

Attending Domotex Shanghai 2023 – the World’s Largest Flooring Exhibition

Ivan Kirton, We Love Parquet Wood Floors.

Domotex Shanghai, held in July 2023 is uniquely billed as the world’s largest flooring exhibition, with more than 1600 specialised flooring companies, product manufacturers, wholesalers, machinery manufacturers and new technology demonstrators exhibiting their products over a gigantic 200,000 meter squared, multiple level floorspace.

This year, the expo attracted 83,000 unique visitors, with over 14,000 visitors, including me, attending from all parts of the globe.

Mainland China has finally come out of a very strict COVID19 lockdown regime. At the time, small protests and increasingly vocal calls to remove the harsh lockdowns eventually resulted in a near complete abandonment of the measures that had been in place since 2020.

I flew into Shanghai, China the week of the expo and caught a plane up to Dalian, to the north of China, close to the border with North Korea. The Dalian city is home to 8 million people who benefit from the port city that is strategically placed and has been militarily occupied both by the Russians, and Japanese.

Dalian is a strategic hub in the north of China and is where laminate, SPC vinyl, engineered flooring, and solid timber flooring is produced. The city itself is advanced, with good

roads, rolling hills and beautiful landscapes. The people are friendly and have not seen many foreigners for a while due to COVID so expect to be looked at by everyone – “this is what being famous must feel like”, I said to myself.

I did some factory tours here, and visited some wood machinery manufacturers. Chinese made machinery is what is powering the wood floor coating lines of China, meaning all our engineered prefinished flooring is coated with Chinese made machines. They are fantastic technology with robust construction.

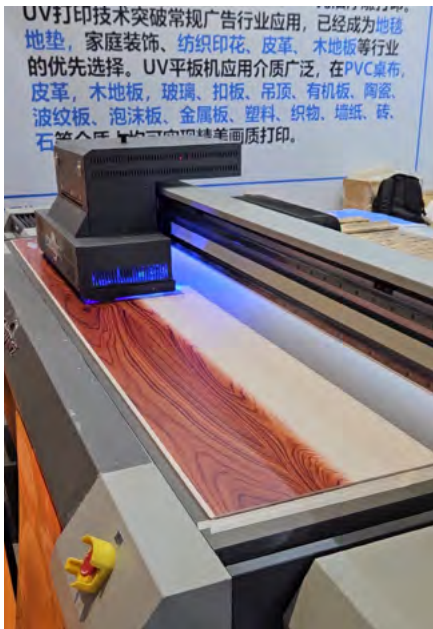
Being close to the ocean, the people of Dalian are very proud of their seafood and are eager to show you hospitality and get you to try their local dishes, which include some strange seafood items that we would not traditionally eat.

I noted that the perception of Australia is very good in Dalian, China. We are considered to have very clean food, beautiful landscapes, and I had many remarks that Australia seems to them to be like a paradise.

Back to Shanghai to attend the Expo. Spread over 200,000m² of exhibition space the place was quite incredible. Many displays were of very heavy machinery that required cranes to lift into place.

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One machine on display, weighing over 8 tonnes, functions as a heated screw. It processes a bag of SPC raw material – a mixture of mulched up stone and plastic bits – by heating and extruding the vinyl into sheets which are then fed through a roller and given colour and texture before being put through a profiling machine.

Once the expo finished, I was invited for factory tours in a place called Huzhou, about two hours inland from Shanghai. Here there are over 300 wood flooring factories.

Throughout the expo, I was introduced to wood flooring business people from all over the world. I met flooring colleagues from Russia, Dubai, Qatar, Spain, Portugal, Indonesia, Thailand, Canada, France and Denmark.

I will now travel to Indonesia to meet up with some colleagues that I met at Domotex Shanghai for some training, a machinery expo, and more factory tours.

In all, attending Domotex Shanghai was an incredible experience, and beneficial to my business in so many ways.

I wish you all the best in your flooring travels.

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Photo: Clever Choice team at the 2023 Andersens Conference Awards Night