

Interview Bastian Mingers, Director Wine & Spirits Messe Düsseldorf GmbH

ProWein: Back to Business

Back to Business – but not business as usual. Preparations for ProWein 2021, the largest and most relevant trade fair for wines and spirits worldwide, are in full swing. In particular, the impacts of COVID-19 and the hygiene and safety regulations currently in force demand substantial adjustments on all levels and by all parties involved. What will change in 2021, what adaptations to the new circumstances will we see?

It is true that the current hygiene and safety regulations set the pace for ProWein 2021. Alongside many other precautions only a determined number of people are allowed in the exhibition halls each day; this is the only way to ensure the required social distancing measures are met. Just counting the staff manning the stands of our approx. 6,900 exhibitors already takes us to about 20,000 people per day. Adding the over 60,000 visitors at ProWein 2019 would make it impossible to observe the required safety provisions. And even if we expect the number of visitors to decline – which will be the case – we can only admit a limited number of visitors to the nine halls at ProWein. For this reason we extended the trade fair to five days thereby channelling visitor flows and spreading them over five days. Accordingly, ProWein 2021 will be held from Friday, 19 March to Tuesday, 23 March in the proven array of halls 9 to 17 – not forgetting Hall 7.0 for our special show “same but different”. We have also adjusted the opening hours: Friday to Monday from 10.00 to 18.30, Tuesday from 10.00 to 16.00.

This extended duration and simultaneous channelling of visitor flows is certainly not the only concrete measure resulting from COVID-19. Which other hygiene and safety measures can exhibitors and trade visitors expect at ProWein?



19 -23 March 2021
5 days of ProWein!
Düsseldorf, Germany

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International Trade Fair
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Mitgliedschaften der
Messe Düsseldorf:

 The global
Association of the
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 Ausstellungs- und
Messe-Ausschuss der
Deutschen Wirtschaft

 FKM – Gesellschaft zur
Freiwilligen Kontrolle von
Messe- und Ausstellungszahlen

Öffentliche Verkehrsmittel:
U78, U79: Messe Ost/Stockumer Kirchstr.
Bus 722: Messe-Center Verwaltung

Managing visitor flows – meaning limiting the number of people at the Exhibition Centre and inside the individual halls in concrete terms – is indispensable for compliance with hygiene rules. Visitors and exhibitors will have to wear face masks covering their nose and mouth and strictly adhere to hand hygiene. Under the motto “PROTaction” Messe Düsseldorf has developed a highly detailed hygiene and safety concept and has already implemented this very successfully in early September at CARAVAN SALON, the world’s most important trade fair for camping and caravanning. Also forming the backbone here – next to the general obligation to wear face masks and observe hand hygiene – was the limitation of visitor flows to a daily quota with the help of personalised tickets. For details interested readers should go to <https://www.prowein.de>

What do exhibitors at ProWein 2021 need to watch out for? Can the hygiene and safety concept be put into practice by them without major efforts?

First of all, let me mention maybe the most important point: by extending to five days while also limiting attendance to 10,000 visitors a day, the hall layouts/space allocation will not need changing, which means exhibitors will keep their stand locations from 2020. They will not need to reduce or enlarge their stand size. However, stand construction must be adapted to meet COVID-19 conditions.

Is there an alternative to this concrete implementation of the hygiene and safety provisions and/or extended duration?

Needless to say, we looked into various versions and options very thoroughly. We examined in detail, for example, whether trade visitors could be clustered by halls, i.e. the focal ranges, and by trade fair days. At first this seemed an appealing idea with many benefits; taking a closer look, however, we realised it would not be feasible, nor in the interest of our customers.



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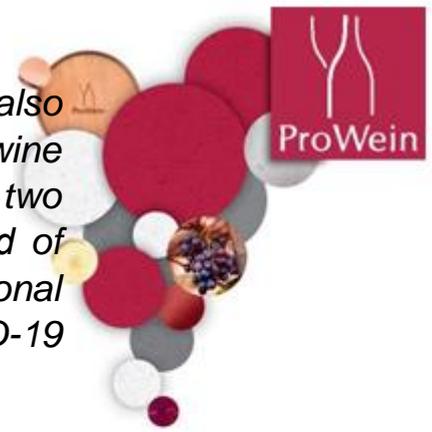
As the sector's leading trade fair ProWein is also characterised by a high percentage of international wine and spirits professionals; after all, 2019 saw one in two visitors come from outside Germany. Aren't you afraid of facing a drastic decline in the number of international ProWein visitors in view of the dynamic COVID-19 development worldwide?

A very recent decision taken by the German government might have an extremely positive effect on the exhibition business as a whole. With immediate effect exhibitors and visitors will be deemed to be business travellers with a material reason and will be allowed to enter Germany even if they hail from a risk region. In addition to a negative Corona test they have to submit confirmation of their trade fair involvement. What this means in concrete terms is that visitors will have to present their admission ticket to the trade fair plus a business appointment made with at least one exhibitor at the trade fair on site. Employees of exhibiting companies have to submit a confirmation of their trade fair participation from the event organiser. This entry permit also applies to citizens from countries with a visa requirement; the business visa will be required as before. Employees from exhibiting companies are exempt from the visa fee. These are extremely positive measures for ProWein, Messe Düsseldorf and the German exhibition industry as a whole.

Which concrete impacts and changes can exhibitors and visitors expect beyond this at ProWein 2021?

One key point is that visitor tickets will be available exclusively online. On-site ticket purchase will not be possible. The Ticketshop is expected to go live in January 2021. Trade visitor registration will, of course, remain unchanged and naturally those tickets already purchased for ProWein 2020 will remain valid and/or will be carried over to a respective day of the event in 2021. This group of trade visitors will be contacted and provided with concrete details by e-mail at the end of the year.

We have been able to already now make adjustments to the hygiene and safety specifications currently in force but



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there are still some open issues to address such as the approach to spittoons or whether there will be large tasting events and/or areas at all. There are still many details to be clarified.

Coming back to the “normal” trade fair preparations already proceeding at pace at the moment. What is on the agenda in concrete terms?

Three “items” are currently on the agenda. We plan to modernise the image of ProWein in line with the zeitgeist of the wine and spirits industry: open-minded, curious, dynamic, colourful – and yet always conscious of its origin and roots. The campaign will already be launched in October with several activities specifically designed to address younger target groups of visitors from trending food service or the bar community.

Also on our to-do list is the further development of digital formats. Not least the Corona developments have shown that digital tools will also play an ever more important role in the wine and spirits sector. Here, ProWein, in particular, can provide decisive impetus as the leading global trade fair and will join forces with industry players to come up with up-to-date digital formats. I am thinking of the Matchmaking Tool here, for example, which was introduced into the market very successfully at the last ProWein and which has met with equally high acceptance among exhibitors and visitors alike.

The third major project is the Business Report that we will once again produce in cooperation with Geisenheim University. For good reason the focal themes this year are COVID-19 and its impact on the international wine and spirits industry.

Rest assured: ProWein will stay by the side of the wine and spirits industry – in the future just the way it has done over the pa



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