BRS
RETAIL SURVEY
Top 20

SPIRIT GUIDE —*Global*

Preface
The days when gloomy analysts foretold the death of the high street are behind us: bricks-and-mortar retail is undergoing a renaissance as companies big and small innovate and adapt to the changing climate. This issue we celebrate a host of ambitious founders and creatives pushing the boundaries of retail. From the man steering Muji's next phase of growth to Montréal's defiant independent grocery sector, Monocle browses the best.

EDITOR
Matt Alagiah

01
Rés do Chão
Lisbon
Neighbourhood rejuvenation

Rua Poço dos Negros, just to the south of Lisbon's centre, is typical of the city's streetscape. Four-storey buildings are covered in pretty tiles, with retailers, restaurants and cafés on the ground floor and apartments on the upper levels. The iconic 28 tram trundles up the narrow road and footpaths are still cobbled.

For decades the street was home to a buzzing retail scene but when the financial crisis hit in 2008, stores closed and the area lost its appeal. By 2013, petty crime and drug-dealing had become prevalent. In stepped Rés do Chão, a not-for-profit initiative set up by four young architects. Rés do Chão ("ground floor" in Portuguese) was established to revitalise neighbourhoods through the rehabilitation of empty ground-floor retail spaces.

"We felt it was a place where we could jump-start a regeneration," says co-founder Mariana Paisana of the Poço dos Negros location. The group, with the help of funding from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and Lisbon's city council, set about surveying empty spaces and connecting landlords and potential new tenants. It also took the lead by founding its own shop in 2014, selling the work of five young Portuguese designers who work in a space above it.

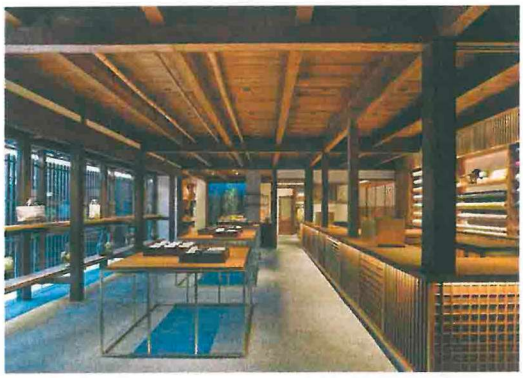
The organisation has provided support for the opening of three further shops on the street. And unlike some gentrification projects, the existing community is at the heart of the regeneration with a monthly market established to draw a crowd. — TL
resdochao.org

Why it works: *This regeneration is proving that retail is essential to the vitality of a neighbourhood.*

Best for regeneration: *Promoting retailers and reviving a street*

PHOTOGRAPHER: CHRISTOPH HAIDERER

Best for lighting: *Taking a sensitive approach to light and shade*



02

Chiaki Murazumi

Tokyo

Go-to lighting designer

Illuminating a restaurant or shop is about more than just picking out bulbs and lampshades. There's an art to placing lights and knowing how brightly they should shine. It's also good to keep in mind that darkness has its place. "People find darkness and shadows comforting," says Chiaki Murazumi (*pictured*), who runs Tokyo lighting design firm Spangle. "It's something I always think about. There is beauty in the shadows."

Murazumi's work on The 3rd Burger, a small speciality burger chain in Tokyo that opened its first shop in late 2012 showcases this belief. Using incandescent bulbs, Murazumi created layers: a soft glow at the end of a brass lamp or the narrow cone of a spotlight near the ceiling. The lighting indoors is designed to mimic the natural light outside, starting off bright and cheery at midday and turning to a warm, orange-tinted glow in the evening. "After work you might want a calming setting to enjoy a burger and beer," she says.

Murazumi starts every project with a sketch of her ideas. She often borrows a miniature model from the architects to test an array of lightbulbs but there's always a bit of guesswork until the lights are installed.

Each job requires a different approach. For Yu Nakagawa, a shop and café in an old wooden building in Nara, western Japan, Murazumi put lights directly over tables and beneath counters to draw attention to the products but she left the high ceilings dark. "You want people to be moved by what they see," she says. "But you want them to notice the interior design and products, not the lights." — KH

spangle.jp

Why it works: *Murazumi starts with the shop owner's design but never forgets that the aim is to please the customers.*

03

Vicharee Vichit-Vadakan

Bangkok

Co-founder, The Commons

A creative brother and a business-minded sister, Varatt Vichit-Vadakan and Vicharee Vichit-Vadakan are set to launch a unique Bangkok food-retail development: The Commons. The pair already have one hospitality hit in the city with the Roast café chain. Vicharee says The Commons, opening in Thonglor this November, takes inspiration from quality produce and a welcoming design.

