



JOE & THE JUICE Denmark

The Danish juice bar that isn't relying on typical Scandinavian style to spread its message

It may not be classically Nordic in style but Danish coffee and juice bar franchise Joe & the Juice has managed to expand beyond Denmark using a youth-orientated fashion retail model.

"From day one it was our plan to build a new Starbucks," says founder Kaspar Basse. "And, actually, opening in new markets outside of Denmark seems natural. In Denmark, not many people bring coffee to the streets – most employees stay in their office during lunchtimes – and we are not a culture that tends to welcome a very 'outspoken' atmosphere in retail stores. Our first opening outside of Denmark was our Regent Street [London] store two years ago and it's doing very well."

Two more outlets are due to open in London and the 25th and 26th are imminent in Denmark. Within the next six months there will be Joe & the Juices selling their shakes, lunch snacks and coffee in Hamburg and Stockholm, with tentative plans to break into New York.

It may well be, of course, that eschewing classic – ie austere and frosty – Scandinavian design cues has allowed Joe & the Juice to blend more easily into the global mainstream. Its HR policy is another matter, however. We can't help noticing that Joe & the Juice staff do tend to be rather "comely".

"I have to be careful what I say here, and we don't have anything like an Abercrombie & Fitch approach," says manager Kaspar Svingholm. "Let's say... we try to hire people with character and personality." — MB
joejuice.com

MONOCLE COMMENT: *While Danes may really be bargain-focused shoppers, the nation's global brand is actually associated more with healthy, Nordic good living. Joe & the Juice squeezes the most out of this reputation.*



B
GUIDE
Food retail

WORLD FEEDERS

—Global

Preface

Monocle has visited the aisles, shelves and banquettes of food outlets to find the best retailers. Whether it's small artisan producers or large-scale supermarkets, what we discovered is a focus on great quality produce, real convenience and shops that make customers feel good by actually selling them what they want, and in environments where they enjoy being.



Why it works:

Youth appeal

Beats Starbucks its own game by targeting a younger market – effective in a country like Denmark that has no tradition for take-away coffee.

Style

Uses a fashion retail ambience to sell smoothies and sandwiches.

Staff

Having buff, well-trained staff always helps.



MOS BURGER Japan

Quality food tailored to local tastes – and personally tested by the CEO – has created a recipe for success

Next to a locked door on the third floor of Mos Burger's Tokyo headquarters, a plaque reads: "Creative Kitchen". It's here that every new sandwich, dessert and drink sold by the Japanese burger chain starts off as an idea. The kitchen is small, about the size of the food-prep station at a Mos Burger shop. There's a fryer, a flat-top stove, a bun toaster, gas burners. A rarely used microwave is off in one corner. A box of oyster bouillon sits on a shelf while, beneath a steel table, bottles of soy sauce and rayu, a spicy oil, compete with 100 vials of cumin, fennel, yuzu and other spices.

Mos's *aji zukuri* is a sort of flavour creation lab. Three men, three women. "Seven, if you count me," says Yoshihiko Mihara, who is general manager of product development. "But I usually get chased out." It's hard to fathom that this is Japan's largest homegrown hamburger chain. But then again Mos – short for Mountain Ocean Sun – seems to have made it big while maintaining higher standards than US rivals precisely because of its insistence on acting like a small burger joint.

At home, Mos (1,393 shops) is a distant second to McDonald's (3,300 shops). Mos's challenge will be to uphold its standards as it adds to its 261 stores overseas, says Atsushi Sakurada, president of Mos Food Services, which owns Mos Burger. He predicts that Mos will have 1,800 outlets overseas, including in the US and Europe, within a decade. "My dream is to have a shop in Paris on the Champs-Élysées," he says.

Sakurada – only Mos's third president – is carrying on a family tradition of sorts. His uncle was Satoshi Sakurada, a former banker who started it all in 1972 with a chilli burger that paid homage to Tommy's in California but was modified to appeal to Japanese diners. The previous year, McDonald's made its debut in Tokyo's posh Ginza district. The first Mos shop was also in Tokyo but on the outskirts, surrounded by rice fields.

The two have been on divergent paths ever since. As McDonald's rolled out cheaper, faster meals, Mos focused on quality. Its staff prepare burgers only after taking customers' orders. It



Why it works:

Staff

Store staff prepare meals only after orders are placed.

The food

Burgers and sandwiches are tailored to appeal to Japanese and other Asian palates.

Information

The company's website lists the farms that grow the produce for every sandwich.

Product development

Test kitchen is small-scale and the CEO has the final say on every new product.

Design

Shop interiors use natural materials.

Mos Burger in numbers:

Founded: July 1972

Shops: 1,652 (1,393 in Japan, 261 overseas)

Employees: 1,122

Annual revenues: ¥63.2bn (€604m)

No. of customers daily: 320,000

Mos's biggest overseas market: Taiwan (199 shops)



PHOTOGRAPHER: TETSUYA ITO



Bigger than Mac

Contrary to popular opinion, McDonald's is no longer the world's biggest restaurant chain. Subway overtook it in 2011, edging the golden arches' 32,737 outlets with 33,749 sites.

sources vegetables from 3,000 mostly family-owned farms that meet Mos's near-organic standards. It buys beef from Australian ranchers whose cattle graze in open fields. And on its website, the company lists where it gets every ingredient of every sandwich. That's helped win over an unusual demographic: women aged 18 to 35, who make up two-thirds of the clientele in Japan.

