

**Mission to Guangzhou:  
Showcasing BC Sea Urchins in a new market**



**Report on the January 2011 Trade Mission  
involving representatives from the:**

**Pacific Urchin Harvesters Ass'n  
Pacific Sea Cucumber Harvesters Ass'n  
Canadian Wild Sablefish Ass'n  
Western Canada Seafood Merchants and Processors Ass'n**

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## Acknowledgements

The Pacific Urchin Harvesters, Pacific Sea Cucumber Harvesters, Canadian Wild Sablefish and Western Canada Seafood Merchants and Processors Associations sincerely thank the Canadian Consulate in Guangzhou, the British Columbia Ministry of International Trade and Investment in Guangzhou and the Ministry’s representative office in Guangzhou, the Canadian Trade Commissioner Services involved in this trip for their support hosting the Showcase Dinner in Guangzhou, for their efforts facilitating the dinner and the trip and for their continuing efforts supporting our industry. The dinner was made possible by generous donations of BC sea urchin, sea cucumber and wine and we are grateful to the companies that stepped up. Paladin International Food Sales Ltd. and Grand Hale Marine Products Ltd., both of Richmond, B.C., provided sea urchin and sea cucumber dishes for the dinner while the wine was arranged through the Guangzhou office of the British Columbia Ministry of International Trade and Investment.

Mr. Paddy Wong and Ms. Joanna Fang provided critical support and effort to the planning and execution of the trip, the dinner and the many meetings and deserve special mention. It is very likely that this trip would have simply not happened without their active involvement. We also thank the Guangdong Fisheries and Oceans Administration and the Guangdong Fisheries Association for the extraordinary hospitality they showed us on the trip as well as for their interest in our products. The author of this report thanks all involved, the Canadian and Chinese associations, authorities, officials and people, for the opportunity to participate.

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### Introduction

During the 2010 Asian Seafood Expo (ASE) in Hong Kong, we were presented with an opportunity to introduce BC sea urchin products to a new market in Guangzhou, China at the invitation of the Guangdong Fisheries Association. The offer was put forward by Ms. Joanna Fang, second in command of the Association. The Association is prepared to host an event with perhaps 100 - 150 guests where Chinese dishes featuring BC sea urchin and other fishery products will be served to introduce buyers from Guangzhou to the products and to representatives of the BC fishing industry.

Guangdong Province, known historically as Canton, is in south China and abuts the northern border of Hong Kong. It is a primary region within China producing manufactured goods for trade with the rest of the world and includes Shenzhen, a city comprising the first Special Economic Development Zone designated by the Chinese Government in the late 1970's. Guangzhou is a city of some 10 million plus residents sitting on the Pearl River about 200 km upstream of Hong Kong and Shenzhen. Guangzhou was one of the first centres in China to develop trade relations with British and Portuguese traders back in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and it remains one of the wealthiest and most trade oriented regions within China. Combined with the 7 million people in Hong Kong, this region is a market offering immense potential for Canadian seafood and other agri-food producers and is a priority for our international marketing programs.

The BC delegation recognized this as an opportunity they just could not pass up and immediately agreed to work with the Guangdong Fisheries Association on getting things set up. Guangzhou was also hosting a very significant sporting event in November, the 2010 Asian Games, which was going to be taking up a lot of resources during that time, so the most appropriate time for the BC visit was January, 2011. This gave us a 4 month lead to make sure everything was in order. The Guangdong Fisheries and Oceans Administration (a regional equivalent of Fisheries and Oceans Canada), the Canadian Consulate in Guangzhou and the British Columbia International Trade and Investment Representative Office in Guangzhou also participated, providing substantial support in hosting the dinner and the delegation during its visit. The only expenses delegates were responsible for were their actual travel and accommodation.

The Pacific Urchin Harvesters, Pacific Sea Cucumber Harvesters and Canadian Wild Sablefish Associations all agreed to provide a range of products for the event and send representatives along on the mission. The Canadian delegation comprised two separate groups. The first group, Paddy Wong, Alfa Wong, Gary and Vivien Grant, Gary and Michael Legas, Kristoff Machaff and Aldonna ??, departed Vancouver on January 5 and spent a few days touring Shanghai prior to proceeding to Guangzhou. The other group, Mike Featherstone, Ken Ridgway, Francis Cheung, Tim Joys, Ruth Ellen Robicheau and Geoff Krause, departed Vancouver on January 6 and spent a few days in Hong Kong before taking the train to Guangzhou. This report is a record of the Mission as experienced by the second group and will be supplemented by a separate slide show of a much wider range of pictures than can be included in this report.



