The Ludwigsburg Figurines
20th jubilee

20 Years of Ludwigsburg Figurines

Photo credit: Stadt Ludwigsburg/Benjamin Stollenberg

Welcome address from the Lord Mayor of the City of Ludwigsburg, August 2025

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate you on this special illustrated book, which was created to mark the 20th anniversary of the Ludwigsburg figurines. For two decades now, these artistic costumes have enriched the cultural life of our city and radiated the spirit of town twinning far beyond our borders.

The figurines are far more than magnificent garments: they embody friendship, diversity, and international solidarity. Each individual figurine brings Ludwigsburg's twin towns to life, making them visible and tangible at festive occasions. They are a living symbol of what has always distinguished our city - openness, cultural exchange, and mutual appreciation. Special thanks go to the dedicated people who, with creativity, patience, and craftsmanship, made most of the costumes themselves. Their tireless dedication, passion, and willingness to represent the city at international events for 20 years deserve the highest recognition. Without this extraordinary commitment, the success story of the figurines would be inconceivable.

May it help to preserve the fascination of this special tradition and pass it on to future generations. The Ludwigsburg figurines are a shining symbol of a living town twinning – and a gift that allows our city to shine far beyond its borders.

Sincerely,
Dr. Matthias Knecht
Mayor of the City of Ludwigsburg

The Idea

When I started working for the city of Ludwigsburg as town twinning representative in 1994, the twin towns were hardly known by the residents of Ludwigsburg. Musicians or dancers from the twin towns occasionally performed at the Venetian Fair and other city festivals.

At the 2004 Horse Market parade, I talked to some of the city councilors and we realised there was no representation of our twin towns. This led to the idea of featuring Ludwigsburg's twin towns at events like this in the future. The four city councilors in office at the time were keen to participate. Anita Klett-Heuchert chose Montbéliard, Elfriede Steinwand chose Caerphilly C.B., Roswitha Matschiner chose Jevpatorija, and Elke Kreiser chose St. Charles.

We discussed the various characteristics of each twin town. We were inspired by the imaginative masks of the Venetian Fair, which takes place in Ludwigsburg every two years. We chose the name „Figurine" because rather than hiding what they stand for, the figurines display the essential characteristics of our twin towns through the symbols we use.

The designer Sylvia Bespaluk helped us with the costume design, drawing the costumes according to our specifications. Based on these drawings the wearers tailored the costumes and also made the masks themselves under the guidance of Anita Klett-Heuchert. Later, the costumes and masks for Nový Jičín and Bergamo were added.

