The fascination of glass

Upon walking into the museum, visitors see a large piece of obsidian, a natural glass created by the mighty forces of a volcanic eruption.

So visitors can get into the right mood, two walls full of videos consisting of ten monitors vividly introduce them to the fascinating history of glass. It is here that visitors learn about the basic trio called Sand – Fire – Glass. At the end of the video sequence, the floor lights up and the viewer gets the impression of standing on an oversized, hot “Ceran” cooktop panel. Dramatic music directs the visitors’ attention to a large hourglass built of two 25-liter laboratory flasks which suddenly appears out of nowhere.

As visitors move about, they often run across smaller hourglasses precisely where the informative video clips have been installed. A turn to the left makes the video clip start in German, while...
a turn to the right delivers the English version. Visitors can look at the hourglass at any time to see how much time has elapsed.

All of the explanatory texts are bilingual as well. “After all, we are an international group of companies and would like to attract an international audience”, explains Dr. Steiner. Using the practical audio guided tour, the visitor can embark on his own individual museum trip. The small device resembles a mobile phone and every station along the trip offers the choice of German or English.

Milestones in the development of glass technology

Next to the creative use of picture, video and light, authentic exhibition pieces reflect Schott’s innovative achievements. Some of the highlights include the original optical glasses developed by Otto Schott, the heat-resistant glass cylinders that once helped gaslight to achieve a technological breakthrough and helped Schott become an industrial giant in the process. The famous Wagenfeld teapot with its Bauhaus design, as well as fiber optic components and glass-to-metal seals used in electronic...
The Schott GlasMuseum shows products made by Schott not only as exhibits, but also in the exhibition technology itself. “Mirogard” coated glasses for showcases and display boards is used, as well as a newly developed fluorescent light with glass tube profiles for basic lighting, halogen lamp reflectors for the exhibition piece and fiber optic components in showcase lighting.

Innovations for the future

At the end of the museum tour, visitors learn how Schott, as an innovative forward-looking group of companies, is set to meet the challenges and visions of the third millennium with its special glasses and other high-tech materials. One learns that Schott’s optical materials are used for microlithography in the manufacturing of microchips or that the company makes the world’s thinnest glass (only 0.03 mm thick!). Thin glasses are used, for example, in cell phone displays or in notebooks. The centerpiece of the “Innovations for the Future” section is clearly a large statue made of laser glass. It clearly symbolizes the almost endless possibilities of the material glass. 3,500 of these laser glass plates, key components of the world’s largest laser system, will soon do their part to reconstruct the processes on the sun in order to produce unlimited energy here on Earth.

Coming face to face with the past: Classic items of household glassware from Jena, for example heat resistant “Jenaer Glas” cookware and tableware and a “Sintrax” coffeemaker.
A museum for everyone

"The Schott GlasMuseum is not only an important contribution to corporate culture but it also provides an extensive overview of the technological development seen in the entire special glass industry", said Wolfgang Meyer, Managing Director of Schott's Jenaer Glas GmbH.

Nevertheless, the museum is only the first of three stages. The second stage of expansion will be the renovation of the original Schott Villa, paying tribute to the work of Otto Schott and certain aspects of the company history. The third stage envisions the presentation of large historical machines as well as other oversized exhibition pieces taken from the Schott Group.