

THANK YOU VISITORS ...

It has been a great trade fair, the 17th Busworld in Kortrijk. And that's mainly down to you, the visitors, who turned up in droves. All we do, after all, is stage the thing...

So how many attended? Answer: 24 224 professionals & trade visitors from 105 different countries. 7% of the visitors came from outside Europe. Of particular note was the drop in the number of Belgians. Their share in the total attendance figures has fallen, over the last four years, from 40.38% to 33% and the visiting Belgians from 8 445 to 7 996 while, in contrast, the total itself rose from 20 914 to a whopping 24 224. So what does this mean? Well, that — turning it around — the number of foreigners has risen by 4 208. When it is known that every additional foreigner, attending this latest edition of the trade fair, has travelled, on average, over 1.000 km to get here ...

We should also like to thank the **277 exhibitors** (which included 46 coach- and bus makers) along with their 2.500-strong stand crews who, between them, occupied 37 000 m² of floor area, which necessitated the erection of two marquees with a combined, additional show area of 7 300 m².

Everything passed off smoothly; it was a **trouble-free trade fair**. One of the highlights was the traditional banquet evening of the F.B.A.A. (Federation of Belgian Coach and Bus Operators) with, this time round, a resounding performance by the Lille-based cabaret troupe "Les Folies de Paris". The opening session, in the Kinopolis multicinema complex, confronted the 410 participants with the fast-evolving life of Busworld.

The première of our Shanghai film with some stunning footage of the trade show there, the signing of the co-ordinator agreement with New Delhi, Wim van der Leegte (VDL-NL) and Paulo Bellini (Marcopolo, BR) being voted 'Busbuilder of the year' 2003 and 2004 respectively, Autostadt Wolfsburg being awarded the "Grand European Prize for Coach Tourism", the celebration of a deeply moved Adam Tarnowski who, after many years of fervent dedication at the I.R.U. (International Road Transport Union), took formal leave thereof, and — last but not least — the film showing the 75-year history of the B.A.A.V., the association which organizes this Busworld event.

One of the principal side events, for sure, were the **seminars and colloquia**. With workshop themes such as hydrogen fuelled engines, sustainable energy and the mobility problem. The

3rd I.R.U. forum, which dotted the i's and crossed the t's on the subject of travel coach tourism. The announcement of the market research study on 'the regular service (version) buses of the future' by the Association of Train, Tram and Bus Users (BTTB). The workshop organized by the social fund on training opportunities in the sector...

All this made for a **full schedule of stops for the ministerial visit**. Besides the transport ministers from Iran, Morocco and Poland, we had the honour of welcoming four Belgian ministers. These visits are of particular importance as they completely immerse the ministers concerned in the prevailing business climate and issues affecting the sector.

Which was all the more relevant this time round as this edition of Busworld was, for a fact, the ultimate in 'Safety First' trade fairs.

