



Borsalino

In 1834 Alessandro Giuseppe Borsalino, also known as 'u siur Pipen', was born in Pecetto, Alessandria.

As a boy he worked as an apprentice at a hat company. In 1850, he decided to move to France, a country leader for hat production and for fashion. In Paris, he became a skilled hat maker. In 1856, he returned to Alessandria, and in 1857 he opened a workshop with his brother Lazzaro. 130 employees worked with the Borsalino family in 1871 and Alessandro Giuseppe, learning from the English, decided to import new machines, which had already revolutionised the work of hat makers in Great Britain. Borsalino was transformed from an artisan adventure into an industry.

In 1880, the company started exporting its goods and a few decades later, 60% of the production was allocated for exportation. In 1900, Alessandro Giuseppe died and his son Teresio took his place in the company.

In the following years, the production increased reaching a record figure of 2 million hats a year in the 1920s. Teresio Borsalino was very fond of his hometown, and he financed many important projects for Alessandria.

In 1911, Borsalino began a collaboration with Marcello Dudovich, and with him some of the most remarkable illustrations of the time were created for Borsalino in the form of advertising posters. In 1939, Teresio Borsalino died and the company passed into the hands of his young nephew, Teresio Usuelli. He arrived at the most critical period

for the company: the crisis of the 1930s and the war marked a slowdown in production. Recovery started at the end of 1945, and in 1947 exportation took off again.

The production output at Borsalino reached 800,000 hats a year in the mid-1950s.

In 1970 the film Borsalino, with Alain Delon and Jean Paul Belmondo, was released, followed by the sequel Borsalino & Co. These two films marked the revival of the Borsalino brand among





new generations. In 1979, Teresio Uselli, last heir of the Borsalino family, left the company, leaving his role of president to Vittorio Vaccarino. In the early 1990s, Borsalino was purchased by the Gallo and Monticone families, industrialists from the nearby city of Asti, and the exportation increased again. In 1997, Borsalino acquired Sabino D'Oria and Sons of Lecce, an important hat manufacturer specialised in the processing of fabric and leather.

This acquisition resulted in the creation of the Borsalino Sud. The expansion on the market went on with the setting up of Borsalino America Inc., in response to the growing demand of the American and Caribbean markets. In addition to this, in 1998 Borsalino opened a factory in Zhangpu, China, the Borsalino Orient.

From 1999 up to today, Borsalino has developed considerably, both in Italy and internationally, and has started the production of men's clothes collections.

ACTIVITIES

1 Complete the following time scale.

YEAR EVENT

1834
1850
1857
1880
1900
1911
1920
1939
1970
1979
Early 1990s

2 Read the text again and find the following information.

- | | |
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| <p>1 How many people worked at Borsalino in 1871:
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.....</p> <p>2 How the company transformed the company into an industry:
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.....</p> <p>5 The acquisitions and expansion of the 1990s:
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