

The Coca-Cola Christmas Truck

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The Coca-Cola Christmas Truck Tour 2009

The spectacular and brightly-lit Christmas Truck is on the road once again this year. From 6 to 20 December 2009, it will be spreading Christmas joy among children and adults alike at many locations throughout Switzerland. It is fully-laden with Christmas music, Santa Claus, Christmas presents and many other surprises for the whole family.

You can find out everything about the Coca-Cola Christmas Truck's tour at <http://www.coca-cola.ch>

Technical information about the Coca-Cola Christmas Truck

The conventional Freightliner FLD truck was specially imported by ship from the USA for the Coca-Cola Christmas Tour. The driver's compartment comprises a special aluminium cab which is typically American in design.

It has a legendary Detroit Series 60 engine which produces 470PS (464BHP) at 1800RPM; it has a unsynchronised, 18-speed Fuller gearbox; and the 12.7L, 12-cylinder Detroit Series 60 engine has an average service life of 1.5 million miles.

The overall length of the Coca-Cola Christmas Truck is 16.5m. 125m of strip-lighting was installed on the truck alone!

The story of Father Christmas

Santa Claus accompanies the Coca-Cola Christmas Truck to every event – after all, his story is closely intertwined with that of Coca-Cola. Father Christmas, with his white beard and red coat, is widely recognised and much loved; he is full of energy and has a real zest for life which he passes on to his fans. Since 1931, he's been warming children's hearts across the world with his kind-hearted, ever-smiling face and rosy cheeks. Whether they call him Father Christmas, Sint Nikoloses, Père Noël, Sinterklaas, Nikolaus or Santa Claus, it really doesn't matter as children all agree on one thing: he is chubby-cheeked, has a loving smile, wears a red coat and has a long white beard. That said, only a few people really know how Father Christmas came to look like he does today.

Modelled on a delivery salesman

In 1931, The Coca-Cola Company in Atlanta commissioned the Swedish-American illustrator Haddon Sundblom to draw Santa Claus for a Christmas campaign. And this is precisely what Sundblom did – creating a lovable, life-like Santa Claus in the process. A white-haired retired Coca-Cola delivery salesman modelled for him — and thus the figure was created that everyone knows and loves today: Santa Claus with his kind-hearted, chubby-cheeked face and long white beard, dressed in the colours of Coca-Cola with a red coat, white fur, black belt and black boots. Starting from the original advertising idea, he has become a much-loved, globally recognised symbol full of warmth and goodness. But that wasn't always the case. Santa's little helper, the forefather of today's Father Christmas, was a scraggy-looking imp who came from the grim cold of the dark forest. Santa's little helper didn't just carry presents, he also threatened to dispense punishment with his bundle of brushwood. Only in the 19th century did the imp become a sort of Father Christmas closely associated with the holy St. Nicholas. The romantic painter Moritz von Schwind provided the pictorial representation of that time, with the figure of 'Mr Winter' appearing in the illustrated broadsheet 'Münchener Bilderbogen' in 1847.

The legend of Nicholas is many centuries old and has its roots in Asia Minor.

In the 4th Century AD in Myra (present-day Turkey), Bishop Nicholas was renowned for helping children and those in need. 200 years after his death, he was proclaimed a saint. Then in the 12th century, the tradition in France was established of giving gifts to poor families on the evening of the death of St. Nicholas – in other words the 6th of December. In contrast, in Northern Germany St. Nicholas was known as Father Christmas – and it was here that the Calvinist Protestants insisted that presents were handed out to celebrate Christmas and not on St. Nicholas' Day.

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