

# World plumbing's greatest trade fair

By Marc Williams, Studor Australia area manager for Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania, reports on ISH Frankfurt 2003

**F**rankfurt, in the centre of Germany, is a city only a fifth of the size of Melbourne but every two years the population increases by about a third when ISH is happening. Hotel rooms up to 100km from the city are booked out, traffic congestion triples and just walking in and getting a sit down meal in a restaurant is almost impossible.

My NSW colleague, David Griffiths, and I were lucky enough to be asked by the Studor Group to help at the 2003 ISH – Studor's first time of exhibiting at this premier event. Thinking that having some Designbuilds, Interbuilds and Home Shows under our belts would prepare us, we accepted, but how wrong we were. Nothing could prepare your average Aussie for the sheer size and quality of this exhibition.

plumbing or heating. One floor of just sanitary ware, one of tap ware, another of valves and fittings and so on. Just for comparison, the Sydney or Melbourne Motor Show would fit on one of these floors.

You don't buy a day ticket here – you buy a three-day pass, which enables visitors to jump on and off the free mini-buses constantly circulating around the complex and visit all the floors of displays. Every possible variant of style, colour, material or accessory is shown here.

Picture a bath that is also a spa, sauna and solarium or a range of taps where a coloured light comes on from inside the spout to illuminate the water whenever you use it. Millions of dollars are spent on display stands, many being two-storey with offices and fully operational restaurant-size kitchens and facilities on the upper

current trends and technologies for possible future use. I also heard the occasional Aussie accent at various stands when I had the opportunity to view some other halls. After a lot of cautious "Guten tach...?" it was a pleasant surprise to be greeted with "Sorry mate, my German's not that good – I'm from Austraylia!".

Our own stand had its own cosmopolitan flavour to it with our Swiss company president, his Belgian wife, our technical manager and office manager, both from England, a representative from Studor Inc. in the USA, our director from New Zealand and we two Australians.

The flow of nationalities through our stand was also amazing with Americans, Taiwanese, Malaysian, Iranians, Swedish, Turkish, Spanish, Portuguese and French amongst the many other people making the trip over to speak and meet with us. One woman even came from Peru.

Of course, not all the displays were mind-bogglingly huge; there were many stands of the usual booth type we are all familiar with from our local trade shows.

But if you are a manufacturer, big or small, put some money aside from your next marketing budget, if you are a sales rep, teacher, manager, commercial, industrial or domestic plumber, an apprentice or anyone else who considers themselves part of this dynamic industry of ours – save your dollars and get yourself over to Germany in 2005 for the next ISH.



Anyone who is part of the Plumbing Industry should try to visit ISH Frankfurt – the world's biggest exhibition of everything plumbing

Imagine a major city university campus, grounds and all, and you get the idea of this venue. Ten four-storey buildings with each floor showing a different aspect of

Australians were represented – both as exhibitors and visitors – the major plumbing merchants were there touching base with their European suppliers and noting the

floor. This is not so much a trade show for the public, but a place for manufacturers and suppliers to display their latest products and services to the world and say, "Wouldn't you like to sell this in your neck of the woods?"