Q Bangkok has many malls. How will The Commons stand out?

A *It's not another community mall. It's a coming-together of people who are passionate about what they do and a gathering ground for consumers to buy products made with care, thought and skill. The focus is on providing plenty of semi-outdoor space.*

Q Tell us about your tenant mix.

A *We had a dream of building a place for the best craft producers in Bangkok but we knew we had to have a mix of both local and international brands. Everyone at The Commons is an expert in their own thing, from Neapolitan pizza to Thai street food.*

Q Is there a demand for The Commons?

A *If there is anywhere in Bangkok that is ready for it, it is this area in Thonglor.* — NSG

thecommonsbkk.com

04

Viu

Zürich

Eyewear direct

Best for eyewear: *Slow and steady expansion is a smart play*

Viu sold its first frames on a wintry day in 2013; today, the Swiss eyewear brand sells more than 2,000 pairs of glasses a month. "We found the eyewear market pretty boring," says co-founder Kilian Wagner, one of the five-strong team. "You either had super-expensive frames or the cheap segment, which is very functional but not an emotional purchase. The whole idea behind Viu is to bring reasonable prices and high quality together."

To this end the young company has taken design, manufacturing and distribution into its own hands, enabling it to offer its contemporary collections 60 per cent below the average market price. Viu – a name inspired by the Portuguese word for "see" – marries Swiss design with Italian skill. Each frame is sketched in Zürich and created in a workshop in Cadore, in the Belluno Mountains.

While the founders were keen to disrupt the eyewear market, they have been sure to not grow too fast. Viu's five shops are designed in harmony with their surroundings and the collections they showcase; from the minimalist showroom in Zürich to the elaborate Greek marble Berlin boutique (*pictured*), each one is unique. In October, Viu will open shops in Hamburg and St Gallen. "We want Viu to be more of a fashion experience than a medical optician experience," says Wagner. — MSS

ch.shopviu.com

Why it works: *Viu's focus on growing organically without losing sight of service and quality distinguishes the Zürich-based brand. It's conquered Germany and now has Asia in its sights.*

PHOTOGRAPHERS: KOHEI TAKE, SANDRA KENNEL, SIMON WILSON, KRZYSZTOF PACHOLAK, IMAGE: DAICHI ANO

05

Muck Floral

Auckland

Flour power

Outside Muck Floral & Store with Were Bros – most people call it Muck for short – there's a handpainted sign declaring "Bread, Butter, Pickles, Breakfast, Lunch, Drinks, Flowers, No Frothy Coffees". The setting is a former "dairy" (a Kiwi word for corner-store) in a small block of shops in bijou Grey Lynn, a gentrifying suburb just west of downtown Auckland.

"I knew I wanted to be in this set of shops," says Sophie Wolanski of Muck. "I wanted to be on a corner and I wanted an old space." The Sydneysider arrived in Auckland via Los Angeles and New York. Once settled, she invited Carter Were (*pictured*), a baker who had never had her own space, to join the venture.

Wolanksi sells flowers along with lumpy handmade ceramics, heritage potatoes and extra-virgin olive oil that she dispenses from two large stainless-steel tanks. Were, meanwhile, bakes 20 loaves of her seeded sourdough per day, which she also turns into toast served with smashed peas, sheep's feta and herbs. It's simple but beautifully put together, best eaten at the wood-and-steel table in the window with a mug of single-origin filter coffee. — SFG

muck.co.nz; werebros.co.nz

Why it works: *It's honest and sincere but also welcoming and casual; it feels like a part of the neighbourhood.*

06

Mysia 3

Warsaw

Polish rethink

Housed in the former communist-era censorship office in central Warsaw, the department store at 3 Mysia Street celebrates its third birthday this month. Founders Joanna Kulczynska and Adam Okraska were determined to create a retail space unlike any other in the Polish capital. Here, discerning shoppers can explore a dozen clothes and design boutiques, both Polish and international, far from the noise of ordinary shopping malls.

