

BILSTER BERG – From Vision to Reality

On June 1, 2013, the day had finally come. After a planning and approval phase of nearly seven years and a construction phase lasting almost 20 months, BILSTER BERG officially opened. It was the first new racetrack in western Germany to open in more than 80 years.

However, 4.2-kilometere-long asphalt track was not designed for use as a racing circuit, even though it was designed and built by Formula 1 architect and engineer Hermann Tilke. Automotive manufacturers often rent BILSTER BERG as a test and presentation track and, in accordance with the white label principle, the course is also popular for product presentations and an ideal film location.

BILSTER BERG also includes an off-road course, a club house, a restaurant run by local restaurateurs Marcus Schuster and Thorsten Federschmid, as well as a driving dynamics testing area.

From a NATO ammunitions depot to a racetrack

In 1993, the British Army of the Rhine closed the ammunition depot that it had opened 19 years earlier. The area, which spanned 84 square hectares, was returned to the Federal Republic of Germany and to the previous owner, Johann Friedrich Freiherr von der Borch. Together with Marcus Graf von Oeynhausen-Sierstorpff, von der Borch took a bicycle tour of the property in April 2005. The idea of building a racetrack was born.

In March 2006, current Managing Director Hans-Jürgen von Glasenapp and his team began project development. Formula 1 circuit architect Hermann Tilke was skeptical at first. But he changed his mind after visiting the property and began to design an initial plan for the track. Moreover, two-time World Rally champion Walter Röhrl helped the team to develop a challenging circuit layout by contributing his extensive expertise and volunteering as a test driver.

In the following years, the project attracted more than 180 private investors. The team was able to raise the EUR 34 million that were estimated for the project without any public funds. Just as intended the plans from day one.

The construction permit and operation license were issued in August 2011, and the foundation was laid on September 27 of that year.

The construction period lasted 20 months and involved a total of 200 construction workers. The track was finished in April 2013, and the official opening took place on June 1, 2013.