

THE WORLD'S ONLY GLOBAL RETAIL AND LEISURE MAGAZINE

# RILI



RETAIL & LEISURE INTERNATIONAL

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APRIL 2022 ISSUE 171

GLOBAL FOCUS

## CKE RESTAURANTS HOLDINGS NEXT-GENERATION DINING



SEMIR GROUP  
**Moving Forward  
Together**

JIGSAW  
**Style and Truth**

WYNDHAM HOTELS & RESORTS  
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AFRICA | A.S. WATSON | GUYLIAN | INTERNATIONAL OUTLETS | RETAIL'S UNMISSABLE TOP TEN



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# THE GLOBAL RLI Awards 2022



22

## Cover Story

Based in the United States and with an international network spread across the globe, CKE Restaurants Holdings is reinventing the wheel for quick service restaurants with its new restaurant prototype.



Editor's Foreword

We all say it all the time, but genuinely this year is flying by as we bring you the RLI April issue. This edition includes a wide-selection of lead interviews with unique brands from across the world, a special one-off feature on Retail's Unmissable Top Ten, a Special Feature on International Outlets and a Voyager that highlights the growing retail landscape of Africa. With all this and more, there is plenty to keep you up-to-date with everything retail and leisure related over the next few weeks.

Till next time...

*James Quinn, Editor*



Publisher's Comment

I am finally back on English soil following a whirlwind three week trip to Dubai, Cannes and Riyadh as industry events are firmly put back on the calendar. I had some great meetings surrounding our events in Riyadh later this year with some exciting announcements to be made soon. On this note we have also extended the Global RLI Awards Nomination Deadline to the 5 May, so ensure you make the most of the next few weeks in finalising those Award-winning presentations. In this month's Cover Story we take a look at Next Generation Dining featuring CKE Restaurants Holdings as they reinvent the wheel for quick service restaurants with a new innovative prototype, set to become a global benchmark. This year marks the third Ramadan since the coronavirus pandemic began back in 2020 and as the holy month begins, RLI would like to wish all our friends and colleagues around the world a blessed month of peace, health and prosperity. Wishing you sunshine and good times as Easter approaches, I hope it's an eggstra bright and happy one with lots of fun!

Until next month...

*Jayne Rafter, Publisher*

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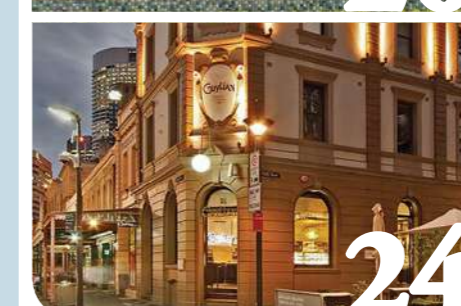
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## RLI MEETS

### Jan Bøgh

PRESIDENT & CEO OF JYSK

**Q. Given the changing market conditions throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, have you had to alter or re-evaluate your key objectives moving forward?**

Overall our performance during the coronavirus pandemic and the restrictions that followed has proven that JYSK has a strong business model and a good mix between a centralised organisation and strong local management teams. That said, we have of course learned from the coronavirus pandemic, and how customers and employees reacted and we will of course use these learnings to make JYSK even stronger moving forward.

**Q. How would you say the Covid-19 outbreak affected your business, and will it have any long-term effects on your plans moving forward?**

Looking at online sales this has taken a huge leap, and I have no doubt that it has "forced" some customers to buy online, even though they might prefer the physical store. I am sure that a lot of those customers will also be willing to buy online in the future. However we have also seen customers returning to physical stores as soon as it was possible, so I would say that we have become better at utilising both physical stores and online in the right way.

**Q. What key leadership skills do you feel are the most important in the current retail climate?**

It is probably more important than ever to set a direction and stick to it. When the world is changing rapidly, I believe that it is important for all employees that they know in which direction we are heading and why. In JYSK we have a strong business model and a strategy that we believe in, and it is important that all employees know that.

**Q. As a leader, when making key strategic decisions, what proportion of the decision do you feel is fact-based and what proportion is instinctual?**

Having been CEO for more than 20 years it can sometimes be hard to distinguish, because a lot of decisions are taken from a mix of my experience and knowledge, and from what I believe is the right decision. Overall I would say that you need to find as many facts as possible and be very well prepared. But when all that is done, being a leader is also about taking decisions when you do not know the exact outcome. In that regard I trust my instinct, and I would never take a decision that I do not feel good about.

**Q. Do you feel that CEOs and company leaders can continue to be transformational in the new retail landscape and will this actually be more important than ever now?**

It is important to be able to adapt and make changes as the retail landscape changes, but I do not think this is something new. Of course the development in regards to technology is much faster now than it was 20 years ago, but being a retailer has always been about having the ability to change in order to fulfil the requirements of our customers.

**Q. What do you make of social media's prominent rise in importance over the last few years, and how important do you feel e-commerce and online activities will continue to be?**

E-commerce is an important sales channel for JYSK, and I have no doubt that this will also be the case in the future. However in JYSK we have always said that we do not have any goal about the split between online sales and sales from physical stores. JYSK should always provide a great offer and the best platform whether it is online or offline. Then the customers can decide where and how they want to buy. However we are investing a lot of money in making the customer journey more seamless and making it more smooth to have a customer journey which includes both online steps and a visit to a physical store.

**Q. What would you consider to be your career highlights?**

My career highlight was being appointed President and CEO of JYSK in 2000 and getting the overall responsibility of this great company. Another highlight would be the merge of what was formerly known as JYSK Nordic and Dänisches Bettenlager. The entities were merged as of 1 September 2019, and it has been extremely rewarding to be responsible for that process. We still have some way to go, especially in regards to IT, but I am really happy with the result so far. Not least with the attitude from all of the employees.

**Q. How are you feeling about the 12 months ahead?**

There are of course a lot of uncertainties right now. Not just in regards to inflation, energy prices and freight rates, but also on a geopolitical level. Furthermore we have a huge task of embracing circular economy and become more sustainable. That said JYSK is a strong company with a strategy that takes these issues into account, so I am sure we will continue to create great results.

**Q. Do you have any words of warning for the industry as we continue to move through uncharted territory?**

Stick with what you believe in. That is my best advice. If the world around you changes a lot, you have to be clear about who you are, and what you want to do.



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## SEVEN DIALS BOOSTS ITS ETHICAL APPEAL WITH THE OPENING OF DAI

Shaftesbury has today announced that the sustainable women's performance wear brand, Dai, has opened its debut permanent space on 35-37 Monmouth Street, Seven Dials. In the Borough of Camden Alongside the launch of two vintage activations, these recent openings boost Seven Dials' diverse community of ethically driven retailers, solidifying it as London's go-to destination for the conscious consumer.

Founded initially as an online-only retailer which has seen subsequent pop-up tenancies, former finance executive, Joanna Dai, founded Dai to deliver comfort-empowered performance wear for the modern professional woman. Following its recent B Corp Certification, Dai Seven Dials marks an important next step in the brand's UK expansion. Dai's 1,400sq ft store houses its full collection of elegantly tailored clothing made from innovative, eco-friendly fabrics that combine stylish silhouettes with properties of activewear – stretch, breathability and wrinkle-resistance.



ROXY LEISURE HAS ANNOUNCED THAT ITS LATEST ROXY LANES SITE WILL BE IN BRISTOL. THE UNION STREET LOCATION WILL BOAST A CAPACITY OF 350, ALONGSIDE THEIR BIGGEST RANGE OF ENTERTAINMENT, ACCOMPANIED BY EIGHT FULL SIZE BOWLING LANES, BATTING CAGES, SHUFFLE BOARDS, KARAOKE BOOTHS, FULL SIZE POOL TABLES, BEER PONG, ARCADE GAMES AND ICE-FREE CURLING. UNION STREET WILL BE THE NEW ALL DAY & NIGHT DESTINATION IN BRISTOL. IT IS THE 11TH SITE FOR THE ROXY LEISURE GROUP FURTHER TO SUCCESSFUL LAUNCHES IN MANCHESTER, BIRMINGHAM, NOTTINGHAM, LIVERPOOL AND LEEDS. THE NEW OPENING OF ROXY LANES WILL CREATE 45 JOBS.

## DUO OF F&B BRANDS SIGN AT THE YARDS IN LONDON

Longmartin Properties Ltd, a joint venture between Shaftesbury and the Mercers' Company, has announced a pair of firsts with its latest F&B signings. Totalling almost 2,000sq ft, The Yards, Covent Garden, will welcome a restaurant debut for UKIYO and a central London first for Buns from Home.

Japanese temaki and sashimi concept, UKIYO has selected 8 Slingsby Place for its first-ever 1,636sq ft restaurant, debuting its unique interpretation of the typical Japanese eatery this summer. UKIYO, translates to 'Living in the moment, detached from the bothers of life', and describes the urban lifestyle of the Japanese Edo-period.

Set to launch this month is independent bakery brand, Buns From Home, who is moving into 140 Long Acre for its first ever central London site and fourth location. Set up by Founder Barney Goff in lockdown, who baked pastries and delivered by bike, the first Buns from Home bakery opened in Notting Hill.

## LABTECH SIGNS THE LUCKY CLUB UP

Leading London property investment company, LabTech, has announced the signing of The Lucky Club. The cocktail and casual dining venue is set to open a roof terrace within The North Yard of the world-famous Camden Market, in May 2022.

Following the brand's debut site in Mayfair, the 5,600sq ft space, which sits upon the historic Grade II listed horse hospital, will be The Lucky Club's flagship. Seating 130 covers, The Lucky Club Camden will feature a Mexican-inspired menu, specialising in Margaritas and Mezcal cocktails. They will be served alongside contemporary takes on classic dishes, such as Lobster Tacos, Pulled Lamb Birria Tacos, and Coconut Ceviche Tostadas.

It has been designed by award-winning interior design firm Elliot James, incorporating a timeless style in-keeping with the building's history and heritage. The focus is on a neutral colour palette and natural planting, with a retractable roof and state-of-the-art gas heaters to allow for year-round alfresco dining.

## KATE SPADE NEW YORK TO OPEN NEW STORE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Global lifestyle brand kate spade new york is to open its first Northern Ireland store in April 2022 at designer outlet, The Boulevard.

Taking prime position at the entrance of the Lotus Property-owned scheme, which is positioned on the A1 corridor between Belfast and Dublin, the 1,458sq ft store will offer a range of product categories, including ready-to-wear, small leather goods, handbags, accessories, tech accessories and jewellery.

The Boulevard store will be the brand's second outlet in Ireland, but its first venture in the Northern Irish marketplace. The deal signals a growing confidence among brands in the Irish consumer as retail activity on the island overtakes pre-pandemic levels.



## ENTERTAINMENT CONCEPT PREPARES FOR GLASGOW TEE-OFF

The highly anticipated Topgolf in Rutherglen is moving a step closer to opening as its team gathered for an official topping out ceremony last month.

Topgolf's Vice President of International, Steve Lane was joined by representatives from South Lanarkshire Council, Clyde Gateway, Scottish Enterprise, Visit Scotland and the many partners involved in the planning and construction of the project including; Luddon Construction, Ashfield Land, CCA (architects), Will Rudd Davidson (engineers), Turley (planners), Currie & Brown (project managers) and DSSR (consulting engineers).

The 45,000sq ft three-level golfing attraction is scheduled to open at the end of the year and will introduce a new way of golfing to both golfing fans and novices.

Located just off the M74, the venue is part of Clyde Gateway, one of Scotland's biggest and most ambitious regeneration programmes.

It's the global sports and entertainment brand's first location in Scotland and Steve Lane is confident Glaswegians are going to love the concept. He said: "Topgolf has locations around the globe and has a proven track record of providing top-class entertainment and fun for both golfers and non-golfers. Our Glasgow venue will be the first in the UK to use our signature technology which will utilise micro-chipped golf balls and Toptracer technology to offer even more interactive and dynamic experience for visitors. Our construction partners have been hard at work preparing the site and it's starting to take shape.

### BALENCIAGA ADDS NEW SITE

The fast-growing Kering luxury brand has unveiled its largest store in Europe on London's most exclusive shopping street, New Bond Street. At more than 7,600sq ft, it's a sprawling iteration of Creative Director's Demna's "Raw Architecture" store concept, which is being rolled out globally at Balenciaga's boutiques and headquarters.

### JULIAN CHARLES SET TO GROW

The leading bedding and linen retailer has announced its plans to open up to 30 stores and concessions across the country over the following 18 months, as it targets revenue growth following the success of its recent turnaround strategy.

### 'SIDES AT HOME' LAUNCHES

Foodies and fans of the YouTube stars, The Sidemen, will now be able to get their hands on a DIY burger kit and recreate their own Sides classic burgers at home. The Sides at Home kits are available for nationwide delivery on Wednesdays and Fridays on plateaway.com.

### HOLLYWOOD BOWL EXPANDS

Ten pin bowling fans can look forward to a taste of tinsel town this month, after Hollywood Bowl announced its plans to open at Belfast's Odyssey complex. The new centre will bring family fun and entertainment to the Titanic Quarter when it opens its doors for the first time on 14 April.

### MOSS BROS OPEN IN WOKING

The company has launched a new concept store at Victoria Place, the recently launched £700M regeneration scheme in Woking town centre co-owned by Woking Borough Council and Moyallen Group. Occupying a 2,742sq ft space, the brand has opened on Victoria Place's Henry Plaza.

## BORSALINO INAUGURATES A NEW FLAGSHIP BOUTIQUE IN MONTE CARLO

Borsalino proudly unveils its new flagship within the luxurious Metropole Shopping Monte-Carlo. Strengthening the Maison's bonds with the Principality of Monaco, this boutique results after last summer's successful pop-up within the coveted shopping complex.

Located on the first floor of the Metropole Shopping Monte-Carlo, one of the most prestigious luxury complexes on Avenue des Spéluges, the store covers 35sq m and overlooks the shopping gallery with two important windows. The boutique is intimate yet rich in detail, designed to premiere and showcase the latest collections of Borsalino hats, caps and soft accessories.

"We are honoured to open this new boutique in the Principality of Monaco, a favourite destination for international tourism," comments Mauro Baglietto Managing Director for Borsalino. "This is an important step in our corporate relaunch plan with the objective to develop international retail."



BRITISH LUXURY BRAND BURBERRY HAS UNVEILED ITS NEW FRENCH FLAGSHIP STORE ON RUE SAINT-HONORE, DESIGNED BY ARCHITECT VINCENZO DE COTIIS. LOCATED IN THE HEART OF PARIS, THE FLAGSHIP FEATURES THE BRAND'S NEW GLOBAL DESIGN CONCEPT AND OFFERS CUSTOMERS WHAT BURBERRY DESCRIBES AS A CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE A SPACE THAT CONNECTS BURBERRY'S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. THE STORE HAS THREE FLOORS AND ITS DESIGN FEATURES BURBERRY'S FAMOUS CHECK CONCEPT WITH THE MAIN COLOURS OF BEIGE, BLACK, WHITE AND RED.

## ASPESI LANDS IN FORTE DEI MARMI

Aspesi inaugurates its first store in the seaside town of Forte dei Marmi, a 90sq m store at number 6 in Piazza Garibaldi in the town of Tuscany, Italy.

The unit contains typical elements of the brand, the cohesion of essential resin and concrete coverings in juxtaposition with furnishings in brighter tones such as yellow, green and pink. The rooms are characterized by details, such as director's chairs typical of the seaside destination, but covered with brand prints.

The opening of this store in the shadow of the Fort of the Versilian town, which has always been a point of reference for Italian and foreign tourists, marks a further step in the retail plan of the company which in 2021 inaugurated two new stores in Verona and in Saint Tropez.

Born as a shirt brand and now owned by the Italian private equity fund Armònia Italy Fund, Aspesi creates ready-to-wear collections for men and women, which it distributes in 17 single-brand and shop-in-shop spaces and in over 600 multi-brand stores worldwide.

## MINISO CONTINUES TO GROW IN SPAIN

The Miniso chain, of Asian origin that specialises in textiles and household items continues its expansion in Spain, and just a few weeks after its last opening in Barcelona has opened its first space in Zaragoza.

The firm has chosen premises with a surface area of 320sq m, located at number 29 Calle Alfonso I, to set up its first establishment in the Aragonese capital. In this space, Miniso also presents a new store concept, which is committed to interaction with customers through photographable spaces.

With a commercial network of more than 40 stores, Miniso plans to reach 50 stores this year, according to recent reports. This one in Zaragoza will be joined in the next few days by another one in Palma, in the Fan Mallorca Shopping mall. Its plans for the medium-long term include reaching 200 points of sale in Spain and, for the time being, it is concentrating its distribution on the retail channel, since it does not have online sales in the country.

## IZAKAYA ASIAN KITCHEN & BAR WILL REOPEN ON 23 MAY

As travellers from across the world find their way back to the island, IZAKAYA Asian Kitchen & Bar announces its reopening in the historical heart of Ibiza, Ibiza Town, on Monday 23 May.

Overlooking the Old Town and the stunning Ibiza marina, IZAKAYA presents modern Japanese cuisine with South American influences and an outstanding shared-dining concept that suits the cosmopolitan nature of Ibiza.

Behind this inspiring idea are creative hospitality entrepreneurs, Yossi Elyahoo and Liran Wizman, Owners and Founders of Amsterdam-based 'THE ENTOURAGE GROUP', together with the Group's Managing Director Stephanie Pearson.



## WINGSTOP READY TO GROW ITS PRESENCE IN SPAIN

Wingstop is expanding in Spain with the imminent opening of four ghost kitchens in Madrid. The kitchens – the first two of which opened on 31 March 2022 in Madrid – were brought to market in partnership with a kitchen logistics partner to jumpstart Wingstop's presence in Spain. The third is scheduled to open in early April, with the fourth earmarked for a summer launch. Through a delivery-only method, these four kitchens will collectively reach flavour fans across nearly all of Madrid. This is the first of a larger footprint potential in Spain, which is seen as a key growth market for Wingstop.