## January 8: Attending Farmfest in Hong Kong

Francis Cheung invited us along to take in an outdoors farmer's market being held in a Yau Yat Chuen Garden City Park in Kowloon. This is a 3 day event called Farmfest and is one of many held monthly or more throughout the year. The events are often held inside during the summer because the heat and humidity can be too much. There appeared to be about 200 - 250 booths and the fair or market looked to be packed solid from about 1100 hours onwards. We wandered through the fair for a couple of hours and could not help but notice that there is a fair emphasis on food safety issues in general and that many of the booths featured organic production. The prices seen overall were quite high and quality was also consistently emphasized as a selling point.



Grand Hale had a booth at the Fair displaying and selling seafood shipped over from BC. Products it had on offer included uni, smoked sockeye, chinook and pink salmon and indian candy. The company calls itself Grand Hale Natural Foods at these sorts of affairs and it sounds like the company has been attending this particular event each year for the past 4-5 years. There is a similar such show in the summer that Grand Hale has regularly attended.

The prices for the uni were HK\$ 170 for a 125 g tray or HK\$ 35 for a single hole, each of which contained two pieces of uni. Both these work out to about C\$ 22 per 125 g, or \$C 44 for 250 g or \$C 176 per kg. This sort of pricing is very attractive from the seller's perspective and apparently from the buyers as the booth was sold

out of uni by early on the third day. Francis reports that sales of all the products are pretty good and have been increasing each year they have been at the show. It is building a strong following and they even get requests for product in the off season.

Francis also delivered some trays directly to another outlet which paid \$C 30 per tray. This price works out to \$C 240 per kg, Consumers in Hong Kong do not mind paying top dollar for high quality products. For example it was this market that first pushed the price of geoduck up to the point where Japanese buyers gave up. Quality is of course a paramount requirement. In this case we had a taste of the uni and it appeared to live up to it's billing: it was fresh, sweet and creamy with no discernable after-taste from the alum that is all too often the dominant feature of some processed product.

## January 9: Travelling to Guangzhou



The next afternoon we crossed over to Kowloon and caught the direct train to Guangzhou. The premium seats cost an extra \$C 9 over standard seats and allowed better views of the countryside as those seats are on the upper deck of a two level train. The ride takes about 2 hours but the first 3/4 of an hour is only intermittently fast as it takes that long to get through Kowloon and clear the border at Shenzhen. From that point the top speed picks up from about 80 kph to probably something in the order of 125 -135 kph which is maintained until the train reaches Guangzhou.

Customs clearance comes on arrival at Guangzhou. The process is quite involved and is similar to what might be expected coming into an airport. Our party carried 2 boxes of frozen sea cucumber meats because difficulties encountered in getting the need health certificates from the

Canadian Food Inspection Agency prior to leaving meant that any shipped via a third party would have been seized. The hope was that it would clear as hand carried personal property but this turned out to be illusory as the all boxes, luggage and packages must pass through x-ray machines to see if there any prohibited materials, like plants or animals (including marine or aquatic) or parts thereof. Both boxes, each containing 6 packs (~12 lbs) of frozen sea cucumber meat, were seized.

This was compounded by a failure to obtain similar health and/or tracking documentation for the sablefish which resulted in it not even being sent to Guangzhou. These were apparently a case of faulty oversight but the result is that two of the four products we had intended to introduce did not make it to the showcase event as we had indicated they would. This of course does not bolster our reputations as professionals but there is plenty of blame to go around. On the one hand, it highlights the lack of flexibility and perhaps an excessively absolute dependence on regulation and process by the CFIA even for one-off samples destined for officially sanctioned and supported events in another country. However it also indicates a problem with industry as the people getting the shipments together should have at least known about it even if they were not whole-heartedly keen on accommodating it. The same goes for the Chinese guards but they too are only doing their job and it is up to us to satisfy their demands. It would appear that extra precautions, preparation and followup are warranted to ensure embarrassing setbacks like this do not recur on future missions.