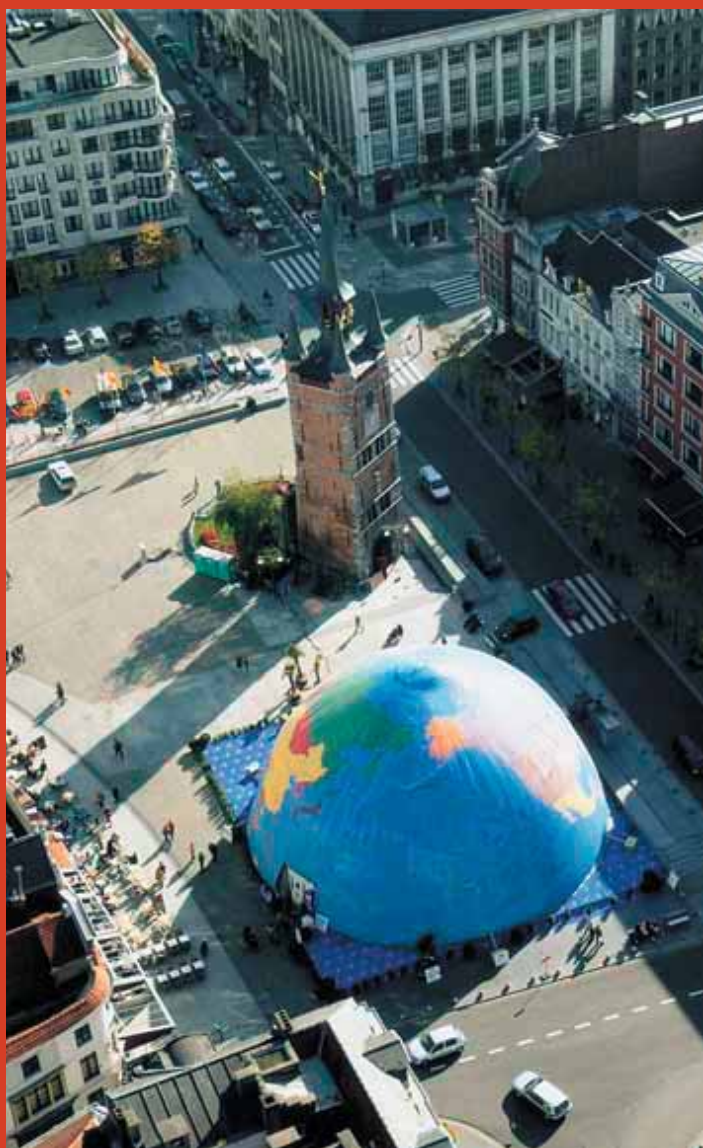
At the European Car Week of 2001, attention was drawn, for the first time, in the shape of the 'live operator's button', to the urgent need to stop coach drivers falling asleep at the wheel. In the wake of that, engineers have now come up with a more practicable solution — the EATON Vorad radar. This device cuts in, according to the road speed of the coaches and the distance away from an (oncoming) obstacle. In the event of impending danger, the driver is alerted by an audible warning and, at the same time, the cruise control cuts out (temporarily). Every visiting minister was brought face to face with this black box and with the solution to the ever-present menace of blind spots. In that knowledge, have you ever doubted the usefulness of such a trade fair?

It was also the **trade fair of increasing globalization** with the notable presence of no less than 816 (that's 3.37% of the exhibitors) Asian, Polish, Hungarian and Turkish coach- and bus makers, and a first-ever Chinese exhibition stand. Some people might, possibly, regret this rising trend. Our answer to that would be that globalization is already an accomplished fact in every sector, which Busworld can neither expedite nor hold back and that European coach- and bus makers (*) shouldn't be blind to what is happening on other continents.

Over there lie — in contrast to the static European market — huge and largely untapped markets and business opportunities (for Western firms too). Opportunities are there for those who can see them and seize them.

() and not just the coach- and bus makers.*

SUCCESES OF THE DOME



Visitors to Busworld Kortrijk who ventured into the centre of the city might have been surprised to see a large inflatable Dome, coloured like half the globe, in the Central Market. Inside was a hospitality centre for exhibitors and journalists visiting Busworld. It was a popular meeting place in the evening, after a busy day in the Exhibition.

The Dome was a joint initiative between Stefaan De Clerck, the Major of Kortrijk, and Busworld to give a boost to the city's flagging economy and to lift

the spirits of the citizens. Shopkeepers ran a series of initiatives to invite people to come to Kortrijk, with the incentive of gift vouchers, depending on the amount of money they spent in the city's shops.

Visitors were also encouraged to use the Dome during the day, when it was not required by Busworld.

This unique temporary attraction in the city gave rise to much favourable comment and demonstrated the caring side of the Busworld organisation.