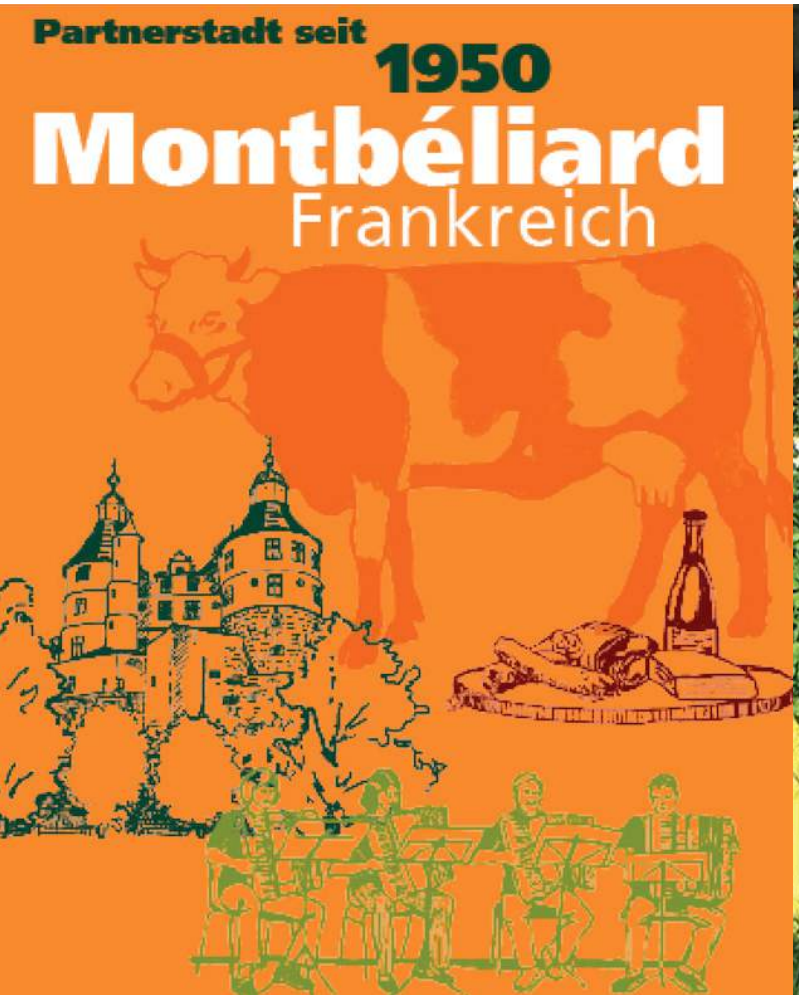
Today, the figurines enjoy great popularity and increasing recognition wherever they appear. Even abroad, they attract the attention of passers-by, who enjoy having their photo taken with them and ask about their origins. This inspired Roswitha Matschiner to create an additional mask representing Ludwigsburg, which is now also worn at receptions, town festivals and parades thoughout our twin towns. Both visitors and Ludwigsburg residents enjoy discovering the towns hidden behind the masks.

Christine Süß
Ludwigsburg International

Montbéliard

Montbéliard is known for its particular breed of cattle, whose milk is used to produce the famous Comté. Delicious pork sausages are also produced there.

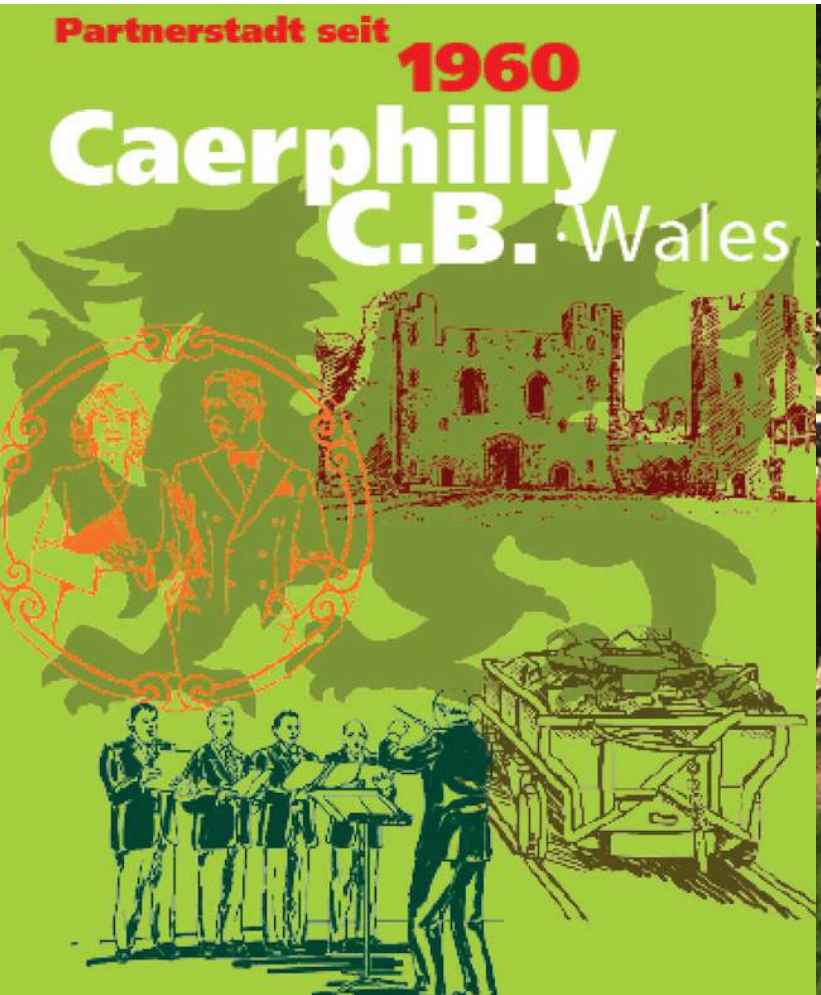
Anita Klett-Heuchert is dressed in a cow costume with horns on her head, sausages, and cowbells on her belt.



