

ISO Congress 2013

Annual general Meeting and Dubai UAE study tour, 18-22 May.

The 56th annual congress of the International Shopfitting Organisation ISO took place in May, in an environment of the World's largest shopping malls, tallest buildings, and a seriously welcome optimism.

The INDEX/Office/InRetail exhibition opened in Dubai World Trade Center at the same time predicting a 28% growth in the interior contracting industry in the Emirates in 2013. Apparently the crisis is over in this part of the World?

The same optimism was remarkable when the ISO Group visited the local colleague and manufacturer DECO Emirates in Dubai Investment Park. A modern, busy, professionally run high quality manufacturing plant, employing more than 400 workers, producing extremely high quality shopfitting to the demanding retailers of the World, who find it both attractive and necessary to be represented in this shopping paradise of the Middle East.

The ISO participants were fewer than the past 3 years in Helsinki-St.Petersburg, Czech republic, and China, but were all professionals engaged in Retail Environment Design and Contracting with a true international perspective. Just like the clients, the Global retailers. The only 19 visiting and local shopfitters participating in this annual ISO highlight were from as many as 12 different countries, getting a good look into the Global Retail Industry as represented in Dubai.

But Dubai is so much more than stunning shopfittings, plenty, and huge shopping malls, astonishing buildings, in a way like some sort of Arab "Disney World", and still very much business, aiming at creating a new crossroad and meeting point between east and west. The rulers and government encourage all kinds of business to make sure that the Emirate of Dubai, having oil resources for only a limited period, shall remain an important member of the UAE, and a country with high standards of living, also in future years. Time will show if they succeed, but the optimism and intentions are visible. To visit now and see for your self is somewhat of a "must". It is a very interesting experiment and development which is going on in a region with a different culture, and a difficult nature with few natural resources - except for the oil, of course, but how many more years?

ISO Annual General Meeting.

The ISO president from Holland was busy in France, why the vice president Dovydas Duoblys from Lithuania was conducting the formal meetings, culminating May 21 with the AGM. After the formalities followed the Economic reviews from the member countries, and other hot issues. Apart from the member situation, which is near status quo between Euroshop's (see the members list on the web-site), the finances are in good order with ISO subsidizing study tours and the tri-annual, much valued ISO MEETING POINT at the Euroshop. Next show 16-20 February in Düsseldorf is already booked and confirmed, and the invitation to all members to take active part in the promotion and participation is on the way.

An additional one-day tour to Abu Dhabi, the more "oil" wealthy emirate neighbor took place for those who had time and interest the last day, after the General Meeting and the Gala evening. A small group visited the huge 7 billion USD Al Zayed Mosque, where alone the ISO member Swarovski's chandeliers must have cost a fortune! Interior environment supplies have many challenges! A visit to Ferrari World is another "must" when you are around, next to Water World, IKEA, and the Yas Island Shopping Mall under construction with 150 new luxury stores to open next year. It was also interesting to see how the Ferrari brand is implementing not only clothes and souvenirs, but also fragrances (do real men need to smell like engine oil or exhaust smoke in the future?) Last, but not least the group took a virtual factory tour in the Maranello plant, seeing how the Ferraris are built, and hearing the famous sound!

The next ISO Event is an educational retail and factory study tour in North Italy, visiting the HOST 2013 exhibition in Milan in October, and why not follow-up with the real Maranello Ferrari factory visit?
Call the secretariat, or keep an eye on the web-site for more information.

Dubai was great, but next year's Euroshop is probably even greater, which is why next year's ISO Congress will be a concentrated general Assembly meeting in Haarlem, Amsterdam, Holland, 25-26 April 2014. Welcome.

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