For the expansion into Spain, Wingstop seeks to capture the attention of new customers by offering its distinctive brand proposition focused on flavour. The company aims to recreate the devoted fanbase developed in the UK, the US and other

countries around the world. The delivery-only, ghost kitchen model will quickly integrate the brand into Spain, where Wingstop expects a traditional franchise opportunity to follow in time and is actively seeking a partner to lead its brick-and-mortar growth.

"We are excited to bring the flavour of Wingstop to Spain initially leveraging a delivery-only method. By embracing our entrepreneurial spirit, in just 12 weeks from planning to execution, we're getting Wingstop in front of consumers in Madrid," said Wingstop Vice President EMEA, Lisa Paton.

Wingstop believes it can operate 7,000-plus global restaurants, 3,000 of which are expected to be outside of the US. EMEA is an important part of the strategy, with new markets targeted within the Middle East and Western Europe.

### HEINEMANN LAUNCHES SITE

Heinemann has opened its Duty Free & Travel Value Shop in the newly launched Terminal 2 at Berlin Brandenburg Airport. The shop of the Hamburg-based travel retailer is 768sq m in size and is perfectly located in the plaza behind the security checks. Within the shop, passengers can access Heinemann's full range of products.

### LIQUOR-FREE BAR UNVEILED

Liquor retailer Dan Murphy's is set to open a bar in Melbourne where patrons will be served only zero-alcohol drinks. The pop-up bar has opened in Melbourne's Hampton suburb, featuring a menu of alcohol-free beers and wines starting from \$5. The bar will also host a free tasting session in partnership with local producers.

### DYSON OPENS A DEMO STORE

Global appliance retailer Dyson has opened an immersive demo space for its products in Sydney. The new store in Australia boasts large demonstration zones and displays that show how Dyson technologies offer solutions to real-world problems.

### TEA CHAIN READY TO GROW

Global milk tea chain Gong Cha is planning to expand in Australia with a further 17 stores this year. This is adding to the 118 stores already operating down under. The plan for growth is part of a bigger international expansion goal for the brand as they look for growth in Japan, Mexico, New York and the Philippines.

### FIVE GUYS ADDS IN AUSTRALIA

The American burger chain company Five Guys will open its second Australian outlet in the heart of Sydney's CBD this year. According to the brand, it has garnered widespread popularity and acceptance by the Sydney community since opening its first outlet in Penrith.



# americas

## SWEETGREEN TO OPEN AT LEAST 35 LOCATIONS AND PILOT DRIVE-THRU IN 2022

Sweetgreen is diving into one of the restaurant industry's hottest trends - drive-thru - but with an added tweak. The health-conscious, fast-casual salad chain will pilot a new concept in Schaumburg, Illinois, within the next year. The restaurant will feature Sweetgreen's signature in-store experience with the addition of its first "sweetlane," a drive-thru lane to increase convenience for digital customers.

To bring the in-store experience to drive-thru digital customers, the space will also feature a round observation window for customers in their cars to watch the fresh prep as they pick up their orders. Pick-up orders may also be placed inside the restaurant, where dine-in service will be available.

"We are always innovating to provide more convenience for our customers, which is why we're excited about our first sweetlane concept in Schaumburg," said Sweetgreen Co-Founder and Chief Concept Officer Nicolas Jammet. "Digital customers are our most habitual users and we believe this new format will provide us with more options to connect people to real food."



NORDSTROM IS CONTINUING TO GROW ITS OFF-PRICE STORE CONCEPT. THE DEPARTMENT STORE RETAILER IS OPENING TWO NEW NORDSTROM RACK LOCATIONS IN FALL 2022. THE STORES WILL BE LOCATED IN PHOENIX, AND IN RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA. NORDSTROM RACK'S NEW STORE IN PHOENIX WILL BE LOCATED IN DESERT RIDGE MARKETPLACE, A 1.2 MILLION SQUARE FOOT OPEN-AIR SHOPPING, DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE FEATURING OTHER RETAILERS INCLUDING NIKE UNITE, ULTA AND BARNES & NOBLE, IN ADDITION TO ENTERTAINMENT VENUES LIKE AMC THEATRES AND DAVE & BUSTERS, AS WELL AS OVER 35 DINING DESTINATIONS. THE 23,500SQ FT STORE IS SCHEDULED TO OPEN IN FALL 2022.

## AREA 15 COMING TO ORLANDO IN 2024

The award-winning immersive art and entertainment destination plans to open second location in 2024. AREA 15, the immersive art and entertainment district in Las Vegas, has announced plans to bring its award-winning concept to Orlando, Florida.

The new location is expected to open in 2024 and will be located in the heart of the city's tourist corridor, off Interstate 4. The Orlando site will feature a 300,000sq ft structure on 17 acres, and there will be over 150,000sq ft of leasable retail space available.

Since opening in Las Vegas, AREA 15 has created over 1,000 new jobs and launched 20 attractions and experiences. It welcomed almost two million visitors in the first year.

AREA 15 Orlando will continue to fully embrace the experience economy, welcoming guests of all ages to enjoy a range of attractions, art installations, retail offerings, restaurants and bars, and more, all under one roof. It will also host events, art exhibitions, nightlife and shows.

## MACY'S EXPANDS BACKSTAGE STORE

Macy's is set to expand its Backstage locations across the country this spring. Beginning 9 April and rolling out through June 2022, Macy's will open 37 new Macy's store-within-store Backstage locations nationwide, offering shoppers another way to find and express their personal style at significant savings on fabulous finds.

Macy's Backstage store-within-stores range from 11,000 to 16,000sq ft of retail space, delivering a constantly changing assortment of on-trend finds. With best-in-class fashion for those who love the thrill of the hunt, customers can find something to fit their style in apparel for women, men, and children; a wide range of toys, housewares, beauty products, designer handbags, activewear and gifts your furry friends will love, plus more.

"Macy's Backstage inspires customers to express their personal style through its offerings of quality merchandise and brands at great prices, which is why we look forward to bringing Macy's Backstage into more of our local communities," said Michael Hersh, Macy's Vice President of Off-Price.

# news

## MINISO SETS FOOT IN NEW YORK'S MOST EXPENSIVE BOROUGH

Lifestyle retailer MINISO is now officially welcoming customers at the prime location in SoHo, New York City, bringing its signature vibrant, fun, and quality products to residents of the Big Apple.

The brand's 7,974sq ft \$10 N' Under store is situated at 490 Broadway within a heritage-listed building which once housed a high-end homeware emporium that counted the country's First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln among its clientele. Packed with more than 3,000 products designed to bring joy to every shopper, 95 per cent of the items are priced at \$10 and under. Over 100 kinds of MINISO's iconic plush toys are now available instore, as well as a wide selection of licensed products from Disney, Marvel, and MINISO's very own MINI Family



## NEW RETAIL PLAZA TAKES SHAPE NEAR RADIO CITY IN NEW YORK

The 115ft long plaza that distances what once was the McGraw-Hill Building from the Avenue of the Americas in Manhattan is being converted into a meeting place that will feature 65,000sq ft of retail space.

The Rockefeller Group - which built and owns the property across the street from Radio City Music Hall - retained the Milan-based architectural firm Antonio Citterio Patricia Viel to transform what it considered underutilised space into an inviting traffic-builder. The street level will be connected to the concourse level with a large staircase, and stadium seating is being installed to invite tourists and lunching office workers to relax there.

"Reimagining our central business districts will be an all-hands-on-deck effort, one that will require investments not just in the buildings but also in the neighbourhood as a

whole," commented New York City Mayor Eric Adams in a press release outlining the under-construction project due to open before the end of the year.

No tenants have been signed to occupy the retail space on the concourse that was once occupied by the McGraw-Hill bookstore and the New York Experience Theatre. But Eric Gelber, the CBRE Executive who's leading the leasing effort, expects much interest.

"It's hard to imagine a comparable retail opportunity in North America that offers such a strong backdrop to display a brand on the world's stage," Gelber said. "The building attracts a wide range of populations, from daytime office workers to locals and tourists. It's a saturated cross-section difficult to find anywhere else in New York City."

# inbrief

### FITNESS FLAGSHIP LAUNCHED

Orangetheory Fitness's new flagship comes with an added offering. Atlanta-based Honors Holdings, the world's largest franchisee of Orangetheory Fitness studios, has opened a flagship in Manhattan. The two-storey, 6,800sq ft space, which is twice the size of a typical Orangetheory studio, is the brand's largest studio in the world.

### THEME PARK TO ADD SECTION

Six Flags Great America has teamed up with Warner Bros. Themed Entertainment and DC on the new DC Universe area which opens on the 15th of this month. It will feature three reimagined attractions - The Flash: Vertical Velocity, Aquaman Splashdown and DC Super-Villains.

### SIMON MALL ADDS CONCEPT

An automated "restaurant in miniature" is serving up hamburgers at the Newport Centre, a Simon mall in Jersey City, New Jersey. RoboBurger operates like an automated vending machine and cooks restaurant-quality, freshly grilled burgers from scratch.

### WENDYS EXPANDS IN MEXICO

Fast-food chain Wendy's plans to further expand its reach in Mexico, aiming to operate hundreds of restaurants across the country. The business currently has 28 outlets, which are located in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Monterrey and Mexico City.

### NEW EXHIBITION LAUNCHED

Imagine Exhibitions has provided details of its bespoke Harry Potter: The Exhibition installation which opened its doors recently in Philadelphia. The new site is a celebration of the memorable characters and settings seen in the films and stories of Harry Potter, Fantastic Beasts and the expanded Wizarding World.

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## HISENSE OPENS FIRST BRANDED STORE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AT DUBAI HILLS MALL

Hisense, the global electronics and whitegoods manufacturer, has opened its first branded store in the Middle East, operated and managed by FGT, at the new Dubai Hills Mall shopping and lifestyle destination, marking a strategic milestone in the technology leader's regional expansion initiatives.

The landmark opening was attended by regional leadership and representatives from from Dubai Department of Economy & Tourism (DET), including Shaikha Ahmad Al Bishri, Director of Business Excellence Department and Ahmad Hassan Al Zaabi, Director of the Consumer Protection Department.

The new store features Hisense's complete and award-winning range of smart consumer electronics and home appliance products, including numerous top of the range models of TV's, laser TV's, refrigerators, washing machines, dishwashers and microwaves.



ALDAR'S YAS MALL ADDS 30 NEW RETAILERS IN Q1 2022 AND UNVEILS REVAMPED ZARA, ADIDAS, FOREVER21 STORES. YAS MALL, WHICH IS THE LARGEST MALL IN ABU DHABI, HAS MARKED A MAJOR MILESTONE IN ITS REDEVELOPMENT PLAN, REACHING 97 PER CENT OCCUPANCY WITH 30 NEW STORES IN Q1 2022, BUILDING ON ITS SELECTION OF RETAILERS ACROSS ALL CATEGORIES FOLLOWING THE ADDITION OF 25 NEW BRANDS IN Q4 2021. THE MAIN ANCHORS OF THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN SPAN ACROSS F&B, ENTERTAINMENT, HOMEWARE, FURNISHING AND ACCESSORIES, FASHION, BEAUTY, JEWELLERY, HEALTH, FLEXIBLE CO-WORKING SPACES, AS WELL AS CORPORATE OFFICES.

## WAITROSE UAE OPENS NEW CONCEPT STORE

Waitrose & Partners UAE has opened a new 'food-to-go' concept store in ICD Brookfield Place, the sustainable high-rise located in the heart of Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC).

Located on the ground floor of the LEED® Platinum building, the 5,000sq ft one-stop-shop provides customers with the same high standard of service that they would expect in any larger Waitrose store. Shoppers can find the food they need for a quick, easy lunch – as well as a meal for later and cupboard essentials.

With a fresh deli counter and bakery packed with salads, freshly baked bread and pastries, shoppers are invited to take a break from their day and relax in the store's cozy seating area. For a tasty meal in the office or at home, the branch's hot and chilled food station is filled with a range of international dishes including butter chicken, tabouleh and Greek salad to cater to the bustling multinational hub

Renowned for its wide selection of responsibly sourced, quality products, customers can also shop Waitrose's own brands, such as its No.1 premium range, offering the very best new products and ingredients.

## NEW DISTRIBUTION PARTNERSHIP AGREED

Frontgrid is pleased to announce its exclusive distributor partnership with ASI, which is set to support the continued growth and success of ParadropVR.

ASI will now become Frontgrid's exclusive distributor in the Middle East, including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates; as well as Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco.

ParadropVR, a virtual reality flying experience, is now in 11 countries around the world and counting, and the move will provide further drive towards market penetration as well as an increase in country support for the region.

CEO of Frontgrid, Matt Wells said: "We are very much looking forward to working with Prakash Vivekanand and the wider team at ASI."

"The partnership has come from an original conversation about 2 units which will be installed in Kuwait in 2022. The conversation and relationship has grown from their," he continued.

## PICKL BECOMES FIRST UAE RESTAURANT TO ENTER METAVERSE

Pickl is paving the way for the local F&B industry as the first UAE-based restaurant to enter the Metaverse.

A "simulating digital environment made up of augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and blockchain, the Metaverse promises to create a space with a rich user experience, while impersonating the real world," the firm said in a statement.

Pickl fans exploring the Metaverse will be able to participate in exclusive brand-themed games, purchase virtual apparel, and pick up Pickl-inspired NFTs, which can be redeemed for physical items or be used as virtual apparel to customise their avatar.

In addition, Pickl - which was chosen as the best burger restaurant in 2022 by TimeOutDubai - has plans to launch its very first virtual restaurant later this year.



## EXPO 2020 DUBAI ORGANISERS PREPARING FOR POST-EVENT ERA

The immense interest in the Scale2Dubai programme is highlighted in the 3,200+ applications it has attracted from 129 countries, illustrating the status of Dubai as the preferred location for start-ups looking to expand their global footprint.

The doors to the Expo 2020 site are now closed – marking the end of the World Expo – and the work to re-purpose 4.38 square kilometre site will begin.

Close to 80 per cent of Expo-built structures will be re-imagined and re-worked to create a mixed-use, flexible environment where people can live, work, and explore. The post-Expo District 2020 site aims to become a hub for global tech innovation, with the first business tenants set to take up their places from the fourth quarter of 2022.

District 2020's global entrepreneurship

programme Scale2Dubai will welcome its first cohort of 85 start-ups and small businesses before the end of this year, joining the diverse organisations living and working in the post-Expo 2020 Dubai community. This marks a significant milestone in the realisation of the future plans for the Expo 2020 site and the lasting impacts it aims to have.

The human-centric District 2020 city will advance the ambitions of Expo 2020 to bring diverse thinkers together to collaborate and devise solutions for a smarter, more sustainable future.

Part of this will be the innovative ecosystem and community it seeks to create, encompassing government, Fortune 500 firms, academic institutions, accelerators, incubators, labs, VCs, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and start-ups.



### NEW HUAWEI SITES TO OPEN

Huawei Consumer Business Group, the iconic global technology brand announces the opening of two more Experience stores in the UAE. The new stores will open doors for Ramadan shoppers this weekend in The Galleria Mall Al Maryah Island and City Center Al Zahia, marking the first sites in Abu Dhabi and Sharjah.

### TIM HORTONSTO DOUBLE UP

AG Café, the master franchisee of the Tim Hortons brand in the Middle East, plans to expand the coffee chain in Saudi Arabia to more than 200 outlets by 2024. The company added that it plans to further expand its presence in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman.

### RADO MAKES IT SIX IN THE UAE

Swiss watch brand RADO has opened its sixth boutique store in the UAE on Al Fahidi Street in Meena Bazaar. The location for the launch of this new boutique was chosen for its legacy of being known as the most-frequented shopping district by both residents as well as tourists.

### PAPA JOHN'S SET TO EXPAND

Pizza giant Papa John's set to expand across the UAE in new ENOC deal. The master franchisee for Papa John's signs agreement for seven new restaurants within ENOC service stations. Papa John's now operates 5,500 locations in 49 countries around the world.

### TRAVELEX ADDS A NEW SITE

The market leading foreign exchange brand has launched its 29th location at the world's busiest international airport, Dubai International in the latest indication of the UAE's tourism industry's strong post-pandemic rebound. Travelex plans to open its 30th site at the airport this month.

## NORTH AMERICAN OUTERWEAR BRAND CANADA GOOSE HAS LAUNCHED CANADA GOOSE JAPAN

Commencing in April, the Toronto-based company said it has entered into an agreement to create the joint venture, Canada Goose Japan, with longstanding partner Sazaby League, with plans to accelerate DTC expansion, including retail stores.

The new agreement will replace the duo's existing distribution partnership, of which each partner will own 50 per cent. Current distribution includes a permanent Canada Goose retail store in Tokyo, a national e-commerce site, as well as wholesale points of distribution across the country. The new operating model is expected to increase revenue and gross profit per unit from the existing business.

"Japan is one of the world's largest and most influential luxury markets and has long been an important consumer market for Canada Goose," said Dani Reiss, President & CEO, Canada Goose.



## GUCCI OSTERIA LAUNCHES NEW SITE

Gucci's restaurant series, Gucci Osteria da Massimo Bottura, is set to open in South Korea later this month, its fourth location in the world after Florence, Beverly Hills, and Tokyo. The restaurant, located on the top floor of the Gucci Gaok flagship store in Seoul, launched on 28 March.

Gucci Osteria Seoul's interior layout follows the design of the Gucci Osteria Tokyo restaurant, featuring star ceiling lights, parquet flooring and a marble mosaic of the terrace. Besides the main dining area and terrace, the restaurant also houses a private dining room dubbed 'the Room of Mirrors' with a capacity of eight guests.

The menu at Gucci Osteria was developed by Michelin-starred chef Massimo Bottura, Gucci Osteria Florence's Executive Chef Karime Lopez, Seoul's Executive Chef Hyungkyu and Head Chef David Cardellini.

## NITORI EXPANDS INTO SOUTHEAST ASIA

Japan's furniture and home-furnishing retail company, Nitori, announced its expansion into the Southeast Asian market with the opening of physical stores in Malaysia and Singapore. Nitori's first store in Southeast Asia opened in January 2022, at the LaLaport Bukit Bintang City Centre in Malaysia. The second store in Malaysia will open in IOI City Mall in Q3 2022.