Caerphilly C.B.

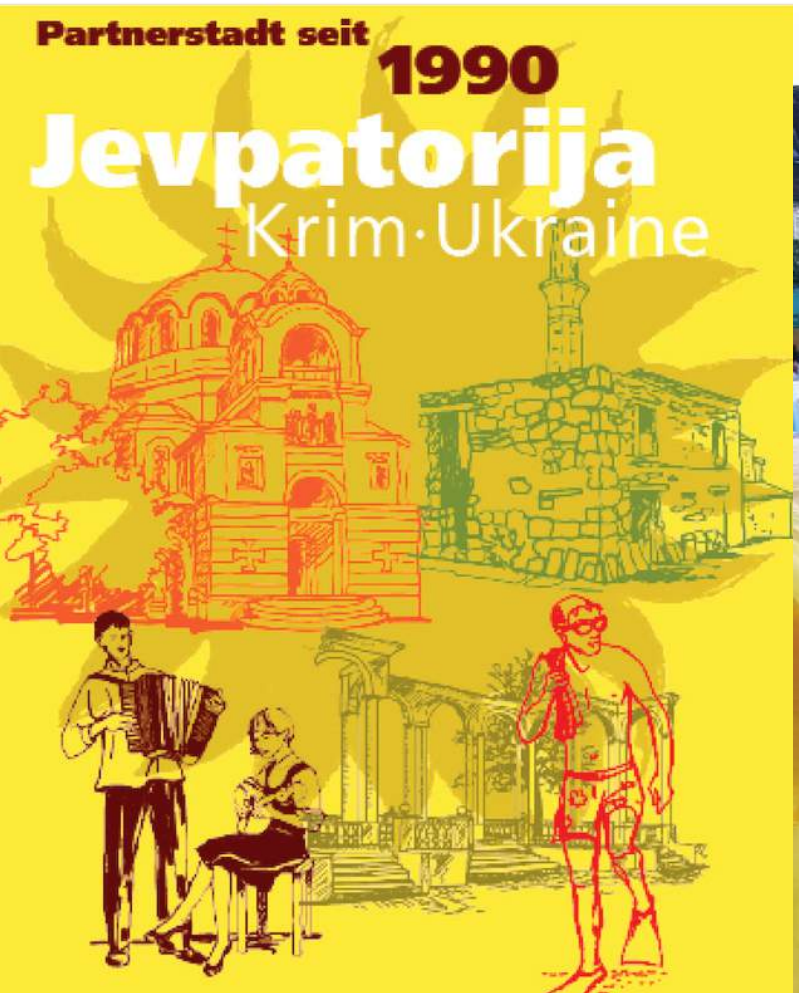
The dragon appears on the coat of arms of Caerphilly, a town that was shaped for decades by coal mining. The mines have since been closed down. Some of them have been converted into interesting cultural projects.

Elfriede Steinwand chose the dragon as her mask.