Mos's best-sellers have a distinct Japanese flair, such as the kakiage rice burger, with tempura-battered seafood and rice discs instead of buns. Mos's Creative Kitchen dreams up 80 products annually, and Sakurada samples every one before it goes out. (Teams of Creative Kitchen grads tailor these products for seven overseas markets.) Cost is never a priority. "Flavour comes first," says Mihara.

Which means some offerings can be pricey. The most extreme case: the Takumi Judan, a 10-layer burger that sold for ¥1,000 (€9.60). "No other fast-food chain would want to imitate us," says Mihara. — KH mos.co.jp

MONOCLE COMMENT: Mos shows that the words "burger chain" aren't always to be equated with the sign of the devil. It's important that big businesses take as much care over their sourcing as the little guy.

TESCO (Not so big in) Japan

In the crowded Japanese market, the British supermarket giant was forced to check out

When Britain's Tesco decided in late August to give up on Japan, after eight years of trying, it came as a surprise to some. The grocery-store giant had ventured into plenty of new markets before, mobilising its enormous global resources to its advantage.

But in Japan, the odds were against Tesco from the start. It was entering a crowded sector in a zero-growth economy. It had to cater to Japanese consumers, a tough crowd to please. And without a distribution channel of its own, it was forced to rely partly on C Two Network, owner of the small, discount Tsurukame grocery stores that Tesco had acquired.

"Tesco bought a business that had to be completely rebuilt from the scratch," says Toshiyuki Yahagi, a professor who specialises in Japan's retail sector at Hosei University in Tokyo. Tesco later set up its own shops and bought another small chain, Fre'c.

In Japan's saturated market, Tesco's success depended on stealing market share from rivals. Try doing that with just 129 stores against major supermarket operators Aeon, Seiyu and Ito-Yokado, which have a superior selection, or ubiquitous convenience-store chains FamilyMart, Lawson and 7-Eleven, whose low prices are hard to beat. Like France's Carrefour (which withdrew from Japan in 2005) and Walmart of the US, Tesco had discovered that, in Japan, global scale can easily be cancelled out with a few bad strategic decisions.

Why do companies like Tesco bother then? Because of the enormous size of the retail market, says Brian Salsberg from US consultancy McKinsey. "Even a company able to grab 5 per cent in Japan would stand to make billions of dollars," explains Salsberg. — KH

Packing an eco-punch

The USA throws away around 72 million tons of packaging a year. But In.redients, a new store opening in Austin, Texas this autumn, hopes to be the country's first packaging-free supermarket. Buyers must bring their own containers or use the free compostable ones offered.



EMPÓRIO SANTA MARIA São Paulo

Upmarket and everyday, a deli store loved by Paulistas

Even before you reach the store's entrance you begin to experience the elements that make Empório Santa Maria stand out from the retail mob in São Paulo. First there's the valet parking and the driver who cheerily addresses you with "Welcome and good shopping!" The shop employs 250 cashiers, packers, bakers and managers – and six sommeliers (in the cellar with 500 different wines, many exclusives).

Empório Santa Maria was founded in 1993 by the same family who ran São Paulo's decadent Daslu department store (see issue 47). But it was only in 2008, when the business was purchased by Victor Leal Jr (pictured) and Bernardo Ouro Preto that the Empório began to gain power and visibility – and become profitable. Leal and Ouro Preto also own the small supermarket chain, St Marche.

"We succeeded in doubling the number of consumers," says Leal. The number of items on the shelves also jumped from 4,000 to 12,000. There are 150 different types of olive oil alone.

Located in upmarket Avenida Cidade Jardim, the Empório occupies 900 sq m. On the main floor there is the market, a wine shop and tables for breakfast. On the first floor, a restaurant and sushi bar serve lunch dishes made from ingredients such as pasta that are produced on site.

In the early days the Empório was inspired by Dean & DeLuca in New York. You could buy the best cupcake in town, but if you wanted to find everyday products you had to cross the street to go to the Walgreens. But Leal and Ouro Preto created a hybrid of a neighbourhood store and a high end deli, and it's a model the people of São Paulo love. — RM

MONOCLE COMMENT: Good Brazilian retail works because it offers customers service levels you find in very few nations – Lebanon is a close rival.

Why it works:

Personal service
Free valet parking.

Unique products
Its own line of pastas, breads and cakes.

Broad horizons
A newsstand with a complete range of international titles.

Good food
Homemade ice cream.

Restaurant and sushi bar
Ingredients are produced on site.

PHOTOGRAPHER: VICTOR APFAVO

BOROUGH AND BERMONDSEY London

When smart food retailers flock together, it's all good for the locals

Good food retail can change a neighbourhood. A well-stocked deli, farmers' market or even the right supermarket can help revitalise a community. Increasingly everyone from civic leaders to property developers sees their ambitions linked to those of smart food retailers. This is the case in one part of south London. Traditionally the half of the city that was seen as less desirable, today people flock to areas such as Southwark in search of the loft apartments that line the river. One of the main attractions is the area's thriving food scene.

