

The Carl Mampe Liquor Empire

By Frank and Frank Jr. Wicker

In the early 1800s cholera was spreading rampantly through Germany. Dr. Carl Mampe was a medical practitioner and the Royal Prussian Privy Medical Councilor. He was brewing, with alcohol and healing herbs mixed together, his brandy Stomach Bitter Drop, which he sold in pharmacies. He started making his schnapps and herb medicine in the 1830s in the city of Stargard, Pomerania (Pomerania is a historical region on the southern shore of the Baltic Sea in central Europe, split between Poland and Germany). It was said that his Bitter Drops may even have the power to bring the dead back to life.

Dr. Carl Mampe would soon stop making his cholera agent and donate his original recipe to his two stepbrothers, Ferdinand Johann and Carl Mampe Jr. The company opened in 1835, in Stargard, Germany. The mark Ur-Mampe was created in 1835 and became Stargader Mampe. Carl Mampe Jr., in 1852, would open a liquor factory in Koszalin, Pomerania.

Dr. Carl Mampe would die in 1857. Ferdinand Johann and Carl Mampe Jr. ran the two companies and were using the same recipe to produce their product. The two brothers had a disagreement, which started an internal family competition.



RIGHT: Lot of two Carl Mampe bottles. Elephant on base. Rare with label.

In 1877 Carl Mampe Jr. moved his family business to Berlin, where he founded the Carl Mampe A. G. Co. with Walter Aleith. Berlin at the time was a booming capital of the early German Empire. His step brother, Ferdinand Johann, ran the FJ Mampe Factory, still located in Stargard, which was rebuilt in Hamburg after World War II. The family competition lasted until the 1960s.

In 1894, Carl Mampe Jr. developed the famous Mampe Half and Half Liqueur. This liqueur, due to its 130 herbs, was also known to give a stomach-soothing effect.

Carl Mampe Jr., or in English Carl Gin, died on Feb. 10, 1899. Robert Exner, who was an advertising representative, would become a partner in 1898 and in 1900 would become the sole owner. Unfortunately Carl Mampe Jr. would not see the largest moment of his firm's history.

In April 30, 1904 the World's Exposition Fair was going on in St. Louis. On this occasion, liquor originating from Germany sought to attain worldwide reputation. The Orange Bitter Likor Mampe Half & Half won the grand prize. In 1896 the firm won the Royal Prussian State Medal in Berlin. The Berliner Mampe-Kummel also was a gold medal winner in Buenos Aires in 1910. The firm won the Grand Prize International Culinary Art exhibition in Frankfurt Am Main in 1937.

Robert Exner would succeed in making his company one of the leading brands in the German liqueur industry. In 1922, he acquired the oldest German wine distillery, the Teicheimann and Swing, which was founded in 1784. By 1929, Exner had increased the production of the wine distillery to 78 liqueurs and brandies, which were exported all over the world. This company lasted into the 1980s, making just a few products at the end. The family business was sold and became Mampe Half and Half and Lufthansa cocktail under license by Berentzen Manufacture.



A Carl Mampe wagon being pulled by an elephant.



Carl Mampe Berlin elephant-themed stamps from 1910 to 1915.



Lot of 4 bottles: Carl Mampe / Berlin // Schutz Marke / (motif of elephant) // Veteranen Str. No 24. These early eight-sided bottles are rare.



Lot of 2 bottles: (motif of elephant) Carl Mampe / Berlin – Danzig. Round-style bottle. Scarce to rare depending on color.



Lot of 2 bottles: Carl Mampe / Berlin // Elefanten / (motif of elephant) / Korn // S. W. Hallesche Strasse 17. Early eight-sided bottles, very rare. The second bottle is missing Elefanten and Korn.



Six bottles: (motif of elephant) Carl Mampe / Berlin. Early square bottles - Bitters - Bittere Tropfen - Bittere Drop. Salesman sample very rare. Large square rare. Other squares very scarce.

Carl Mampe Jr.'s grave is to be found today in the so-called Musician Cemetery (the Sophiengemeinde Berlin), and represents the most important pilgrim place of the Mampejunger.

Included in this article are photos of some of Carl Mampe's bottles from the beginning. You can see the many different styles, shapes and colors of these bottles. There were even many variants of the embossed elephants and many different sizes that were offered.