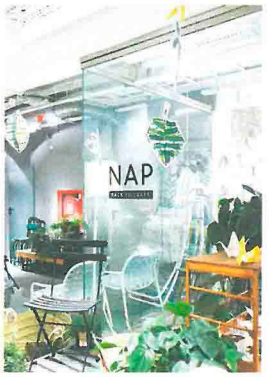
Kulczynska, an interior designer, wanted to return to the essence of the 1950s building. Original details were kept "to show that this place has a history", she says, while the inside was gutted. The result is an uncluttered light-filled space with glass walls dividing the shops. International brands Cos and Muji sit alongside Polish homeware retailer Nap. Rather than competing, the shops complement one another. "This place is a wardrobe full of emotions," says Okraska, who looks after the business side.

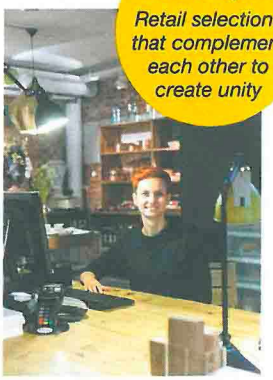
Mysia 3 is not just about retail therapy though. The top floor consists of more than 400 sq m of open space that hosts events ranging from talks to fashion shows. In addition, a café and photo gallery encourages passers-by to venture upstairs and linger. It is this holistic approach to the urban shopping experience that makes Mysia 3 an offer hard to resist. — ABC

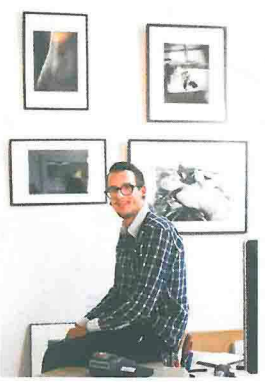
mysia3.pl

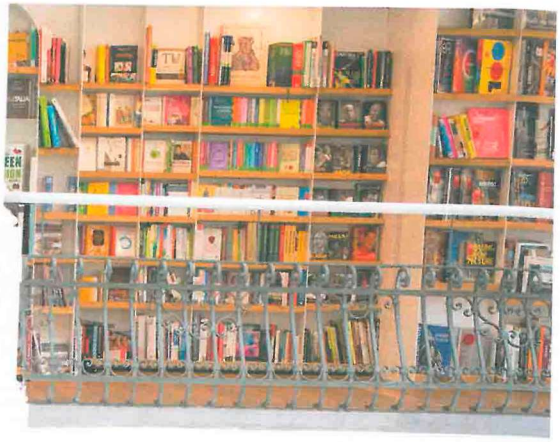
Why it works: *For all their variety, the boutiques are united by their modern approach to design and attention to detail.*

Best for boutiques: *Retail selections that complement each other to create unity*

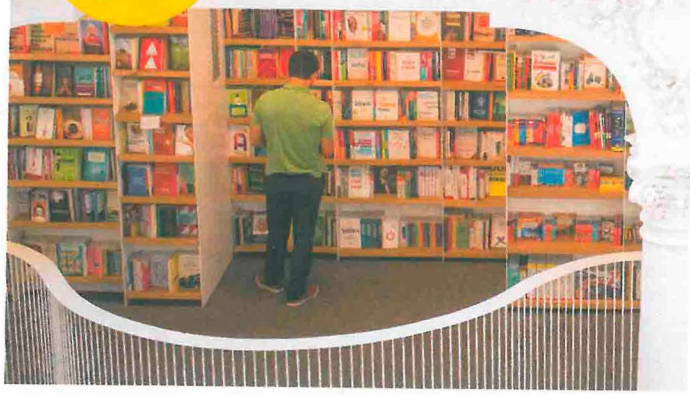


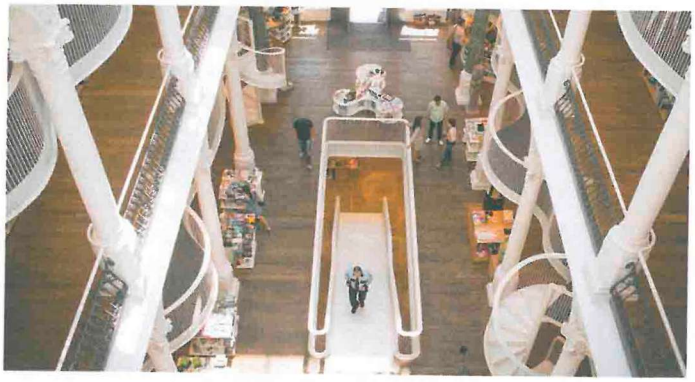






Best for grandeur:
Bold shopfits on an opera-house scale draw the crowds





07 Carusel

Bucharest

Ambitious design

When Carusel opened in the historic centre of the Romanian capital back in February, crowds flocked to the cavernous bookshop housed in a former 19th-century bank. "It is a huge difference from any other bookshop in the city and from the rest of the area, which is almost exclusively bars and restaurants," says Serban Radu, one of the co-founders of Carturesti, the company which now has 18 bookshops across Romania, including Carusel. "You could imagine the atrium, as the lobby of an opera house."