Borough Market has been the main food market in the area since 1755 but in 2007 two traders, Monmouth Coffee and Neal's Yard Dairy, decided to look for more space and took over empty railway arches in Bermondsey, less than a mile away. The inexpensive depots were the perfect place to set up their offices and the cool temperatures under the arches were ideal for storing food. Traders looking for similar spaces followed, but kept selling their products at Borough Market. Soon after, Borough Market saw the new food area (which now comprises Maltby Street, Druid Street and Stanworth Street) as competition because the dealers were also selling their wares there.

Today Borough Market's team seem more chilled. "We actively welcome all new markets that strengthen the drive to support quality UK food producers," says Kate Howell, communications manager at Borough Market. Whatever the political machinations for traders, it's all good for the locals who are finding their shopping baskets ever more varied and their communities ever more vibrant. — SRT
boroughmarket.org.uk; maltbystreet.com

MONOCLE COMMENT: People like meeting the people who make, grow and tend the food they eat. Provenance and passion make food taste better.



Where to shop

The Garrison (1 & 2)
99-101 Bermondsey Street
"This used to be a dodgy area," say Clive Watson and Adam White, owners of this cosy refurbished pub that serves great food. "Now it's a charming neighbourhood with a strong personality."
thegarrison.co.uk

St John's Bakery (3)
72 Druid Street
"I normally work night shifts, so this is a great way to get to know my customers," says head baker Justin Piers Gellatly. The custard doughnuts are a must. Open Saturday mornings.
stjohnbakerycompany.com

Topolski (4)
104 Druid Street
The place for Polish smoked and cured meats, pungent horseradish and sweet pickles.

The Kernel Brewery (5)
98 Druid Street
Down a cold India pale ale, porter or stout beer fresh from the brewery every Saturday.
thekernelbrewery.com

Zucca (6)
184 Bermondsey Street
Chef Sam Harris (pictured), formerly of the River Café, serves hearty Italian food.
zuccalondon.com

Monmouth Coffee
34 Maltby St
A London institution when it comes to flat whites, Monmouth's training site in Bermondsey opens for retail on Saturday mornings, selling drinks, fresh beans and pastries.
monmouthcoffee.co.uk

Coleman Coffee Roasters
55 Stanworth Street
Jack Coleman sells coffee sourced from small farms around the world then roasted in an Otto Swadlo V3 roaster made in Vienna in 1950. Open Saturday mornings only.
colemancoffee.com

KaseSwiss
104 Druid Street
Selling traditional farmhouse cheese from Switzerland. Saturday mornings only.
kaseswiss.com

Bermondsey Farmers' Market
Bermondsey Square
For shoppers who always forget one thing on their list, this is the place for fresh fruit and vegetables, fish, meat, poultry, and cheese.
lfm.org.uk

Small beer

Supermarkets are likely to overtake pubs this year as the UK's prime source for a beer. Pubs currently have a 50.9 per cent share.



CONVENIENCE STORES Scandinavia

The Nordic nations know how to do corner shops – make them nice and sell things we like

It's lunchtime in Stockholm. While those with time on their hands head for a restaurant, people looking for a quicker option are likely to visit one of Magnus Reitan's convenience stores. Getting your lunch from the corner shop would be a depressing option in some countries but in Scandinavia these stores are thriving.

With a 28 per cent market share, Reitan Servicehandel is Norway's biggest player, and holds 11 and 15 per cent of the markets in Sweden and Denmark respectively. Reitan (pictured), head of the Oslo-based company, says innovation is the key.

"It seems that some convenience stores in Europe have stayed in the 1980s, just trying to maintain their positions and selling the same old candy, newspapers and tobacco," he says. "We're constantly bringing in new magazines, new drinks and new electronic services, such as pre-paid Spotify and iTunes cards."

Reitan Servicehandel's major brands are Narvesen in Norway and Latvia, Pressbyrå in Sweden and 7-Eleven, for which it owns the licence in Norway, Sweden and Denmark. All three focus on fast food, drinks and services. Pressbyrå and Narvesen also have wide selections of magazines and all of them are big on traditional convenience store offerings such as lottery and public transport tickets.

If you compare corner shops in Scandinavia with ones in the UK, you'll see that the former are packed with the newest brands and operate in airy, bright locations, while the latter often sell Mars bars and newspapers in stuffy spaces. Reitan says location and convenience alone are not enough – you also need to keep up with customers' changing demands.

Attractive food and drinks will be the dominating product areas for convenience stores in the future, Reitan believes. He is hungry for a bigger share of the European market, and has his sights set on the Baltic countries and Finland. "If something hasn't happened before March next year, I'll be very surprised." — ENA

PRESSBYRÅN Sweden

The right products make for a good convenience store – great service makes them even better

Pressbyrå is a convenience store chain with 322 franchise shops around Sweden. Reitan bought the company in 2001. Sales in 2010 were SEK2.2bn (€240m). It is one of the most well-known brands in Sweden. The stores mainly sell fast food, drinks, magazines, bus, train and lottery tickets.

MONOCLE COMMENT: *Whether we are in Tokyo or Oslo, we are a sucker for a well-run convenience store and this is a model where franchised stores really work – they are run by people who know that their future depends on good service.*



PHOTOGRAPHER: THOMAS EKSTRÖM

Why it works:

Location

The stores are always situated on busy streets and other places where people gather: railway stations, hospitals or airports.

