



STEEL PLATE SOLUTIONS

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July 2026

Richards Bay
on the rise...

The Next SPS Chapter Is Loading...

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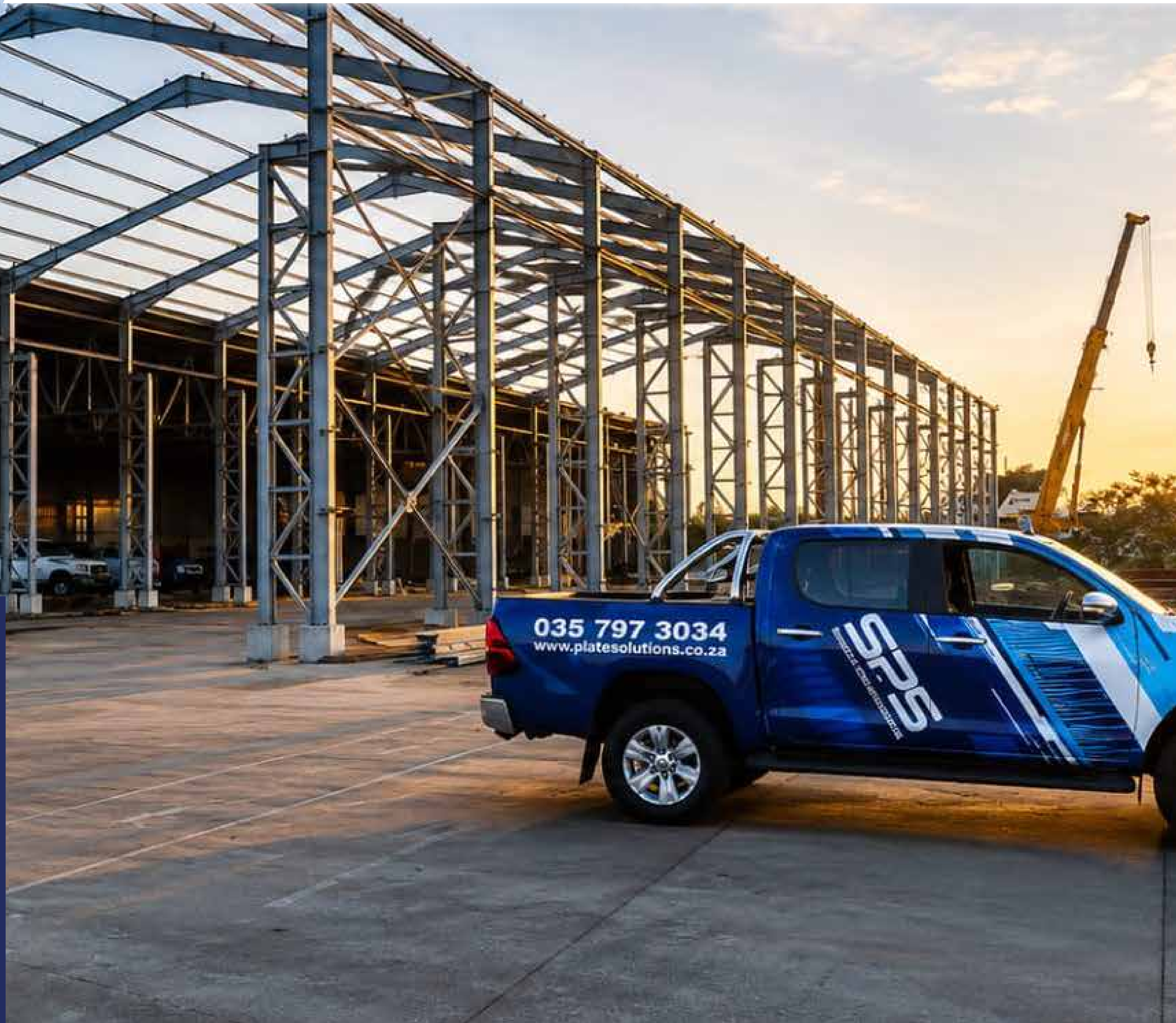
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and what's happening?

