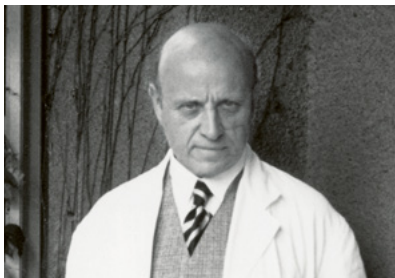


The Buchinger Wilhelmi family – a fasting saga

Dr. med. Otto Buchinger



Dr. Otto Buchinger, born in 1878 in Darmstadt, Germany, was a naval doctor during the First World War, until he was thrown off course at age 40 by severe rheumatoid polyarthritis. His mobility was soon so severely restricted that he was forced to retire from the navy as an invalid. His personal fate led him to therapeutic fasting. He fasted for the first time in 1919. It was a resounding success and saved his life, which he devoted from then on to developing a method for a medically sound fasting therapy – Buchinger therapeutic fasting – which he successfully applied and continued to develop from 1920 onwards in his own fasting clinic, Kurheim Dr. Otto Buchinger in Witzenhausen. In 1935 he established a fasting clinic in Bad Pyrmont, and in 1953, together with his daughter, Maria, and son-in-law, Helmut Wilhelmi, he set up a new clinic in Überlingen on Lake Constance, which he continued to manage for several years as a senior physician up to his death in 1966 at age 88. Dr. Otto Buchinger was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit in 1953 for his work.

Maria Buchinger Wilhelmi



Maria Buchinger, the youngest of Dr. Otto Buchinger's children, was born in 1916 in Flensburg, Germany. She was his personal assistant for many years. The way she looked after guests and gave them the impression that she was there only for them is legendary. Her marriage in 1943 to Helmut Wilhelmi injected a new spirit of entrepreneurship into the family. In 1953, the couple, together with Dr. Otto Buchinger, established the clinic in Überlingen on Lake Constance, followed by the clinic in Marbella in 1973. At the time, therapeutic fasting was completely unknown in Spain. Maria Buchinger Wilhelmi was a pioneer. In Marbella, she became known as the "Grande Dame of fasting", and was revered in the clinic and beyond. Famous guests such as the actress Carmen Sevilla or Mario Vargas Llosa, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, were among her closest friends. The clinic was the largest foreign employer on the Costa del Sol thanks to "Doña Maria". Like her father before her, she was presented with the Federal Cross of Merit (1995) as well as many other awards. In 2003 she was nominated "Entrepreneur of the Year" by Marbella's trade association – the first woman and the first foreigner to be given this honour. When Maria Buchinger Wilhelmi died in 2010 at age 94, the prestigious daily newspaper El Mundo wrote, "The soul of Marbella has died". The Maria Buchinger Foundation was founded in 2011 to continue the life's work of Maria Buchinger Wilhelmi and her husband, Helmut Wilhelmi. The foundation focuses on promoting scientific research into and documentation of therapeutic fasting. It realizes this goal above all by awarding and funding research projects and financing research programmes, educational and informational events. The foundation grants the Maria Buchinger Foundation Award at irregular intervals. For more information, see www.maria-buchinger-foundation.org.

Dr. med. Françoise Wilhelmi de Toledo



Dr. Françoise Wilhelmi de Toledo, who was born in Geneva (Switzerland) in 1953, is the Head of the scientific department of the Buchinger Wilhelmi Clinics. In her function she is responsible for the medical concept of the two clinics in Überlingen and Marbella. Moreover she is Chairwoman of the Maria Buchinger Foundation.

She studied medicine in Geneva. In 1990, she earned her doctoral degree in Basel on the subject of “Methodical Problems in Assessing the Vitamin Balance in Fasting”. In 1986, she co-founded the Medical Association for Fasting and Nutrition (Ärztegesellschaft für Heilfasten und Ernährung, ÄGHE e.V.), which she still chairs today (www.aerztegesellschaft-heilfasten.de).

Dr. Wilhelmi de Toledo has dedicated many years to enhancing and scientifically documenting fasting therapy and integrative medicine and coordinates the publication of guidelines on fasting. She has established international partnerships with other clinics and universities (such as Charité in Berlin and CNRS in Strasbourg) as well as the Longevity Institute of the University of Southern California (USC) in various fields of fasting research. Dr. Françoise Wilhelmi de Toledo has authored numerous publications, including her book “Therapeutic Fasting: The Buchinger Amplius Method”, which has been published in four languages, and is considered one of the most respected fasting experts worldwide.