EUROPEAN COACH WEEK

One of the highlights of Busworld Kortrijk is the European Coach Week, which immediately precedes the Exhibition itself. The European Coach Week of Kortrijk was first established in 1981 and the eleventh edition was held from Saturday 11 to Tuesday 14 October. Entry was restricted to manufacturers taking part in Busworld Kortrijk and vehicle age was limited to a maximum of a single season of active touring work.

The tests carried out by the several juries at the European Coach Week are complementary to the Euro Coach Test which determines the Coach of the Year. In the latter, more emphasis, when judging, is placed on technical performance, ride and handling of the vehicles. The European Coach Week focuses principally on the comfort and expectations of passengers, especially those on coach tours, and on facilities for drivers and tour guides.

All vehicles are taken on extensive road tests, with groups of passengers on board, simulating as closely as possible actual touring conditions. Judges observe the vehicles and their passengers throughout, and award points for a wide range of features and facilities.

Since their introduction, the European Coach Week tests have moved with the times, based on practical experience of using tour coaches. For instance, in the early years, one of the most important tests was the measurement of brake efficiency when descending long gradients. Now that several efficient secondary braking systems, like retarders and retarders, have been developed, that test is no longer conducted.

On the other hand, since 2001, more attention has been paid to the various safety features on board coaches, the position and use of the on-board refrigerator and coffee machine, and also measures that prevent a driver from nodding off.

For the first time in 2003, at the request of manufacturers, there was a separate contest for midcoaches, consisting of a number of trials and competitions concerned with overall safety, comfort, aesthetics and customer-friendliness of the vehicles entered. They were also tested for their suitability for sightseeing tourism.

In the midcoach category, seven prizes were awarded by the Judging Committee. Mercedes-Benz won the award for general comfort and the Grand Prix for best alternative usability for sightseeing tourism with the Medio midcoach. Temsa took the award for general safety with the Opal. The prize for the most decorative exterior design and aesthetics went to the Netherlands converter, Business, while the prizes for the best performing anti-theft system, tour guide equipment and driver's equipment went to the Parade, built by VDL Kusters.

There was keen competition among the large coaches. The Grand Prix Daniël Parmentier was awarded to a Van Hool Acron T917 that scored the highest number of points. It was particularly commended for the excellent facilities for the tour guide, who could either sit in the usual position, alongside the driver, or on the same level as the passengers, at a specially equipped station in front of the first row of passenger seats on the nearside.

This coach also had a proximity sensor which acted when the coach came too close to the vehicle in front. Commenting on the winning of the Gold Award, Yves Goffin of Van Hool said that his company was delighted. Speaking just before we went to press he said: "It was a very positive show for Van Hool. We made many contacts and are now working hard to turn enquiries into firm orders."

VDL Jonckheere won the Silver Award for its enhanced safety features while the Bronze went to a Setra S415HD. The Scania Irizar PB scored highest on aesthetics, in other words the most beautiful coach of the year. Setra's S431TD double-decker won prizes for the best driver equipment and the best anti-theft system. Another Setra, an S415HD, won the prize for the best public address and sound equipment system. The new Neoplan Tourliner was awarded a prize for best innovation and evolution.



Another international premiere, this time the new and well-equipped Tourliner from Neoplan.

The organisers of the European Coach Week are proud that the event is supported by the European Commission, the International Road Union, the Belgian Ministry for Transport and several other important organisations involved in coach operation, tourism and safety. Looking ahead, Piet Vintevogel of Busworld said that the organisers of the European Coach Week wanted to extend awareness of the event to other European markets. "We enjoy very strong support by the manufacturers, who are keen to put their vehicles forward for our tests. We expect some new entrants in 2005. Operators in the Benelux countries watch the results of these tests very closely and our aim is to establish similar interest in the European Coach Week in the rest of Europe."

KORTRIJK BREAKS ALL RECORDS

Busworld Kortrijk, held from 16 to 22 October, broke all records. Even the weather was remarkably mild and sunny for the time of the year.