Carusel, in a stunning six-storey building, covers 1,000 sq m, with book-lined walls, an upstairs café, a multimedia space in the basement and a small gallery floor dedicated to contemporary art. "I couldn't imagine anything else in this space if not a bookshop after I first saw it," says Nicoleta Iordan, the other Carturesti founder.

This behemoth of a bookshop opened after a €1m renovation and received 135,000 visitors in the first two months. Radu says that they are now getting about 30,000 a month. Sales were good enough from day one to cover the rent, which was a nice surprise for the founders. "A lot of people came in just to take selfies but a lot also came in to buy," adds Radu. He estimates that the whole book market in Romania is worth €70m to €80m and says that, at least for Carturesti, physical book sales are rising.

Carusel is the pair's most ambitious shop to date, both in size and design, and within just a few months it has become an important fixture on the cultural scene in Bucharest. "Time is precious," says Radu. "It's not just about money but the emotional impact of how you spend your time. This is more than just a place to buy books." — KG

carturesticarusel.ro

Why it works: *Carusel has a prime location for foot traffic, a design that demands attention and a relaxed atmosphere.*

08

Casa Bosques

Mexico City

Creative destination

Casa Bosques isn't interested in competing with the big boys; browse the bookshop's shelves and you'll see that literature is absent for that very reason. Instead, the store – with Mexico City outlets in Roma and Polanco – caters to a creatively focused clientele. And one that not long ago didn't have a place to shop.

"A few years back the art and design scene in Mexico City began to get sophisticated," says co-founder Jorge de la Garza (*pictured, with assistant Katya Ramos*). "A lot was happening but there wasn't a bookshop catering to this. We thought we had a model that could work." Casa Bosques originally opened in 2013 inside a 19th-century mansion in Roma that design firm Savvy Studio had acquired for its new office. The company wanted to open a bookshop in the lobby so approached De la Garza with the idea. Casa Bosques was born, inspiring people working in the building and also becoming a word-of-mouth destination.

The newest outpost (*pictured*) is based in Polanco and opened in March inside the Anatole 13 commercial centre. This latest edition is nestled alongside other businesses, including fashion store Avery and tea shop Tomás – but because each of them essentially occupies a "room" in the centre, the house idea from the original shop is replicated. The ploy maximises customers, while regular talks, events and signings adds traffic. As De la Garza puts it: "This place has to be alive." — EJS

casabosques.net

Why it works: *Casa Bosques knows its public well: those wanting top foreign magazines and books but also the best of Mex, such as magazine 'La Tempestad'.*

PHOTOGRAPHERS: ANDREI PUNGOVSCHI, ROSS MANTLE

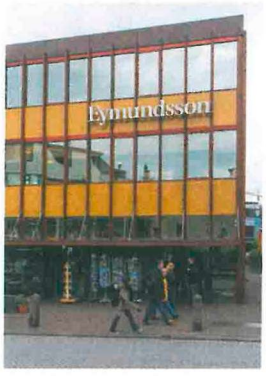
Best for adaptation: *Regular shop check-ups ensure the business stays on track*

09

Eymundsson-Penninn

Iceland

Selling print



Aboard a propeller-engine Air Iceland plane, Borgar Jónsteinsson, manager of retail for Eymundsson-Penninn's shops, talks business while surveying the white-and-green sprawl of Reykjavík we're leaving behind. We're joining Jónsteinsson on a trip to the company's largest book-and-stationery shop in Iceland's remote second city of Akureyri. "It's important to come up at least once a month," says Jónsteinsson, who has been with the company for 19 years.

Eymundsson is Iceland's foremost bookseller. Established in Reykjavík in 1872, it now operates nine shops in the capital together with another five across the country. In 1996 it was taken over by Iceland's primary stationer Penninn and today it is one of the country's 100 largest companies and among its five largest retailers, with some 230 employees.

The shops are all spacious set-ups stocked up to the nines and the Akureyri branch is a perfect example, occupying a prominent 1930s building in the heart of town. A vast magazine stand, five shelves high and containing around 800 Icelandic and international titles, greets customers. "Danish gossip titles are particularly popular amongst the older ladies," says Akureyri shop manager Gudrun Karitas.