Most all of the embossed bottles had their famous trademark of the Mampe Elephant. The early Carl Mampe bottles that were embossed had the street address of S.W. Halleschestrasse 17. This was the main factory address in Berlin. They might have had other factory sites in Berlin as well. We have two other embossed bottles with the addresses of Schutzmarke Veteranenstrasse 25 and also Veteranenstrasse 24. This address was six miles away from the main factory site.

The front label on the smaller green bottle at bottom right reads: "Mampes Medical Bitters M.M.B. / Elephant (monogram of elephant) Brand / Trade Mark Berlin / Founded in 1852 in Berlin, Germany. A preparation of Angostura bark and other herbs of medical value of agreeable flavor medical bitters are prescribed."

The side label on the same bottle reads: "Aromatic & delicate flavor. These bitters are free from harmful drugs and are composed of herbs of medical character. Dose half table spoonful in equal amount of water before meals. Sugar may be added to increase palatability; they may also be advantageously used as a flavoring for plum puddings, mock turtle soup, souses, grape fruit, etc." The other side is in German.

There are bottles that are embossed with the words Berlin and Danzig in a Gothic script. The city of Danzig and East Prussia were separated from Germany just after World War I.



TOP LEFT: Mampe stamp with Bittere Tropfen bottle.

TOP RIGHT: Pocket flask with metal drinking cup.



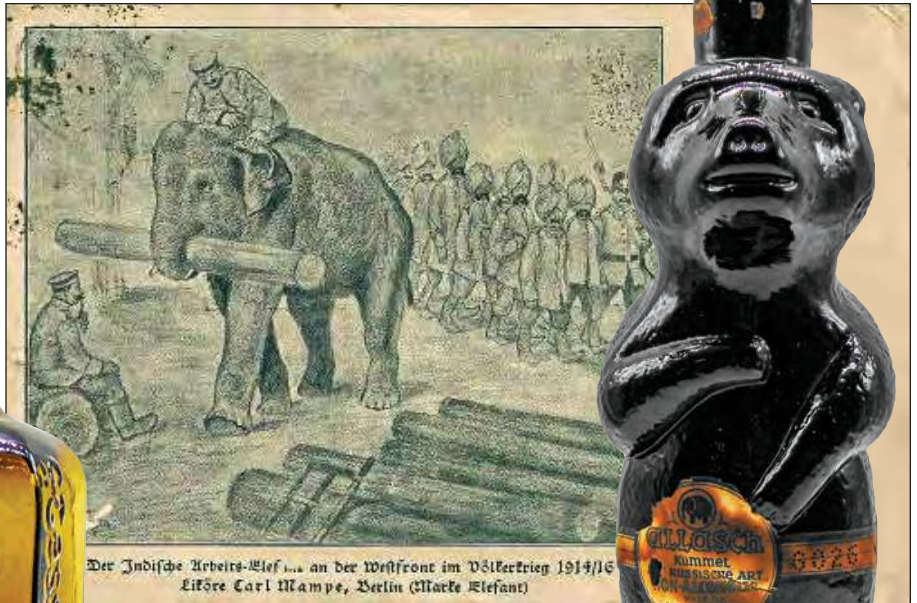
Lot of 3 bottles, labeled squares. Very rare with labels.



Lot of 2 bottles: Carl / Mampe / (motif of elephant) Berlin.
Second bottle embossed Carl Mampe Berlin // Schutz
Marke / (motif of elephant) // Veteranen Strasse 25.
These early six-sided bottles are very rare.



Lot of 2 bottles:
Carl / Mampe / Berlin
(around shoulder) /
(motif of elephant).
These early square
bottles are rare.



Carl Mampe card from 1917
depicting an elephant moving logs.



Kummel Bear with label.
Allasch Kummel Russische
Berlin S.W. 11 Germany.
Figural bear bottle. Rare
with label.

From the early days until its closure, the Mampe Co. was big on marketing its products. They donated two dwarf elephants, one named Carl and the other named Mampe, to the Berlin Zoo. The business seemed to always flourish, having many new products on the market. In the 1930s over seventy different varieties of Mampe products were served on Zeppelin flights. In the 1960s and 1970s they were big sponsors of auto racing.

The business also owned several restaurants, all called Mampes Gutu Stube (Mampe's Living Rooms). The most famous of these was at Kurfurstendamm 14/15 Berlin, which opened in 1917. The restaurant closed in 1986.

REFERENCES:

www.mampemuseum.com, owner Karin Erb, Berlin.
Frank & Frank Jr. Wicker Bottle Collection