We were hosted that first evening at a welcome dinner by the Guangdong Fisheries and Oceans Administration. Francis Cheung was not due to arrive in Guangzhou until the following day so the dinner was set for about 21 people, the 13 Canadians and an official delegation of 8 Chinese. The dinner was hosted at the largest buffet restaurant in Guangdong Province, capable of seating upwards of 2,000 people per sitting, and was appointed with spectacular decorations including corals standing 30 feet high as well as high quality sculptures, paintings, architecture and workmanship displayed throughout. We were treated to a magnificent dinner in a private room around a single very large circular table. The meal included a well-rounded selection of locally produced seafood and other meats and vegetables etc, generous servings of wine and Chinese “wine”. The meal was interspersed with frequent toasts to, and by, both groups to developing closer cooperation and effective cordial working, trading and personal relationships between us.



## January 10: Touring Local Culture Operations

The Guangdong Fisheries Association and Guangdong Fisheries and Oceans Administration provided a minibus tour of some shrimp and tilapia culture operations. The land adjacent both sides of the Pearl River seemingly all the way down to Shenzhen is dotted with numerous culture ponds. China is, by far, the largest single contributor to global aquaculture production and intensively utilizes any appropriate and available habitat for food production.

The shrimp ponds we visited were all covered with probably about an 8 mm poly sheet, something in the order of 50 feet wide and extending right across the whole pond (probably ~ 90 m x 90 m), which helps maintain/moderate the temperature about 20°C. The plastic is strong



enough to support a ~40 lb dog without tearing and, because the whole is covered, they claim the poly cover holds together even in high winds up to and apparently including hurricane force. The cover has slits cut in it so rainwater does not pool on the cover and collapse it. The plastic would deteriorate very quickly in the summer sun so it would have to be replaced annually and is probably kept in place only over the winter.



The shrimp farm we visited had a total area of 40 Ha and each pond was about 0.75 Ha in area with a maximum depth of 2 - 2.5 m. This suggests the farm comprises about 50 ponds. Feeding is by hand broadcasting using a small canoe-like boat inside each pond. Different sized feeds are used for different sized animals. There are two species in each pond, a larger prawn-sized animal (*Macrobrachium rosenburgii*) which is aggressively territorial and stocked (reportedly to about 1 per m<sup>2</sup>) to number about 1/15th of the smaller shrimp sized animals. Using established production estimates for shrimp/prawn culture of 4 - 5 MT ha<sup>-1</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup>, the farm we visited should produce about 160 - 200 MT of prawns/shrimp per year. Given that each pond is harvested 4 times per year with a growout of about 2.5 months per cycle, each pond produces about 1 MT of product per harvest cycle which further translates into a density of about 1.0 - 1.25 kg of prawn/shrimp per m<sup>2</sup> at harvest.

The water even at this distance up the Pearl River is still brackish (5- 6 ppt) but they find that low salinities in the neighbourhood of 2- 3 ppt are advantageous because it reduces disease problems.

They use an electrified leadline, powered by a small battery, on a longish net to herd the shrimp into a smaller space for harvest. They use an extendable throw net with multiple entrances to sample the shrimp and a hand-thrown trawl or seine to harvest.

The product is sold live or fresh through local markets so little to no processing is involved.



We also visited a tilapia operation and got some pictures of the broodstock holding ponds. The installation comprised 6 separate systems, each of which is self contained to prevent cross contamination in the event some fish start getting sick. The ponds are filtered as the water circulates through 3 smaller pools (@ ~ 50 L) adjacent to a much larger (@~ 2500 L) main pool where the fish are held. The first small pond is a settlement basin and water flows from the surface through to the second. From the second the water flows through the bottom

so it upwells through a biofilm coated bed of gravel into the third. The biofilm comprises bacteria etc which remove the nutrients, including ammonia, for their own metabolic requirements. After this treatment the water is sterilized by a couple of UV lights before being pumped back into the main pond.

As mentioned, this installation held the broodstock. We did not see the hatchery but one can assume that the eggs collected may or may not be naturally inseminated/fertilized depending on the reproductive cycle of the tilapia. It may be that they are terminal breeders and spawn only once or they may be multiple, annual breeders and spawn many times through their lifetimes. We did not get to this point in any discussions. At any rate, once the fertilized eggs are taken and incubated, the production fish will eventually be grown out in ponds. Some of the faster growing fish may be taken back into the brood stock pool so as to conserve, if not improve the production characteristics of subsequent generations.

There are increasing problems being reported in the tilapia culture industry, possibly to do with disease, poor pond hygiene and/or perhaps genetic weakness of local stocks caused by inbreeding. There are no reports of escapes to this point but tilapia may turn out to be a very successful invasive species in this area should it occur.



