



# APLF & The Leather Industry Today

Leather expert, professor and long-time APLF - MM&T participant Mike Redwood shares his thoughts on developments in the global leather industry



China Pavilion at APLF - MM&T

Settling down on the ferry to China as so many visitors do after three days at APLF - MM&T one is able to recognise the reality of the trade going on both on the stands and in the corridors. The general mood was positive, and it was clear that yet again it was China to the rescue as it was products destined for The Mainland domestic market that the full prices were achieved. Where the US and the EU were concerned compromise had to be reached, and generally speaking it was.

### The Domestic Chinese Market

From the people on the ferry to those in the inland cities such as Chengdu, Chongqing and Xian it is apparent that wealth is rising fast and that the peculiar Chinese family structure pushes large amounts of that wealth into disposable income. For some ladies it is the Dragonfly brand that fits the poorer purse, for the slightly wealthier Daphne footwear fills the bill, while for a surprisingly large number the aspirational global and luxury brands are now within reach.

One major outcome of the recession has been the change of focus for future demand to new locations with China the dominant although not the sole participant. So places like China, India and the surprisingly strong Indonesia appear ready to take on the mantle of maintaining demand for leather products. And judging from comments from exhibitors and visitors this puts APLF - MM&T in just the right place to facilitate the face-to-face meetings needed to strengthen relationships or reposition the business.

### Connecting peers across the globe

APLF - MM&T is a truly international fair where on and off the floor major and minor meetings bring countries and continents together.

The fair is not only about selling. One exhibitor from Italy said it about as cogently as possible: "[MM&T] is a place where we can sit down with customers and share information. You can only do certain things with e-mail. You have to find a few minutes each year to see one another face to face and to socialise. That is why we always come to Hong Kong and MM&T, and have done so for about 20 years".

So, while the recently retired CEO of CTC told APLF a few years ago "the Pearl River Delta will be a major supply source for international brands," APLF - MM&T has become the focal point for the whole industry.



**APLF - MM&T** is a truly international fair where on and off the floor major and minor meetings bring countries and continents together.