



# From New York to China Town

New York is busy. Then again New York is always busy and the buzz is great for a Christmas visit. Orla likes to soak up the atmosphere around Rockefeller Center and Times Square and do a little shopping (for shoes, of course). Rotomolding pops up everywhere, even in the decorations but there's plenty of opportunity to break away from work and enjoy prohibition-era underground bars and an amazing array of great restaurants. New York is still the number one city in the world for us and thankfully just a quick two-hour drive away.

However, there are plenty of other great cities to visit and if you want to see really busy and new growth, then South East Asia is certainly a region where you need to be: three cities give a flavor of the power that is growing there. Hong Kong, for example, has long been a major hub and after a period of uncertainty as it was re-absorbed by mainland China, it has kept its special status, regained its moxy, and is clearly booming once again. A recent visit included the Tsim Sha Tsui area, probably one of the most upscale shopping districts on the planet with every known luxury brand you can think of. And not just one of each: there are five Chanel stores in downtown Hong Kong (there's only one in New York) and multiple Tiffany's! If that was not enough, there are lines outside them at this time of year with eager shoppers. There is not a lot of rotomolding close by as it is a small island with high real-estate prices but there are a number of molders located nearby on the



Rotomolding Lights Up New York for Christmas

mainland in Guangdong province; some with impressive connections to international customers.

Shanghai is another incredible hub. I had to stop there a few weeks ago and was once again struck by the scale of their recent construction boom. The new international airport at Pudong is simply enormous - you can't see the ends of it from standing in the middle! Downtown is modern and, with more high-rise buildings than any major world-city, it feels almost European at its core (local population notwithstanding). The drive and energy that has made China the engine of manufacturing in the world has now elevated it to a massive consumer base with all the attraction for international companies that this entails. There are plenty of rotomolders in this eastern seaboard region where much of China's manufacturing base and population growth are centered,

some with European and US connections, some with modern international machines but many with home-grown equipment and molds.

On the other hand, not every major Asian city has the same affluence: Manila is bustling, poor, and crowded in many areas yet making its own contribution to the Asian powerhouse in the form of its most abundant resource: young workers. The Philippines 'export' their people widely to the region in the form of English speaking service workers from the Middle East to Japan. There's not as much rotomolding going on in this region as one might expect, in fact they tend to use a lot of stainless steel water tanks - perhaps an opportunity for the future.

As I write, I'm heading for the latest rotomolding meeting in Dubai organised by the StAR group from India. It will be interesting to see how the market is changing there as they try to transition from construction based products to more sophisticated markets. The resources are clearly there

but the manufacturing and consumer base is very different from other regions and may require some new direction. Even the low cost base for material in the Middle East is potentially under threat as the gas finds in the US provide low-cost ethylene sources and move it rapidly towards being in a position to potentially start exporting energy (2020

anyone?). It won't affect rotomolding material sources directly (we are only a tiny fraction of the market) but it will create a new backdrop for general material supply and once again shift the global movement of materials.

On a broader note, 2012 was a busy year, productive, and exciting to see not only some of the major companies in

our industry continue to push forward but also many good quality molders do well and consolidate their positions. I look forward to seeing more of the same in 2013 - all the very best!

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