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THE PLATE BULLETIN



INSIDE CHINA

The industrial giant re-inventing itself

Directors Mark Mitchley and Tommy Coleman recently visited China. Their insights are featured throughout this article on the country's industrial growth and transformation.

Several decades ago, many international buyers associated "Made in China" primarily with cheap, mass-produced, lower quality goods. Even though supplier quality always varied, this perception has changed significantly.

Today, China manufactures everything from everyday components to electric vehicles, battery systems, commercial drones, ships, industrial robots and sophisticated production equipment. Many global technology companies (like Apple) also rely on Chinese manufacturers and supply chains to produce complex, high-quality products at scale.

China is not only manufacturing products designed elsewhere, they're also developing their own technologies, brands and systems.

“

In 2025, China entered the top ten of the World Intellectual Property Organization's Global Innovation Index. It ranked fifth globally for innovation outputs and was home to 24 of the world's top 100 innovation clusters.

”

More than low-cost manufacturing

China's industrial advantage is no longer based solely on production cost.

Over several decades, the country has invested heavily in ports, transport networks, industrial zones, energy infrastructure, engineering skills, research facilities and manufacturing technology.



Its large industrial clusters bring material suppliers, component manufacturers, engineers, toolmakers, software developers, testing facilities and logistics providers into closely connected ecosystems. **This helps companies move quickly from an initial idea to a prototype and then into large-scale production.**

Intense competition between Chinese manufacturers has also encouraged faster product development, greater automation and

“China is the new superpower when it comes to technology and manufacturing,” comments Mark Mitchley



CHINA BY THE NUMBERS

960.8 million tonnes of steel

A scary figure is that China produced approximately 960.8 million tonnes of crude steel in 2025, accounting for around **half of global production**. This makes it by far the world's largest steel-producing country...



INSIDE CHINA

The industrial giant re-inventing itself

295,000 new industrial robots

Chinese factories installed approximately **295,000 industrial robots** during 2024, representing 54% of all industrial robot installations worldwide. China's operating stock of industrial robots also exceeded two million units.

More than 13 million electric cars

More than 13 million electric cars were sold in China during 2025 - approximately **six out of every ten electric cars sold globally**. Electric cars also accounted for more than half of new-car sales in China.

“

“The luxury offered by their electric vehicles is unlike anything we have witnessed in South Africa. China is by far the largest car market in the world, and you can see this in the incredible variety of vehicles available,” says Mark.

”

The rise of smarter factories

Chinese manufacturers are connecting machinery, robotics, software, artificial intelligence and production data to create more efficient manufacturing environments.