Magazines

The name means "press bureau", and the best branches offer more than 2,000 international and Swedish titles.

Quality

No tired bananas – produce is always fresh.

Quick and convenient

The shops are easily navigated and queues are always short.

Something for everyone

If hot dogs aren't your thing, you can pick up a healthy salad or a freshly baked cinnamon bun.

PHOTOGRAPHER: LINA HASKEL

IRMA Denmark

When Danes want high quality, this is the go-to supermarket

Danish letterboxes are bombarded by supermarket promotions which, though they feature the lowest of low-end industrial food products, are as much a part of everyday Danish life as Klint lampshades or B&O sound systems. One supermarket is bucking the trend and, in the spirit of the New Nordic cuisine revolution, is introducing more artisanal regional products.

Irma – the closest Denmark has to Whole Foods – has started featuring Danish gourmet products like Knuthenlund organic sheep cheese, Læsø sea salt and heirloom beetroots in its weekly promotions.

"There are more and more discount stores in Denmark," says Irma's buying manager, Hans Christian Ipland. "But we just had our best year ever from focusing more than ever on our story, which is about quality."

Irma, which just celebrated its 125th anniversary, is Denmark's leading organic grocer. It has benefited from legislation that frowns upon large, out-of-town hypermarkets, but this is also a country with the highest retail taxes in the world, and whose people have the lowest grocery spend in Europe.

"Since the New Nordic manifesto was published in 2004, there's been much more focus on food in Denmark," says Ipland. "So we have put more and more emphasis on local produce."

Thus in Irma, apples are not all the same shape, and the milk – if it's single farm from Gyrop – tastes different depending on the time of year. — MB
irma.dk

MONOCLE COMMENT: *Supporting local farmers makes good business sense and allows supermarkets to do the right thing.*

Why it works:

Suppliers

Collaborative relationship with good suppliers – no bullying.

Shelf life

Integrate-organic and standard produce – no ghettos.

Loveable branding

How can you resist buying from a little girl with a jaunty bow?

Produce

Seasonal and local.

PHOTOGRAPHER: JAN SØNDERGAARD



SUPERMARKETS Australia

Restaurant food might be great Down Under, but big supermarkets are past their sell-by date

For a country that prides itself on fresh food, Australia seems fresh out of ideas when it comes to innovative supermarket space. Dominated by the Coles and Woolworths chains that have stifled competition with an estimated 75 per cent market share between them, the focus Down Under is on satisfying customers' wallets not their in-store experience.

"There are supermarkets in New Zealand that are five years ahead of us," says Martin Kneebone, director of Freshlogic, a Melbourne food consultancy.

According to Kneebone, this lack of competition means less pressure to innovate. "The higher standards in the UK have undoubtedly come from the fact that there are four or five players competing," he says. Figures also show that many Australians never enter a supermarket: 30 per cent still buy their fresh foods from greengrocers, delis and butchers, which means that a personalised approach is as important as the lowest price on pineapples.

It's something Woolworths has tried to tackle through its Thomas Dux speciality stores, but it's not enough. "Coles is leading the way by opening up the front of the store and removing those pesky security barriers at the entrance," says Kneebone, "but there's a long way to go."

"It's becoming scary in big stores, which are saturated with generic house brands," says Sydney University lecturer Peter McDonald, currently undertaking his PhD in retail branding. "The consumer wants to know, 'Where is my choice?'"

"You look at something like Loblaws in Canada; cosy, stylish and multifaceted," says McDonald. "[Whereas in Australia] there is a continued lack of any long-term commitment to finish the job." — JS



Why it works:

Don't hurry
Realise that good bread takes time, and experienced hands.

Timelessness
Build a retail space which looks like it's always been there.

An orderly queue
Ticket queueing system keeps order without dauntingly long lines (Danes are notoriously undisciplined queuers).

Shopfitting
Use high-quality materials in designing your retail space.

Delicious products
Ahh, those rhubarb muffins.



LAGKAGEHUSET
Denmark

A chain of bakeries that's risen by never allowing quality to sink

In 2008 two experienced Danish bakers, Steen Skallebæk and Ole Kristoffersen, amalgamated their bakeries under a new brand, Lagkagehuset (The Layer Cake House), with the aim of dragging the Danish baking scene into the new century.

"Nobody had taken high-quality baking out into a chain here before," explains Kristoffersen, who was the face of baking on Danish morning TV for many years. "You can't rush making bread if you want quality. We wanted our first place [a former pharmacy on a prime corner site overlooking the Christianshavn canal] to look like it had been there for 30 years and would be there for another 30 years, so we used stone for the floor and heavy wood for the counters. A lot of people try to do that kind of thing, but don't go all the way. We wanted it to be a place we loved to be in."

Numerous awards followed both for their products and concept, and the brand expanded rapidly to its current 17 branches selling a range of fruity muffins, cakes, pastries, quality coffees, Danish rye bread and sour doughs baked in (mostly) on-site stone ovens. Most of the branches are in affluent parts of Copenhagen, with three in southern Jutland and a large outlet in Copenhagen Airport. A new branch is set to open in Copenhagen Central Station in November.

