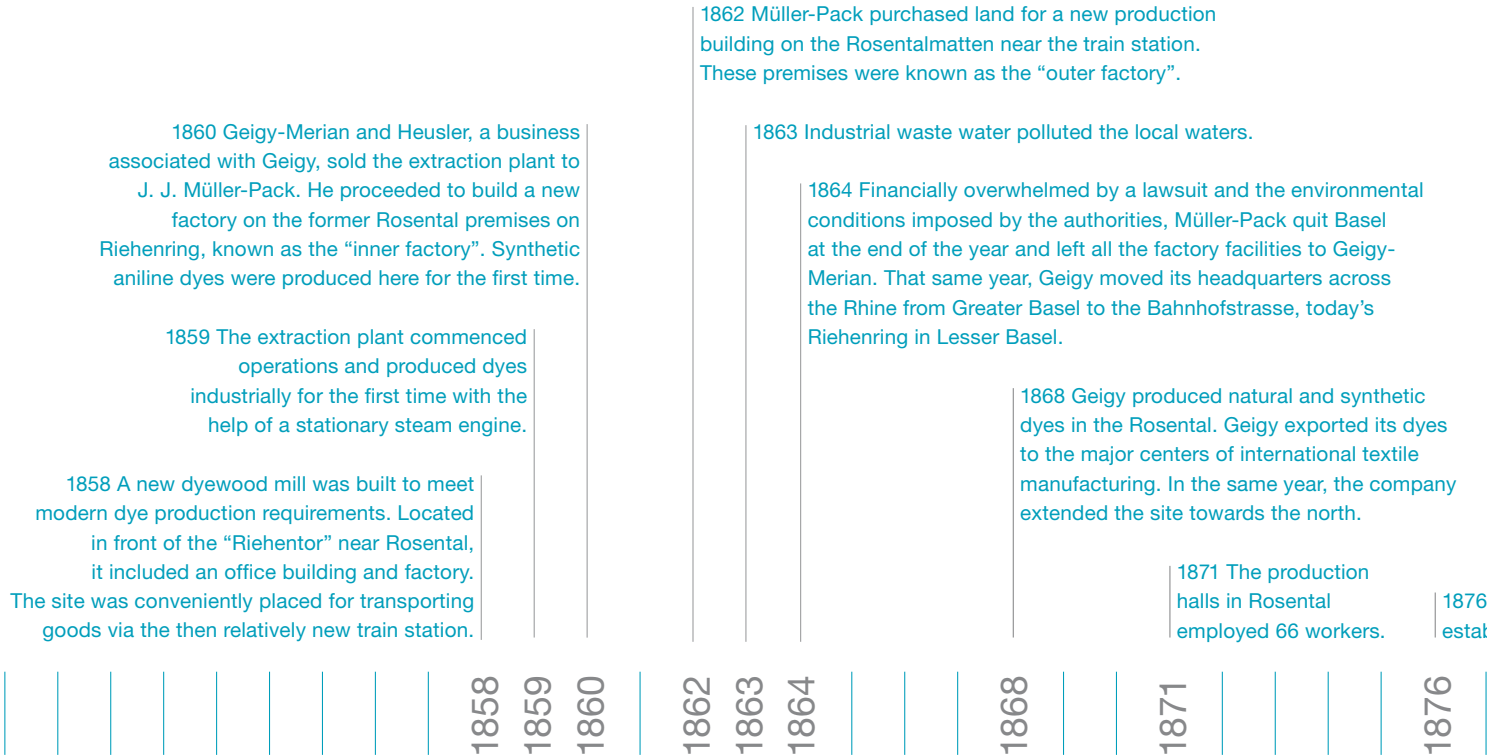
From 1830 the company produced dyes for fabric, first manually and then industrially.

1830

1833



Initial Activities in Rosental





From 1900

- 5| Traugott Sandmeyer, 1888
- 6| Oldest known lab photo, 1909
- 7| Premises in the 1920s, 1919

The Sandoz dye factory was
established in Basel's St Johann district.

Ciba (Chemical Industry Basel) was formed
from the company Bindschedler & Busch.

1888 Traugott Sandmeyer joined Johann
Rudolf Geigy & Cie. The processes he
invented contributed greatly to the company's
success. He identified the structure of a newly
discovered dye for Geigy & Cie.

1897 Natural indigo dye was imported
for the last time. The manufacturing
of synthetic dyes became a major line
of business at Geigy.

1901 Geigy became a
public limited company
and extended its
premises towards the
Maulbeerstrasse.

1884

1888

1897

1901



8



9



10



11

1917 The Rosental site grew again, this time towards the northeast.

1918 Representatives from Ciba, Sandoz and Geigy formed a syndicate to protect their joint positions against economic competition.

1923, 1927 and 1928 New buildings were erected on the Rosental premises and some parts of the production operations were moved.

1935 Geigy began production of insecticides as a new business line, followed by fungicides, seed dressings and pharmaceutical products.

From 1930 a new dye production building and new buildings for administrative offices (1001) were added on Schwarzwaldallee, along with research facilities.