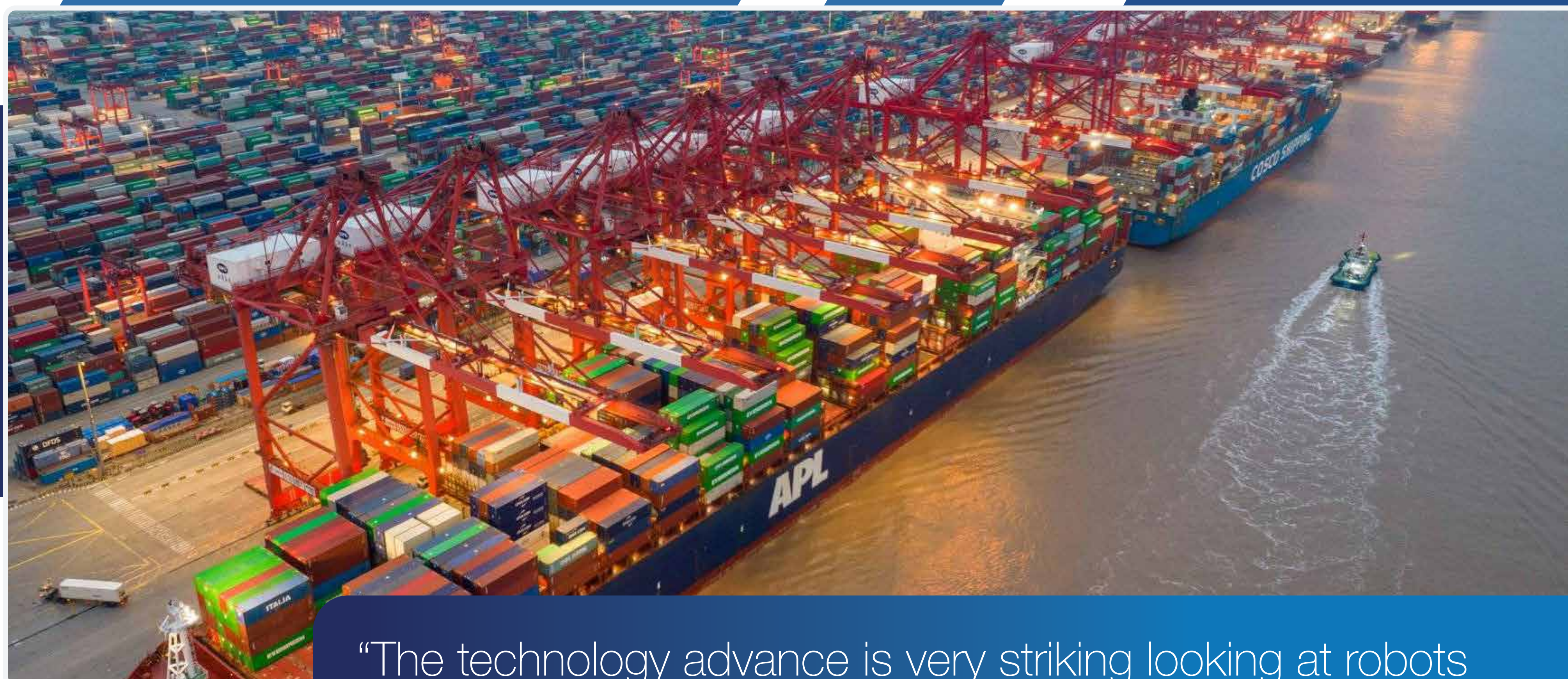


“The industry and facilities we have seen proved to be extremely efficient with minimal physical input due to automation,” says Tommy Coleman



**ADVANCED
CHINESE
Factories**

This does not necessarily mean factories without people. Instead, it changes the skills required from employees. Modern industrial businesses increasingly need people who can operate, maintain, programme and improve advanced machinery.



“The technology advance is very striking looking at robots as porters, full electric automobiles, self service outlets, etc,” comments Tommy

Steel remains central

China remains the world's largest steel producer, but the industry faces growing pressure to improve efficiency and reduce emissions.

Steelmakers are exploring greater scrap use, electric arc furnaces and lower-carbon technologies, although coal-based production still dominates.

Globally, customers are increasingly considering not only price and availability, but also traceability, efficiency and environmental impact.

What does this mean for South African industry?



China should not be dismissed because of outdated perceptions, but it should also not be treated as the automatic answer to every industrial requirement.

The opportunity lies in understanding the market, identifying reputable manufacturers and determining where Chinese technology, machinery or supplier relationships could create value.

Price alone should never determine a purchasing decision. Specifications, certifications, material traceability, quality-control processes, spare-parts availability, after-sales service, shipping times and supplier reliability must all be carefully considered.

This is especially relevant to SPS. We support customers across mining, engineering, transport, construction, infrastructure, OEM manufacturing, marine and heavy industry; sectors in which quality, consistency and reliable service cannot be compromised.

INSIDE CHINA

The industrial giant re-inventing itself

The lesson is therefore not simply to purchase from China. It is to understand its industrial development, qualify the right partners and identify ideas that could improve productivity and customer value in South Africa.

SOME PHOTOS & COMMENTS FROM MARK AND TOMMY'S TRIP

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Very friendly and welcoming people that made us feel like royalty, we really were treated great by everyone.