Following the launch in Malaysia, the first store in Singapore is set to open on 31st March at the Heeren shopping mall on Orchard Road, the largest main shopping street in Singapore. Over the next five years, the company plans to open 20 stores in Malaysia and 10 stores in Singapore as well as to expand the e-commerce business in the region.

Founded in 1967, Nitori is one of Japan's largest furniture and home-furnishing retail chains.

## 10 DESIGN UNVEILS VIETNAM'S HIDDEN GEM: HON THOM ISLAND

International architecture practice 10 Design (part of Egis Group) has revealed the concept design for Sun Group's Hon Thom Island, an iconic integrated resort and hospitality destination along the vibrant Da Trao Beach in Phu Quoc, Vietnam.

The resort masterplan unfolds through 1km of coastal frontage and across 20ha of premium beach and waterfront. The development features an integrated resort tower as well as luxury hotels, beachside and clifftop villas, townhouses and beach clubs, boasting stunning vistas of the coast and the natural mountain ridge of northwest Hon Thom Island. The scheme will also enhance its connectivity to the wider archipelago through private and VIP marinas, a public jetty and helipad, in addition to a cable car connecting the island to Phu Quoc.



## SSP TO OPEN F&B OUTLETS AT AIRPORT IN CHINA

SSP Group announced last month that the company has secured a deal to develop the F&B offering at the new Huaguoshan International Airport, serving the port city of Lianyungang in Jiangsu, China.

SSP will play a central role in the development of Huaguoshan Airport's food and beverage portfolio. The company will operate five concession units throughout the airport, with two landside and three airside under the three to five-year contract.

The company will introduce passengers to a mix of international brands, including SSP's own coffee brand Ritazza, fast food chain Burger King, Chinese restaurant A'Xiang Rice Noodle and Sichuan cuisine restaurant Rong Li Ji. Reflecting how customer experience expectations have shifted since the start of the pandemic, the F&B units will be self-service and mobile ordering enabled.

The introduction of Rong Li Ji at Huaguoshan Airport marks SSP's first venture with the Chinese brand. Further units are expected to open at other locations across the region at a later date.

"Our partnership with Huaguoshan Airport enables us to demonstrate our expertise and commitment to adapting to meet changing customer expectations. Over the past two years, we have seen a marked shift in the way customers wish to interact with F&B outlets. With this latest contract win, we endeavour to elevate the experience that customers have come to expect from us through the implementation of digital ordering services. Passengers that visit Huaguoshan Airport can now order from their favourite local and international brands in the way that suits them," said Jonathan Robinson, SSP CEO Asia-Pacific.

### TORY BURCH OPENS FLAGSHIP

US luxury brand Tory Burch opened its flagship store on JD.com on 22 March, and it features an assortment of collections, including ready-to-wear, handbags, shoes and accessories. To date, JD.com has gathered more than 300 flagship stores of global fashion and lifestyle brands, covering multiple sectors.

### IKEA TO ANCHOR A NEW MALL

Swedish home furnishings retailer IKEA is expanding its footprint in Thailand with a new store that is slated to open at Bangkok's latest shopping mall, Emsphere on Sukhumvit Road. This will mark the brand's fourth store in the country and its third store in Phuket.

### RELIANCE RETAIL TO EXPAND

Reliance Retail is expanding its innerwear portfolio by acquiring an 89 per cent stake in Purple Panda Fashions, which is behind India's D2C lingerie brand Clovia. The deal follows Reliance Retail's acquisition of designer brand Abraham & Thakore recently.

### X DIAMOND GROWS PRESENCE

Jewellery retailer X Diamond has opened a flagship store in Singapore, located at Ion Orchard. Focusing on laboratory-grown diamonds, X Diamond offers affordable luxury jewellery with modern designs and customers can personalise their purchase.

### BOSSINI X TO BE KEY DRIVER

Bossini, the Hong Kong-listed fashion retailer, says it sees its new streetwear-style brand Bossini X as a key driver of its return to profit, especially in Mainland China where it is focusing on network expansion. The brand reflects strong influencers of streetwear and skate culture and includes footwear.

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Wuxi, Jiangsu, China

# Moving Forward Together

**Established in 1996 in the province of Wenzhou, the Semir Group is a multi-brand garment company focused on casual wear and childrenswear that operates two major labels, Semir and balabala. In this interview, RLI spends some time with Nicole Zhou, Head of International at Semir Group to discuss the expansion of both brands during the past few years and what lies ahead moving forward.**



**S**emir is a lifestyle brand for adults and is committed to developing innovative and affordable products. They create and present comfortable fashion for the fast-paced, diverse lives of the new era of youth, focusing on the latest fashion trends combined with cutting edge performance fabrics for easy wear.

On the other hand, balabala focuses on the dreams, the exploration and playfulness of children and with the brand with the largest market share of children's apparel in China, balabala provides on trend fashion, shoes and accessories for children aged from 0-14, delivering high-quality products in an exciting shopping environment.

"As we move through 2022, the company will continue to focus on the principle of "consumer-centricity" and continue to promote the construction of core competencies such as brand operation, product innovation, retail experience and supply chain management," explains Nicole Zhou, Head of International at Semir Group. "The pandemic has set new patterns of consumer behaviour – a preference for online shopping, rational spending in times of crisis and consumption of digital content. Our strategic decision was to quickly adapt to new market conditions and increase online presence."

Today the Semir business has more than 2,600 stores whilst balabala has more than 4,800 stores in mainland China and by the end of 2021 they had 56 stores in 13 overseas countries and regions.

Recent store openings include a balabala site in Dubai Hills Mall, Dubai by Emaar on 17 February which was launched in collaboration with their newly signed strategy partner BTC Fashion in the Middle East. This opening is a milestone moment for balabala and they are now extremely confident

about the upcoming openings in Qatar. Meanwhile, Semir opened the doors of its first store in the capital of Nepal, Kathmandu at Civil Mall in early February. This store has already received rave reviews from Nepalese customers and they are looking forward to the opening of the next four stores with their local partner and they are due to launch at the end of May this year.

With such a presence in China, moving forward more attention will be given to the quality of store openings, increasing their presence in first-tier cities with flagship stores and upgrading their omni-channel presence.

"To compete in the international market, seeking global partnerships is essential; therefore it is important to meticulously choose the appropriate partner. At the moment, we are in the process of reaching commercial agreements with retail partners from more regions in Asia, but our global expansion strategy includes all regions of the world," explains Zhou.

With 26 years of experience in the design, manufacture, distribution and retailing of garments and having a strong infrastructure, Semir Group combines this with the latest fashion trends and unique models designed by their own in-house product department to maintain its position in the upper echelon of the Chinese fashion market.

Zhou explains that they offer customers an amazing experience when buying and wearing clothes. They also do slight localisation when entering different markets. For instance, every year they tailor-make a collection for their Middle Eastern partners for Ramadan and Eid and develop supporting marketing materials in order to meet the needs of special festivals and cultures.

Utilising the power of social media has always been a focus and a strength



Hayat Mall, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

for the group in China with them being able to catch the wave and ride the crest of new channels and approaches as they happened, something that was not easy considering how quickly new trends and mediums appeared and continue to arrive.

"Livestreaming was and still is a great success for us in linking social media through to sales and we are now actively working on future trends such as metaverse as a digital marketing and sales opportunity to further develop the brand," comments Zhou.

Semir Group excels in providing customers with collections that deliver product assortments in connection to their customers' dynamic shopping lifestyle. Their brand promise is to provide high-quality, performance-enhancing fashion products at affordable prices, resulting in high-quality standards at the right price.

"Our ethos is all about helping to create a better life for customers and employees. At Semir Group we always have a saying that we live together

with partners, not only customers but also suppliers and employees, we always move forward together. The people are at the centre of everything we do."

When looking to the future, Zhou comments that for international expansion, the Semir Group faces the same challenges as most international brands, which is how to adapt to varied local markets while maintaining a core brand identity and its values. She believes this has been achieved so far by creating an international team in their overseas office to ensure they maintain an international perspective in everything they do, developing tools and support packages refined to local markets while ensuring consistency and global standards.

"I see 2022 as an exciting, springboard year as we expect more markets to open up, we are all looking forward to re-kindling those personal interactions with both customers and partners that are so important in any successful retail business," Zhou concludes.



Wuxi, Jiangsu, China



Hayat Mall, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



Bath, UK

# Style and Truth

Believing fashion is temporary but style is permanent, John Robinson Founded Jigsaw with the opening of the first store in Hampstead in 1970 to sell stylish clothes in inspiring surroundings, at affordable prices. Here, RLI sits down with CEO Beth Butterwick to discuss how the brand has evolved throughout the pandemic and why this restructuring will set the company up for future success.



Guildford, UK

**B**uilt on the principle of beautiful quality at affordable prices, 52 years later the company today remains true to its roots in terms of hosting an amazing platform and remaining focused on delivering excellent customer service.

While Covid-19 had a profound impact on the business, it did offer a unique opportunity to take a step back and re-evaluate and re-model the company. So they retreated out of international markets and the menswear and childrenswear sectors and the team agreed to strip back the business to focus on what Jigsaw is renowned for and that is to be the leading upmarket, high-street clothing brand appealing to a sizeable ABC1 female demographic across the UK.

“We also utilised the time to invest and develop our digital proposition and even today post-Covid this represents almost 50 per cent of the business,” explains Beth Butterwick, CEO of Jigsaw. “We have focused on once again being the best in our home market and then building out on an international scale from there, and this is a key part of our current three-year strategic road map.”

Jigsaw currently operates 42 boutiques, however this is a number that is ever-changing and Butterwick believes there are around a further 10 sites that have been identified that are of interest, as they look towards a portfolio of around 45-50 sites in the near future.

The portfolio has seen a number of relocations and new additions in



Bath, UK



Guildford, UK

recent times and all of the boutiques are inspiring spaces that connect customers to the brand, its people and the local communities.

They have invested in some beautiful new locations, relocating in Kings Road, Bath, Winchester Leeds and Beverley, whilst refreshing sites in Guildford, Battersea, Marlborough and Kensington and their only outlet at Cheshire Oaks which opened just a few weeks ago.

Internationally, Jigsaw work with Arnotts through a store in Dublin and they are also international through Next. But looking forward, the brand would like to once again be in markets it was previously, such as the US, Northern Europe and Australia. Additional markets that interest the company are areas like the Nordics, parts of Asia and the Middle East but this is further down the path once they have built a solid footprint of international boutiques.

The aforementioned three-year plan for Jigsaw has four pillars to it that focus on product, digital, stores and international presence. “The pandemic placed us in unprecedented times and many companies, including ourselves were fighting for survival. But what it also did was allow us to step back and think about where we were and where we wanted to be, and we used the crisis opportunity to change, fix things and evolve the business, putting the building blocks in place to then go ahead and execute this three-year plan and grow the company,” Butterwick highlights.

When discussing social media, Beth explains that all social media interactions, regardless of whether it is paid social or organic social, gives brands a fantastic platform in which to talk to the world, your customers and that you can empower them to be a part of Jigsaw. She goes on to say that it is all about connections and that the role of social media is very important in terms of how you communicate to people

and because it allows their customers to talk about the brand and build brand communities.

“Sustainability is another aspect that I think is pivotally important and I believe transparency and conducting operations with integrity is key,” Butterwick says.

On a day-to-day basis Jigsaw operates with sustainability mind in the way they procure their product, the way they source fabrics, the way that manufacturers dispose of water and how all their factories work to industry standards.

“It is a moving topic for all of us really and sustainability is very much one of our key levers and a principle when we’re considering any new business, new products, new boutiques, logistics or operations.”

Despite already being a 50-year old name, the last couple of years have given Jigsaw a chance to once again remind people what the brand stands for and why it stands out from the competition. It is a concept that has never veered away from quality, from craftsmanship and from bringing architectural, artisan and artistic elements into everything they do.

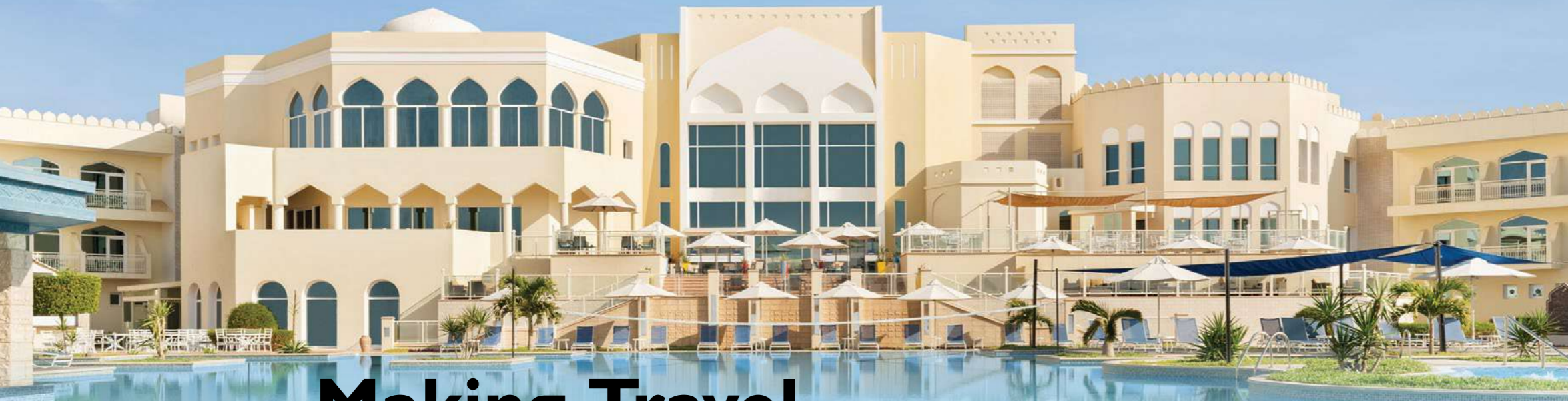
“We offer style and quality, we don’t offer fashion and the truth is that we will always be open and transparent with our customers about our quality or the way we procure items,” explains Beth.

With their fantastic strategy implemented, the coming years will all be about the execution and the acceleration of what has been put in place in recent months.

“While there may be significant headwinds to come, if we can just execute our three-year business plan, it is a fantastic opportunity for Jigsaw to take the market by storm and be a global brand once again,” concludes Butterwick.



London, UK



# Making Travel Possible

Formed in June 2018 as a spin-off from Wyndham Worldwide, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts has grown to become the world's largest hotel franchising company by number of properties. Here, RLI meets up with Dimitris Manikis, President for EMEA to speak about the ongoing growth of the business and how this will continue moving forward.



**W**yndham Hotels & Resorts makes hotel travel possible for all, so that wherever people travel Wyndham will be there to welcome them. This is the single-minded mission which drives the business forward every day.

Today the company has approximately 9,000 hotels across more than 90 countries with a global portfolio of 22 hotel brands, which can accommodate every traveller on every budget whether it be economy, midscale or upscale.

Despite all the fluctuation and change in the industry within the past two years, Wyndham has managed to maintain their goals and growth strategy. "In reality, what actually changed for us was the way we looked at things on a daily basis and how digital elements increased in a much shorter time frame," explains Dimitris Manikis, President for EMEA. "Implementations that would normally take five to seven years were being completed in 18-24 months as Covid-19 impacted our business and the wider industry."

Even with such a selection of brands already in a multitude of markets, the company continues to grow and increase its global presence with new introductions and brand inaugurations. Recently they have launched their Days Inn brand in Turkey and in the UAE in Dubai. They have expanded their lifestyle offering TRYP by Wyndham and seen success with their Trademark Collection by Wyndham which allows individual hotels to have an association with the brand whilst keeping their name.

"Additionally we have entered the all-inclusive market with our Wyndham Alltra brand, launched the Registry Collection Hotels and we are moving forward with the introduction of La Quinta into Europe as well as other territories," highlights Manikis.

In the past few months the business has also grown into the leisure market with the introduction of a dozen resorts under the Wyndham, Ramada and Wyndham Grand Residences brand tiers and they see this leisure market as a segment that has enormous growth potential moving forward.

Continuing the discussion of moving forward, Manikis spoke to us about the desire to be present in further amazing destinations in the future, with Mauritius being one that is high on their target list. They are also looking to enhance their presence in leisure markets such as Spain, Portugal and the South of France. Additional growth in Greece is something else under consideration and Wyndham is also due to launch its first site in Cyprus very soon and leisure markets, along with key metropolitan cities are locations being targeted for future sites.

"Retention is certainly as important as growth!" remarks Dimitris when we ask about how the portfolio remains attractive and exciting. "If you don't have clients who want to return, you will not have a business. Our retention rate today is between 95 and 96 per cent and we maintain this by having an operational team in place across Europe, Middle East, Eurasia and Africa whose sole role is to work with owners, hoteliers and general managers to maintain the high standards of our portfolio."

The acceleration of digital is one of the aforementioned implementations at Wyndham in the last couple of years. As fewer customers were in hotel lobbies or restaurants and leisure spaces, the company needed to become more agile and pivot to reach them instead of online in their own homes. A key feature of this plan was to upgrade the Wyndham app. With a staggering 92 million members on the Wyndham Rewards loyalty program, the time had come to update this app to better talk to their

online community, the true followers of the brand.

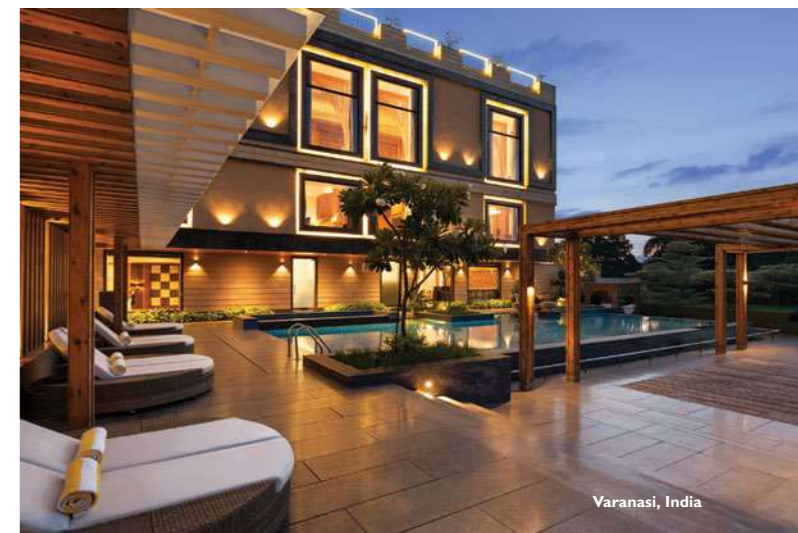
"While face-to-face can never be replaced by digital, we aim to ensure that digital is there to ensure consumers are listening to our message," he exclaims.

