

Listening transcript

Piotr's next stop was Bolesławiec - a city in western Poland that was famous for its exquisite hand-painted navy-blue ceramics. As he drove into the city, he was welcomed by a human-sized teapot sculpture standing in the middle of the roundabout. He shook his head in disbelief. It was all there - the original pattern, the vibrant navy-blue colour! The sculpture looked like the traditional ceramics from Bolesławiec, just that it was enormously huge. He drove towards the manufacture.

He was promised a factory tour and a possibility to negotiate the prices of the pottery for his store. As he left his car, he was greeted by Kuba, an old friend of his who worked at the pottery manufacture and would be his guide. After a short conversation, they went into the main production hall. There were hundreds of shelves filled from top to bottom with yet unpainted dishes of all forms and shapes imaginable. Kuba explained how exactly the pottery was made.

- So first, we use moulds - Piotr raised his eyebrow and Kuba explained - 'Think of a making a cake. You have the baking pan that you fill with liquid dough. The pan gives your cake the shape. Mould is like that pan - you fill it with a liquid that dries up and turns into a cup, a teapot or a plate. This method is very efficient, allowing us to produce a lot of pots simultaneously. Once out of the mould, our pottery has to be cleaned and polished. Then, just like with the cake, we place the pottery in a furnace. Think of a huge oven that has the temperature of 800 degrees Celsius. Once this process is finished, we paint the ceramics. It's all done manually, no machines involved. This is by far the most difficult and time-consuming process but as a result every single item we produce is a work of art. In the end, we place a layer of glaze on our pottery and into the furnace they go once again. This time the temperature is higher and reaches up to 1250 degrees Celsius. This makes our pottery shiny and smooth. And that's basically it!

Piotr left the manufacture with a smile on his face. The pottery was truly beautiful, rather inexpensive for the quality it offered and, as he learned, it was selling very well. The problem, he thought, was that it was perhaps a bit too popular - almost every single souvenir store he has visited so far was offering the ceramics from Bolesławiec. Was this going to be a problem? Well, the time would show.