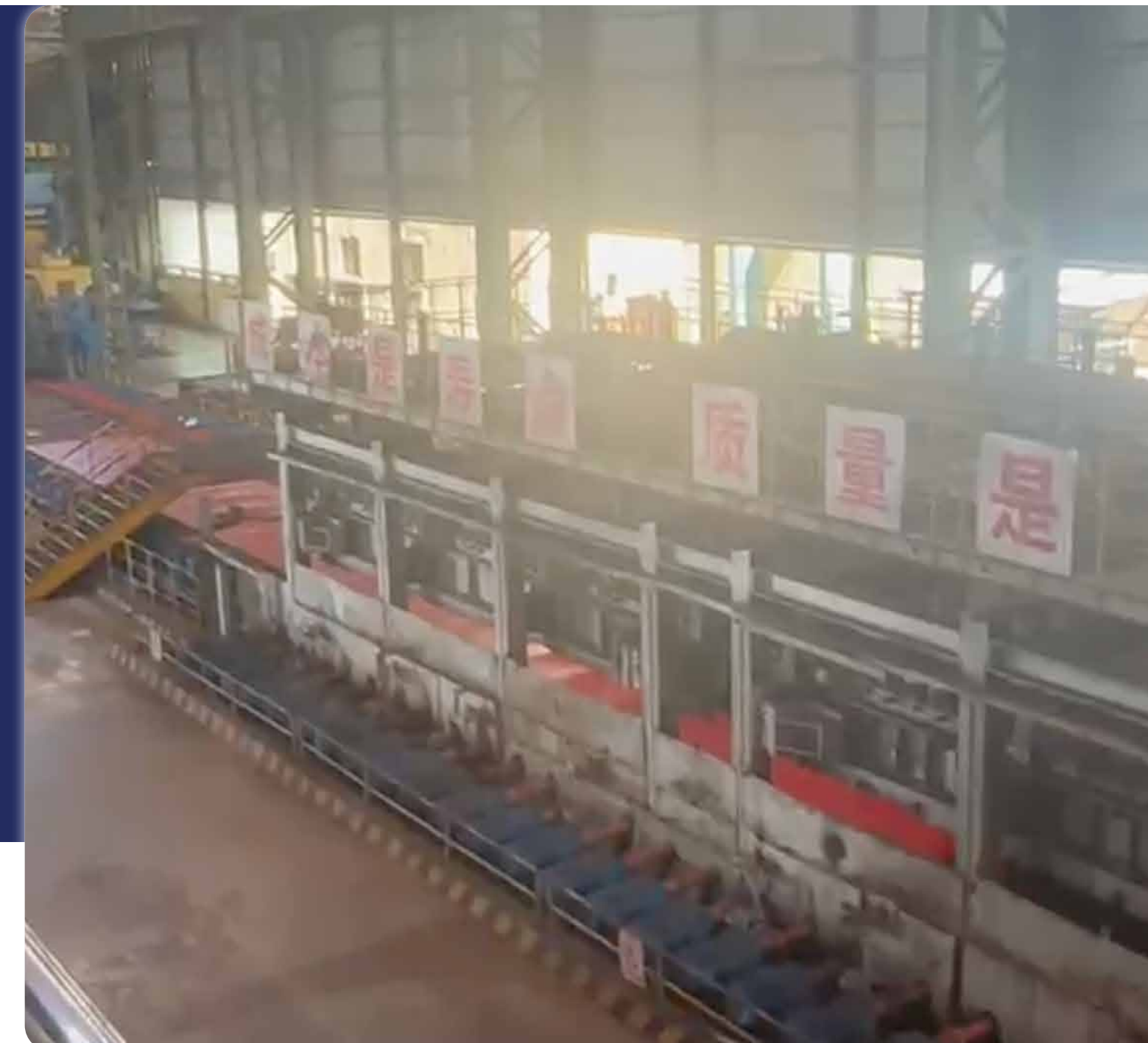
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“Well organised country where everything works and everyone has a job to do, irrespective of how insignificant”

“

Their passion for what they do was also very striking

from the bar tender to the production engineer



The luxury of their electrical vehicles is like nothing we have witnessed in South Africa. China is by far the largest car market in the world and you can see it in the variety of vehicles available.

“America may well be the largest household consumer market in the world, but in terms of volume, I believe China is leading the way.”



