

Pressemitteilung

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Safeguarding the treasures of tea culture: ABUS video surveillance in an East Frisian tea museum

Just a few kilometres away from the North Sea, where fresh sea breezes sweep over the brick houses, lies the East Frisian tea museum. A magnificent Renaissance building from the 16th Century, the former town hall of Norden now houses the entrance of the museum, inviting visitors to discover the world of East Frisian tea culture. The exhibitions, which include precious tea sets made from fine bone china or precious silver, require special protection against theft and vandalism. This protection is provided by a total of 31 ABUS camera domes with night vision, ensuring an overview of all the museum's winding halls and dimly-lit areas. The richly detailed video image quality and seamless live broadcasting and recording of video material allow the staff to keep watch over everything happening in the museum so they can react accordingly if something does not seem right.

Protecting centuries-old exhibits against theft and vandalism

Visitors to the East Frisian tea museum can learn everything there is to know about the ingredients that make up an authentic, herbal, aromatic East Frisian tea and discover how the East Frisians traditionally enjoy their "Teetied" (tea time) – i.e. with cream and Kluntjes (sugar sweets). Visual installations and colourfully illustrated panels dynamically explain the origins of the tea, its production, its international distribution and its preparation to the museum's guests, while exhibitions from table culture also assist in creating a vivid portrayal of the history of tea: historic, artfully crafted tea warmers and tea sets from Japan, China, India and East Frisia, in stunning silver and precious porcelain.

The irreplaceable treasures which lie within the display cases are inevitably appealing to thieves – a hazard which can be prevented through reliable video surveillance. As such, Dr Matthias Stenger, director of the East Frisian tea museum, decided in 2014 to replace their existing video surveillance system with new state-of-the-art equipment.

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Video surveillance aids visitor management

“Handling is what the East Frisian tea museum is all about,” explains Dr Stenger. Visitors – particularly children – are invited to discover the world of tea using folding display cabinets and drawers. Amongst large, lively groups, however, this can quickly become chaotic. “Video surveillance helps us to minimise any oversights and to ensure that the museum’s furniture is being used as intended,” the museum’s director says, before continuing: “As the cameras instil a sense of being watched, which means that this behaviour does not develop into an incident.”

Simultaneous use of analogue and IP cameras during installation

Since its founding in 1989, the tea museum has grown in terms of space, adding new exhibits. Following expansion in 2014, the museum now spans five buildings that feature construction and cabling from different eras. This presented a challenge for the surveillance solution: in order to change as little as possible of the buildings themselves, the existing coaxial cabling would need to be used in the older buildings. In the newly renovated buildings, however, it was possible to use network technology.

Dr Stenger turned to Dieter Bunke, a local expert in electrical and security technology, to handle the technical implementation of the professional video surveillance solution. With his help, a cost-effective surveillance solution which combined analogue and IP cameras was devised. Because the new surveillance system was to be completed in time for the opening ceremony of the museum’s newly renovated rooms, just four weeks were available for the installation – a challenge which Dieter Bunke’s team managed to overcome, much to the satisfaction of the museum’s management.

ABUS HD camera domes with night vision for monitoring in even the most difficult lighting conditions

In order to create the right atmosphere within the museum, a warm, dim light level is used to set the scene for the precious exhibits. This does, however, result in corners with low light conditions which would challenge the capabilities of standard video cameras, yet at the same time the tea museum required discreet, constant video surveillance of its valuables. For this reason, the security firm recommended ABUS HD camera domes with night vision. Their ultra low light function is perfect for the daily-darkened rooms of the museum, while also

ensuring highly detailed and true-to-colour images at night. The cameras are also supported by an infrared spotlight, which provides additional lighting to monitored areas.

The museum's winding architecture proved yet another challenge: one which the ABUS camera domes solved with their wide angled view of the environment, thus ensuring seamless image overlap. As it would be impossible to see all corners in some of the museum's rooms with just a single camera, up to four camera domes are installed in each room, which cover every nook and cranny using intelligent positioning.

Live transmission and video recording

The camera's images are transmitted live to monitors in the Museum's entrance, ensuring incidents can be recognised and addressed as soon as possible. The video surveillance system also records 24 hours a day, allowing incidents which have gone unnoticed to be scrutinised after the fact. The video material is saved to two ABUS video recorders, which are located in a security area inaccessible to visitors.

Satisfaction with the video surveillance solution

Overall, the ABUS video surveillance system's full HD image quality and reliability have impressed: "The image quality of the cameras is outstanding, allowing us to identify individuals in the event of incidents," says museum director Stenger. He continues: "So far, we have not needed to replace or repair any components, and the video surveillance system remains perfectly stable to this day. So I am very happy."

And what's more, the visitors are often happy to see the new video system too. It is not unusual for museum guests to come to the entrance area and ask the museum staff to track down their family members who they have lost in the museum's many rooms, twists and turns. Something the staff can swiftly help with using the live video feed!