In order to cater for more demand from exhibitors, two large marquees were erected in front of the main halls and formed the main entrance into Busworld. Exhibitors came from far and wide. For the first time ever, a Chinese manufacturer, Feipeng, took part. The company, based in Shanghai, makes windscreen wipers and alternators and said it was delighted with the number and level of contacts made at Busworld.

A record number of 24,224 visitors came from 105 countries. There were international delegations from major markets like China, India and Russia. Van Hool and its US importer, ABC, brought over a large party of American coach operators who visited Busworld and Van Hool's factory.

The futuristic new Temsa Diamond, built from initial sketches to finished product in only eight months.



Once again, several manufacturers chose Busworld Kortrijk for the launch of important new models and there were literally dozens of innovations on the stands of component and service suppliers.

It was an important event for the VDL Group, which expanded again in the summer with the acquisition of Bova. At Busworld, there were increasing signs of collaboration between the various subsidiaries. VDL Bus International, formerly DAF Bus, showed new front and rear chassis modules and also supplied the driveline modules for new low floor heavy duty city buses built by Berkhof and Jonckheere.

By far the longest vehicle in Busworld Kortrijk was the 24 metre Phileas by APTS, which is largely owned by the VDL Group. This and eleven 18 metre vehicles will go into service in Eindhoven on a dedicated busway next year.



VDL is also the principal shareholder in Advanced Public Transport Systems and showed the largest vehicle in Busworld. The 24 metre bi-articulated Phileas is one of the new generation of public transport vehicles which combine the

style of a tram with the flexibility and low operating costs of a bus. The show exhibit and eleven 18 metre articulated Phileas vehicles are due to go into service in Eindhoven next spring.

Structurally, Phileas was one of the most advanced vehicles in Busworld. The light-weight body consists of polyester sandwich panels for the sides,

Rear end aspect of the Phileas



with aluminium sandwich floor and roof panels. When bonded together, they form a stiff monocoque structure with a designed life cycle of at least 20 years. At the opposite end of the scale, VDL Kusters has developed an attractive low floor minibus body that can be mounted on various popular light chassis/cows.

The VDL Group has also had considerable success with its new middle weight low entry bus model, designed for 14.4 tonnes gross. Many of the SB200 chassis have been fitted with Ambassador 200 bodywork, built in Berkhof's Heerenveen factory. The designs use lighter materials to keep down weight and thereby make significant gains in fuel economy.

Setra chose Busworld for the world premiere of its new ComfortClass family of coaches. These are lower priced than the award winning TopClass range, but were nevertheless very well equipped. ComfortClass models come in overall lengths of 12.2, 13.02 and 14.05 metres. The entrance steps are wider and easier to use and the driver's area is 200mm longer than before. ComfortClass models will be available from the spring of next year.

Mercedes-Benz showed the new Tourino midcoach, built in its joint venture with Caetano Bus in Portugal. This comprehensively-equipped 9.35 metre vehicle is designed for smaller parties, with a maximum seating capacity of 38. Outside was a Turkish built Conecto ME, built to 12.8 metres on two axles, and intended principally for the school bus sector in Belgium and France.

There was at least one new vehicle in every hall. Neoplan's contribution was the new TourLiner. The underframe and driveline were common with MAN models, but the structure, styling and interior were pure Neoplan. With the widespread availability of Euro 3 engines and ultra low sulphur diesel, there now appears to be less interest in gas as an alternative fuel. However, MAN has continuously developed its range of engines, fuelled by Compressed Natural Gas and Liquefied Petroleum Gas.

MAN is now the only manufacturer offering LPG engines which meet the

The Daniel Parmentier prize in the European Coach Week was won by this well equipped Van Hool T917 Acron.



EEV (Enhanced Environmentally Friendly Vehicle) standard. The emissions from the engine are lower than the Euro 5 limits scheduled for introduction in 2008. The bus on display was destined for a customer in the Czech Republic, once again demonstrating the international influence of Busworld.