**SPS'S
TRUSTED
long-standing
supplier**

“

“A massive landscape, the sheer size of the place and the amount of people is overwhelming”

”

“Food is great although not everything is my preferred choice, so I was a bit out of my comfort zone!”

“

An epic experience and a great country to witness and visit, certainly been one of my travel highlights of my life.

”



BRAND NEW WORKSHOP

SPS Richards Bay has been working on something big! We are developing a brand new workshop and office in Alton, Richards Bay. This is right next door to our current premises, 6 Geleiergang, Alton. Here's some progress pictures of the developments these past few months!

Richards Bay
getting more than just a
revamp



We have recently started a YouTube channel, and will be sharing footage of our latest developments in Richards Bay. Subscribe to stay up to date!

[Click here](#)



Phase one workshop

- Measures **20m in width and 74m in length**, making it **1510m²** under roof;
- It will be equipped with **two gantry cranes** of 5 ton lifting capacity;
- It will house our **laser division** as well as light bending and thin plate stockholding



Tommy Coleman, our Operations Director, gives us an update

Growth on the Richards Bay horizon...

Phase two workshop

- Measures **23m in width and 87m in length**, making it **2022m²** under roof;
- It will be equipped with **four overhead cranes**, two 5 tons and two 10 ton units;
- It will house our **large bending brake, oxy-fuel cutters, plasma and thicker plate stock**.

We anticipate to move into phase one at the end of September and phase two end of November;

We will have three offices, one in the workshop for technical staff and managers, admin block for finance and a sales office for customer visits.





This month's projects coming out of

Follow us on Social Media to keep up-to-date!

both branches

 <https://web.facebook.com/steelplatesolutions>

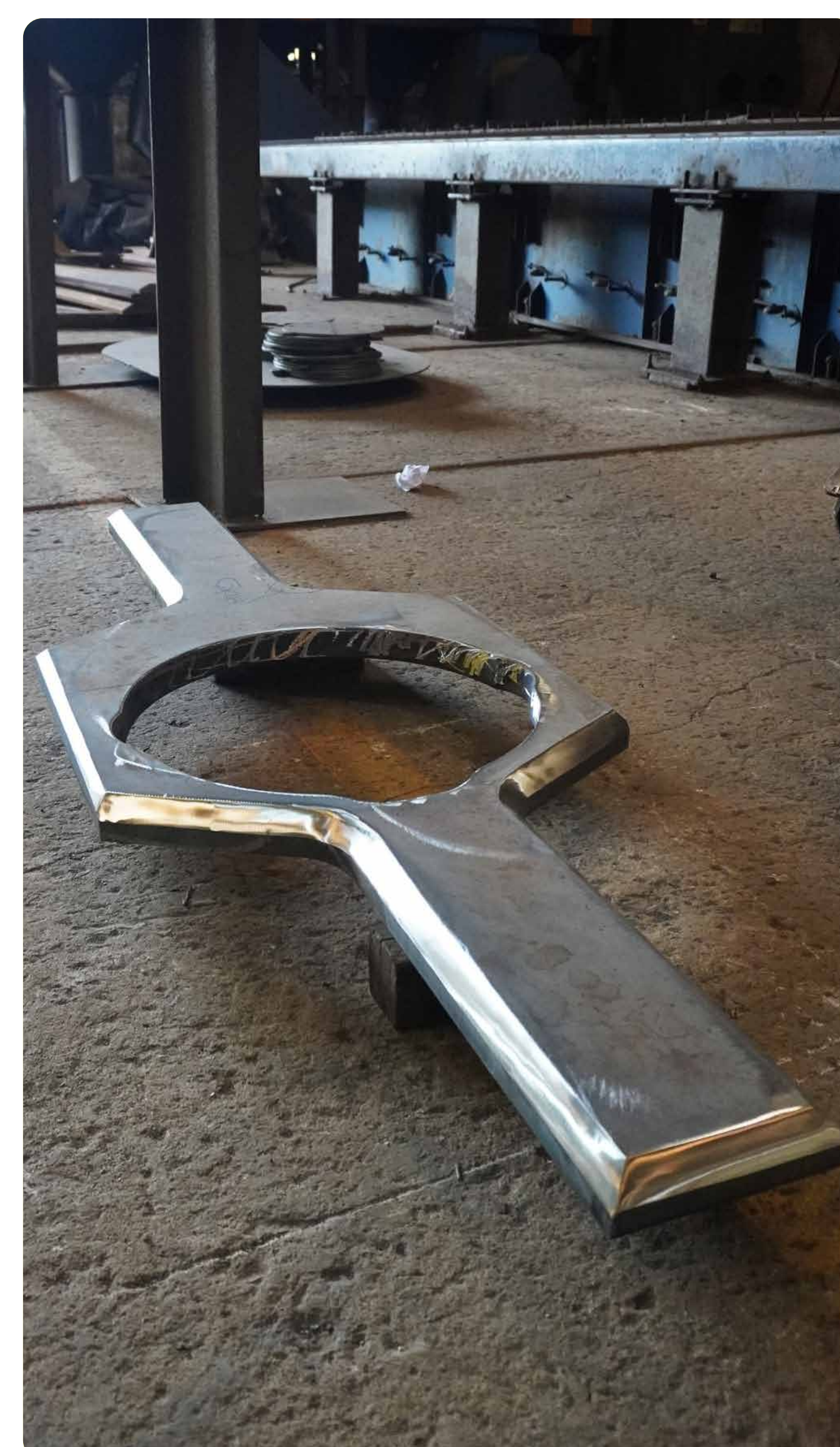
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 Call us on 087 291 4441/2/3 or 035 797 3034 to get in touch



