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Seeing MPreis

Category: Commentary

Posted by: [Lorenza](#) on 10/31/2005 6:27:00 AM | [Digg](#) | [Stumble It!](#) | [del.icio.us](#)



An Austrian supermarket spree

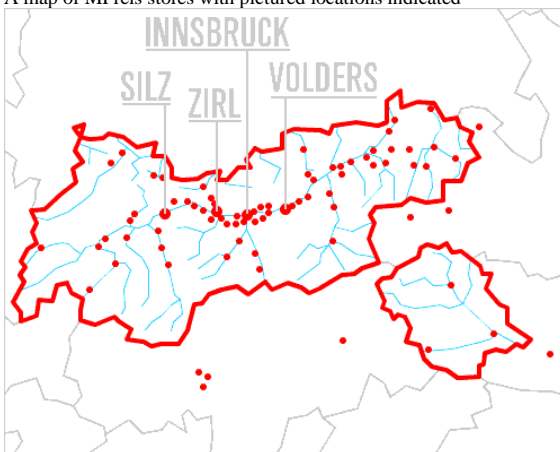
My September (2005) journey, through Tyrol - Austria, allowed me to explore about 15 MPreis supermarket stores; driving through towns along a 100 km route, west and east of Innsbruck.

The following images and text describe some of the MPreis locations I visited and my overall impression of the chain and it's unconventionally designed stores.

Link: [MPreis](#)

Reference: [MPreis: Seriously sexy supermarkets](#) (L+L)

A map of MPreis stores with pictured locations indicated



In all the stores I saw, I was struck by the imaginative use of materials and details (i.e. MPreis in Zirl shown below). The use of views, and therefore of glass framing incredible backgrounds (ok, they do have the 'almighty' Dolomites at their doorstep), was recurrent in all stores. It was so refreshing to enter the stores and still be able to see the outside. Using natural light to flood the internal volume also minimizes the use of artificial lighting during the day.

By being able to view the outdoor landscape it also helped to get orientated (something that certainly doesn't happen in the UK stores, which are usually a sealed 'tin box').

Browsing through the food and wine sections becomes a very pleasant experience, so you find yourself not rushing to get the shopping done; instead the trendy and comfy cafes of the MPreis stores seemed to be a perfect 'excuse' for a coffee break.

The buildings are certainly not cheap projects. The choice of materials shows an interest in creating a pleasant and accurate architectural environment. However the compact forms and the relative small footprints of the stores, I am sure, aims to the efficiency of construction and therefore of cost.

Moreover, if customers are happy to shop in such buildings, and also are proud of them (they do look like little 'jewels'), it means they will come over and over again, keeping the MPreis' economy going and, most importantly, justifying the initial extra costs.

The display and arrangement of the products inside, also showed care and value towards a healthy lifestyle where cooking and eating is a fun thing to do, about which we can hardly say the same thing when going to any UK supermarkets.

Store in Zirl



The MPreis located in Volders, east of Innsbruck was one of the smallest stores I visited. It is located at the back of a block of flats off the main road. Like this one, most of the MPreis presented seeded (planted) roofs. The environmental issues seem to be high on the Austrians' agenda, as green roofs and photovoltaic panels featured in a lot of residential and commercial scheme.

Store in Volders





The MPreis store in Silz has to be one of the most intriguing we saw. The amount of glass used was quite incredible. The north skylights gave a constant view of the Alps, as well as flooding the store with natural light.

And being able to see the products on shelves from the outside is very inviting!

The shelving system is consistent in all the stores, probably designed to be as flexible as possible and to give a sense of lightness as much as possible, so the customers' sight concentrates on the actual products.

Store in Silz





One of the last MPreis stores we visited was located on the outskirts of Innsbruck, just next to the city's airport.

An incredible roof plane extends beyond the store's footprint, creating a cover overhang: aesthetically pleasing as well as practical. The store itself resembled a glass box (only on the front facades, at the back a cladding façade provides economy of costs and energy).

Store on the outskirts of Innsbruck



It was an inspiring journey, to see an everyday functional building type being transformed in something exciting.... As Wallpaper magazine wrote "The seriously sexy supermarket."

Bower

Posted by Paul on 11/2/2005 7:39:00 AM

It just goes to show that even supermarkets can be design classics. I think it is time that the english supermarkets sat up and noticed what good design can do for their image and quality of shopping experience for thier customers. An interesting journey....lets hope the supermarkets follow suit

Posted by jef zaborski on 3/2/2006 10:29:00 PM

What I wonder are the incentives (either provided by the state or municipality, or within the business model) that make this sort of responsible and sane design possible? Tax breaks, a long term outlook? What? Tell Me Please and I promise I'll call Wal-Mart tomorrow and tell them.

Another fan

Posted by ANITA FRANCE on 4/16/2007 8:08:00 AM

M Preis made us very popular with fellow travellers when we visited St Anton two years ago and again last year in Soll. The one at St Anton is by the main autoroute outside the village. It felt surreal to sit by a busy road, surrounded by beautiful mountains eating delicious cakes and coffee at what would be classed as a motorway cafe in the UK. Acting upon our recommendations to fellow travellers who went on a day trip, they persuaded the rep to get the coach to call at our cafe and everyone was so impressed that the tour rep decided to make it a regular stop! Hence it was a joke between us last year when we returned to Austria wondering if we would find an M Preis in Soll. We couldn't believe it when upon arrival our coach pulled up outside M Preis - our hotel shared the same parking area! Although not up to St Anton standard the take away sandwiches we purchased for taking on picnics were super. Unfortunately they were so delicious they didn't last longer than mid morning. We are going to Seefeld in June and I came across this site whilst searching to see if we would be in luck a third time. It's been reassuring to know there are other sad people out there with the same interests.