Typical of the bus industry, three premieres came along at the same time on the Irisbus stand. The Evadys is a 12.8 metre 2-axle coach using the same underframe and driveline as the interurban Ares. Irisbus identified demand for a coach with very high luggage capacity for airport transfers and other inbound tourism activities. The Midys is a new 9.7 metre mid-coach that can seat up to 41 under French regulations. The stainless steel framed body was built in Hungary by Ikarus Special Coach. The third new model was a 10.6 metre version of the interurban Ares. This range is now available in various lengths up to 15 metres.



Irisbus launched the Evadys, a 12.8 metre coach with extra large luggage capacity to handle airport transfers.

There was another world premiere on the Temsa stand, and one of the most memorable launches in the history of Busworld Kortrijk. The ambitious Turkish manufacturer is making a determined effort to develop business in Western Europe. The 13.89 metre Diamond coach was only an idea at the beginning of January. Bob Lee, Temsa's Design Consultant, produced hundreds of design sketches which were turned into sold metal in less than eight months. The styling of the Diamond was refreshingly different, with excellent forward visibility for passengers. Bob Lee said that he wanted to make some minor changes, but the new coach is expected to go into production early next year.

The stylish new driver's cockpit on the Temsa Diamond.



Yet another first came from the specialist German bodybuilder, Ernst Auwärter. They launched the latest version of their Clubstar high deck midicoach on an MAN chassis.

Continuing with the theme of world launches, Salvador Caetano unveiled a very attractive new full size luxury coach body, the Winner. This was unusual in having asymmetric styling on the two



All the atmosphere of Kortrijk and a memorable launch. Bob Lee, foreground, on the drums with Ibrahim Orhan, Strategy Director, singing and Mehmet Buldurgan, President of Temsa, accompanying!

sides. The styling of the front and rear aspects was highly commendable. Caetano has already won an order to supply 30 of its new coaches to customers in Portugal, who will initially use them to carry teams and officials at the Euro 2004 football finals.

Solaris, the progressive Polish bus builder, launched a 13 metre 3-axle version of the Vacanza coach, which was itself first shown at Busworld Kortrijk



The stylish new Winner body by Salvador Caetano of Portugal. The first production models will carry teams and officials at the Euro 2004 football tournament.

two years ago. Solaris has also developed its Urbino diesel bus range and its Trollino trolleybuses. Its other exhibit at Busworld was an Urbino 10 for a customer in Switzerland. This bus was the first to be fitted with the new On-Board Diagnostic system, developed by Solaris' own engineers.

Ikarus Special Coach is all that now remains with the Ikarus name. Their sole exhibit was a well-equipped midibus on a low entry RABA chassis for a customer in Iceland. Vehicles for the North American market are rare at Busworld Kortrijk, the only example this year being the unique NABI CompoBus. This vehicle is built in a new factory in Hungary. Most of the structure is formed in a special process in two huge moulds, for the top and bottom halves of the vehicle.

The CompoBus at Busworld was raised on wheel-lifts so that visitors could see the completely smooth under-side of the vehicle. NABI claims a weight reduction of around 3,000kg compared with a conventional steel-framed bus. In the United States, where maximum permitted axle loadings are more restrictive than Europe, this is an important selling point.

NABI's British subsidiary, Optare, showed one of its popular Solo midibuses. Like several other exhibitors, Optare was actively looking for distribu-

tor. Marcopolo is the largest bodybuilder in the world, with annual production now nudging 15,000 units. The company has recently invested in its factory in Coimbra, Portugal, to increase capacity. Complete body shells are shipped from the main factory in Brazil and married to chassis in Portugal. Glass, doors and much of the interior equipment are sourced from European suppliers. Exhibits included one of 50 Andare coaches being delivered on Volvo chassis to Greece, in readiness for the Olympic Games next summer.