She discovered fasting when she was 18 years old and has fasted every year since. She has regularly accompanied the spiritual exercises in the Christian Communauté de Grandchamp in Switzerland since 1996.

Katharina Rohrer-Zaiser



Katharina Rohrer was born in Überlingen in 1981 and grew up in Spain, where she attended the German School in Málaga. In 2002, she completed her studies in Tourism Management at the Academy for Business Administration and World Trading Languages in Stuttgart, followed by a diploma in Business Administration from Ludwigshafen University of Applied Sciences, where she majored in Marketing. Katharina Rohrer worked in Stuttgart, Marbella and Miami before taking responsibility for marketing at the Buchinger Wilhelmi clinics in 2012.

After her marriage to Gerhard Zaiser, their daughter Zoe was born in 2014. Since January 2018, she took over management of Buchinger Wilhelmi clinic in Marbella together with Victor Wilhelmi.

Her area of specialization is marketing: For example, she was largely responsible for organizing the celebrations for “100 Years of Maria Buchinger”, including a film and biography of the “Grande Dame of fasting”. She has also designed her first clothes collection, “Buchinger Wilhelmi by BRAEZ”, together with her sister, Johanna Pumberger, and developed fasting teas to support fasting especially for Buchinger Wilhelmi in cooperation with regional providers.

Victor Wilhelmi



Victor Wilhelmi is the oldest son of Dr. Françoise Wilhelmi de Toledo and Raimund Wilhelmi and was born in 1986. After finishing his schooling at Schule Schloss Salem boarding school, he began to study at the internationally renowned École Hôtelière de Lausanne, graduating in 2011 with a Bachelor's degree in Hospitality Administration and Management. After gaining work experience in London and Mumbai, he joined the development department of an international system catering company, where he accompanied and actively contributed towards projects from the idea to market launch.

He founded an e-learning start-up that developed, among others, the "Fasting Coach" that is used in the clinic today. In 2016, he graduated from the IESE Business School University of Navarra with a Master of Business Administration and became a member of the management team at Buchinger Wilhelmi in Marbella together with his cousin, Katharina Rohrer-Zaiser. They became joint Managing Directors in January 2018. In 2017, Victor Wilhelmi established the initiative "CSA – Clinic Supported Agriculture" – a collaboration with small, independent farmers that follow the principles of permaculture and supply the Buchinger Wilhelmi clinic in Marbella daily with high-quality produce grown just 30 km away. Another project close to his heart is the "House of Inspiration" that offers various activities such as yoga, Pranayama (breathing exercises), aromatherapy, meditation and more than 20 other therapeutic services in extensive, naturally designed gardens to provide guests with a source of inspiration. Since 2018, he has been married to Isabelle M. Somers, a Canadian.

Leonard Wilhelmi



Leonard Wilhelmi, the younger of Dr. Françoise Wilhelmi de Toledo and Raimund Wilhelmi's two sons, was born in Scherzingen in the Swiss canton of Thurgau in 1987. After graduating from boarding school at Schule Schloss Salem, he completed his master's degree in International Business Management at the University of St. Gallen (HSG) in 2015 after a semester abroad at the University of Southern California in San Diego.

At the University of St. Gallen, Leonard Wilhelmi was founding president of the Family Business Club, which aims to promote an exchange between students of the University of St. Gallen and family businesses. In 2013, he and a fellow student won the "Social Enterprise"-award from "Startfeld", an innovation network, for their start-up Gartengold. Gartengold works with disadvantaged people and people with disabilities to produce apple juice from unmanaged trees in Eastern Switzerland, and is still going strong today.

After various internships, including at an international management consultancy, he started working at a listed telecommunications company in 2015.

In 2017, Leonard Wilhelmi joined his parent's company in the management of the Buchinger Wilhelmi clinic on Lake Constance. On 1 March 2019, Leonard Wilhelmi took over from his father as Managing Director of Buchinger Wilhelmi clinic on Lake Constance. The famous fasting clinic on Lake Constance has now passed into the hands of the fourth generation of the family.