We were then hosted by the Guangzhou fisheries Association to a lunch at another of the many wonderful seafood restaurants in the area. In this case there were a number of live tanks adjacent to the entrance where one could inspect and order particular fish, snakes, turtles, hens or etc. for lunch. We left the selection to our hosts and Paddy to work out. The lunch again featured much good cheer and many rounds of toasts to good health, good relations and improving ties between our groups.



Later that evening we were treated to a bit of a surprise at a local circus venue. This location hosts troupes from around the world and included clowns, animals, death defying gymnastics and high wire acts, diving, explosions, lasers and other feats of daring-do that make up the modern circus experience. It was very good.

## January 11: Touring the local Wholesale Market



The next morning we were provided a tour of the local wholesale market. The market comprises about 8 square blocks of stalls selling primarily live, but also some fresh, seafood to customers including restaurateurs, supermarkets, and retail customers. Each of the booths comprises an independent company and each may have its own fishing vessels, transport vehicles and other warehouses etc. There are currently about 10 importers which are importing product from Canada. One of the main Canadian products in the market now is geoduck. Developing the business is the responsibility of each company and arrangements with international suppliers are usually left up to each company to work out on their own. It sounds like setting up a booth on behalf of a Canadian company in the market will be more complicated than most of our guys will be willing to support.

We had an introductory presentation provided by the company which coordinates and oversees the whole of the market. The market deals with 80,000 tons of product each year and including many products from international suppliers. They are used in Guangzhou as well as many other markets in China. On the floor above the main business offices there is a 6,000 square foot seafood restaurant which they claim is the largest professional seafood restaurant in the city of Guangzhou. They are also constructing a new supermarket that they hope to open after the 2011 spring festival which will sell live, fresh and frozen seafood and other products. They are also planning a new larger and fully modern facility to house the market that looks like it will greatly increase the market capacity in terms of both volume and technology.

Usually the China Inspection Authorities stop by the market once or twice a month to conduct hygiene, quality and documentation (Country of Origin, Health Certs etc) inspections. There were some problems reported on imports of Australian and some California rock lobster which were seized. These problems were related to extra stringent inspections and oversight because of the Asian Games but things have apparently gotten back to normal since the end of the Games.

Mexican geoduck held in live tanks were selling for about 100 RMB for 500 g. The water temperature was about 18°C and the salinity 20 ppt. Mike could tell they were from down south because the shells are larger in relation to the neck compared with geoduck from BC. There were other geoducks from California around which were priced at 500 RMB while the ducks from Canada were 1,500. The equivalent prices for weights would be about RMB 150 and RMB 200 per 500 g. The prices for especially the best quality clams are very fluid right now and the sellers are very reluctant to try to put any price on them as it is rising fast with the approach of the Chinese New Year (Feb. 4).



There are a number of sea urchin suppliers in the market but no product was seen on our tour. This may be because the Chinese production, the great majority of it cultured, is now out of season.

Farmed salmon from Norway was selling for 45 RMB per 500 g. although if portioned the price rose to RMB 55.

We were again treated to a lunch, this time at the restaurant associated with the market. This restaurant is again outfitted with an impressive entrance lobby as well as with an adjacent live-tank set up from which customers can choose their lunch. A number of items, primarily seafood but also including goose and chicken, had been chosen during our tour of the market which were then taken to the kitchen and prepared for us.



## January 11: Showcase Dinner



The main showcase event started at about 1630 hours at a restaurant on the other side of the river in the Pangi district of Guangzhou. The function was co-funded by the Guangdong Fisheries and Oceans Administration, the Guangdong Fisheries Association, the Canadian Consulate in Guangzhou and the BC Ministry of Trade and Investment Representative Office in Guangzhou. Francois Rivest, Canada’s Consul General in Guangzhou, Doris Zhang and Kitty Ko, Trade Commissioners from Guangzhou and Hong Kong respectively, Cathy Yao and Leanne Yi from the British Columbia International Trade and Investment Office in Guangzhou were on hand to represent the Governments of Canada and British Columbia at the event. The support provided by both levels of Government was substantial and the appearance of all of us together favourably reinforces the message that we are all working jointly to develop business relations with our counterparts in Guangzhou. My understanding is that this demonstrated unity of purpose provides some assurance that we will follow through and extend our efforts over a longer term.