Sustainability is another topic on the mind of every brand and the Wyndham Green certification highlights that sustainability is here to stay and that with their diverse portfolio, education and training in this area is pivotal. It remains a continuous effort to train, educate, teach people and make sure that our employees understand that sustainability is a key agenda for the industry, for today and the future.

The company has seen monumental success over the years as they are an asset light business that has a flexible model, with their umbrella of hotel brands being a key differentiator for them in the market. Their phenomenal amount of loyalty program members and the strength of their leadership team are other key pointers that have helped to build the brand and to maintain its leading position in the market.

"We believe in the democratisation of travel, it is not a privilege of the few, it is for the many to enjoy and this is why we have the presence that we have and the brands that we have. The culture of our company is Count on Me so guests can forever count on us to do the right thing, today and tomorrow," says Manikis.

"Everything we do is a marathon not a sprint. We cannot force change, it needs to come through acceptance, education, training, new concepts and new ideas through new people and new talent joining the industry. I am more excited about hospitality today than I have ever been and I am looking forward to what the future brings in this era for hospitality," concludes Manikis.



Varanasi, India



Balikesir, Turkey



Costa Adeje, Tenerife, Spain



Copenhagen, Denmark



## COVER STORY - CKE RESTAURANTS HOLDINGS

# Next-Generation Dining

Based in the United States and with an international network spread across the globe, CKE Restaurants Holdings is reinventing the wheel for quick service restaurants with its new restaurant prototype. Here, RLI speaks with Marc Mushkin, Vice President, International Franchise Sales and Development at CKE Restaurants Holdings and Don Jones, Director, International Design and Construction at CKE Restaurants Holdings to learn more.



The history of CKE Restaurants Holdings can be traced back to 1941, but the merging of the Carl's Jr. and Hardee's brands did not take place until 1997 with the acquisition of Hardee's by CKE Restaurants Holdings. Today the two brands continue to operate under one corporate entity with their individual banners and CKE's global footprint is nearly 4,000 restaurants spread across more than 40 countries and 19 time zones.

"Hardee's represents almost 2,200 of this total and Carl's Jr. has over 1,600," explains Marc Mushkin, Vice President, International Franchise Sales and Development. "Our presence outside the United States totals around 1,020, with Carl's Jr. representing just under 600 and Hardee's over 400. Carl's Jr. is the brand we develop in all international markets except in the Middle East and Africa region where we develop Hardee's restaurants exclusively," he continues.

A groundbreaking and exciting development within their restaurant portfolio took place in San Luis Potosi, Mexico in February this year with the launch of the company's new restaurant prototype called the International "OMNI - Next Generation", which has been modified to meet the site's small size and omni-channel sales model.

"It features a dual-level split kitchen, second floor dining room, freshly updated International Urban Light Design scheme and fresh, new, California-inspired graphics," comments Don Jones, Director, International Design and Construction. "The kitchen design uses the new efficient OMNI kitchen plan which centralizes the packaging area to allow quick access to the drive-thru window, the new exterior-accessible delivery window, dine-in table service and to-go orders in a new smaller footprint layout."

In addition, the dedicated curbside order pickup station is covered by a distinctly labelled canopy that was incorporated into the site plan adjacent to the kitchen access door for quick service.

Along with the multiple methods for guest ordering from on-site to off-premise, the new site in Mexico is equipped with QR ordering via a guests' mobile phone at the table for full orders or additional menu items after the meal. Guests can also use QR ordering whilst in the comfort of their car at the designated curbside ordering point.

What all these experiences mean is that the new restaurant ensures that CKE guests have a unique experience each time they visit, no matter where they choose to enjoy their food, be it in-restaurant, order ahead, to-go, or via one of their many delivery partners.

The original goals of this new concept restaurant were to reduce building costs and footprints, design kitchens meant for several omni-channel sales channels, simplify the overall design and create a building prototype that is very flexible and easy to adapt to different size and shaped real estate opportunities.

"The overall design is the most flexible building layout we have offered to our franchisees, and it provides the tools to design restaurants to meet what the market dictates. In a sense, it is a "plug-n-play" approach to restaurant design to allow you to build what you need and easily omit features you don't (e.g. build with purpose)," Jones highlights.

To do this, they created a new kitchen layout that is the 'engine' of the overall design, from here they could add elements such as dining rooms with variable seat numbers, flexible drive-thru window positioning, outdoor terraces, curbside pickup/ordering, dedicated

exterior delivery window pickup and single and double drive-thru lanes.

"The OMNI also boasts a new concept within it which is an off-premise pickup and drive-thru model that has no dine-in seating, but optional al-fresco seating with a walk-up window or QR code ordering via a mobile device. We are currently calling this the Carl's Jr. GO! Concept and it will have its very own branded signage. Our building footprints range from 110 sq m to 205 sq m or greater if needed. There is no "one size fits all" approach in QSR anymore and this new prototype is a perfect fit for the future," Jones comments.

When discussing the upcoming development pipeline, Mushkin explains the company is in an exciting period of growth that combines their decade-long trajectory of opening in new markets and working with new franchisees, whilst Jones says that while the new prototype is still in its early stages, they are continuing to identify franchise partners and locations to build additional OMNI restaurants moving forward.

"Our Mexico franchisee which just opened its first location is excited to open another one, and we are already in the process of discussing site planning and we will bring in new learnings from the original site into this second location that uses the OMNI design," Jones comments.

"We are focusing a lot of our resources on plans to expand Carl's Jr. in Europe into markets we have not yet ventured into, with the UK and Germany being primary targets," says Mushkin. "Around the world we are equally focused on new growth opportunities in the Americas (primarily Brazil and Canada) as well as Australia. While for Hardee's we are looking at growth in Israel and Africa (starting with South Africa)," Mushkin continues.

A watchword in the industry right now, sustainability is not something new to CKE Restaurants Holdings and they are actively researching new packaging and materials that will reduce their impact and footprint in critical areas. Together with their vendors they are working towards their sustainability goals up and down the supply chain and it is an important part of their forward-thinking planning, and the company remains committed to making meaningful changes.

While there are many reasons that the company has achieved long-term global success, the core of its continued momentum is down to its great food, "All-Star" service, attractive and efficient facilities and a compelling business model for their franchisees.

"Our quality food, including real Angus beef burgers, hand-breaded chicken tenders and chicken sandwiches, hand-scooped real ice cream shakes, and more, undoubtedly set us apart from our competition," highlights Mushkin.

Alongside this, their great and experienced leadership team that begins with company CEO, Ned Lyerly, who has been in leadership roles with the company for over 35-years and their President of International, Mike Woida are what set the business apart from its rivals.

Looking to what comes next, accelerated growth is what's in focus and according to Mushkin and Jones, "it is an exciting time at both the Carl's Jr. and Hardee's brands!"

"We pride ourselves on being agile enough to pivot to new solutions while being a big enough company to weather any storms. Our 80-year history proves we are resilient and an enduring player in the restaurant industry. The future looks bright for our company," concludes Mushkin.



Carl's Jr.  
San Luis Potosi, Mexico



Carl's Jr. International  
OMNI-Prototype



Carl's Jr. International  
OMNI-Prototype





Circular Quay  
Sydney, Australia



# Exquisite Indulgence

Created in 1958, Guylian makes great tasting chocolates that are unique and delicious with only the finest Belgian chocolate. Here, RLI spends some time with company CEO Tom Snick to discuss how the company is changing to meet a retail world that is in constant flux after two years of disruption.



**B**orn in 1938 in Sint-Niklaas, Guy Foubert married his partner Liliane and the two immortalised their passion for chocolate by creating the Guylian brand by combining their names. In celebration of love and chocolate, the couple created for the first time the Guylian Sea Shell Chocolates that the business is now globally renowned for.

Bought by the Lotte Group in 2010, today the Guylian headquarters are still based in Sint-Niklaas, whilst the company has affiliates in Dusseldorf in Germany, Lisbon in Portugal and Oxford in the UK with more to follow in the coming months and years. They also operate nine Guylian Belgian Chocolate Cafés, four of these are situated across Sydney in Australia, three are positioned throughout Dubai in the UAE and the remaining two are ideally located in Seoul, the capital of South Korea.

When discussing the impact of Covid-19 on the chocolate category, current CEO Tom Snick explains that it has vastly affected different countries in different ways. For example in the UK, there was an enormous uplift in the category with significant double-digit growth, whilst in Portugal there was a noticeable drop of chocolate consumption.

"We also knew that from day one of Covid-19 that the world of duty-free would change, but it has changed dramatically," Snick explains. "First in 2020 it completely collapsed, then last year we reached 25 per cent on 2019 sales and this year we predict it will reach 50 per cent. We estimate it will never get back to 100 per cent because of how much the world has changed. This is something we are working to counteract in other departments because duty-free was an important element of our business and around 20 per cent of our revenue."

Taking the reins a little over a year ago, Snick has since gone about implementing a completely new strategy that he coined as the five-year plan. This strategy map has consisted of focusing on its four key ranges, its seashell range, its seahorses range, its temptations range and its

range of chocolate bars and implementing a retail strategy that begins with zoning in on specific online countries of interest before expanding with a physical presence.

Moving forward, there will be a strong focus on Europe as its key markets are currently in this continent, for example the UK accounts for 15 per cent of total revenue. Following this European growth, the next stage of expansion will involve building the brand in key countries across the world like the US and China. Snick feels these two are the most important locations where they would like to build a presence as additional core countries for Guylian in the future.

"I feel we do not need any additional innovation within the company because as long as the fundamentals are in place, Belgian chocolate is an incredibly well-known item around the world so we want to make sure Guylian is front and centre in this segment with a strong, positive brand image that promotes sustainability and responsible sourcing. From here we will look to increase our shelf presence in the next few years, and then we can go to the next step and the next level."

The Guylian concept is one of premium chocolate that still utilises the original recipe of the founder and high-quality ingredients to create products that are different in shape and flavour and are incredibly unique. They also continue to have a minimal ecological footprint and they take care of the communities that enable them to make these chocolate gems.

Harnessing the power of social media, the company is developing a new roadmap that will promote the business across multimedia platforms in the four key countries of the UK, Belgium, Germany and Spain, along with smaller operations across the Netherlands and Portugal.

Speaking on the topic of social media, Snick explains that in tandem with social media marketing, television still plays a vital role, particularly for their demographic which focuses on a slightly older target group of 35-55 year olds, and they have a brand new TV campaign which can be seen on all social media platforms this month.

"Within this target group, television is still very much front and centre of our marketing, but of course we complement it with social media and we are setting up influencer programs. We are focusing on a mix of multiple media outlets and a mix of initiatives and personally I believe that the world is not quite ready for a television-free society," says Snick.

The company is one that has been around for many decades, and this sustained success can be attributed to the brand's unique, premium product offer of chocolate seashells that utilises a praline filling made from roasted hazelnuts, and the three types of chocolate that they use to give it a marbled coating makes it a one-of-a-kind product that stands

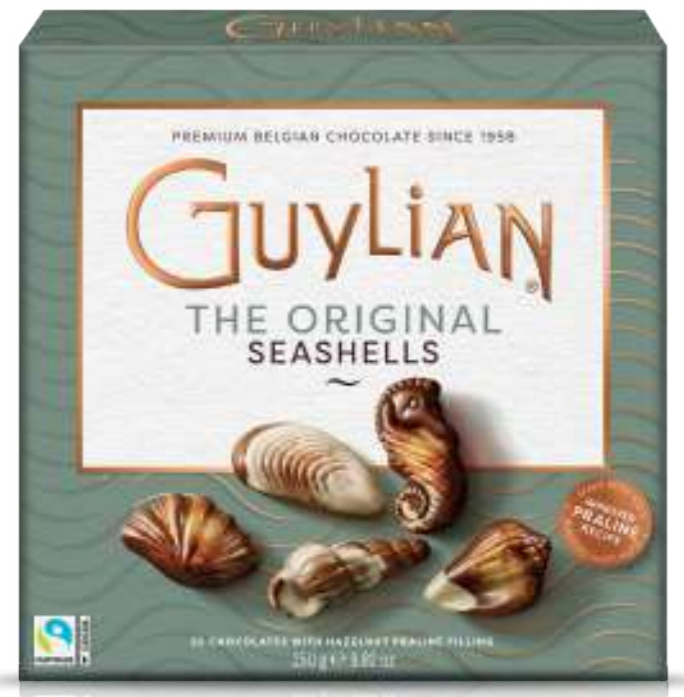
out in the industry.

"It is our product that differentiates us in the chocolate world, and in the future we aim to extend our ranges based around this concept of seashell chocolate that focuses on Belgian chocolate with a praline filling created with roasted hazelnuts," Snick highlights.

Looking to the future, the current CEO says that moving to plastic free packaging is a massive challenge facing the company right now, as currently there is no technology available to make chocolate packaging plastic free.

"Our other challenge is to ensure ingredients are sourced sustainably and responsibly and that we take care of the communities who help to supply us, and that in the future we can move to the packaging that has the most minimal ecological footprint possible," Snick says.

As we near the end of our time with Tom, he explains that what he and his team have done in the last 12 months is begin the process of building something beautiful by polishing the brand to the level it is now, which means the company has a very significant, relevant and differentiated offer for the consumer and now the real work begins in building the brand to become a global powerhouse.





# Making a Difference

Established in 1841, A.S. Watson Group is the world's largest international health and beauty retailer and each year over 5.5 billion customers and members shop with their 12 retail brands in stores and online. Here, RLI speaks with Malina Ngai, Group COO of A.S. Watson Group & CEO of A.S. Watson (Asia & Europe) about the company's continuing growth and how it is evolving its offline plus online platform strategy.



The Perfume Shop, UK

The A.S. Watson Group is a family of market leading health & beauty retail brands that are situated across 29 markets in Asia and Europe. Their flagship brands are Watsons in Asia and Superdrug, The Perfume Shop, Kruidvat and Rossmann in Europe and they recently celebrated their 180th anniversary. Its journey from operating one store in one market to now running over 16,400 stores across almost multiple markets has been driven by their continuous evolution, never staying still and focusing on staying relevant to customers. Their brand experience has evolved over time, changing from a

traditional retail offering to an O+O (Offline plus Online) ecosystem that connects with billions of customers every year. "We remain one of the fastest growing brands in the world, having launched 1,700 new stores during the last two years despite the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic," explains Malina Ngai, Group COO of A.S. Watson Group & CEO of A.S. Watson (Asia & Europe). "Recently we have entered into three countries in the Middle East with stores launching in the UAE, KSA and Qatar across Dubai Mall, Dubai Festival City, Mall of the Emirates, Mirdiff City Centre, Al Wahda Mall, Mall of Dohran and

Watsons, United Arab Emirates



Doha Festival City."

Standing at almost 3,000sq ft, the new store in Qatar is designed to appeal to modern beauty lovers who demand an exciting and highly interactive shopping environment. The store features different and designated zones that focus on specific product categories, including Natural & Clean Beauty which features the Sustainable Choices products, and an open makeup area so that customers can try out different looks and play around with a wide range of the latest and trendiest colour cosmetics.

"With every crisis comes opportunity and the unfortunate effect the pandemic had on the world and our business has enabled us to accelerate our digital transformation and brought forward the progress by at least a few years," Ngai comments.

She continues by explaining that the traditional O2O model no longer serves the needs of customers, and it is not about driving customers from offline to shopping online, or vice versa, it is about serving the customers when and how they want to be served and how they receive their products.

The O+O model that A.S. Watson has transformed into has proven to be a resilient model. Amongst the 142 million loyalty members they have, those who shop with them O+O spend up to three times more versus those who only shop in physical stores.

"We do not see the pandemic as a crisis, but an opportunity to build and intensify our relationships with our customers. What helps us to navigate through the challenge and turn it into opportunities is the teamwork, agility and resilience that we've demonstrated through the pandemic," explains Ngai.

The role of social media within A.S. Watson's O+O ecosystem is a significant one, as it is all about creating customer connectivity. Seven

years ago when there was only the vision for the O+O platform strategy, the brand established eLab, an in-house digital agency to build digital experiences and content. Seeing themselves as not only a retailer but also a media company, they were one of the first retailers to do livestreaming, and they integrate this into their website and mobile apps to allow customers to place orders directly.

Ngai believes 'content is king' and 'engagement is queen' and that it is not just about how much content they can reach out to customers with, it is the engagement they can gather from it that is important.

The topic of sustainability is pivotal for retailers today and it is not a new concept for A.S. Watson. It is entwined within their history and the brand's purpose of putting a smile on customers' faces today and tomorrow.

"We refreshed our sustainability roadmap last year with our 2030 Sustainability Vision. The Vision sets out a bold commitment to acting on climate change, embracing a circular economy, providing more sustainable product choice, supporting our communities and creating a greater workplace," Ngai comments. "We strongly believe in creating a real impact through involving our customers around the globe with content and activities to engage them to join hands and do good for the planet."

As the interview draws to a close, we ask Ngai about the future of the company and what its greatest challenge is?

"It is in the digital transformation of A.S. Watson. It is not just about how much investment we put into technology or how many more digital devices we put into the stores. It is about genuine revolution in changing the way we think, the way we work and communicate, leveraging on technology as an enabler to allow us to adapt and change ever more quickly to meet customer expectations and needs. Retail is not dead, it is evolving very quickly."



Superdrug, UK



Watsons, United Arab Emirates



Watsons, Hong Kong, China

## SPECIAL FEATURE: RETAIL'S UNMISSABLE TOP TEN



Samaritaine, Paris, France

# A New Retail Landscape...

Matthew Brown, Retail Futurist and Owner and Founder of Echochamber, a London-based retail trend agency and his team has travelled the world seeking out retail innovation since 1999. In this article, he zones in on the ten unmissable global retail stores that can be found across the world in 2022.