**SUPPLIED
MATERIAL**
to this client



Winter Warmer: **Slow-Braised Rolled Beef Short Rib Roast**

Made for those cold, cozy Sundays

I recently used this recipe as we had bought a juicy beef short rib from the New Hanover Garage Butchery in Dalton - highly recommended stop if you find yourself driving past the area. We made this dish at home, and wow - was it a winner!

Rolled beef short rib is beautifully marbled and full of flavour. Because it comes from a harder-working part of the animal, it benefits from being cooked slowly at a low temperature. Given enough time, it breaks down, leaving you with tender, succulent meat that almost falls apart at the touch of a fork.

Method:

1. Prepare the roast

Remove the roast from the refrigerator approximately 30–45 minutes before cooking. This allows it to come closer to room temperature and helps it cook more evenly. Preheat the oven to 150°C.

2. Season generously

Season the roast well on all sides with salt and black pepper.

3. Sear the meat

Heat the oil in a heavy ovenproof pot or roasting dish over high heat. Brown the roast for approximately 3–4 minutes on each side, until it develops a deep golden crust. This step adds richness and depth to the final dish. Remove the roast from the pot and set it aside temporarily.

4. Build the braising base

Add the onion, carrots and celery to the same pot. Cook for approximately five minutes, or until the vegetables begin to soften. Add the garlic and tomato paste and cook for a further minute. Pour in the red wine, when using, and scrape the bottom of the pot to release all the caramelised pieces. Allow the wine to simmer and reduce for 2–3 minutes.

5. Add the stock

Return the roast to the pot. Pour in enough beef stock to reach approximately halfway up the side of the meat. Add the fresh herbs and bay leaves.

6. Cook low and slow

Cover the pot tightly with a lid or foil and place it in the oven. Cook for approximately 3½–5 hours, depending on the size of the roast. It is ready when a fork slides into the meat easily and the roast is tender enough to pull apart. For beautifully tender short rib, the internal temperature will usually reach approximately 90–96°C.

7. Make the gravy

Carefully remove the roast from the pot and allow it to rest for 15–20 minutes.

Remove the string or netting before slicing.

Serve and Enjoy

Ingredients

- 1 rolled beef short rib roast, approximately 1.5–3 kg
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 1 large onion, roughly chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 carrots, roughly chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 cup red wine, optional
- 2–3 cups beef stock
- A few sprigs of fresh thyme or rosemary
- 2 bay leaves

