



# Press release

## The Oktoberfest as a brand

(4.8.2022) The Oktoberfest is the biggest traditional fair in the world – a unique synthesis of the arts and an integral part of the Munich spirit. More than anywhere else, it is here that local customs and the Bavarian way of life are traditionally injected with a new vibrancy. The Oktoberfest stands for the sense of identity and the hospitality that is so typical of the people of Munich: it is a traditional fair for everyone that promises a wide range of pleasures appealing to all the senses and the highest quality. The brand essence of the Oktoberfest can be described as interpersonal encounter, shared experience and a zest for life.

“Oktoberfest” is a powerful brand that includes a number of related terms with similar appeal (“*Wiesn*”). The fair is widely recognised as being in the possession of the City of Munich municipal authorities, which are entrusted with its organisation and careful protection. Having staged the event extremely successfully since 1810, the City of Munich has applied to register various wordmarks and wordmark/symbols in order to guarantee this protection. For example, the trademark “Oktoberfest” has been successfully registered internationally at the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO).

The wordmarks *Oktoberfest München*, *Münchner Oktoberfest*, *Wiesn* and *Oide Wiesn* are likewise registered trademarks.

### **Legal protection of the brand**

The Oktoberfest and related terms are legally protected in several respects to the benefit of the City of Munich. As such, the Munich municipal authorities enjoy exclusivity in the commercial and brand-related use of the respective terms in connection with numerous goods and services in the European Union and therefore in Germany, too. In addition to this registered trademark protection, the City of Munich has also been granted unregistered protective rights of title by the courts. Only recently, the Regional Court and the Higher Regional Court of Munich explicitly confirmed that the Oktoberfest also enjoys supplementary protection under competition law. The municipal authorities can therefore claim extremely robust legal protection based on various pillars.

### **The “O” is the star – the new Oktoberfest logo**

For the purpose of consistent marketing of the Oktoberfest, a uniform





brand identity is now being developed for the first time in the fair's history so as to provide a focal visual framework. To this end, all the classic elements of corporate design were incorporated in the creative process: a logo, a wordmark/symbol and the development of a proprietary typeface.

The new logo and lettering will now be successively applied at all contact points, including the Oktoberfest fairground itself. The previously known logo of the Oktoberfest – the “laughing beer mugs” – will no longer be used in communication.




Particular emphasis was placed on the design of the symbol. The ornamental decoration of the letter “O” creates a dynamic form that reflects the vibrancy and spirit of the Oktoberfest. The result is not a single static logo, but a lively, multi-layered and highly flexible signet featuring various vivid colour gradients – as diverse and colourful as the Oktoberfest itself.

Like the new brand typeface, the symbol is based on a traditional Gothic script which was the typeface commonly used in Bavaria at the time the fair was first held. However, this traditional lettering has been interpreted in a modern, accessible way – especially with a view to international use and optimum legibility – in the form of a completely new, distinctive and contemporary typeface which is appropriately named *Wiesn*.

The typeface is embedded in a design principle that does justice to the highly emotional nature of the theme in that it captures the colourful character of the Oktoberfest and typical *Wiesn* moments, visualising them as if in a kaleidoscope. The result is a contemporary, highly flexible and varied design that offers sufficient substance along with a certain degree of freedom for the long-term development of the Oktoberfest brand.

The brand agency RED prevailed in a multi-stage pitch to take on responsibility for the brand's strategic and visual development.

Clemens Baumgärtner, Department of Labour and Economic Affairs of the City of Munich: “The Oktoberfest is a synthesis of the arts and an integral part of the Munich spirit. It stands for the sense of identity and the hospitality that is so typical of the people of Munich – a traditional fair for everyone that promises a wide range of pleasures appealing to all the



senses of the highest quality. Once the trademark had been registered, it made sense to give the Oktoberfest a new image, one that is as distinctive as the fair itself. RED is a partner who has perfectly understood and translated these requirements and, together with our project team, is now consistently working to further evolve this leading Bavarian brand.”

Michael Mazanec, Managing Director and Creative Director of the advertising agency RED: “As an agency, we asked ourselves the question: what is the right symbol for the Oktoberfest? We came to the conclusion that the Oktoberfest is too diverse and multi-faceted to be reflected in a single image – whether a beer mug, a gingerbread heart or a Ferris wheel. The idea was to choose something abstract that would be atmospheric and open to interpretation. The initial “O” of the word ‘Oktoberfest’ meets all these requirements.”

Benedikt Brandmeier, Head of Munich Tourism, Events and Hospitality at the Department of Labour and Economic Affairs: “We wanted the new branding to be perceived as typically Bavarian, of course, but it also had to blend the tradition of the fair with a contemporary feel. And we wanted it to be open to interpretation so that it would be understood at the international level and work for all target groups. In short: it shouldn’t need explanation, but be instantly self-explanatory – that’s the Oktoberfest!”

### **Brand management: strategic partnerships, licences and merchandising**

The stated objective is to effectively protect the intrinsic value of the Oktoberfest while at the same time ensuring its effective utilisation as an asset. On the one hand, this can be achieved by consistently enforcing the applicable rights against anyone not willing to respect the existing extent of protection. The successful court case “Oktoberfest goes Dubai” clearly established that the City of Munich is willing to take court action against infringing parties if necessary.

The municipal authorities intend to adopt a restrained approach here, however, especially towards partners of the Oktoberfest itself. The aim is not to develop the brand into a source of income: the main priority is to protect the Oktoberfest as a Munich cultural asset.

Nonetheless, it is equally important to cultivate partnerships with those who share the same quality standards as the City of Munich. The municipal authorities therefore strive to establish cooperations that strengthen the Oktoberfest brand while at the same time enabling its values to be transported and utilised to the benefit of all those involved.

The City of Munich seeks to enter into dialogue with strategic brand partners so as to jointly



select products that can be promoted and marketed in connection with the original Oktoberfest. In legal terms, this requires the conclusion of a licence agreement. Such products must form part of the partner's up-market product segment and transport the above-mentioned values of quality, originality and tradition. Providing licence partners meet these requirements, they should be able to use the *Oktoberfest* or *Wiesn* seal of quality.

In addition, the organisers will launch their own specially designed series of high-quality licensed products. These practical and traditional items are intended to appeal emotionally to true *Wiesn* fans and form an important building block in the new Oktoberfest brand world. The products range from drink coasters and fridge magnets from the Altmühltal valley to fashionable neckerchiefs, and also include high-quality Dirndl (women's traditional Bavarian dress) and Lederhosen outfits produced locally for our loyal *Wiesn* guests.

**Editors please note:** The logo can be downloaded exclusively for editorial purposes (illustration of articles) at: <https://mediaserver.muenchen.travel/>

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