**T**wo years into the pandemic it is clear that not only has retail survived, it continues to innovate. Moreover, trends that we were predicting to emerge within the next few years have accelerated into the retail landscape much faster than expected. This has brought both the destruction of legacy retail and the creative shoots of recovery, as new concepts fill the vacuum.

The world has learned to shop online, QR codes are now part of everyday life, and technology brings fresh opportunities for creative brands to connect with us in ways that add genuine value to the shopping experience.

At the same time, inspiring tactile experiences are more important than ever. The retail essentials of great merchandising and design, personal service and product innovation are flourishing. Department stores, far from extinct, are reinventing themselves as exciting, expert, curated and socially responsible destinations.

Hospitality, on hold during the pandemic, is back as a driving force in retail. Pop-ups are exploding with dynamic creativity and constant change, driven by the normally staid luxury sector. This truly is a great time for retail. Here are ten of our favourite new stores in 2022...

### 10. Amazon Fresh, London, UK

2022 is the year of the convenience revolution. Back in 2018 when we first visited Amazon Go in Seattle, it was clear that checkout-free retail offered not just frictionless shopping, but more importantly magical technology that could totally transform the way we interact with brands. However, it wasn't until 2021 that Amazon finally launched its 'just walk

out' technology internationally, with 15 Amazon Fresh locations across London within the first year.

Whilst Amazon is actively promoting its fresh private label, on a strategic level

Amazon Fresh is really proof of concept, designed to sell 'just walk out' technology to other retailers beyond food retail. The grocery industry has already opened their own versions; Sainsbury's Pick & Go uses Amazon tech, whilst Tesco Get Go uses rival Trigo, and Aldi's new checkout free Greenwich store uses AiFi. Expect a host of international concepts across the world in 2022.

### 9. Eataly, London, UK

Whilst the pandemic has accelerated online retail and technology trends in convenience grocery, Eataly proves that tactile food experiences still matter and that hospitality is key to creating inspiring physical retail. The pandemic didn't stop Eataly's launch in London and what a wonderful store it is! We first visited the Turin original in 2007 and have followed the brand around the world ever since. The new London store, near Liverpool Street station, is particularly impressive; 45,000sq ft of food over two floors, with London's biggest Italian enoteca, a cookery school, more than 5,000 Italian products, house made mozzarella, pasta and bread. There are also three restaurants and bars and six eateries. Eataly is perfect proof that storytelling, beautiful merchandising and crafted food production instore are timeless tools in creating expert retail that surprises and delights.



### 8. Silpo Designer Markets, Ukraine

In a world of boring, cookie-cutter stores, Silpo stands out like a beacon of creativity, with supermarkets that bring culture and fairy tales to life. Whilst Ukraine is now in the news for all the wrong reasons, supermarket retailing in Ukraine is amongst the most innovative anywhere in the world. Silpo is a premium format from Fozzy Group, the largest food group, and has 230 stores, of which more than 90 are unique 'designer supermarkets', each with a completely different theme and design. Silpo has opened designer stores throughout the pandemic, with more than 30 new concepts added since 2019. Themes include American Diner, Steampunk, Circus Excellence and Mountain Extreme, which celebrates outdoor activities in the Carpathian Mountains.

### 7. RH Gallery, Dallas, US

Upscale homewares brand Restoration Hardware, now renamed RH, continues to lead as a fantastic example of aspirational lifestyle retailing, with a \$40 million revamp and pandemic reopening of this superb store on Knox Street in Dallas. It comes complete with a wine bar and rooftop restaurant, set within a gorgeous garden. This is further proof of the importance of hospitality as a driver of retail as a destination. CEO Gary Friedman's strategy to invest in iconic destination Gallery spaces sees the line deliberately blur between residential and retail, so that customers browse the displays as though they are in a real home. Customers lounge on huge sofas in beautifully appointed rooms, with a glass of wine or coffee, before booking a table in the rooftop restaurant. The retail offer combines member pricing and personal design services.



Silpo, Ukraine



Eataly, London, UK



Amazon Fresh, London, UK



RH Gallery, Dallas, US



Censuum, Copenhagen, Denmark

#### 6. Gentle Monster Haus, Seoul, South Korea & Shanghai, China

Our favourite bonkers brand Gentle Monster becomes a surreal department store, where art meets commerce, and where robotics meets digital, with the Seoul opening of their new Haus flagship concept. Seoul Haus Dosan combines three of their brands into one creative experiential brand space: Gentle Monster eyewear, Tamburins beauty and a Nudake experimental patisserie. The space is anchored by a multi-floor 3D installation designed in collaboration with Frederik Heyman, which deliberately breaks the conventions of traditional retail display. The third floor features THE PROBE, a six-legged robot created and developed by the inhouse Robotics Lab at Gentle Monster. Gentle Monster has become a 'dog whistle' brand; cool to those in the know, which constantly pushes the boundaries of playful storytelling, digital theatre and design led product innovation.



Gentle Monster Haus  
Seoul, South Korea & Shanghai, China

#### 5. House of Schwarzkopf, Berlin, Germany

Direct to consumer retail is a growing trend, as brands understand the power of connecting to customers in spaces where they can bring their brand stories to life in exciting, immersive ways. House of Schwarzkopf is a fantastic hair experience in Berlin, which combines a hair and colour salon with expert hair analysis and a retail store that offers limited edition, heritage and personalisable Schwarzkopf hair products. Located in a beautifully designed space in the heart of Mitte, this was a project that we actually helped develop at Echochamber, with a client innovation workshop and retail safari. The result is a world class example of how to turn a commodity product into an immersive experience. There's RFID activated storytelling, a selfie studio, and shampoo that you can personalise by putting your own silhouette onto the packaging.



Anya Hindmarch Village  
London, UK

#### 4. Censuum, Copenhagen, Denmark

Whilst the pandemic has accelerated the demise of mid-market legacy department stores, a new breed of mission-driven retailers is emerging from the ashes, offering new shopping spaces, underpinned by expert curation and unique creativity. Censuum bills itself as the 'department store of the future', which champions and plays host to socially responsible brands across food, fashion and home. These are new to market and looking to break into retail. The brainchild of Danish entrepreneurs Dion Guldberg and Dennis Eriksen, they now have two brand new Censuum stores in the Copenhagen area, which combine immaculate industrial Danish design, with lovely creative merchandising and interactive product storytelling. Every brand featured has to be socially responsible, moving beyond environmental sustainability to wider ethical issues.

#### 3. Anya Hindmarch Village, London, UK

The Anya Hindmarch Village is a new kind of playfully creative brand experience that brings a hybrid department store/shopping mall approach to an open air street corner in London's Belgravia. Anya's original bespoke store, which offers custom crafted bags and accessories, has been joined by four brand new shopfronts to create her village, complete with local noticeboard. The Plastic Store is all about sustainability and upcycling, whilst Labelled is dedicated to the art of organisation, offering Hindmarch's best-selling Labelled collection. The Anya Cafe is a charming cake shop cafe with outside dining. Finally, The Village Hall is a permanent pop up store that changes seasonally; from a hair salon on opening, to this mock grocery last summer. It transformed to Santa's Grotto over Christmas 2021.



House of Schwarzkopf, Berlin,  
Germany

#### 2. Gucci Circolo Pop Up, London, UK

Pop ups have been a defining feature of pandemic retail, with luxury brands building immersive experiences that even change multiple times during their temporary existence. Gucci has been a trailblazer, with a host of experimental brand activations and collaborations, from its North Face tie up, to this wonderful pop up house in London's Shoreditch. Gucci Circolo launched last Autumn in the iconic David Adjaye building and transformed three times during its three month residency. They repainted the entire facade and redesigned the interior for each theme. First opening to celebrate Gucci 100, the space featured a bookstore; music listening room and roof terrace bar, it reopened featuring the Balenciaga Hacker collaboration. The final iteration, in December, was 'Collective Processes' a multi-media exhibition of Black Women Artists, curated by Ronan McKenzie.

#### 1. Samaritaine, Paris, France

After 16 years, Paris' most iconic department store Samaritaine has finally reopened after an eye watering €1bn renovation by DFS, the travel arm of LVMH group. Undertaken by a team of star architects and designers, this mixed use experience combines a luxury hotel, with 20,000sqm of new retail, offering a curated selection of women's and men's fashion, jewellery, watches, beauty and beauty experiences, including a spa and Europe's largest beauty hall. It also plays host to an ever-evolving roster of pop-ups, such as the famed Galerie Perrotin. With twelve food counters and restaurants, destination dining is key to the concept. The store is home to over 600 brands, many of which are exclusive and 1,700 staff to look after the expected torrent of visitors. All Samaritaine needs now is for the international tourists to return!



Gucci Circolo, London, UK



# Following the Money

Mark Faithfull crunches the numbers as he looks at analysis and expansion that reflects changing markets.



## Primark looks to the US for expansion opportunities

The owner of fast-fashion retailer Primark expects group profits to bounce back above pre-Covid-19 levels and is also forging ahead with US expansion, with around a third of planned new openings in North America.

Primark sales for the first half to 5 March are expected to be more than 60 per cent ahead of last year, while the impact of the surging costs of raw materials, and supply chain problems at its operation have been mostly offset by cutting store operating costs and a favourable exchange rate with the US dollar, the company said.

The company, which operates a network of over 400 stores, including 191 in the UK, has added 27 stores over the past two years and recently announced its first store in Romania, due to open later this year in Bucharest, marking Primark's 15th international market.

It is also stepping up its US expansion with three new store locations in the New York region and Primark now has five new leases signed in the area, in addition to a new store lease for Tysons Corner, Washington, signed earlier in the year.

In the past financial year, almost a third of Primark's new store openings were in the US, including the most recent launch in September last year at Fashion District, Philadelphia, its 13th store in the country. Primark intends to accelerate expansion and over the next five years Primark expects the US store estate to grow to some 60 stores.



## Ted Baker mulls future amid bids

Fashion retailer Ted Baker confirmed in late March that it had turned down no less than two proposals from US private equity firm Sycamore Partners Management.

After what the company's management described as a careful review of the offers, the group determined that the bids significantly undervalued the business and "failed to compensate shareholders for the significant upside that can be delivered by Ted Baker as a listed company."

At the time of writing, Sycamore was facing a decision as to whether it should come back with a higher bid before the mid-April deadline set by the UK's Takeover Panel or walk away, having previously outlined its interest in a statement to the London Stock Exchange.

Ted Baker has been without a permanent chairman since the death of John Barton, and has endured torrid times, with high profile management resignations and Founder Ray Kelvin left under a cloud in 2019 amid claims of inappropriate behaviour toward female colleagues.

More recently, the business has begun to show encouraging signs of a recovery, with a recent trading update revealing that sales rose by 35 per cent during the 12 weeks to 29 January compared with the same period a year earlier.

## Boots waits on suitors as Walgreens leads chase

Bidders for Walgreens-owned UK pharmacy and drugstore giant Boots are preparing to take their bids further as they square up in a battle for the high street group.

Current front-runners include the billionaire Issa brothers, owners of supermarket chain Asda – a deal which they closed out from Walmart last year - and EG Group, who are looking to add the chain of 2,200 stores to their rapidly growing retail empire.

The eventual winner will likely reshape the pharmacy and drugstore markets in both the US and UK, with American giant Walgreens exiting the Walgreens Boots Alliance (WBA) to focus on its home market, while UK market leader Boots seeks new direction beyond its recent era of mega-mergers.

For its part, Walgreens is shifting its focus toward primary healthcare. The drugstore group has administered a colossal 56 million doses of the Covid-19 vaccine over the past year and in the Autumn WBA Chief Executive Roz Brewer unveiled the new Walgreens Health unit.

Central to this initiative is an expanded partnership with primary care clinic specialist VillageMD – in which WBA invested a total of \$6.2bn across 2020 and 2021 to build up an ownership stake - to open Village Medical at Walgreens clinics.

With 80 clinics across 10 markets already opened since their initial 2019 pilot, the partners are aiming for 200 clinics by the end of this year, increasing that to 600 by the end of 2025.



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# The Future of Retail



Retail as we knew it continues to evolve following two years of unprecedented disruption in the industry because of Covid-19, here, Farah Thalji, Director at Simon-Kucher & Partners Dubai takes some time out to discuss how sustainability will soon become the biggest purchasing factor for consumers and what this will mean for the sector.

With 86 per cent of the region's population now connected, online product information has significantly changed product awareness and purchasing behaviour. Consumers worldwide continue to demand a sustainable, socially conscious, and personalised lifestyle following the events of the pandemic. Purchasing habits, such as seeking out more sustainable and philanthropic brands, have become a more prevalent consumer trend.

Consequently, retailers are being held more accountable than ever before for not meeting consumer expectations. Simon-Kucher & Partners cites two areas of focus following The Retail Summit in Dubai: building brand value through sustainable investments and redesigning loyalty programs to meet consumer needs.

### Core sustainable investments escorting the demand

The ongoing sensitivity behind global demand for sustainable and ethical brands is based on cultural and societal values.

Around 80 per cent of global consumers place importance on environmental sustainability and aspire to lead more eco-friendly lives, according to Simon-Kucher & Partners' 2021 Global Sustainability Study. One in four UAE citizens has made significant changes to their buying behaviour to make it more sustainable in the last five years, and one in three even report a willingness to switch to sustainable solutions when they are available.

Here are the core sustainability trends to invest in:

### Opt for selling 'pre-owned' goods

Consumers now have a better understanding of their options thanks to e-commerce. Think with Google research shows that 74 per cent of in-store buyers searched online first for in-store-related information, such as store locations or what was in stock near them.

The luxury online fashion platform Farfetch, for instance, offers a 'pre-owned' section in its store. Start-ups like Shift Eco are taking this one step further in the UAE. By pre-identifying an entire range of eco-friendly products, it serves as a curated marketplace to ease the process of buying sustainable products.

### Reduce the amount of paper and packaging

Retailers can make the post-purchase part of the transaction more sustainable. The less single-use packaging in circulation, the less energy is consumed to handle and process packaging waste. Using less paper and packaging for shipments and returns contributes significantly to both cost-efficiency and greening operations.

### Consolidate shipment numbers

The same Think with Google research also shows 70 per cent of shoppers said the ability to buy a product from a physical store was important to them. If indeed using online search to check for stock at their local stores, this can significantly reduce the number

of shipments or store deliveries made to individual consumers' residences. Tailoring the stock take of products high in customer demand - as dictated by online analysis - can consolidate the number of shipments needed to both stores and consumers. Thus, reducing the number of carbon emissions from the fossil fuels used to power them.

### A potential pitfall

The majority of sustainable, eco-friendly products bought new are an investment that often times come with a premium. Consumers have to decide whether they are willing and able to pay it, and Simon-Kucher and Partners' study indicates that Millennials and Gen Z are more likely than Gen X to do so. The study also shows a willingness to pay for sustainability is highest in Consumer goods (38 per cent).

GenZ will be used as a long-term indicator for retailers and manufacturers, despite their not yet growing purchasing power. Companies will aim to offer products at competitive prices in order to meet acquisition targets. As an alternative to cutting prices, sustainable brands should create customer loyalty programs to shore up their customer base.

### Personalisation also has a part to play

Improving the customer experience can strengthen loyalty, and such loyalty programs geared towards personalisation have been found to be the most effective. More than ever before, consumers have an expectation of personalisation across touchpoints with companies, e.g., product recommendations, promotions, and direct communication. Personalised communications can make customers feel valued (i.e. they feel valued when messages are tailored to them). This can significantly contribute to building customer relationships.

72 per cent of connected consumers in the UAE subscribe to at least one loyalty program and 40 per cent subscribe to multiple programs, according to our findings. It is almost a given that loyalty programs are offered, and UAE consumers are more likely to spend their money on an e-commerce platform that personalises offers and discounts and continuously engages them. These services will undoubtedly become a fundamental way to drive both awareness as well as conversion.

GCC consumers are willing to go the eco-friendly route. However, there is still work to do to provide sufficient options at affordable prices. While retailers have managed to make shopping safe and convenient throughout the pandemic, it's now time to iterate on those processes and keep up with customer demands.

By developing a value model that aligns with the changing demand in the region while incorporating loyalty programs, companies will ensure their customers are well taken care of along the way.



## DESIGN WEB GALLERY

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\* minimum of 12 months

# The Forefront of Leisure



Immersive experiences is a sector still not defined but at the forefront of leisure and in this month's Leisure Insight feature, Tom Lionetti-Maguire, CEO of Little Lion Entertainment delves a little deeper into a sector that is a major topic in the industry at present as customers crave experiences that are more and more immersive.

Consumer trends inevitably underpin the way in which leisure develops, and so it is no surprise with access to technology 24/7 and consumers demanding more, that immersive experiences are leading the way in terms of the future of leisure. While a bit of a buzzword that has been thrown around over the years, the 'immersive experience' has developed from initial small gimmicks that were used to attract consumers, to fully immersive experiences through theatrical expression, and technology where consumers are able to enter a completely new world and escape reality. Ultimately, this has become a whole sector in itself within leisure, and rather than being an add-on to a bar or restaurant consumers specifically look for immersive experiences to enjoy their free time. Despite this, it is still not specifically defined as a sector, and there hasn't been a great deal of research into the huge potential this burgeoning sector has.

## What defines an immersive experience?

The scope of immersive experiences is large but involves something that creates the sense of being lost within an experience or story. From decoration, such as the themed bars to social, team-based experiences such as the escape room phenomenon, and now the use of augmented and virtual reality, immersive experiences can range in different levels. If we look back, this was initially created through amusement parks that created immersion through 'fantasy' with the likes of Disney creating themed experiences on a scale previously unseen. These amusement parks were the owners of this type of experience until recently, when this has been made more accessible through immersive experiences on a smaller scale. Immersion into theme parks was always broad brush however, and gave spectators a sense of the world, whereas its younger 'immersively theatrical' cousin has plunged people entirely into carefully structured and narrated worlds.

While not completely clear what has led to this drive for more immersive experiences, it is no doubt that consumers have always enjoyed a sense of escaping from reality. What amusement parks like Disney began was to enable a mechanic in which consumers can be immersed in their favourite films, tv shows and video games. More recently, this trend has been exacerbated by social media and the notion that sharing an experience is an extension of our personalities.