Msr. Francois Rivest, Consul General for Canada in Guangzhou



Ms. Doris Zhang, Trade Commissioner in Guangzhou



Ms. Kitty Ko, Trade Commissioner from Hong Kong



Ms. Cathy Yao, BC Int'l Trade & Invest't Guangzhou



Ms. Leanne Yi, BC Int'l Trade & Invest't Guangzhou

The representatives from the Guangzhou side included all the folks we had met at the previous dinners, Mr. Liu, Ms. Joanna Fang, Mssrs. Li and Li and the others. There were also about 50 - 60 from industry including distributor, wholesaler, retail, restaurant and hotel representatives.



Mr. Liu. Director of the Guangdong Fisheries and Oceans Administration



Ms. Joanna Fang. Ass't Exec. Director of the Guangdong Fisheries Ass'n

The event officially got under way as Joanna Fang and Leanne Yi introduced the official representatives, each member of the Canadian delegation and the speakers for the night. Mr. Liu from the Guangdong Fisheries and Oceans Administration, Mssr. Rivest from the Canadian Consulate in Guangzhou, Cathy Yao from the Guangzhou office of the BC Ministry of International Trade and Investment, Mike Featherstone from the Pacific Urchin Harvesters Association, Tim Joys from the Canadian Wild Sablefish Association and Ken Ridgway from the Pacific Sea Cucumber Harvesters Association all spoke.

Highlights from Mr. Liu's speech: First off were his warmest wishes and sincere thanks to the officials and the Canadian delegation for attending. Guangdong is a major fishery province in China with an annual market value worth 145 B RMB per year in 2009. The total aquatic production that year was approximately 7 MMT worth 69 B RMB. Guangdong also imported some 780 KMT of aquatic products worth 4.5 B USD. Canada is well known to produce very high quality aquatic products and the market for high quality aquatic products in Guangdong is growing strongly. This provides a good basis for increasing trade between Guangdong and Canada in high quality seafood and relations between Guangdong authorities and businesses and their counterparts are being pursued for mutual benefits through trade and cooperation as well as the sharing of knowledge and expertise in fisheries, environment, processing, food safety and

quality in both wild fishery and aquaculture fields. The seafood cooperation between Guangdong and Canada holds huge potential and we believe that joint efforts by both sides on fisheries and trade cooperation will open a new chapter so both can realize immense benefits. He finished with a reference to the approaching Chinese New Year and wished all present good health, prosperity and happiness and graciously wished the Canadian delegation a pleasant stay in Guangzhou.

Highlights from Mssr. Rivest's speech: Canadian seafood products are recognized as among the safest, best quality and best tasting in the world. The Canadian seafood industry and the Government of Canada have invested significantly to ensure that their fisheries are both safe and sustainable. Canada has one of the best and most effective fisheries management, inspection and quality control systems in the world. China represents a huge potential and recognized market for Canadian seafood producers.

The relationship between Guangdong Province and Canada goes back a long way. There are 1.4 million Canadians of Chinese origin and most of these come from Southern China, mainly Guangdong and Fujian Provinces. The Province of Guangdong is twinned with British Columbia and the city of Guangzhou is twinned with Vancouver. British Columbia made a wise choice when it decided to be twinned with Guangdong, in part because it has been the fastest growing Province of China for the past 30 years, expanding at an annual rate of 13.28% (doubling every 5.5 years). Guangdong Province has a population of 110 Million people, constitutes the largest province of mainland China. It is also the wealthiest province and represents the largest market for imported products including seafood, food and beverages and services.

He finished by thanking everyone who helped organize this event, the delegation for visiting and particularly Mr. Liu for taking a leading role in pursuing the development of a stronger relationship with BC.

Cathy Yao gave a warm welcome to the BC delegation but delivered the majority of her speech in Chinese.

Mike Featherstone, Ken Ridgway and Tim Joys each gave a speech, expressing among other things, thanks to everybody involved with organizing and supporting the event, with special mention to Mr. Liu, Mr. Prevost and Ms. Yao and for the opportunity to meet with everybody on the trip. All mentioned the high quality of the products produced by the BC industry and how we have all been working together to fulfill our promise of producing only the finest possible seafood. Tim reiterated that we had hoped to have sablefish for sampling on the menu and again apologized for our failure to overcome the difficulties imposed by the holiday delays in Canada. Paddy Wong also gave a speech as President of the Western Canada Seafood Merchants and Processors Association, but it too was in Chinese and no translation was provided.

Following the speeches dinner was served. The menu featured Chinese-themed sea urchin and/or sea cucumber dishes developed and passed on by Paddy to a chef hired for the event. There was also a selection of red and white BC wines for the dinner. These were mainly dispensed by serving staff from decanters and, while I hate to admit it, I neglected to identify and record either the supplier(s) or the names of the wine. The Sea Urchins From Canada production



featuring Vancouver chefs preparing sea urchin dishes and discussing the virtues of the BC products played throughout the event on a couple of strategically placed large screen TV's.