1917

1918

1923

1927

1928

1930

1935

8 | Artist's impression of Rosental, 1936

9 | Picture of Memorial Plaque, 1941

10 | Rosental, 1957

11 | Sandmeyer Building, 1941

1939

1939 Geigy researcher Paul Hermann Müller discovered dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), which continued to be used as an insecticide into the 1970s.

1941

1941 A large laboratory building, the Sandmeyer Building, was erected in honor of Swiss researcher Traugott Sandmeyer (see "1888" above). The Sandmeyer Reaction is well-known in the field of chemistry and did much to advance the chemical industry. A memorial stone on the Rosental premises commemorates Sandmeyer's skills.

1951

1951 The 1918 syndicate agreement between Ciba, Sandoz and Geigy was terminated.

1954

1954 The new laboratory (1093) on Mattenstrasse was built for scientific research.

1956

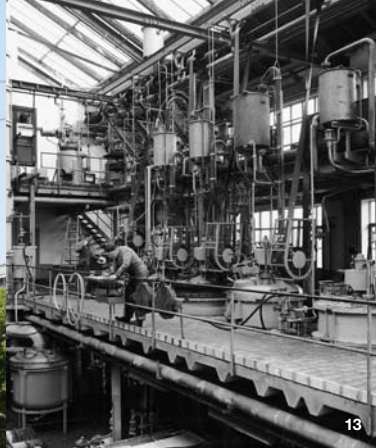
1956 A new office high-rise (1002) was officially opened on Schwarzwaldallee in Rosental. This was one of the first high-rises to be built in Basel; three others had been erected at Kannenfeldpark in 1951. The boiler house was modernized.

1960

Geigy shut down production operations in Rosental and from then on manufactured only at the Schweizerhalle facility, some 10 kilometers further up the Rhine. The company demolished Rosental production buildings and replaced them with laboratories.



12



13



14

- 12 | Building 1002, 1956
- 13 | Boiler House, 1956
- 14 | Workplace, 1967

1970 Geigy and Ciba merged to form Ciba-Geigy AG.

1980 The experimental lab (Building 1003) in Rosental was demolished.

1984 The original milling and mixing facility (1052) was also taken down.

1990 A new building (1008) was erected of the former carpenters' workshop. The building was laid out and quickly became popular within the company as a summer meeting place. Swiss artist Günther Rambold's "Golden Staircase" decorates the interior. Adjacent to the Piazza is the "Agrogarden" with an old groundwater well, grapevines and trees. Originally, potatoes, corn and sunflowers were planted there. Today, Syngenta flower beds predominate, adding a splash of color to the green oasis of green at the heart of the premises.

1996 Nova... was... head... were...

1970

1980

1984

1990

1996

Today

15| Golden Staircase, 1990
16| Fitness Center, 2007
17| Entrance Gate, 2008
18| Map of Today's Premises, 2008

... on the site
... the Piazza was
... with employees
... st René
... the square.
... den" with its
... fruit trees.
... ers were
... varieties
... to the small
... ses.

... Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz merged to form
...artis. The main office building of Ciba-Geigy
... completely renovated and became the second
... quarters of Novartis; the other headquarters
... located in St. Johann (formerly Sandoz).

2000

2007
2008

2000 on November 13, the title to the Rosental premises was transferred to Syngenta, a new company created from the merger of Novartis Agrobusiness and AstraZeneca Agrochemicals. Rosental has been the main headquarters of Syngenta ever since. Structural adaptations were made here in the administrative building (1001) on Schwarzwaldallee, which now houses the company's Executive Committee. The site is also home to the global headquarters of Crop Protection and Seeds, the Crop Protection headquarters for Europe, Africa and the Middle East, as well as other functions. In the course of the major mergers and associated spin-offs or creation of individual businesses, several other companies settled on the Rosental premises. Today there are more than 30 companies and scientific institutions operating at this site. The great majority focus on Life Sciences.

2007 Syngenta sold large parts of the Rosental site to a private investor and set aside a 2.5 hectare core area for its own use. At the end of the year, Syngenta moved its chemistry laboratories from Rosental to the integrated research center in nearby Stein (Canton Aargau). Syngenta also opened a fitness center in Rosental to promote employee health.

2008 Syngenta employs about 1200 people from some 50 different nations on the Rosental site. Over the next two years, Syngenta will modernize its Basel headquarters. The company will concentrate its activities in the 2.5 hectare core area and run this as a separate unit to the rest of the Rosental area.



15



16



17



18

Printing information

Publisher: Syngenta International AG,
 Communications Switzerland, Historical
 Company Archives
 Edited by: Noëmi Schneider
 Design: typo.d AG
 Printed by: Birkhäuser + GBC AG
 Photos: private; Peter Schnetz
 Original language: German with translations
 into French and English

Sources

Report of Geotechnisches Institut
 Alfred Bürgin: Geschichte des
 Geigy-Unternehmens von 1758 bis 1939.
 Ciba: Aus der Entwicklungsgeschichte der
 Gesellschaft für Chemische Industrie in Basel
 (Ciba). Basel 1939.
 Historical Company Archive of Syngenta
 Company Archive of Novartis
 Kutter, Markus: Geigy heute. Basel 1958.
www.dutly.ch/sandmeier/sandmeyer.html

Syngenta International AG

Communications Switzerland
 Schwarzwaldallee 215
 CH-4058 Basel
www.syngenta.ch