Consumers are keen to share their experiences via these social media platforms and an immersive experience creates a narrative that reflects their personality, whether it be a 'cool trend' or nostalgia for something such as our Crystal Maze experience; there is certainly an emotional connection to the immersive experience.

## The opportunity is huge

Leisure in general has been more resilient to the last two years than expected. In a recent Barclays survey, it was found that 94 per cent of leisure and hospitality owners were confident, coming out of this difficult period. For investors wondering where to invest though, the immersive experience sector is still one that hasn't been properly defined, and this could cause challenges.

In 2019, the immersive entertainment industry was valued at \$61.8bn reflecting the tremendous growth in this exciting and unique industry, according to the Immersive Entertainment Industry association.

Despite this, and the association, there still aren't many statistics demonstrating the pure growth and opportunity that this sector could achieve.

This is especially important, as it is no doubt that this type of experience will continue to grow but for typical leisure investors, they don't have the in-depth knowledge or statistics to illustrate the growth this offers. It is therefore down to industry leaders to educate investors and stakeholders.

## What next?

While most of the conversation is still focused on virtual reality and the metaverse that is being created by Mark Zuckerberg, we have a different impression of what will drive this leisure trend. Although technology is key and there is no shortage of virtual reality experiences, artist-driven immersive theatre experiences are still one of the fastest growing trends in leisure. The likes of Punchdrunk and ourselves at Little Lion Entertainment, saw the opportunity to create a whole experience from start to finish, and this has been very successful. At our Crystal Maze Live Experience, we have sold over one million tickets since launching five years ago, and we will shortly be launching a Tomb Raider experience in Camden Town, London. Likewise, companies such as Punchdrunk have gone from strength to strength, creating beautiful worlds and highly anticipated shows such as the upcoming 'Burnt City' this summer in London.

We have no doubt that there is significant demand for this type of theatrical experience, and yet there are still not many players in the market. Following the last two years of isolation, we are seeing that consumers are keen to socialise with friends, family and big groups, which is why this type of experience is seeing such demand. In fact recent ONS data has confirmed that consumers are more interested in experiences rather than spending money on goods. People want to be active, and engaged, not passive and isolated. Therefore although we aren't against the idea of virtual reality and the metaverse, we believe there is still a big desire for human connection and interaction through leisure. Now though, we need more insight and definition of the sector to attract investment, to ensure these businesses continue to grow and develop.

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Zweibrücken Fashion Outlet  
Zweibrücken, Germany  
Developer: VIA Outlets

# Looking to the Future

**A model that has maintained its appeal during unprecedented times, the outlet market continues to thrive and it has a bright future ahead. Here, RLI provides an overview of the sector before experts in the field offer their views on the industry.**

Due to their nature of being largely out of town and open-air, outlet centres and destinations have become more attractive shopping destinations for the general public during the last couple of years and this seems to be continuing as Covid-19 begins to dissipate in certain countries.

According to the most recent Outlet Centre Performance Report (OCPRE) by ecostra GmbH in partnership with the French research institute Magdus, which is considered to be the 'benchmark' for the European outlet industry, the outlet operator Value Retail has achieved something truly unique by taking first, second and third place in the rankings.

Gold went to "La Roca Village" in La Roca del Vallés, Spain, north of Barcelona. Silver went to "Kildare Village" in the north of Ireland and bronze to the previous serial winner "Bicester Village" in the British county of Oxfordshire. All three centres were developed and operated by Value Retail.

"This is indeed a very special achievement, which should not be

underestimated," Dr Joachim Will, Head of ecostra commented on this result. "It is well known in the market that Value Retail, in its centres, charges by far the highest rents in the outlet sector. At the same time, the brand manufacturers surveyed now confirm to us that their outlet stores also achieve the best returns there. Obviously, it is worthwhile to operate shops in Value Retail centres despite the high rents."

The report continues by saying that outlet stores continue to be significantly more profitable for brand manufacturers than their own brand stores in the cities high streets. Here, the survey results of OCPRE have never shown a different picture over the past 14 years. So as we continue to move through 2022, the future for the outlet industry appears bright and while it has not been dampened by the pandemic, its next steps will be on more-assuredly stronger ground than that of traditional retail and over the next few pages industry experts offer us their thoughts on the outlet sector.

## OTTO AMBAGTSHEER, CEO – VIA OUTLETS

The outlet sector continues to perform robustly through 2022 despite initial concerns around the Omicron variant, the wider political instability from Ukraine, general rises in inflation and of course petrol price rises. Whilst we are seeing signs of these sensitivities in the same way as all retail markets, the sector remains more attractive than full price retail for those shoppers seeking best value for money without compromising on shopper experience or brand choice. As a result, the outlet channel remains an ideal solution for brands and shoppers alike.

Health and safety continues to be at the forefront of everyone's minds in 2022, and therefore outlet centres - because their predominately open-air design - are in an increasingly good position to attract visitors for days out.

We see the outlet industry being further boosted by the arrival of digitally-native brands - those which have traditionally never had an offline presence and are now using fashion outlets to test a bricks-and-mortar concept. They want to access and engage with a new type of customer in a physical way, and this industry is especially useful for them with the flexible leases we offer.

A trend we see bigger than ever in 2022 is the omni-channel mindset. After various periods of confinement over the past two years, many consumers have become routinely familiar with online shopping, whilst simultaneously desiring 'real' in-person experiences. Not only do they now expect the best of both worlds, but they switch quickly and effortlessly between online and offline - which means brands and landlords need to join them in becoming channel agnostic. Additionally, the pandemic has brought about new ways of shopping such as virtual personal shopping via WhatsApp and live-stream shopping, and the personalisation that these channels have offered will need to be translated into shopping in the physical world by utilising data in better and more meaningful ways.

Finally, the S in ESG - Sustainability will grow further as a key differentiator to create an even more positive and regenerative approach to outlet shopping - not just when developing or redeveloping centres but as an integral part of any retail experience. We see an increased engagement with brand partners on sustainability issues will be needed, whether it be shop-fits or brand partners' own responsible initiatives - as well as the implementation of the CRREM tool to set targets for the reduction of energy consumption and GHG emissions - all in line with what is required from the commercial real estate industry to limit the effects of climate change.

## CARLOS GONZÁLEZ, MANAGING DIRECTOR - NEINVER

Despite it being hard to gauge a clear outlook in the midst of international conflicts, ongoing supply-chain issues and diminished purchasing power caused by inflation, we remain optimistic about outlet sector performance.

Last year we saw a general rebound in retail and shoppers coming back into stores across our outlet portfolio, drawn by the lure of the outlet proposition and our ability to respond quickly to changes. Despite the challenging year, our outlet business recovered steadily over the course of 2021, reaching pre-Covid-19 figures in H2 2021, and despite the significant challenges we face in 2022, we do not expect momentum in the sector to wane. In fact, rising prices mean that consumers are more value-conscious than ever and are now driven by both price, but also experience, particularly on the back of an extended period of restrictions. The outlet business provides just what the consumer is looking for: an enticing combination of product, price and experience.

Outlet leasing terms and conditions are particularly relevant in the current retail climate and we expect our centres' commercial offer to remain dynamic, creating an additional incentive for customers. Even as we see some firms becoming more cautious when it comes to their expansion plans, major international brands, as well as strong local ones, continue to open in dominant outlet centres and new brands are using the outlet channel to make their debut in bricks-and-mortar. In terms of brand mix, we are also seeing a greater number of younger-focused brands opening across our portfolio, with some of our schemes increasingly targeting younger shoppers than they used to several years ago.

Covid-19 exacerbated the need for easy access to products and services and up-to-the-minute information, and tech tools will therefore continue to play a defining role in the sector, with digital services and tools such as virtual shopping and loyalty programmes helping centres to adapt to ever more digitally savvy shoppers. While invisible smart tech solutions such as geolocation systems and tracking tools will continue to help analyse consumer behaviour and adapt aspects such as marketing, leasing and facilities management, and support brands' strategies.

In the coming years, there will be plenty of opportunity for value creation in the outlet sector as schemes adapt to the evolving ESG scenario, keeping ahead of the new sustainability regulations and requirements, whilst also responding to consumer expectations for sustainable and socially conscious shopping experiences.



Vicolungo The Style Outlets  
Vicolungo, Italy  
Developer: NEINVER



Malmö Designer Village  
Skåne County, Sweden  
Developers: Rioja Estates, Osborne+Co

## MATT SLADE, RETAIL DIRECTOR – QUINTAIN

Historically, outlet centres have far outperformed the wider retail sector – and there is nothing to suggest this upward trajectory is set to falter any time soon.

Even with inflation on the rise - coupled with the cost-of-living crisis - world-renowned flagship brands continue to signal a strong vote of confidence in the outlet model and, in particular, its understanding of relative value.

At London Designer Outlet, for instance, a number of big brands including Nike, adidas, Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger have all significantly expanded their store footprints in recent months. This is evidence of the growing awareness among retailers that the shoppers who frequent outlets, by and large, spend more than they would at a full-price store to take advantage of the greater value.

And while many outlet regulars will sadly see their disposable income ebb over the coming months, an increasingly frugal consumer base will also see an influx of shoppers who ordinarily shop at full-price stores turn to outlets, seeking out better value for money.

Our own continued success also suggests a growing preference

by brands to take up space in outlet centres that are strategically located in urban centres, close to public transport connections and residential areas.

Though travel is no longer restricted as it was during the pandemic, Covid-19 has almost certainly left a long-lasting impact on consumer behaviour, highlighting the obvious merits of there being a range of stores and other amenities on your doorstep. Moreover, as petrol prices rocket, the virtues of localism are only set to gain further traction – with concepts like the 15-minute city we are pioneering at Wembley Park, for instance, negating the need to travel long distances to visit restaurants, shops and indeed, outlet centres.

The use of turnover-based rent structures by outlet destinations is appealing to retailers too, now more than ever. This shared risk inspires greater confidence in brands, which appreciate the fact that the landlord has as much of a vested interest in ensuring solid sales performance as they do.

The driving force behind the continued success of the outlet sector will be three-pronged. Not only will it be spurred on by consumers honing in on better value for money, but also brands investing in their stores via upsizes and other enhancements, as well as the growing appeal of turnover-based rent structures to retailers themselves.



London Designer Outlet  
London, UK  
Developer: Quintain

## GILES MEMBREY, MANAGING DIRECTOR – RIOJA ESTATES

First, we had Brexit, then we faced a pandemic, now we have a war on Europe's doorstep. Hopefully the situation in Ukraine will be resolved soon, but the effects of the conflict will be felt for years, maybe decades, to come. So, what does the future hold for outlets?

Outlets have proven to be very resilient when it comes to the pandemic: domestic tourism has turned them into destinations where, thanks to the easy introduction of social distancing measures, consumers have felt safe. But the situation in Ukraine and the growing spectre of inflation, pose new challenges. A rise in the cost of fuel and raw materials as a result of the current conflict will have an impact on any future developments and, although increased inflation tends to have a positive impact, existing outlets will also have to adapt.

Sustainability is increasingly important for investors and brands. However, sustainable options are often not the cheapest so any increase in fuel, raw materials, or indeed labour costs, will see sustainable alternatives come under the spotlight even more, even if any increase is relative. Developers, funds, and brands should also remember that sustainability is becoming more and more important to consumers, so my advice to them would be that they resist the temptation to value engineer these options out of any future schemes, purely on the grounds of cost, if they

want to attract consumers. At Rioja Estates' new Malmö Designer Village project, as well as looking at sustainable, locally sourced materials, we are also developing one of the first ground source heat pump systems with solar panning, as well as providing power direct to each unit. Attention needs to be given to operational costs too, so in addition, we are looking at water efficient products across the scheme along with a wide range of sustainable facilities management initiatives such as EV fast charging points.

My feeling is that going forward visits to outlets are going to become increasingly experiential and this will need to be reflected in every aspect of customer service including accessibility and public transport (especially with rising fuel costs in mind), as well as the recreational, leisure, and food and beverage offers. It is important to create excitement AND experiences for the consumer.

Undoubtedly there are challenges ahead. Rising costs will need to be offset, potentially through higher prices and increased rental revenue as a result of greater sales density, but we should be encouraged. Visitor numbers have been on the up and there is more and more product going into outlets, which is giving consumers more choice. Furthermore, there is an increasing number of investors looking at outlets and more brands coming into the market. If they adapt, then I believe the future looks very bright for outlets.

# Showing Resilience in Difficult Times

**A turbulent couple of years have meant that the retail industry has undergone multiple changes in a very short space of time. Despite this, the outlet sector has shown incredible resilience during difficult times with its fresh approaches and innovative tenants. Here, RLI takes a closer look at a selection of projects that highlight why the sector continues to be a beacon of hope for the wider market.**

Florentia Village, China's leading brand of luxury designer outlets under the Italian real estate development group RDM, celebrated its opening in Chongqing, the second Florentia Village in Southwest China after Chengdu back in February last year. Florentia Village Chongqing is the first international outlet brand in the city and the seventh Florentia Village outlet location, following the brand's counterparts in Tianjin, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Wuhan, and Chengdu. The total construction area is over 60,000sq m and accommodates more than 100 brand stores. The luxury outlet mall chain, operated by Italian real estate entity RDM, is set to open its first property in Vietnam this year as part of its Southeast Asian expansion plan. The move comes following Florentia Village's expansion into China over the past year, with the opening of Florentia Village Chongqing. The group is also looking at expanding into Indonesia, with the country acting as the second location for Florentia Village in Southeast Asia.

TORG International has added another project to its outlet portfolio, Tubize Outlet Mall (TOM), in the heart of Belgium, 25minutes South West of Bruxelles. The 15,300sq m outlet will be part of a major mixed use new neighbourhood development, the so-called "Confluents" including residential, leisure and diversified gastronomy. Located on a former industrial site of over 80ha, TOM will benefit from one of the most densely populated catchments in Europe with over seven million people living within an hour as well as an above average purchasing power. It will attract visitors from Flanders, Wallon Brabant and Hainaut. TOM is being created as a convivial and sustainable living space. It will not only include a major leisure attraction on 6,000sq m, but it will also showcase the largest urban green roof in Europe with over 8,000sq m dedicated to gardening. Shoppers will simply need to walk onto the TOM roof, made accessible, to buy their vegetables. With energy self-sufficient buildings, TOM is qualifying for the BREEAM certificate of excellence

for sustainably built environments. Strategically located near the E19 motorway to Antwerp and Mons, TOM is also at the crossroads of Belgian cities like Namur, Liège, Ghent or Ostende or Lille and Roubaix in Northern France. Construction of the entire project is well advanced with an opening planned for late 2023 and it is being developed by Start Concept.

Set to open in 2023, this 27th project of McArthurGlen will be the first and only luxury Designer Outlet to the west of Paris. Located near Monet's Giverny, one of the most prestigious cultural and tourist sites in France, and just 45 minutes by car from the French capital, their newest Designer Outlet is set to become a key attraction for its fashionable local population and for the 40 million tourists who visit Paris every year. With 20,000sq m of contemporary retail space, the new centre is already attracting interest from brands, with 70 per cent of the 100 available units either leased or in advanced negotiations and the upcoming centre has been thoughtfully designed to bring together international fashion, local culture and artisanal design. The centre will also be home to an artisan village, the Maison des Métiers d'Art, an immersive destination dedicated to promoting and showcasing the very best of Norman and French craftsmanship. McArthurGlen has partnered with celebrated designer, Mathieu Lehanneur, to create the architectural concept for the space. The Maison des Métiers d'Art has been developed in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (The CCI) and the Chamber of Crafts and Artisanship of the Eure (The CMA).

Construction of the 12,500sq m first phase of Tbilisi Outlet Village, situated 30 minutes outside of the Georgian capital has progressed well since the project celebrated groundbreaking in September 2021. The opening is now set for spring 2023. Being developed by Georgian Outlets & Resort Group (GORG) in close collaboration with TORG International, Tbilisi Outlet Village is aiming to become the number one outlet in Central and Eastern Europe. Sixty per cent of the space is already leased and these include the signings of many top brands. The first phase will feature 70 units with a second phase planned in

the following three years that will mean the outlet will reach a total of 20,000sq m and 110 units. Tbilisi Outlet Village is expected to attract more than seven million visitors in its first three years alone, including a significant number of cross-border travellers from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia and Turkey. The outlet's location is particularly well suited – south-east of the capital, directly on the busy E60 motorway. It benefits from a strong catchment made up of Tbilisi's 1.4 million people in a country of close to four million people. Financed by the Domus Group with the support of TBC Bank, one of Georgia's leading banks, it is a strategically important project for Georgia's national economy, especially in the post-pandemic period.

NEINVER, the leading outlet operator in Spain and Poland and the second-largest operator in Europe, has announced a steady recovery at its outlet business in 2021, particularly during the second half of the year as restrictions began to ease. The company recorded over €909M in brand sales across its 17-centre outlet portfolio, a 24 per cent like-for-like increase on 2020 and welcomed more than 35 million visitors over the course of the year, a 16 per cent like-for-like increase. One of its latest projects, Amsterdam The Style Outlets is a scheme from NEINVER and Nuveen Real Estate that features 115 units and is home to such top international brands as adidas, Bjorn Borg, GUESS, New Balance, Nike, O'Neil, PUMA, Salomon and The Kooples and it is set across 19,000sq m. From its first day of operation, the outlet centre has complied with the 'Shop Safe, Stay Safe' guidelines drawn up in collaboration with the inspection and certification organisation SGS, to ensure the safest measures against the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Fashion Outlet Slovenia is being developed by HG Invest in cooperation with FOC Retail Service GmbH and Outlet Evolution Services. On an area of more than 20,000sq m, 70 shops and several hundred new jobs will be created in two phases. The first phase will be opened in 2023 with phase two scheduled for 2026. The upcoming outlet is set to be positioned directly next to the motorway exit for Šentilj on the Austrian border in the north-east of Slovenia. The development will only be a half hour drive south of Graz, the second largest city



# REDEFINING THE OUTLET SHOPPING EXPERIENCE



McArthurGlen Paris-Giverny  
Paris, France  
Developer: McArthurGlen

of Austria. The village atmosphere that will be created will incorporate modern and typical regional elements of Slovenia construction style and architecture. The tenant mix is targeting an international feel that focuses predominantly on fashion brands. This will then be backed up by offerings in market sectors covering outdoor, shoes & accessories, home and kidswear. Michael Lungkofler, Head of Center Management and Managing Director FOC Retail Service, said: "In combination with up to 20,000sq m of rental space, 1,500 parking lots and up to 70 sports and fashion brands as well as a specially-configured gastronomy concept, the development will be an attractive and unique shopping destination for a full-day or weekend excursion."