The dishes included a sashimi style uni with tuna and surf clam, a vegetable and mushroom broth with full pieces of uni, an uni and mushroom omelette, a spinach dish with a sea urchin-based sauce, whelk with a sea urchin-based sauce and steamed BC sea cucumber. It seemed as though more active oversight of the chef would be advised as the two sauces he produced had a dubious visual impact on the spinach and whelk dishes. They tasted fine but it took some effort to get over the associations that seemed to naturally come to mind on viewing the sauce. There were no complaints from any of the guests and many compliments on the tastiness of the dishes. However, it should be remembered that the Chinese are, like people everywhere but perhaps like Asians especially, very sensitive to situations involving 'face' and will generally assume a very courteous manner as a matter of course at these sorts of events. At any rate, there were again a number of rounds of toasts both during and after the meal as people we had met over the course of the trip came around and partook in "kompay" (bottoms up) to reinforce the developing relations between us.



Another expected custom within the traditional Chinese lexicon of courtesy is the giving of gifts to our hosts and sponsors in recognition of the hospitality and effort(s) provided. The delegation purchased some West Coast native art pieces that were given out discreetly to Mr. Liu (Guangdong Fisheries and Oceans Administration), Mssr. Rivest (Canadian Consul General in

Guangzhou), Doris Zhang (Trade Commissioner Guangzhou), and Cathy Yao (BC Ministry of Trade and Investment in Guangzhou). Joanna Fang (Guangdong Fisheries Association) was given a nice bottle of Ice Wine from BC.



The dinner was essentially winding down after about 2 ¼ hours but the meet and greet continued on for another hour or so. The success of the event was considered “amazing” according to virtually everyone on the delegation and we all are looking to more visits to further deepen the relationships. It appears that Ken’s wish that this will be the first of many productive meetings is likely going to come to pass. There were some comments that for future meetings all involved were looking forward to making it even better and strong interest from guests in all the products represented by the Canadian associations present, PUHA, PSCHA and CWSA. Cathy Yao, Doris Zhang and Joanna Fang all felt there would be increasing interest in these and other BC seafood products in Guangdong and requested more copies of the DVD’s and brochures from the urchins, cucumbers and sablefish to distribute throughout the area. All the brochures laid out on the front table for the event, approximately 150- 200 each for the urchins, cukes and sablefish, were either taken or left on request for later distribution.

Doris Zhang and Kitty Ko, the Trade Commissioners in Guangzhou and Hong Kong respectively, expressed gratitude to the delegation for coming to Guangzhou and volunteered to fully support the 2011 urchin and cucumber AMP proposals. They also look forward to providing whatever advice and assistance they can on building our business and selling seafood in the region encompassing Guangdong and Hong Kong

The potential of this market is huge, probably in excess of our ability to fully service in the longer term, given the current and future production constraints on the urchin and cucumber fisheries, and the marketing focus should remain on establishing an identity as luxury, high value, limited volume specialty products. This will require building a certain degree of prestige into the marketing program. The alternative of building volume to serve a more ‘commoditized’ economy-priced use will be doomed to failure because the wild production potential of the resource will not be able to support growing demand beyond a certain limit and replacements that can support that level of demand in that scenario will replace BC production. Changing consumers perceptions and re-branding the BC product at that point as a luxury good will likely meet more resistance than if it is branded that initially.

All in all, the reception for the urchins and cucumbers was enthusiastic and buyers were reportedly very keen to get orders filled prior to Chinese New Year. It will be interesting to hear how successful Paladin and Grand Hale are in meeting the challenge. It should also be pointed out that Mike was right on the ball and put out letters expressing our thanks to all the organizations and individuals who helped put the event together as soon as we got back to the hotel. That sort of followup reflects favourably on all of us.

## January 12: Homeward bound

The following day we caught the train to Hong Kong and prepared to head for home. Mike, Francis and Geoff flew to Vancouver on the 13<sup>th</sup>, Ken had some meetings with buyers in Macau and in Hong Kong throughout the day and did not fly until the 14<sup>th</sup> while Tim and Ruth Ellen also had other business in the region. The rest of the delegation, Paddy, Alfa, Gary and Viv, Gary and Michael, Krystof and Aldonna, toured Hong Kong for a few days and flew home on the 16<sup>th</sup>.