One of 50 Andare coaches being supplied by Marcopolo to Greece on Volvo chassis for the Olympic Games.

The strong Spanish bodybuilding industry was well represented by Ayats, Beulas, Castrosua, Ferqui, Hispano, Indcar, Irizar, Noge, Sunsundegui and UNVI. They offered a very wide range of products, from minicoaches upwards. Castrosua is one of the largest builders of city bus bodywork in Spain and decided to exhibit at Busworld, simply because the exhibition attracts such an international audience.



There is a strong bodybuilding tradition in the Italian city of Modena. Sitcar showed this stylish small coach on a Mercedes-Benz chassis.

Because the French authorities place a maximum age limit of 15 years on vehicles used to carry school pupils, there is now a thriving industry building buses for this market. Fast Concept Car is connected with one of the largest school bus operators. The size of this sector in France can be judged by the

All the flair of Spanish styling in this midicoach from Indcar.



The Spanish builder, Beulas, always presents its bodywork very well. This midicoach was on an MAN chassis.



fact that the company showed the 1,000th Scolar 2 12 metre school bus. A smaller 9 metre school bus was also on display.

They say that the simplest ideas are sometimes the best. Volvo has a reputation for concern for safety. From now on, all their new coaches will be delivered with a brief film to advise passengers of safety features on board and the procedure in any emergency, before the coach starts its journey. It is very

Volvo introduced an airline-style film introducing passengers to safety and emergency features on board their coach.



similar to standard airline practice and long overdue.

Speaking to journalists, Lars Blom, European Vice President of Volvo Bus Corporation, said: "Busworld is one of the highlights of the year and gives us the opportunity to meet people from all over the world." That neatly encapsulated the unique spirit of Busworld and explains why so many senior executives attend the exhibition.

Busworld Kortrijk is a regular fixture for many exhibitors and visitors. In 2005, there should be more space. One of the smallest and oldest halls will be demolished and replaced by a considerably larger building. Even so, demand for space is again likely to be at a premium.

BUSWORLD LAGOS COMING UP

The second Busworld Lagos will be held in the Nigerian city from 2 to 6 December in the Lagos International Trade Fair Complex, about 25km west of the city centre.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is the most populated nation on the African continent, with around 125 million people. That is about 20% of the entire population of Africa. Lagos is the main port and commercial centre. Its population has rocketed from under 6 million in 1985 to over 15 million today. It is projected to reach 35 million by 2015!

Lagos is the largest city in the world without a metro system. It relies very heavily on buses, with an estimated 120,000 running in the Greater Lagos area alone. As in many other parts of Africa, there are large numbers of minibuses and minibuses and they are a major cause of traffic congestion.



The authorities are keen to replace them with full size buses, one of which, built by Volkswagen and Marcopolo in Brazil, was exhibited at the first Busworld Lagos last year.

There is also an extensive network of intercity services operated by members of the Luxury Bus Owners Association of Nigeria. LUBOAN has over 80 members who run nearly 10,000 vehicles between them.

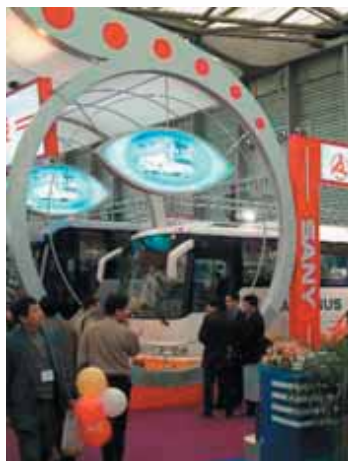
Many of the long distance coaches are imported from Brazil. They have Mercedes-Benz, Scania or Volvo chassis, with bodywork by Busscar or Marcopolo.

Goody Ugorji, Busworld's partner in Lagos, says that the second Busworld Lagos will be one day longer than the first and that the number of exhibitors is up substantially. Several vehicle manufacturers or their agents will be represented, including GM-Isuzu, Toyota, Mitsubishi, KamAZ, GAZ, Volkswagen and Nissan.