VIA Outlets – Europe's fastest growing owner-operator of premium fashion outlet destinations – is investing €17.5M in Sevilla Fashion Outlet, its premium outlet destination in Seville, Spain. The outlet will enjoy an extension of 2,680sq m which will create space for 17 major brands to be added to the existing roster of more than 70 stores. With this latest investment, VIA Outlets has invested a total €30M in the centre since acquiring it in 2016. The extension will include the creation

of an experiential multipurpose space designed to host meetings, events and cultural happenings, as well as serve to give the entire commercial area a more sophisticated appearance – highlighting the beauty of the local Andalusian architecture and making reference to some of the most iconic elements and characteristic materials from the city of Seville. One of the most striking aesthetic features of the project will be an innovative ventilated façade made from ceramic slats, which utilises a passive natural lighting design to create feelings of spaciousness and comfort. The extension to Sevilla Fashion Outlets has been designed by internationally renowned architects L35, which previously worked among others on the remodelling of VIA Outlets' Freeport Lisboa Fashion Outlet.

In Malmö, Sweden's third-largest city, Malmö Designer Village, Scandinavia's largest professional outlet centre specialising in designer brands, is under construction. The first phase of Malmö Designer Village will open in the summer of 2025, while the second phase will be completed by the fall of 2027. The outlet will bring together premium fashion brands and iconic restaurants, seasonal events, and "multi-sensory experiences," reflecting new trends in the retail market.



Sevilla Fashion Outlet  
Sevilla, Spain  
Developer: VIA Outlets



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Malmö Designer Village  
Sweden  
Developer: Rioja Estates



## The first and only outlet centre in Greater Amsterdam



The outlet is being built by international company Rioja Estates, which opened the new McArthurGlen West Midlands Designer Outlet centre in the UK last year. The total area of the first phase of the new outlet in Malmö will be 18,000sq m. It will include international and unique to the market premium brands. After completing the project's second phase, its area will reach 27,000sq m. To ensure that the completed project represents the pinnacle of contemporary outlet retail design, it has chosen to partner with experienced outlet architects HMA and award-winning Swedish architects Krook & Tjäder to ensure that Malmö Designer Village pays maximum attention to key design considerations and always remains sympathetic to its surroundings. Rioja Estates is investing €120M into the project as it works towards completion.

When completed, Grantham Designer Outlet Village will be a state-of-the-art retail destination that will transform visitors' shopping and

leisure experience. It will be the UK's only premium outlet with a visible frontage and direct access from the UK's 3rd busiest highway (A1). Inspired by the surrounding countryside, its buildings are conceived as traditional forms with contemporary finishes and high-quality shop fronts. Under development by Rioja Estates, the outlet will offer a uniquely stylish retail and leisure experience for shoppers and tourists alike. Phase one will consist of 89 units with an area of 193,680sq ft; phase two will add a further 94,809sq ft and 48 units. A choice of dine-in or grab and go eateries, combined with an array of premium fashion and lifestyle brands along with landscaped areas for relaxation and children's play, make Grantham Designer Outlet Village the ideal day out destination. Easily accessible by car and public transport, the scheme will also boast a VIP shopping lounge and relaxation areas to offer a premium shopping experience to guests who are members of its loyalty scheme.



Grantham Designer Outlet Village  
Lincolnshire, UK  
Developers: Rioja Estates & Buckminster



Prime location. Everything in one place. Diverse brand mix

**115 UNITS. 2.000 PARKING SPACES. 19.000 SQM GLA. 18 MINUTES TO CITY CENTRE.**

Scotch Corner Designer Village  
Yorkshire, UK  
Developer: Scotch Corner Richmond LLP



Scotch Corner Designer Village is set to be the leading outlet and leisure destination in the north of England and it will serve an affluent shopper profile with a high volume of residents and tourists in a very accessible location in the UK's number one tourist region outside London. Being developed by Scotch Corner Richmond LLP and set to open in autumn 2023, the scheme comprises 150,000sq ft of retail space and will feature 80 boutiques, restaurants and cafes in phase one. In addition, the site will be home to the UK's largest Blue Diamond lifestyle, home and garden, which is already fully let and will encompass 160,000sq ft. The scheme is also a leisure destination with extensive landscaping, unique food offering, children's and adult activities, restaurants and interactive experiences, dog walking and bike riding routes. The investment in Scotch Corner Designer Village is £100M for the first phase and will feature premium brands and restaurants including adidas, Hugo Boss, Skechers, Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, Joules, Dune London, Five Guys and wagamama.

Springfields Outlet and Leisure goes from strength to strength enjoying 16 years of growth. 2021 weekly sales have consistently delivered double-digit growth up on 2019, culminating in the final week with sales up 19 per cent. Springfields' unique mix of retail, leisure and 25 acres of award-winning gardens is the winning formula for retail destinations today. Conceived, developed and asset managed by SLR Outlets for the UBS Triton Property Fund LP, this combination is exactly what guests are looking for. Giving everyone what they want with a perfect shopping experience set in an uplifting healthy green environment. A great mix of sensory experiences coming together to deliver positivity and enhancing visitors' mental health. The latest offerings include the launch of The Parlour, a superb-quality upmarket restaurant capturing the popular Afternoon Teas market. "Springfields is an ongoing success story, and we are looking forward to even more growth in 2022 as we get ready to open phase three in spring 2024. We had a vision when we designed Springfields to combine outlet and outdoor family leisure and have improved it every year," said Ian Sanderson, Director of Springfields Outlet and Leisure and SLR Outlets.

The Boulevard is Northern Ireland's only premier outlet shopping destination. Situated close to the Republic of Ireland border, it benefits from shopper footfall from Northern Irish capital, Belfast and one of Europe's most exciting and affluent cities, Dublin, as well as the

surrounding areas. The Boulevard recently welcomed global fashion brand, New Look, to its impressive roster of tenants as it opened its first ever outlet store. Home to more than 50 other brands including Joules, Dune London, Molton Brown, Crew Clothing, Kurt Geiger, Nike, GUESS, Timberland, Jack Wills, as well as an Omniplex and several eateries, The Boulevard is the perfect option for fashionistas and families alike and has cemented its position as one of Ireland's fastest growing retail destinations since landlords Lotus Property bought it in 2016. In 2022 The Boulevard reached international audiences with the launch of the hotly anticipated HBO Game of Thrones Studio Tour, with the attraction's Park and Ride facility situated adjacent to the scheme, part of the 360,000sq ft Outlet Park. Attracting upwards of 600,000 visitors per annum, the Game of Thrones attraction has already made a positive impact since launch, with a reported sales increase of 25.9 per cent and Average Transaction Value up 37 per cent compared to the same period in 2020. The Boulevard reported its highest month of sales on record in December 2021 as well as an annual growth in sales of 23 per cent last year, compared to 2019. The Boulevard's already strong roster of retail brands will soon be further bolstered by the arrival of a 3,000sq m M&S Simply Food and a 4,518sq m The Range which will open on Outlet Park summer 2022.

The Al Khiran Hybrid Outlet Mall in Kuwait is set to meet heightened shopper expectations by offering a combination of high value and dynamic experiences through a mix of premium outlet shopping, curated dining, immersive entertainment, large format events & exhibitions and recreational leisure experiences when it opens this year. The project area is spread over 350,000sq m, the total GLA of the upcoming outlet is 70,000sq m and it will be home to 300 retail stores. Al Khiran Hybrid Outlet Mall is being developed by the Tamdeen Group which has consistently delivered exceptional real estate including the award winning 360 Kuwait and Al Kout with a single-minded purpose; To Build Great Places. In addition to being the first hybrid outlet in the region, the Al Khiran Hybrid Outlet Mall will be the first outlet mall in Kuwait serving a catchment area of 4 million people in addition to the 2.5 million tourists that will be coming by road from Saudi. Al Khiran Hybrid Outlet Mall will soon be the main commercial centre in the South of Kuwait serving as the Central Business District of the area.



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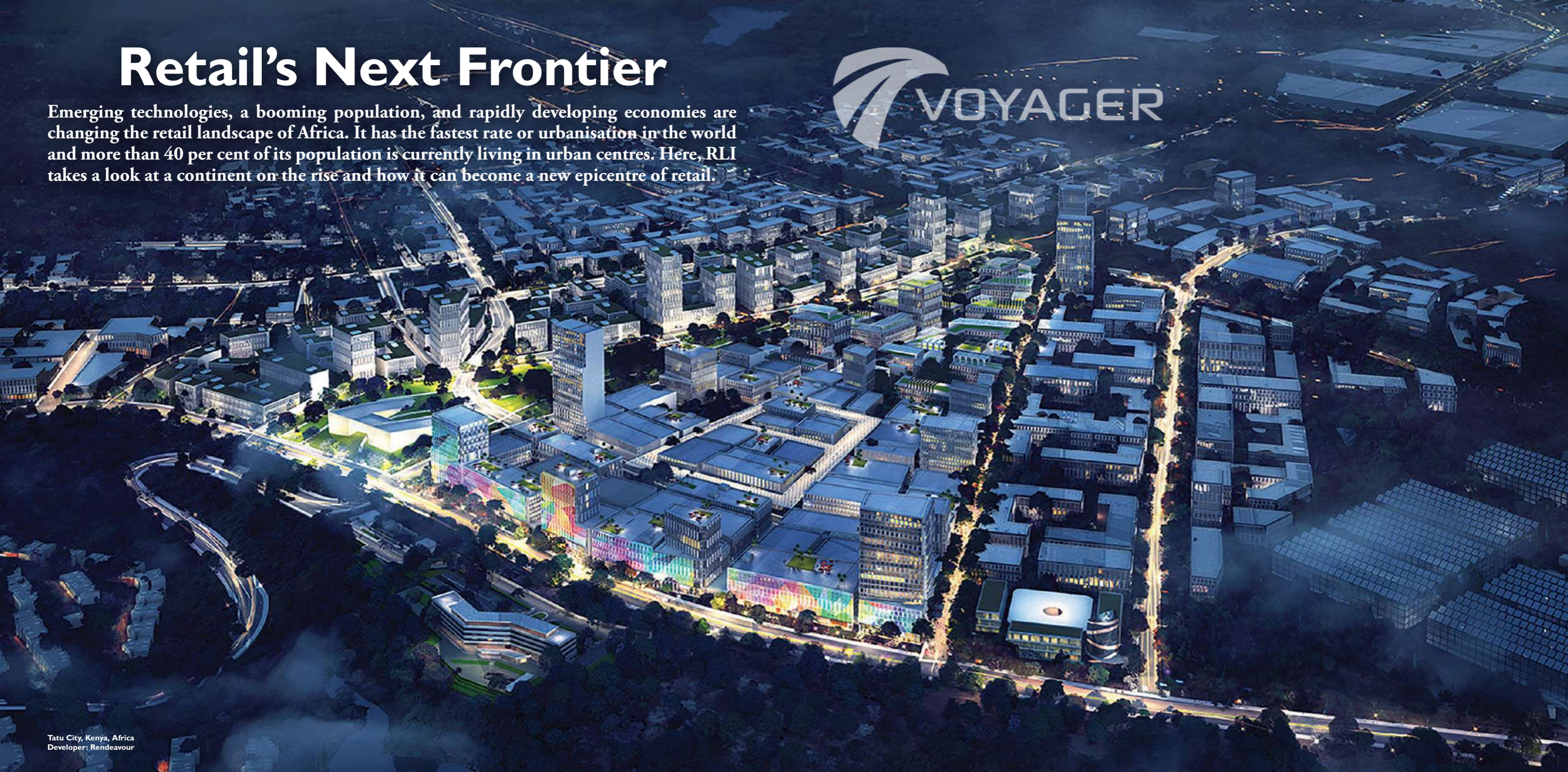
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# Retail's Next Frontier

Emerging technologies, a booming population, and rapidly developing economies are changing the retail landscape of Africa. It has the fastest rate of urbanisation in the world and more than 40 per cent of its population is currently living in urban centres. Here, RLI takes a look at a continent on the rise and how it can become a new epicentre of retail.



Tatu City, Kenya, Africa  
Developer: Rendevour

In the online article 'Retail in Africa: Facts and Emerging Trends' by Bindy, they highlight that by 2030, Africa's 18 largest cities will have a combined spending power of \$1.3 trillion. Additionally, Africa has as many cities with one million inhabitants as North America.

Moreover, Africa is on track to become the continent with the world's youngest population. Approximately 70 per cent of Africans are presently under the age of 30. Youth accounts for around 20 per cent of the population and 53 per cent of African income earners are between 16 - 34 years old. This is an age group known for their awareness of and eagerness to consume new products.

The article goes on to say that a growing population and larger cities are translating into big opportunities for retail. For instance, wholesale and retail are already the third largest contributor to Nigeria's GDP. Kenya has seen a 54 per cent growth in its number of stores over the last five years. South Africa has almost 2,000 shopping malls covering over 24 million square meters. With a surge of investment in technology and infrastructure, Johannesburg is poised to become "Africa's hippest city" and the newly revitalised neighbourhood of Maboneng boasts trendy restaurants, luxury hotels, and galleries.

The emerging middle-class consumer is increasingly brand conscious. Consumer spending is still mostly concentrated in the informal sector of roadside stalls and town markets. However, in East Africa there is already a discernible shift from informal to formal retail. Below is a selection of projects that highlight the new offerings available to consumers.

## Projects across the continent

IMKAN Maroc has announced significant progress on its Rabat-based Le Carrousel project as it signs two major retailers – Carrefour Market and CINEATLAS – to feature at its state-of-the-art Mall du Carrousel. Alongside the major retail signings, IMKAN Maroc has appointed leasing management firm AMS AFRICA to implement the mall's merchandising strategy. Mall du Carrousel in Morocco, which is home to a leasable retail space of over 29,000sq m spread across two levels, is already attracting several globally renowned brands, some of which have already confirmed their presence at the shopping destination. Amongst the first to sign lease agreements are Carrefour Market - a part of the LabelVie Group - and the first network of premium cinema complexes in Morocco, CINEATLAS Holding. In collaboration with its newly appointed leasing

management company, AMS AFRICA, IMKAN Maroc has started to roll out its mall merchandising plan to ensure Mall du Carrousel becomes a dynamic flagship shopping and lifestyle destination on a regional scale which is estimated to attract more than five million visitors when it opens in 2023.

Offering an upscale shopping experience for the inhabitants of Al Rehab City in New Cairo, Egypt, Boulevard Al Rehab is set to become a privilege for the community. The mall will cater for all age's groups with a various range of facilities. The concept of Boulevard Al Rehab is characterized by a well-balanced structure between commercial and retail spaces, in addition to a global brand hypermarket and wide range of international brands. The family & friends facilities combination is enhanced by a kid's entertainment area as well as a cinema which is operated by leaders of the field. A start up project by a prominent real estate investment group, United Global Company (UGC), with a capital investment of around 1.2 BillionEGP, Boulevard Al Rehab has an area of 25,000sq m, out of which the total construction area is about 100,000sq m comprising six different levels.

Located in a strategic position between Tunis city centre and Tunis Carthage International Airport and being designed by Design International

and developed by SPLT (Société de Promotion du Lac de Tunis) and Indigo Properties, Tunis Garden City will be the first development of a larger masterplan that will change the face of Tunis when it launches in 2024. Tunis Garden City is designed to give back to the city of Tunis an urban space where people can live, work, and enjoy life. Everything is connected together and it will feature 150 retail outlets, distributed across two floors, with a mix of shops and restaurants that face both the indoor galleria and the outdoor boulevard. Ultimately, Tunis Garden City will be a new post-Covid-19 city, symbolising a new Tunisian renaissance.

Zenata Mall is poised to become the largest mall in North Africa with 120,000sq m of gross leasable area. Over the past year, the teams at Al Futtaim, Marjane Holding, Sonae Sierra and Société d'Aménagement Zenata (SAZ) have collaborated to develop an innovative retail, marketing and branding strategy to position Zenata Mall as Morocco's largest and most attractive shopping, food, family and leisure destination. The mall is currently set to open in 2022. The €100M investment is located in Mohammedia, Casablanca and when it is open it will include 250 shops served by approximately 3,650 parking spaces. The centre will have 18 anchor shops, including IKEA and Marjane hypermarket.

The Arch, Durban, South Africa  
Developer: Multiply Property Holdings



Tunis Garden City, Tunis, Tunisia  
Developer: Indigo Property

The upcoming Castle Gate development by Castle Development will be an impeccable commercial expansion and its hub has been designed by the superior company OKO-PLAN. The mall is to be located in the R7 zone beside the Coventry British University in the New Administrative Capital. The project is to be a focal point where social gatherings can be created in restaurants, cafes, retail outlets and professionally through office and medical clinic space. Upon completion, at an as yet unspecified date, Castle Gate will become a one-of-a-kind business plaza where unrivalled shopping experiences meets astounding fashion desires and exceptional dining experiences rolled in one. The ground floor will comprise of 54 units in multiple different shapes and spaces.

The redeveloped Metroplex Shopping Mall in Uganda is a world-class, double-level shopping centre in a convenient location. A \$20M investment in the 13,000sq m shopping mall by Gateway Delta has drawn retailers such as Carrefour who has taken space previously occupied by collapsed Shoprite. The supermarket is estimated to be 3,400sq m in size and other retailers such as Pep, Woolworth, Cinemax and Bata have made the shopping mall their most recent address. The Metroplex Shopping Mall is in the Naalya neighbourhood, a suburb where the towns' socialites reside. It is a 10-minute drive off the Northern Bypass and is a shopping, dining, and entertainment hub in Kampala, close to Naalya Housing Estate.

