

RAINER RAMELSBERGER

As a shareholder, company director and board member, Rainer Ramelsberger has made a significant contribution to COBRA since he first visited what was then Windglider Thailand in late summer 1978, joining the company a couple of years later.

Originally from Munich, Rainer had travelled extensively before he found himself working in and for Thailand in 1981 – just as windsurfing was starting to explode in popularity as a sport and the first COBRA-branded boards arrived on the scene. The legendary King Cobra followed on from the company's earlier success in producing the Windglider equipment package and was a COBRA board with a truly global following. Demand was huge, and the company just couldn't make enough boards.

Though the pace of work was often frantic, Rainer emphasises that the beach lifestyle was also important. As well as researching his Industrial Economics Diploma thesis in Thailand, Rainer found time to work for race organizations at windsurfing events such as the 1981 Mistral Worlds in Pattaya, and the highest profile local event, the annual Siam Cup. Always a keen windsurfer, Rainer spent as much time on the water as possible.

"I never raced competitively, but informal racing was part of product development for COBRA at the time," Rainer says, "although I basically always lost against K. Vorapant, who was a talented and skillful sailor."

While other commitments meant Rainer had to move away from Windglider Thailand in 1983, he always maintained good contacts with COBRA. During his time away he held several executive management roles in the watersports industry, including five years as CEO of Mistral – arguably the leading global windsurf brand at the time and a valued COBRA customer.

In late 1995, Rainer was looking for his next challenge. Motivated by the enormous potential in Thailand and in order to transfer the windsurfing-specific contacts and experience he'd gathered in Europe, the USA, Japan and Australia, it was an easy decision for Rainer to rejoin his long-term, trusted friends at COBRA.



Rainer, Vorapant and Mrs Eva Ramelsberger



Initially focused on sales and marketing, Rainer also played an important role in developing the organizational structure and administrative functions at COBRA as the business entered a period of massive growth.

"From the shop floor to the executive team, a strong company and indeed family ethos has seen many staff enjoy long careers with the company and I'm a good case in point."

Whilst the majority of this growth was in watersports, the company had also implemented a strategic move into the automotive sector, with the foundation of its COBRA Advanced Composites (CAC) division in 2007. It was a former colleague from Mistral, Joachim (Sigi) Siegmann, who helped Rainer drive the early stage development of the automotive business in Germany before becoming Managing Director of CAC Europe.

As CAC developed from initial Audi orders to multiple programmes for a range of premium global OEMs, Rainer became more and more involved, becoming a director of CAC Thailand in 2009 and helping to secure some of the biggest and most profitable contracts so far.

Today it is CAC which consumes most of Rainer's time but his global commercial expertise, his background in the watersports industry and deep connection with COBRA since the very beginning provide an invaluable resource for COBRA across all business areas.

"I am extremely pleased and proud to be a part of the great COBRA story," Rainer says. "Of course, there have been plenty of bumps along the way, but my family and the Chotikapanich family have remained the best of friends throughout our many years of working together – this is what matters most."