"We are expanding further from Copenhagen and that's what we are focusing on for the next year, but we definitely want to go beyond Denmark," says Kristoffersen. "But we have to be careful. Everything must be made by hand, otherwise the quality starts to go." — MB lagkagehuset.dk

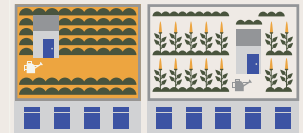
MONOCLE COMMENT: Doing simple things well is the bedrock of a new generation of European food retailers. We'd like one in front of Midori House.



PHOTOGRAPHER: ENOK HOLSEGAARD



Thinking above the box
BrightFarms in New York is working with supermarkets to design and build farms on rooftops. Growing locally cuts transport costs and pollution.



WAITROSE
UK

A supermarket that's profiting from the bankers without forgetting the mummies

Early this autumn the British supermarket chain known most for its yummy mummy-ness launched an innovative new store in Canary Wharf – the haven of bankers, hardly the most trolley-friendly of folk. This Waitrose flagship, 6,900 sq m of some of London's most expensive real estate, is also proving to be a housewives' favourite and Waitrose's most profitable store.

The new "Waitrose Food, Fashion & Home" is a £15m (£17m) refit of a branch that first opened in 2002. Corporate HQs nearby include Barclays. The footfall at Waitrose is not only

high, but premium, hence the £700 bottles of Chateau Lafite Rothschild in the wine section and the oyster bar. Unusually, men make up 51 per cent of the customer base at this branch and an average lunchtime sees 4,000 customers in the peak period, the vast majority in collar and cuffs. The front area is therefore designed in an arc along which customers travel seamlessly from sandwiches to takeaway curries to drinks to self-service checkout, making a time-efficient visit for the BLT-buying banker.

Upstairs, on the floors devoted to homeware and fashion, the merchandise is skewed to the Canary Wharf consumer. There's plenty of sportswear – there's a huge gym next door – and a big push on gifts, including leaving treats and anniversary prezies aimed at the absent-minded husband. Crucially, Waitrose hasn't alienated the local consumer base, including residents. "The more people that engage with us," says Diana Hunter, Waitrose's director of store development, "the happier I am." — TM waitrose.com

MONOCLE COMMENT: While the British often complain about the spread of the supermarket chains, everyone seems to be happy when a Waitrose opens. And it's a company that treats its staff well too.



Why it works:

A place to linger
A wine bar with corkage fee, espresso bar and cosy café upstairs allow you to stay long after you've got your groceries.

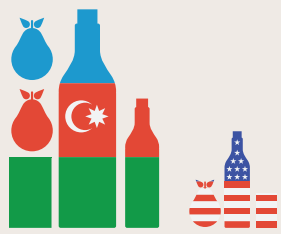
Join the fast lane
Those wanting to grab a quick sandwich can do so almost entirely separately from those doing their weekly shop.

Signage
As good as any airport, navigating around the store is straightforward.

Customising
The store is tailor-made to the exact needs of the local clientele.

Knowing the formula
It still provides what Waitrose is known for – top-quality food.

PHOTOGRAPHER: JON TONKS



Big and small slices of the food pie
Azerbaijan's citizens spend the highest percentage of their income on food, with 46.9 per cent of household yearly incomes going on nourishment compared with the USA whose citizens spend the least in the world at 6.9 per cent.



ZURHEIDE
Germany

A supermarket where Kobe beef and gourmet dining have added to a winning formula

Located in and around Essen since 1997, Edeka Frischecenter Zurheide has made a splash in Germany's supermarket world with oversized destination supermarkets run by the Zurheide family (father Heinz, along with sons Rüdiger and Marco, control the business under the German supermarket franchise Edeka).

In seven locations scattered throughout the traditionally industrial Ruhr region, the Zurheide stores offer shoppers an impressive mix: low-price staples such as house-brand milk are just as important as high-end gourmet fare like Kobe beef. And every corner of the store seems made for comfort and convenience. The Zurheide Feine Kost branch in Düsseldorf, which opened in 2009, won the designation of German Supermarket of the Year in 2011.

Some of the ideas – such as the in-house bistros and an island layout – are definitely borrowed, but Zurheide's remix is unique in a country still dominated by cramped, unattractive discount supermarket chains. "Germany has a very conservative business culture, but German food entrepreneurs are finally catching on that when it comes to food, if you give people what they want, they'll pay for it," says business journalist Andrew Bulkeley. "And *feinkost* – delicatessen fare – is part of German culture. Upscale supermarkets like Zurheide are starting to get some of the market share back from that."

"We looked all over the world to see how we'd develop this supermarket," says Rüdiger Zurheide. "We thought of how people want to shop now and where they'd shop in 10 years." — KB
frischecenter-zurheide.de



PHOTOGRAPHER: HENNING BOCK



MPREIS
Austria

Individual architect-designed stores and a strong local focus mark out this regional supermarket

MPREIS began as a small grocery store in the 1920s, founded by Therese Mölk in Innsbruck, the capital of the Austrian province of Tyrol. Still owned by the Mölk family, 30 years ago an architect friend of the family offered to design a store. The building was so successful that the firm has been an architectural trailblazer ever since, creating individual stores that are so impressive that MPREIS's concept was on view at the 2004 Venice Architecture Biennale.

