



Asian Glass  
06-07/2015  
(Great Britain)

## Stretching horizons

Asian Glass talks to Dr Schneider, CEO of Bystronic glass, on his views on the direction of both the company, and the industry across the continent itself.



shipped worldwide. Why? Because producing where main markets are is our strategy; doing so allows us to directly transferring customers input in adjusting the products. And a main market for midrange products is the region and customer type of Asia.

**AG: As Europe continues to stumble, how can you mitigate any slowdown there by winning increased market share in Asia?**

**RS:** Conversely, we do not see Europe as “stumbling”. Actually, mid- and Northern Europe is still strong with a need of reinvestments to produce high efficiency architectural glass. The automotive market of Europe is still giving 1/3 of the worldwide car production and offering sufficient chances and challenges for our CHAMP SPEED production lines. Productivity and quality is still king also in Europe – for automotive and architectural.

Asia is still growing for our automotive glazing. For the architectural market Bystronic glass has been first opening what we call “midrange”: Our product B'COMFORT is following our customers' needs above the low-end of machinery (no automation, lowest productivity) and below the high end (full flexibility, high speed lines). We recognized that this is door opening and also our dear competition has been following us with this strategy.

**AG: Are the returns in Asia as great as those in other markets in terms of the prices that can be achieved for the technology on offer?**

**RS:** Customers worldwide and not only in Asia have a fair demand for a fair pricing vs. performance. And this is not only related to machinery but specifically to our service. We emphasize our new slogan “Because we care”. Bystronic glass is the most trustworthy contact for everyone in flat glass processing, meaning we ensure customer productivity, product efficiency as well as customer oriented concepts. At the end our dear customership is paying for productivity and whatever we give them to achieve best results. This is similar worldwide.

**AG: How has the crisis in the Ukraine, and hence the subsequent effect on trading with Russia, affected your approach to that market, and how are you seeking to solve that problem?**

**RS:** We keep up with our Moscow-based sales and service unit first of all because we do have standing customers both in the automotive and architectural glass market and keep up with reliable service. Secondly the situation in Russia is not comparable with countries surrounding Russia that we serve from Moscow. And thirdly: Sure it is tough making business in the actual Russian situation – but we see it as our duty to support our customership and are sure the situation will change positively the sooner the later.

**AG: Do you foresee a time when Bystronic glass Asia may become the dominant partner or trading name within the company, and would that involve a strategic re-think of how you present yourself to the industry?**

**RS:** There is nothing to re-think: We are a Swiss-German company with roots in mid Europe but markets and friends around the lovely globe. Indeed our customership recognizes us exactly this way. “Because we care” does not mean only presence in the markets but individual caring in individual regions, adopting to and playing market rules and behavior. We avoid having a “dominant partner” because our automotive and architectural glass business is and will be worldwide and there will be ups and downs in each region. Still we will serve all of them – with service, production facilities and specifically with customer care.

**AG: As a global leader in the markets you operate within, you must have a constant conflict between revealing your most advanced technologies into markets notorious for their emulation and copying: what are you doing to get round this problem, or do you operate a 2-tier system of product release into those markets?**

**RS:** The so called markets notorious for their emulation and copying are improving their compliance with the law because they do worldwide business as well. Above this our main strategy is old but simple and effective: Being 2 years ahead of the competition.

**AG: Besides from Asia, where else are you looking for growth in 2015/16?**

**RS:** Bystronic glass is targeting specifically NAFTA where we see reinvestments in automotive glazing and a push to fulfill governmental regulations by high quality architectural insulating glass products.

**AG: Many are considering West Africa to be a market with great growth potential, but difficult payment conditions. How attractive is an emerging market such as that? Or do you prefer to be in the “second wave” of technology suppliers servicing such areas and waiting for market sophistication to increase?**

**RS:** To be honest: Waiting for something is a pretty odd strategy. There are defined business opportunities for architectural but also automotive glass in East Africa and this is where we put activity in. West Africa so far is more a lucky punch in the field of architectural glazing from time to time and closely followed by our market research.

**AG: In addition to the existing technologies you supply and your traditional markets, does Bystronic allow itself to experiment in completely new sectors of the market and the provision of entirely new solutions in markets previously not covered? Or do you prefer as a company to excel in the sectors for which you are already famous internationally?**

**RS:** We are not doing experiments but strategically scanning markets and technologies for new opportunities within our yearly strategy review. And indeed we defined a new core technology as well as a – for us – new application market. New core technology to stay ahead of the competition – new market to increase our business in total.

**AG: Finally, if you had one wish for the market in the next 12 months, what would it be and how would you see that impacting yourself?**

**RS:** Nice to have a fairy godmother ... my wish would be tearing even more down the worldwide barriers of tax and duties for exchanging goods and human resources. Allowing us making international business from production facilities around the world without the need of calculating back and through the import tax situation and legal regulations or caring about visa protocols. This indeed would ease my business life.