Jevpatorija

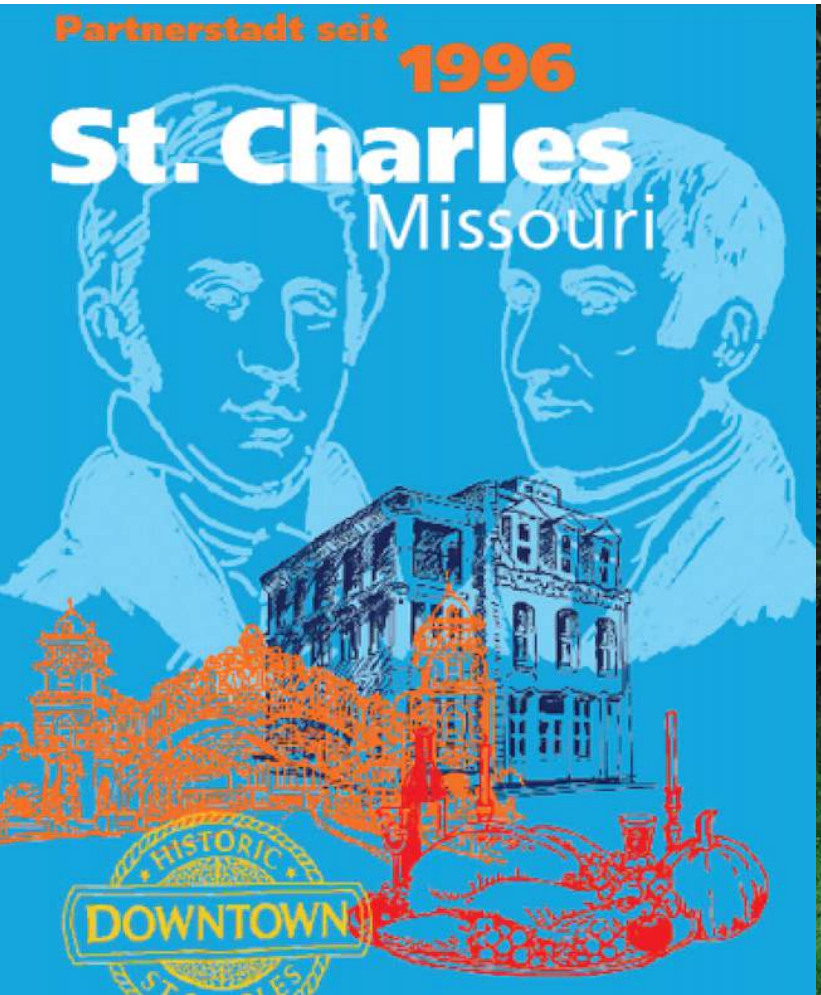
The city of sunshine in Crimea was depicted by Roswitha Matschiner, using beach shells as a symbol of the city's beautiful long sandy beaches on the Black Sea. The snakes on the head of the figurine also adorn the coat of arms of the spa and health resort town as a symbol of good health.



St. Charles

The twin town in the USA is represented by Elke Kreiser.

St. Charles is located at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. The costume was therefore also influenced by water and fish – the ship with a paddle wheel on her head is an amusing touch. The coins in the chain symbolise the casino, which brings income to the town.



The Venetian Fair Ludwigsburg has taken place since 1993

In 2004 the Figurines were introduced to the twin town partnerships

New Year‘s reception at the County District of Ludwigsburg

21 January 2005, on the theme of “Europe“.

2005 Horse Market Parade

Figurines join the Horse Market Parade

2008 Venetian Fair

First appearance of a fan bearer in the parade.

2012 Venetian Fair parade

Nový Jičín

is known for its traditional hat production. The cloud on the sleeve refers to the town‘s coat of arms. Sonja Henning wears the mask for Nový Jičín.

At the town festival in Nový Jičín on 21 July 2012 the partnership agreement was signed by Lord Mayor Werner Spec and Mayor PhDr. Jaroslav Dvořák during a ceremony at the Beskydy Theatre.

Photo credit: City Archives, CD „2012 New Twin Town Nový Jičín, Agreement Signing in Nový Jičín"

17 January 2014 The District County of Ludwigsburg New Year‘s Reception

The figurines present samples from the twin towns.

2016 Venetian Fair

Market Square in Ludwigsburg

2018 Venetian Fair

The costume wearers have changed over the years and so have some of the costumes.

Bergamo

The partnership agreement with Bergamo was signed in 2022. Stracciatella ice cream was invented in Bergamo. The musical notes commemorate the composer Donizetti, who was born in Bergamo. The Venetian lion indicates the connection to Venice, and the magnificent robes evoke its rich history.