Generous space, natural light and sleek design make for an aesthetic food shopping experience, but MPREIS has even more going for it, including a strong commitment to its region. MPREIS works closely with Tyrolean suppliers, so products are local, fresh and fairly priced. "We even work with farmers on expanding their crop selection," says MPREIS spokesperson Ingrid Heinz. As successful as it is, MPREIS has always expanded slowly and with a lot of thought to location. "We opened stores in remote mountain valleys that didn't have a supermarket," says Heinz, "and we've always stayed within our own cultural circle." — KB
mpreis.com

MONOCLE COMMENT: *It's strange how few supermarkets ever think of employing an architect – this is an industry where people are scared of not running with the pack.*



Why it works:

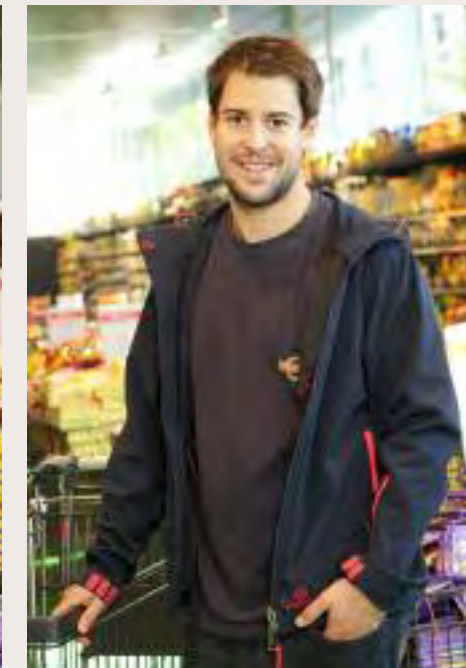
The buildings
Non-uniform architecture and design that has won multiple prizes.

Local focus
A regional loyalty that ranges from cooperating with local farmers to regional architects (most have been native Tyroleans). MPREIS even publishes a table of what local fruits are on offer in what season, and was one of the first to offer organic Tyrolean products with its brand "Bio vom Berg".

Slow expansion
MPREIS's 200th store is opening soon

Affordability
Fair prices.

Excellent working conditions
MPREIS is Tyrol's second-largest private employer with 4,900 employees, and regularly wins awards for its treatment of employees, sustainability and corporate responsibility.





Food with longer shelf life

Food packaging in the UK is to lose its “sell by” date. The government is recommending “use by” or “best before” in a bid to cut the £12bn worth of food needlessly binned every year.



**SUPERMARKETS
Middle East**

Big players, huge, lively stores – but an edited, personal focus wouldn't go amiss

In a region where shopping and eating might well be life's most important activities, food retail is big. Lest we forget, the Middle East is home to the souk, ancestor of the hypermarket. “People like souks. They also like to bargain and socialise in a way that is not so common in the West,” says Nabil Fahed, head of Fahed Supermarkets and president of the Lebanese Association of Supermarket Owners.

This makes for lively grocery outings and the idea of ordering food on the internet has “a way to go yet” says Michael Wright, CEO of Spinneys, one of the oldest food retailers in the region which was launched in the 1920s to indulge the British Army's pangs for Marmite.

In the Gulf, the grocery retail market is growing at a whopping average of 11 per cent a year. Qatar's Almira has just announced a massive expansion programme in neighbouring countries while in Saudi, the Majid al Futtaim holding company has teamed up with Carrefour to open enormous hypermarkets across the Middle East.

“All the big players are already in the UAE, but there is still room in Saudi Arabia and a lot of retailers are considering entering Iran,” says Karl Nader, retail expert with Booz & Company.

But for all their muscle and low prices, big stores can be rigid and daunting. As in the West, Nader believes the trend for smaller, edited stores focused on fresh foods will reach the Middle East. In this respect, the grocery sheikhs might learn from the much-loved neighbourhood stores that let you settle your bill monthly, order groceries over the phone and deliver just about anything free of charge to your door. — CC



**THE SULTAN CENTER
Beirut**

The best of European and Middle Eastern produce

Beirut's Signature was the first gourmet market of its kind for The Sultan Center (TSC), Kuwait's largest supermarket brand. It fills a much-needed gap in Beirut's renovated souks, an area awash with fashion boutiques but with few places to buy food.

Taking its cue from European food halls as well as Lebanese delicatessens, TSC Signature is the country's chicest supermarket. Along with organic fruit and vegetables are Kobe beef burgers and Lebanese heritage brands, as well as staple groceries. Near the entrance, customers can sip Arabic coffee while they leaf through the selection of Arabic and European newspapers. Sensing they were on to something, TSC opened a similar supermarket back in Kuwait this summer. — CC sultan-center.com

MONOCLE COMMENT: *Despite being a high-end store, TSC also uses the display techniques of the souk to make sure it reflects the wider retail culture.*

Why it works:

A gap in the market
The only grocery shop in Beirut's downtown city centre.

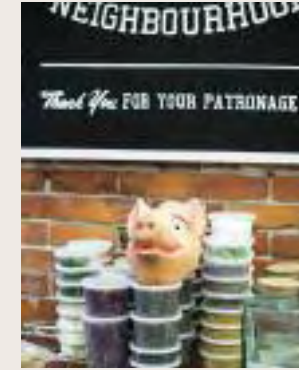
Good customer experience
Inviting to walk around, nifty trolleys.

Import selection
Top quality foreign products – perfect for cosmopolitan Lebanese.

