

PRESS RELEASE

40 Years of CUBORO – How a Swiss Marble Run System Connects Generations

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For 40 years, CUBORO has stood for playful learning, timeless design and precise Swiss craftsmanship. What began in 1986 as an educational idea is today an internationally established marble run system that has inspired children and adults across generations. To mark its anniversary, the Swiss family-owned company looks back on its history and, on the occasion of the International Toy Fair in Nuremberg, shows why analogue play with wood is more relevant than ever.

The roots of CUBORO go back to the 1970s. Matthias Etter, a trained mechanic and social pedagogue, was looking for a three-dimensional learning tool in his work with children and young people with disabilities. This led to the creation of the first cubes with grooves and tunnels. When combined correctly, a marble would roll through the track at the end. Learning became visible, tangible and motivating.

From simple prototypes made of clay and wood, a system gradually developed that was launched on the market in 1986 under the name CUBORO. From the very beginning, it was clear that this was not a short-lived toy. CUBORO evolved into a multi-generational toy. Young children build their first tracks, older children often create highly imaginative and sophisticated constructions, while adults continue to explore complex solutions. What makes CUBORO unique is the interplay between visible grooves on the surface and hidden tunnels inside the cubes. The marble disappears and reappears at unexpected points. This encourages spatial thinking and makes CUBORO a distinctive marble run system that goes far beyond simple construction play and enables lasting learning experiences. By freely combining the elements, millions of different marble runs can be built. Each construction invites players to plan, discover and rethink new paths.

To this day, CUBORO is manufactured entirely in Switzerland. The more than 100 different wooden elements are made from Swiss beech wood sourced from sustainably managed forests. For 40 years, the wood has been processed in close cooperation with the Nyfeler joinery in the canton of Bern. Each individual element goes through several precise manufacturing steps. Packaging, printed materials and services also come from regional partners. All products carry the Swiss Made label.



CUBORO®

In addition to craftsmanship, a strong social attitude has shaped the history of CUBORO. Its origins in educational work continue to influence the company today. Alongside play at home, CUBORO is used in schools, in therapy, in professional contexts such as workshops and team training sessions, as well as in educational projects, tournaments and championships. The focus is always on encouraging people to find their own solutions and to build confidence in their own thinking.

During the 1990s, the system continued to grow steadily. Numerous additional products expanded its physical and mathematical possibilities. Through its presence at the International Toy Fair in Nuremberg, CUBORO gained international recognition. At the World Expos in 2005 and 2025, CUBORO was represented in the shop of the Swiss Pavilion. In 2017, CUBORO attracted international attention when it was mentioned as a preferred learning toy in a documentary by Japanese public television about the youngest grandmaster of shogi chess. In addition, a renowned brain researcher highlighted playing with CUBORO as a valuable contribution to the development of cognitive abilities. Today, the CUBORO marble run system is available in more than 35 countries.

At the beginning of 2020, Sebastian Etter took over the management of the company from his father. Now in its second generation, CUBORO remains a family-owned business. The brand is being carefully further developed, the design modernised and the range selectively expanded. The core idea remains unchanged. Play should be meaningful, sustainable and timeless.

“CUBORO shows how new things can emerge again and again from wooden cubes with different functions through thinking, patience and curiosity. That is exactly where its fascination lies and why this toy accompanies people throughout their lives.”

Sebastian Etter, CEO Cuboro AG

As it celebrates its 40th anniversary, CUBORO stands not only for its history, but also for its future. With a new book as a source of inspiration and a companion to the system, as well as new extensions such as WAVE, the system continues to evolve while remaining true to its values. In an increasingly digital world, CUBORO consciously focuses on building with one's own hands, on wood from the region and on play ideas that take time and therefore have a lasting impact.

For 40 years, CUBORO has shown how sustainable learning can grow out of play and how simple ideas can turn into lasting experiences.