Many companies in the parts and accessories business will be present, including tyre giants Bridgestone, Michelin and Pirelli, oil, vehicle recovery and insurance companies. The Federal Ministry of Transport, the Lagos State Government, the Nigeria Institute of Transport Technology and LUBOAN will all have stands.

More exhibitors were coming forward as we closed for publication. The second Busworld Lagos will be a showcase for the bus and coach industry in Africa.

SHANGHAI DEMAND !



The fourth Busworld Shanghai will be held from 23 to 26 March 2004 in the impressive and modern Pudong International Exhibition Centre. It is the only specialist trade fair for the bus and coach industry in China. The Centre now has the added attraction of being next to a station on the ultra-high speed magnetic rail link between the international airport and the city centre.

Busworld's partners in Shanghai, Key Long, advise that there will be one third more space at Busworld Shanghai 2004, with many more European companies planning to exhibit. Demand for stand space is very strong.

the latest low floor technology. Several cities have trolleybus systems and there is considerable demand for CNG-fuelled vehicles. China is building massive pipelines from the natural gas fields in the West of the country to the Eastern seaboard. Chinese manufacturers are also expanding their activities in export markets.

A number of joint ventures have been established between Western, Japanese and Korean bus builders and local partners. Some have now become well established. Their products tend to be at the top end of the market in terms of specification and price.



The Chinese authorities have also encouraged the development of a supply industry, making all the components and parts which go into buses and coaches. There is still plenty of scope for further development in this area and opportunities for European companies to establish joint ventures.

COACHES OF THE YEAR 2004

For the first time in the annual judging for Bus or Coach of the Year, there was a dead heat for the top prize. A panel of 13 jurors, each representing a leading trade journal in a different European country, tested five coaches at Baveno, Italy, in May.

For the first time ever, there were joint winners of the "Coach of the Year" trophy. Wolfgang Fahrenberger (left) received the trophy from Stuart Jones, Chairman of the International Bus and Coach of the Year jury.



Half an hour later, Koldo Saratzaga, MD of Irizar (left) and Gunnar Rustad, Deputy CEO of Scania, (centre) received their trophy from Stuart Jones.

On the first public day at Busworld, Stuart Jones, Chairman of the International Bus and Coach of the Year jury, first gave the "Coach of the Year 2004" trophy to Wolfgang Fahrenberger, Chairman of NEOMAN, for the Lion's Star. The judges praised this coach for the quality of its build, its quietness, the efficiency of its climate control system, the smoothness of its ride characteristics and the design of the driver's work area.

Half an hour later, Stuart Jones gave a second identical trophy jointly to Gunnar Rustad, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Scania and Koldo Saratzaga, Managing Director of Irizar, for the Scania K124 with Irizar PB coachwork. This coach was praised for the beauty and originality of its design, the comfort afforded to passengers, and the excellent driving characteristics.



The Chinese bus and coach manufacturing industry is growing at a phenomenal rate. In 1999, it built 508,372 buses of all types, from mini to full size. By 2002, that figure had more than doubled, to 1,064,208. Over the same period, production of medium buses (7.0-10.0m) and large buses (over 10.0m) rose from 37,067 to 81,871, and is likely to break the 100,000 barrier within two years. That will take China to around four times the size of the Western European industry.

If you need further confirmation of the rate of growth in China, Luc Glorieux, Director of Busworld, predicts that by 2005, Busworld Shanghai will be a larger exhibition than Busworld Kortrijk.

Demand for buses and coaches is coming from several directions. China is opening over 3,000km of new highways each year, leading to demand for long distance coaches. Buses are the main form of public transport in the major cities and there is growing interest in

For further information on the most exciting bus and coach market in the world, ask for a free copy of the Busworld Shanghai 2003 DVD. It is ten minutes of compelling viewing.

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