Local food choice
Well-presented fresh produce such as seafood from the Arabian Gulf.

Caters to both genders
Cigar humidor for men and nail bar for women.

PHOTOGRAPHER: TANYA TRABOULSI



PHOTOGRAPHER: GRANT HARDER

**SAVE ON MEATS
Vancouver**

Instead of flogging a dead horse, one entrepreneur simply revived it

Save on Meats opened in 1957 and was famous for its neon pigs, affordable butcher's and filling burgers. When it closed in 2009, it seemed like a punch in the stomach for Vancouver's deprived Downtown Eastside district. Enter restaurant entrepreneur Mark Brand (pictured), who himself ate at Save on Meats before he built his empire and reopened it this year. — AG saveonmeats.ca

MONOCLE COMMENT: *Good food shops and restaurants can hold a neighbourhood together – even turn it around by pulling in new residents.*

Why it works:

A broad vision
The new Save on Meats is more of a gastro emporium than a shop. It features a revamped butcher store, take-out window and diner, a commissary kitchen for Brand's other restaurants, his head office, and facilities for producing flour.

Something for everyone
Offerings range from a \$3 cup of chilli to caviar.

Focus on the environment
This is Vancouver, after all. Save On recycles almost 90 per cent of its waste and is converting an old diesel generator so it can burn cooking fats from Brand's restaurants and provide energy.

Opportunities for locals
“We hire people that other people wouldn't hire,” says Brand, such as those with physical disabilities or ex-cons.

Design that is fit for purpose
Brand saved the original butcher's counter and the stools, but almost everything else was built from scratch. It is the brainchild of a film set designer, Guy Roland, who was happy of the chance to build something with a longer shelf life than his Hollywood creations. “We promised him his work would be here for at least 30 years, instead of 90 days,” says Brand.

Small change

Tesco Homeplus sales in South Korea have increased by 130 per cent since the introduction of virtual shopping on the subway.



**LØGISMOSE
Denmark**

A high quality brand that's spreading its ethos to the most unlikely corners of food retail

Løgismose is arguably Denmark's leading luxury food brand, with a Michelin-starred restaurant and large-scale deli in Copenhagen; a successful wine importing business; an organic dairy farm and manor hotel; and chocolate company, Summerbird, all under its umbrella. So, collective eyebrows were raised when their products suddenly began to appear on the shelves of low cost, lowest-common-denominator supermarket, Netto.

"Actually, Netto is very open to new things," explains Christian Grønlykke who, together with his three brothers and one sister, owns and runs the company his parents founded in the 1970s.

Netto now stocks 25 to 30 different Løgismose products, including gourmet sausages and the company's famous smoked cheese, the Fynsk Rygeost. "With Netto it was always important that we stuck to our principles: firstly, that taste is our compass and that the customer should be able to understand the products and what they are made of."

Mainstream expansion brought challenges. "We needed to industrialise our production to an extent, but machines aren't bad in themselves. As long as you still use quality ingredients, and we work very hard to avoid anything artificial, then it's fine."

Løgismose began as a wine importer, opened the manor hotel, Falsled Kro, on Fyn in the early 1970s, and then restaurant Kong Hans in 1976. Throughout the company's expansion, quality has been the watchword.

"You can get very rich selling cheap cheese to Danish people," says Grønlykke, as we inspect the deli cheese counter – stocked by the legendary Brittany affineur, Jean-Yves Bordier. "We aren't rich, but we sell great cheese."

This "quality above all else philosophy" did lead the company to its one great misadventure: Copenhagen's first boutique hotel, Nimb, which opened in a refurbished,

cod-Moorish palace in Tivoli Gardens in 2008. Though the reviews were ecstatic, the hotel never made money and was sold back to Tivoli A/S for DKK1 last year. "The financial crisis made it very difficult," says Grønlykke.

Today the company has a turnover of DKK2.5bn (€336m), a tribute in part to the success the Grønlykke family has had in educating the Danes – notorious low spenders when it comes to grocery shopping – on the finer points of eating.

"When we started the company there was almost no quality Danish produce. My father and sister were the first to really promote quality Danish food and today there is more interest among Danes in eating well. And in recent years we've had more clientele coming here on bicycles, which we are really pleased about!" — MB
loegismose.dk

MONOCLE COMMENT: The Netto link shows that with the right partner even low-cost stores can be persuaded to carry better quality food.



Why it works:

Great retail environment

One of the most cossetting retail spaces in Copenhagen – a destination in its own right.

Know your customers

Sometimes only foie gras and sauternes really hits the spot.

Believe in your mission

Quality will out, eventually: sometimes you have to lead from the front, and it can take years to educate your market.



PHOTOGRAPHER: JAN SONDERGAARD

PHOTOGRAPHER: GATA CAMBIAGOT



**SCHWEITZER
Italy**

The past master at designing the physical (and psychological) structures of food retail

Lined with apple orchards and farms perched above in verdant Alpine meadows, Venosta Valley in Italy's South Tyrol is a world away from suburban big-box supermarkets and city convenience stores that are the final destination for the area's produce. Yet nestled on the valley floor in the sleepy town of Naturno sits the headquarters of one of the most influential players in food retailing. Only its name is one you'll never see while browsing the aisles for groceries. And that's exactly the point.