But Eymundsson is mostly about literature. The long, dark Icelandic winters and the imposing landscape that inspired the country's famous sagas are two key reasons Icelanders love books. Literature, reading and publishing are a huge part of the national culture.

Eymundsson's central Reykjavík flagship stores all have spacious cafés to entice people in from the cold. But Jónsteinsson says that publishers are bringing out paperbacks during the summer now too, so there is never downtime. Meanwhile, the Penninn franchise specialises in stationery and office furniture, both retail and wholesale, and is a major player in the sector for government and private clients. Eymundsson lost some of its client base as a result of Iceland's banking crash in 2008 so gifts, maps, guides and tourist goods have become increasingly important earners. However, "books and the feeling of books is most prominent," says Ingimar Jonsson, Penninn's CEO.

Having to distribute and manage everything from coffee machines to toy puffins and still turn a profit is no simple task. "With a small market you simply have to take up various parts and go with it," says Jonsson. But this combination of distribution, import, retail and wholesale is also the group's strength.

Shop visit over and back on the plane to Reykjavík, Jónsteinsson espouses a deep fondness for his company. "I am very proud of the Akureyri store," he says. "It was not cheap to do but Penninn let me go over budget because they trusted me to make it good." — DMP

eymundsson.is

Why it works: *Diversification in a relatively limited market has been the key to success.*

PHOTOGRAPHER: KRISTINN MAGNÚSSON

10
Iwasaki Shiki
Hasami, Japan
Packing a punch

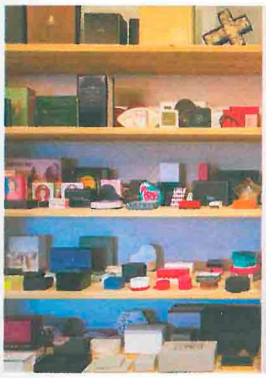
Packaging is an essential part of product planning for Japanese brands, which is what you might expect in a country with elaborate gift-giving customs. One classic Japanese packaging style is the *keshobako*, or "fancy box". This is the speciality of Iwasaki Shiki, a company based in Hasami (Nagasaki prefecture, southwestern Japan) and run by Hirotaka Iwasaki, the third generation of his family to be at the helm since its founding in 1960.

Eight years ago the company's designers made the switch from pencils to 3D software. Now instead of the standard circles, squares and rectangles, Iwasaki Shiki produces boxes (mainly from paper, usually printed or embossed in-house) of complex shapes with hidden drawers and multiple compartments.

To maintain quality, Iwasaki Shiki's staff finish every *keshobako* by hand. "It's still the best way of completing the last steps of applying the outer layer and folding the box into its 3D shape," says Yuko Iwasaki, head of planning (and the president's wife).

Iwasaki Shiki's best customers tend to be cosmetics brands, kimono shops, *wagashi* dessert-makers, hotel patisserie stores and flower-sellers but it has also begun to work with Hasami-yaki ceramic artisans on a line of pottery that comes in a box. — KH
total-package.jp

Why it works: *Made-to-order packaging is a speciality and often the design team's role is to propose ideas to clients.*



Best for wrapping: *Iwasaki Shiki brings a final flourish to a product*

PHOTOGRAPHER: KOHEI TAKE

Best for fashion: *A great mix of Thai and global brands to please the faithful*

11
Onion
Bangkok
Multi-brand marvel

New retail businesses in Bangkok face two choices. They can either set up shop in one of the city's mega-malls and accept high rents in exchange for consistent foot traffic or they can establish themselves on the street and build their brand as a destination business. Sorasak Chanmantana (*pictured*), the owner of Onion, chose the latter course.

"While we don't have huge numbers of visitors per day, almost everyone that does come here, comes here to buy," he says, taking Monocle through the second branch of his multi-brand menswear shop. Located on the second storey of an old shophouse that is tucked away off the tree-lined streets of the Ari neighbourhood, Onion provides visitors with a strong sense of occasion upon arrival. Through a discreetly branded door and up a wooden staircase, Onion's wares are spread out across a warehouse-like space that also serves as the location for in-house café Brave Roasters.

Perhaps the shop's most impressive selling point is how well the Thai brands on offer stand up against US and Japanese favourites such as Moscot and Doek. "Thai people trust international brands more than they trust Thai brands right now," says Chanmantana. "So I have integrated them in a way that is helping the local brands find their place among these international labels." — NSG
onionbkk.com

Why it works: *Onion's passionate owner is determined to create a fresh retail experience to counterbalance Bangkok's mall-driven shopping culture; it's a vision he is making a reality.*

12

Satoru Matsuzaki

Japan

President, Ryohin Keikaku (Muji)

Muji puts little stock in a name, preferring to focus on design and functionality over branding. The new president of parent company Ryohin Keikaku tells Monocle about growing Muji internationally while maintaining its values.