The figurine is modelled by Gabi Seyfang.

2022 Venetian Fair

for the first time with the figurine for Bergamo and a new fan

2023 Horse Market Parade

Photo credit:
Tourism and Events Ludwigsburg

Ludwigsburg

in the colors of the city's coat of arms, yellow and black, and with the symbols of the Baroque city: the pumpkin represents the annual pumpkin exhibition, the Rapunzel braid represents the fairytale garden, the chestnut necklace represents the chestnut avenues, the military jacket represents the garrison town, the skirt and blue shoes represent the palace, and the blue chicory blossom in the skirt represents the coffee originally made in Ludwigsburg.

European Elections 2024

Promoting Europe at the Marstall Center and on the market square with the Minister-President of Baden-Württemberg, Winfried Kretschmann. First appearance of the Ludwigsburg figurine.

Visit to Bergamo in May 2024

2024 Venetian Fair

Parade in the rain

75 Years of Town Twinning

Celebrations of the twin towns Ludwigsburg and Montbéliard
on 7 May 2025 in Montbéliard

9 May 2025 City Founding Celebration

The Citizen‘s Medal was awarded to the Mayor of Montbéliard, Marie-Noelle Biguinet.

Photo credit: Stadt Ludwigsburg/Benjamin Stollenberg

Our Figurines

Photo credit: Wolfgang Medinger

20 Years of skillful Embodiments of the Twin Towns

The Statue of Liberty and clear river water, the black-helmeted, red-winged dragon, cow horns and sausages, stracciatella ice cream and testaments to the ties to Venice, towering hats and a cloud from the city's coat of arms, and finally, flickering sunbeams and beach shells on sand – this is how our figurines, from west to east, represent the twin towns of St. Charles, Caerphilly, Montbéliard, Bergamo, Nový Jičín, and Jevpatorija. Ludwigsburg itself features a pumpkin and references to the fairytale garden and its past as a garrison town.

In 2004, 20 years ago, Christine Süß, who is responsible for all town twinning relations, came up with the idea; the costumes and the masks, most of which were made by (former) city councillors have since become closely associated with inter-municipal international encounters, the Venetian Fair and jubilees with the twin towns.

They are a voluntary association nevertheless.

Whenever they have accompanied the International Partnerships Association, their public appearances have been met with curious enthusiasm, applause, and many spontaneous photos. Leaflets are not required: People sense that the figurines combine splendor, diversity, mystery, and dignity.

We would like to thank the people of Ludwigsburg for their ideas and their commitment to international partnerships, and we look forward to further appearances.

Wolfgang Medinger
Internationale Partnerschaften Ludwigsburg e.V.

Internationale
Partnerschaften
Ludwigsburg e.V.

We would like to express our thanks

to the City of Ludwigsburg for their kind support in producing this anniversary edition, Tourism and Events (TELB), the City Archives, and the team of the Department for Twin Towns;

to the Lord Mayor Matthias Knecht and Wolfgang Medinger from the Ludwigsburg International Association for their words;

to everyone who provided us with photos, including Klaus Burkart, Michael Steinwand, and of course the figurines;

to Sylvia Bespaluk for her wonderful drawings, which served as the basis for our masks and costumes, and to Anita Klett-Heuchert for her guidance in creating the masks;

to “Info & Idee” for their advice and the production of the fans;

to the many Ludwigsburg residents who represented us at numerous events when we were unable to attend;

to Inge Beyer for the translation

and to Christine Süß, without whom none of this would have been possible, for „The Idea“ and the tremendous support over the years.

The figurines of the twin towns:
Roswitha Matschiner (Ludwigsburg), Elfriede Steinwand (Caerphilly), Anita Klett-Heuchert (Montbéliard), Elke Kreiser (St. Charles), Sonja Henning (Nový Jičín) und Gabi Seyfang (Bergamo), Julianna Goriacheva (Jevpatorija).

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