"In our field, it's the products that need to be the hero," says Bernhard Schweitzer, owner of Schweitzer Project, a family business started by his grandfather in 1927 that specialised in selling refrigerators and meat counters to local butchers and delis. Impressed with their functionality, merchants soon started asking for shelving and other displays.

In 1987, Bernhard's father took things a step further by setting up Interstore Design, a consultancy that works with supermarkets to design and build retail interiors. Today, the company's expertise in improving traffic flow in stores, along with its well-made shop furniture, graphic design and lighting solutions, has propelled its annual revenues above €100m. Its client portfolio is an enviable list of brands ranging from Switzerland's Migros to upmarket British chain Waitrose.

Much of the company's success stems from its ability to lay out a floor plan for the public that keeps people relaxed and in a buying mood. Taking a blank piece of paper, Schweitzer quickly sketches a floor plan similar to a newly opened sales point they designed for Waitrose in London's Canary Wharf (page 91). In place of a standard grid, his team came up with a loop layout that replicates a racetrack so shoppers move through the aisles in a snakelike course that gives them a chance to better see items stocked along the perimeter walls. "We created diverse loops for people to choose. Nowadays, nobody wants to be forced through a maze like at IKEA."

For a new 6,000 sq m hypermarket on the outskirts of Düsseldorf for German supermarket chain Edeka (see Zurheide, page 92), walls were coloured-coded and highlighted with simple suggestive titles such as "taste", "sniff", "smell". Food preparation, including staff making fresh pasta, was presented up front at the counter next to the deli and food stations (sushi bar, grill) were interspersed to allow customers to try food or wine on the spot. The final result was remarkable according to Schweitzer. "People came from up to 60km away to try it. Some clients spent up to three hours shopping." — IC
schweitzerproject.com



**SMART SHOPPING
South Korea**

The humble supermarket trolley is about to become your hi-tech personal shopping guide

Leave it to South Korea, the country with the highest smartphone penetration rate in Asia, to turn something as utilitarian as the supermarket trolley hi-tech. This summer, SK Telecom, one of Korea's leading mobile phone carriers, began testing its new Smart Cart, a trolley equipped with a wi-fi-enabled tablet computer that is the first in the world to use indoor positioning technology to provide people with real-time information while they cruise the grocery store aisles.

This is how it works: shoppers download the Smart Cart application to their smartphones, which enables them to search for store coupons or upload a shopping list; then the phone syncs with the Smart Cart and allows shoppers to upload their lists to the tablet on the trolley. As they progress through the store, the cart offers shopping suggestions, product information or special deals, depending on where the shopper is located.

The goal is to create a more "tailored" shopping experience for consumers, while helping brands directly target shoppers with their advertisements, says Yook Tae-Sun, SK Telecom senior vice president and head of industry productivity enhancement. Supermarkets will also benefit, he adds, by offering "a new type of customer experience" that ensures fickle shoppers keep coming back. The company hopes to further personalise the service by incorporating a user's personal shopping history to provide more accurate recommendations.

SK Telecom hasn't set a date for rolling out the trolleys in Korea. But interestingly, it chose to test the Smart Cart first in Shanghai. Is this an indication of where the company's future ambitions lie? "The Chinese retail market has a high demand for new customer services," Yook says. But, he admits, the company also wanted to work out the kinks before allowing tech-obsessed Koreans behind the wheels. "We could identify areas that can be further improved," he says, "thereby enhancing the completeness of the service." — JB

**STOCKMANN
Finland**

Helsinki's venerable department store has cooked up a fresh shopping recipe

Stockmann's food hall reopened last September after a 10-year overhaul, expanding into the former parking area, taking the floor space up to 5,000 sq m. "We wanted to keep it as homely as possible," explains store director Tuija Wänttinen. "Customers loved the familiarity and cosiness of the old food hall." Cosy in the new incarnation means a mixture of wood, slate, careful lighting and benches dotted throughout.

There's a hint of IKEA in the layout – wide aisles, racks, shelves and basket bins of food and a circuit-style layout – but it's a far cry from the usual drone and dazzle of over-lit spaces and the 30,000 mostly seasonal and Finnish goods for sale are immaculately presented and restocked frequently. And it's bang in the middle of Helsinki.

"Ninety-nine per cent of the feedback we have had has been positive," says Wänttinen. "When you buy food you want it to be easy and we've listened to our customers and made changes."

Customer service is where Stockmann, which turns 150 next year, excels. "We have daily food demonstrations and a service desk to provide advice." There's also a coffee bar and a wine bar. And it's the staff that are the best selling point. "We have 450 wonderful staff," Wänttinen explains. "I've worked here for 27 years. Anyone who wants to work in a food store in Finland wants to work here."

It's clear customers enjoy the environment. In place of the hum of refrigeration units there's the chatter of shoppers and staff. And this simple recipe translates into results. "The number of customers has increased and so has the average purchase," says Wänttinen. — HM
stockmann.com

MONOCLE COMMENT: *The out of town supermarket has had its day. People need to be able to buy food where they live and get it home without having to own a car.*

**Why it works:**

The cupboard is never bare
Shelves and counters are always fully stocked.

Staff

Service is impeccable – staff take pride in their work.

Environment

Natural materials help soften acoustics and careful lighting keeps it cosy.