The upcoming 10,000sq m Pamodzi Shopping Mall in Blantyre will be an innovative retail space that will include shops, restaurants and more. Being developed by Pamodzi, the shopping centre is due to be

finished this year and will be centrally located within a 3-4km radius from Sunnyside, Nyambadwe, Namiwawa, Mandala, Moneymen and Soche residential areas. The scheme will include five restaurants and 29 stores, two of which will be anchor units, two upper floor executive restaurants and lounges with dining space, an outdoor terrace and a 202-space car park.

Tatu City is a 5,000-acre, mixed-use development in Kenya with homes, schools, offices, a shopping district, medical clinics, nature areas, a sport & entertainment complex and manufacturing area for more than 150,000 residents and tens of thousands of day visitors. The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) has given Strategic Environment Assessment approval to the second phase of Tatu City, as the new city expands to meet demand for businesses, homes and social amenities. The approval from NEMA paves the way for Tatu City to develop on its 2,500-acre second phase. The city's first phase, also 2,500 acres, has more than 50 businesses operating or developing, two schools open educating 3,000 students daily and more than 5,000 homes delivered or under construction.

Arguably the biggest industrial zone under construction in Egypt is the Tarboul Industrial City by GV Group. This will be the first green industrial city in Egypt and will be positioned over a space of 109 million square metres where every inch is designed to cater for its purpose as a 'multi-core' city. Offering a harmonised platform for sustainable production, smart logistics, modern business centres, interconnected commercial outlets, integrated accommodation facilities and inclusive social services, Tarboul Industrial City will be the 'pivot' that connects Upper

Egypt and the Golden Triangle project to the main economic centres of Cairo.

Another major scheme by the company is the revolutionary Times Square project which is situated at the heart of Port Said, one of the most important cities and ports in the world and at 31,500sq m, the scheme is being designed to become the city's new central hub. The development will feature multiple experiences in one place including Times Residence which is where the smart homes of Times Square will be delivered and fully finished with central AC and a rich diversity of areas catered to customer's needs. In addition there will be Times Premiere, which will be fully furnished hotel apartment units, Times Towers which is the business hub that will be fully equipped to meet business needs with the latest technology, facilities and services and Times Hotel, a cozy business-orientated hotel that will be situated on the main street. Finally, the Times Mall will be a design masterpiece that houses a variety of retail shops, cinemas, entertainment and exquisite F&B experiences, all created with care for individuals' and families' enjoyment.

McCormick Property Development has completed work on Flagstaff Square and the opening of this project took place in the final quarter of last year. Flagstaff Square is a double level mall anchored by Shoprite and Roots Butchery. The 10,956sq m development has full service offerings from Clicks, Absa and Capitec Bank and includes a substantial fashion offering from Truworhs, Markhams, Sportscene, Ackermans, Pep, Power Fashion and Dodos. Also by McCormick Property Development, KwaBhaca Mall in Mt Frere is currently under construction and is set to

open in late 2022 with a pipeline of developments including Bizana and Idutywa all in advanced stages of planning and leasing. This development is in partnership with AJ Property Holdings and will include almost 20,000sq m of leasable area in the first phase and host a number of national retailers.

Castle Gate Lifestyle Centre opened late in 2020 and occupies a prime site adjacent to the NI, Van Ryneveld Ave and Solomon Mahlangu Dr. This central location features easy access to and superb visibility from all surrounding roads. Developed by Atterbury Property, this modern mixed-use development features 115,000sq m of offices, 90,000sq m of residential space with 1,100 units, 40,000sq m of space is used for a medical centre and there is a Planet Fitness Gym and a hotel alongside the 23,000sq m of retail space.

The Arch, which was developed by Multiply Property Holdings, covers 45,000sq m, including 163 apartments (30 of which are loft apartments). The Umhlanga Arch in KwaZulu Natal has rapidly added big name tenants including the Hilton Hotel Group and SMG BMW. The R1.3bn development is characterised by an iconic sea-facing arch configuration and European-inspired high streets. The residential component of this upmarket mixed-use development offers smart-ready apartment and double volume lofts, while the office space is attracting much interest. Completed in stages in 2020, it will not only be a good fit for international and local travellers, but will feed into the business hub of this bespoke, mixed-use development. It offers a business centre, fitness hub, outdoor pool and various food and beverage outlets, including a garden and lounge bar.



Castle Gate, New Cairo, Egypt  
Developer: Castle Development



Times Square, Port Said, Egypt  
Developer: GV Group

# Changing the Rules

Over 18-19 May at Superstudio Maxi in Milan, retailers, leisure operators, restaurant chains, shopping centres developers & owners are looking to connect, expand and develop their business in Italy. The MAPIC Italy event is the “unmissable rendez-vous” for property players and in vogue retailers looking to build the perfect retail mix and to create complete lifestyle destinations.



For the retail and property industry, 2021 was a very challenging time. The pandemic accelerated many changes in consumer habits, most of which were already underway, obliging all of us to adapt our way of living and doing business. It is now time for retail and property players to face the challenges and opportunities post-Covid - A world built around human beings, their needs, new behaviours and new ways of living. Today is a world where the boundaries between digital interactions and physical experiences are blurring and where sustainability and responsible consumption are no longer optional.

MAPIC Italy 2022 will continue to play its role as a barometer and window of the industry, guiding all the market players and helping them to navigate this continuously changing world.

For this 6th edition, MAPIC Italy’s main challenge is to help visitors to find new revenue streams by building connections with the most relevant key players from the retail, food, and leisure communities.

The whole industry has to encompass human, face-to-face interaction, emotions, new business models, innovation, and the increasing role of social media networks and virtual communications, while also providing the best physical experiences locally, in cities, and regions.

Thus, MAPIC Italy 2022 will provide you tailored solutions to respond to the new demands & challenges.

The topic of the MAPIC Italy 2022 event is ‘People, Planet, Profit: Navigating retail towards a more “human” world’.

## Key pillars of the event

At the event will be a dedicated leisure programme built around key industry players looking to create vibrant experiences for places and spaces in Italy, while there will be an F&B exhibition area at the heart of MAPIC Italy with restaurant chains looking to conduct business in Italy. There will also be a specific zone that includes the most innovative solutions to help visitors make their business more profitable.

The six pillars of the programme of conference and contents will help participants to identify the right business partners to help them to create new and unique lifestyle & experiential destinations.

**The new retail** – Concepts that meet new consumer needs and values

**Leisure** – Creating experiences in physical places

**Food** – Giving a new flavour to retail destinations

**Sustainability** – Respond to consumer’s search for meaning and investor’s search for value

**The evolution of traditional property assets and the rise of mixed-use** – Borders between asset classes continue to blur, creating new and unique lifestyle destinations

**Innovation** – Bridge the gap between online and offline with seamless shopping experiences.

Confirmed exhibitors at the event are BNP Paribas, Svicom, Pradera, Savills, CBRE, Eurocommercial Properties, IGD SIQ, Engel & Völkers, Cushman & Wakefield e Multi and confirmed retailers include YellowKorner, Dental Pro, Löwengrube, NAU!, Casa Piocheur, UCI Cinemas, Kuwait Petroleum Italia spa, L’Erbolario, Caffè Ottolina, Giovanni Rana e Pandora.

Speaking about the event, Francesco Pupillo, Show Director MAPIC Markets said: “The commercial real estate market and the entire retail industry are going through a time of great transformation. The pandemic that has hit our economies in the last two years has accelerated the processes of change that were already underway. MAPIC Italy is the most important business platform dedicated to players in the commercial and retail real estate market in Italy. The 2022 edition will analyse the main changes taking place in the industry, giving the floor to the new players at the centre of this transformation, and will guide the market players in identifying and choosing the most suitable solutions and partners to give new life to the own business facing the challenges of the near future. Sustainability, ethics of consumption, innovation, new habits of life and consumption, new emerging concepts, leisure, and catering will be at the centre of the discussions of the operators during the two days of an event not to be missed!”

For more information or to book your place at the event, please visit [www.mapic-italy.it](http://www.mapic-italy.it)



# Reconnecting the World of Real Estate

A landmark event for a world trying to return to something resembling normality, MIPIM 2022 featured around 20,000 delegates from over 80 countries. Taking place in its usual home of the Palais des Festivals in Cannes, France across the 15-18 March, the show saw the return of face-to-face networking and in-person events for the international property industry as restrictions begin to ease following the global pandemic.

The global real estate conference featured over 360 speakers, with 2,400 exhibiting companies at more than 350 exhibition stands and pavilions across 18,500sq m of exhibition space. Delegates from France made up the largest contingent, followed the UK and then Germany.

Investors comprised a quarter of delegates to MIPIM, including those from top funds & real estate investors from across the globe. The major brokerage firms CBRE, Colliers, Cushman & Wakefield, JLL, Knight Frank and Savills all had a significant presence at MIPIM 2022.

The four-day event was kicked off by former French President Francois Hollande, who launched the conference with a key-note address that highlighted the theme of the event: Driving Urban Change which was chosen to encourage the industry to explore and discuss the challenges of climate change, affordability, liveability and technological innovation in cities.

"We must build more housing, densify the city – and for this we must remove apprehensions about building permits. The crises to come will relate to climate change. It is the public leaders who have the responsibility to avoid or at least reduce the climate crisis," Hollande stated.

From the UK, Stuart Andrew, the new Minister of State for Housing arrived at MIPIM on 16 March for his first major industry event as minister, delivering a keynote address at the UK Government Pavilion.

"We have published our Levelling Up white paper, our flagship plan to spread opportunity and investment at every corner of the United Kingdom. Twenty areas will benefit from £1.5bn of investment from our Brownfield Fund, to deliver ambitious, job-creating regeneration projects. We will announce a further 18 places as soon as possible this year... and we're

also providing £300M of locally led grant funding for mayoral combined authorities and councils to unlock brownfield sites for more houses," he explained.

Alongside the main theme, sustainability and ESG were at the heart of many debates across the three-day programme. More than ever, the consensus across the event was how the industry can tackle the risks presented by climate change, achieve net zero and net positive developments and ensure that positive social outcomes are embedded into real estate decision making.

Guy Grainger, Global Head of Sustainability and ESG at JLL, said: "You have to relate everything back to the people in the buildings because that's what the tenants are interested in. How do you ensure that this is an attractive place for people to work? That when they're here, that they're productive, healthy and really happy."

Real Estate is at a crucial point in its evolution as digital transformation is fully embraced by the sector. At Propel by MIPIM, the seventh edition of the global Start Up Competition, in partnership with MetaProp, celebrated the latest tech innovations tackling areas such as sustainability, user experience, investment and data.

Meanwhile at the MIPIM Awards, the winners came from across Europe, Turkey and China and were announced during the ceremony on 17 March. Notable winners included the House of Music in Budapest, Hungary, which received the Special Jury Award and the Arboretum in Nanterre, France, which won the Best Futura Project. The jury, chaired this year by François Trausch, Global CEO & CIO of Allianz Real Estate, included architects, developers and investors from Denmark, Gabon, the UK, Singapore, Belgium and other countries.

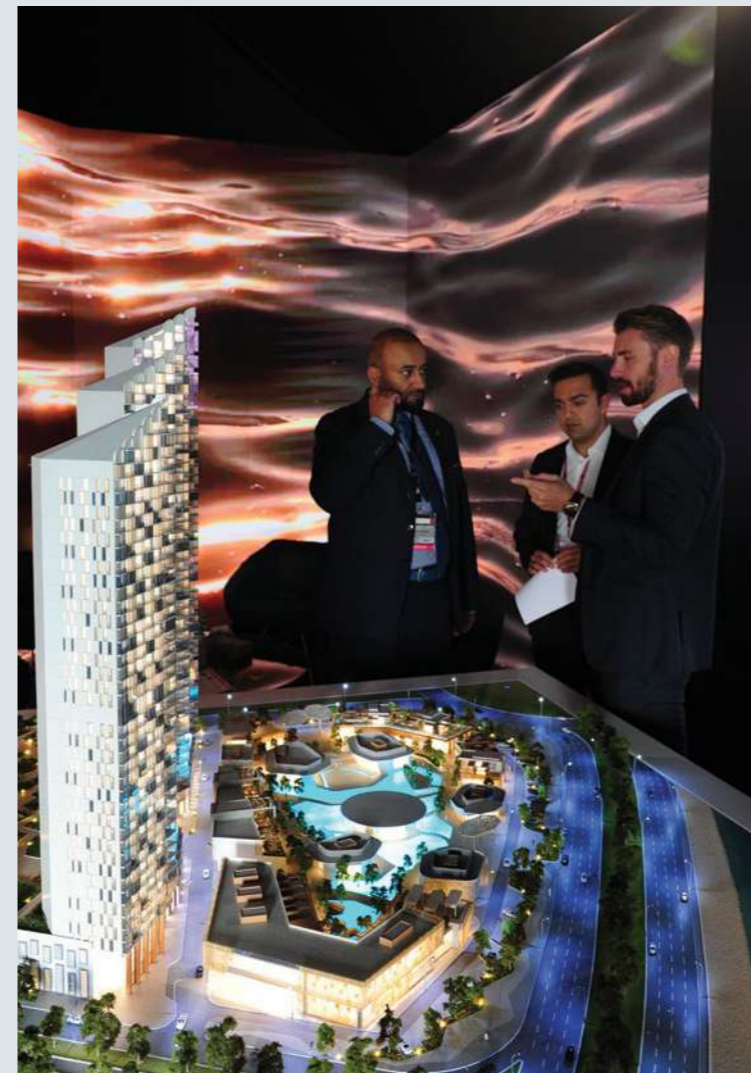
MIPIM also announced that Nicolas Kozubek will become the new Director of MIPIM following Ronan Vaspart's five-year tenure. For the past four years, Nicolas Kozubek headed up proptech and innovation event Propel by MIPIM, and he takes the helm at MIPIM at a critical time for real estate, as it experiences dramatic changes accelerated by technology.

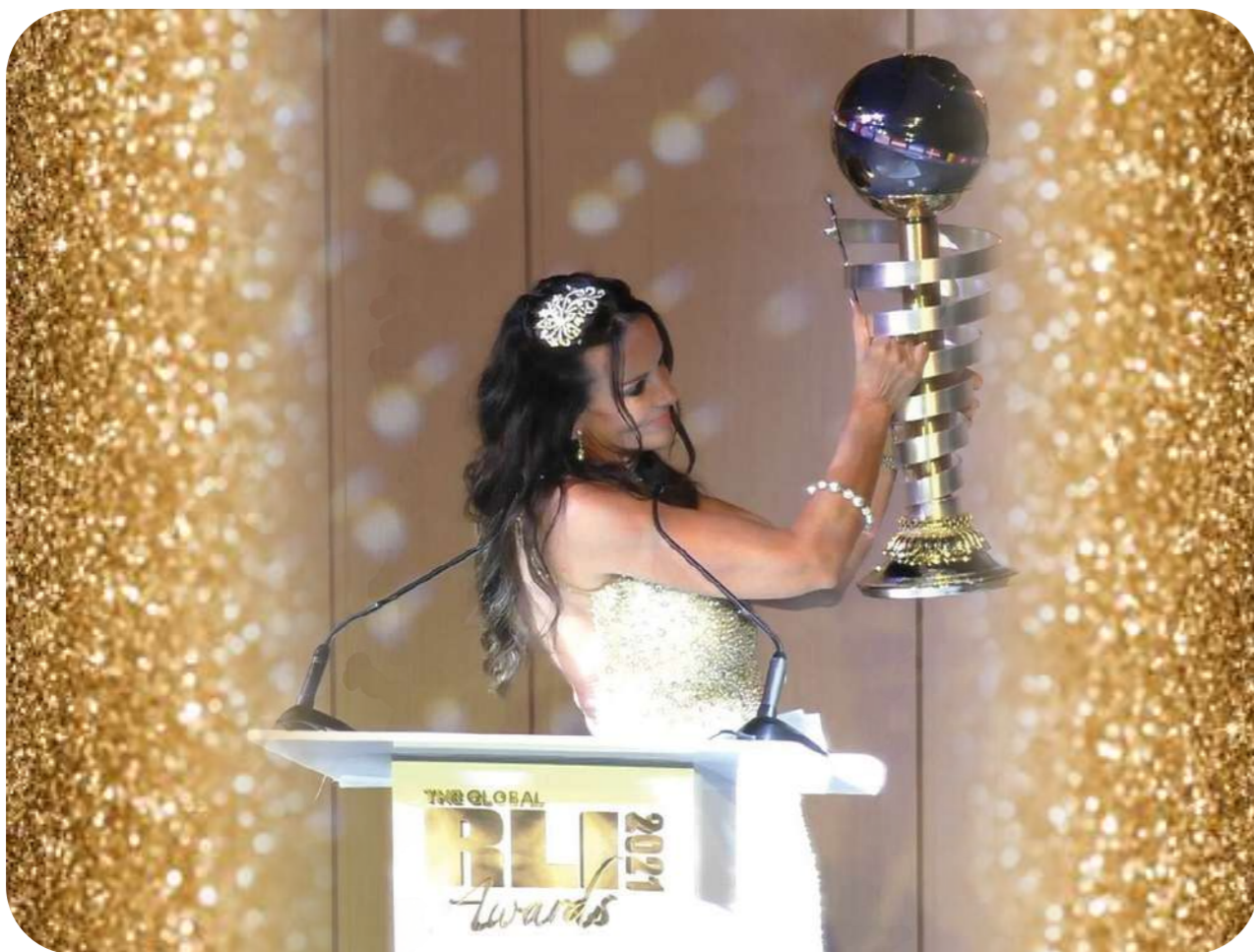
Departing Director Ronan Vaspart commented: "This year MIPIM has shown that the need for physical events and face-to-face meetings is as strong as before. After the pandemic, as the real estate industry recovers and looks forward to the challenges of the future, we are encouraged by the strong attendance we have seen from the investment community as well

as a major commitment, across the sector, to ESG principles and building back better. I'm delighted to be handing over to Nicolas and look forward to seeing how his amazing work at Propel will support the transformation and continued innovation of MIPIM.

He concluded by saying: "MIPIM is a platform where all countries and cultures can come together to not only do business but to share knowledge and ideas to create the cities and places of tomorrow."

**MIPIM will return to Cannes on 14-17 March 2023, for more information please visit [www.mipim.com](http://www.mipim.com)**





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