

Press Release



BERTHOLD LEIBINGER
STIFTUNG

Milestones in Laser Technology – Leibinger Laser Innovation Prize and Research Prize Awarded

- For the first time four prize winners for innovation prize; from Germany and USA**
- Nobel laureate Theodor Hänsch presented research prize to Harvard professor Sunney Xie**
- Speech by Jürgen Mlynek, President of the Helmholtz-Society and performance of “Physikanten & Co.”**

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Four of the eight nominees, selected from 33 applications from nine countries worldwide, received the Berthold Leibinger Innovationspreis 2008 with total prize money of 40,000 euro. The awards were presented during the prize ceremony on September 15, 2008 in Ditzingen, Germany. 250 guests from science, industry and politics joined the festivity in the auditorium at the headquarters of the Trumpf group. The celebration continued with the proud prizewinners at the following reception.

For the first time the jury decided to double a prize. The third prize worth 5000 Euro was given twice. Dr. Cary Gunn, cofounder of Luxtera in Carlsbad, California, received the third prize for his development work in silicon photonics, namely CMOS manufactured optical transceivers. The other third prize was presented to Dr. Jürgen Czarske, Professor at the Technische Universität Dresden, and two of his scientific co-workers Dr. Lars Büttner and Dr. Thorsten Pfister. They developed a new laser sensor that is not only more precise than existing detectors but can also simultaneously measure the velocity and the distance of objects.

The second prize of 10,000 Euro went to Dr. Richard Sandstrom and Dr. William Partlo of the laser company Cymer in San Diego, California. Today's manufacturing of microprocessors and memory chips would not be possible without their excimer laser. 20,000 Euros of prize money for the first prize is shared among four developers of Robert Bosch GmbH. Dr. Jens König, Dr. Thorsten Bauer, Dr. Markus Willert and Ulrich Graf were the first worldwide to introduce micro machining with ultrafast lasers in industrial mass production. A milestone not only for Bosch but for the whole of laser technology.

The award ceremony included the second presentation of the Berthold Leibinger Zukunftspreis. The international research prize is also biennially awarded for applied laser technology and endowed with 20,000 Euro. Prizewinner of 2008 is the biochemist and Harvard Professor Xiaoliang Sunney Xie. In his laudation Professor Dr. Theodor Hänsch, Nobel laureate and member of the jury, recognized Xie's work

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on single-molecule biophysics and non-linear optical microscopy as very important applications of laser technology. His work, including real time films on the production of proteins in living cells would enable us to understand the genetic code and help find new strategies to fight against diseases.

The evening's speech held by Professor Dr. Jürgen Mlynek, president of the Helmholtz-Society, looked at the big challenges of big science. To overcome the challenges it needs not only a long breath, far sight and the right goals, the really important factor are the people themselves, their ideas and talents, was one of Mlynek's messages. A high-light of the ceremony was the performance of the "Physikanten & Co." Their performance with physical experiments was informative and entertaining for experts and layman alike.