Satoru Matsuzaki is the president of Ryohin Keikaku, the company behind Mujirushi Ryohin – or Muji, as it is known outside Japan. Mujirushi Ryohin, which literally translates as "no-brand quality goods", was established in 1980 as a private label for the Seiyu supermarket chain. Today Muji has more than 700 shops worldwide, nearly 6,500 items of clothing, food and homeware, and annual global sales of more than ¥220bn (€1.6bn).

Monocle: *You've been president of Muji since May; what's your vision for the company?*

Satoru Matsuzaki: Our mid- to long-term plan is for overseas expansion. This year we're opening 24 stores in Japan and 47 abroad. Our target for February 2017 is to have 888 Muji stores: 445 in Japan and 443 overseas. By 2018 there will be more shops overseas than in Japan.

M: *Where is your biggest overseas market?*

SM: China: we're opening more than 30 stores a year there. Our next target is the US. We opened a shop in the Stanford Shopping Center [in Palo Alto] this summer and we're opening our new flagship store in New York [on Fifth Avenue] in October. It will be nearly 1,000 sq m. We don't have a plan [for a specific number of shops in the US]. We want to make a success of the Stanford shop first. It's our first store in a shopping-mall format. If we can make a success of this one we could open Muji shops in malls all over the US.

M: *How about Europe?*

SM: We're planning to rebuild the European market. If you look at a Muji store in London for example: it's small, the prices are a little expensive and the product range is limited. We want to launch a store that is Japan size and price, with a bigger product range. We want to introduce Europe to the proper Muji world. That will happen from 2017 onwards.

M: *How do you meet the demands of individual markets?*

SM: Muji's *monozukuri* [creative output] is solely based in Tokyo. The idea is to take Japanese products to the overseas market; of course there are differences in clothes sizes or voltages so we have to make some small adjustments. But our current goal is to establish a basic Japanese standard that can be sold anywhere. It's more cost efficient to unify the merchandise mix all over the world. Localisation of products might come in the future. In the US we only sell a few food items, for example, but if we want to make food in the US we would need to make a certain quantity [to make it worthwhile].

M: *The company is renowned for its strong design philosophy. Is good design a priority?*

SM: From the start Muji was almost anti-design. When Muji launched in 1980 Japan was going through rapid economic growth and the market was all about adding design value. Muji came into that setting with a different idea: "All value, no frills." Our idea was that you shouldn't sell your product with a brand name or a logo. Even now our garments have the logo on the price tag but there's no Muji logo sewn into the product itself.

M: *You've worked with many famous designers but you don't publicise their names. Why is that?*

SM: At Muji we think that design has to be functional, which is why designers who share that value – such as Naoto Fukasawa and Jasper Morrison – come on board. Of course, famous names are a good association for us but it's not the Muji way to push products by talking about big names.

Satoru Matsuzaki's CV

1978 Joins Seiyu retail group
1980 Seiyu establishes Mujirushi Ryohin (Muji) label
1989 Ryohin Keikaku (Muji's parent company) founded
2005 Matsuzaki joins Ryohin Keikaku as head of the Asian overseas market
2014 Muji's global sales reach ¥220.6bn (€1.6bn)
2015 Matsuzaki becomes president of Ryohin Keikaku

M: *Tell us about the Advisory Board.*

SM: The Advisory Board has been an important tool for keeping quality consistently high for more than 30 years. People like Naoto Fukasawa, Ikko Tanaka, Kazuko Koike, Takashi Sugimoto and Kenya Hara make sure that new products reflect Muji's philosophy and values.

M: *You have designed houses and even come up with a concept for a Muji Village. Are there more architectural projects in the pipeline?*

SM: The big market now is for renovation. There are so many vacant houses in Japan. We want to rebuild and renovate so we've been working with the Urban Renaissance Agency in Japan. It's the same in Hong Kong. The rest of Asia is in the same situation as Japan: the same age structure – a high ratio of old people, fewer children – and small apartments. Hotels are another field that Muji could enter; hotels would be a very good market for us.

M: *You have already diversified into small outlets such as Found Muji, Muji To Go (airport shops) and Meal Muji. Any other new formats for Muji in the offing?*

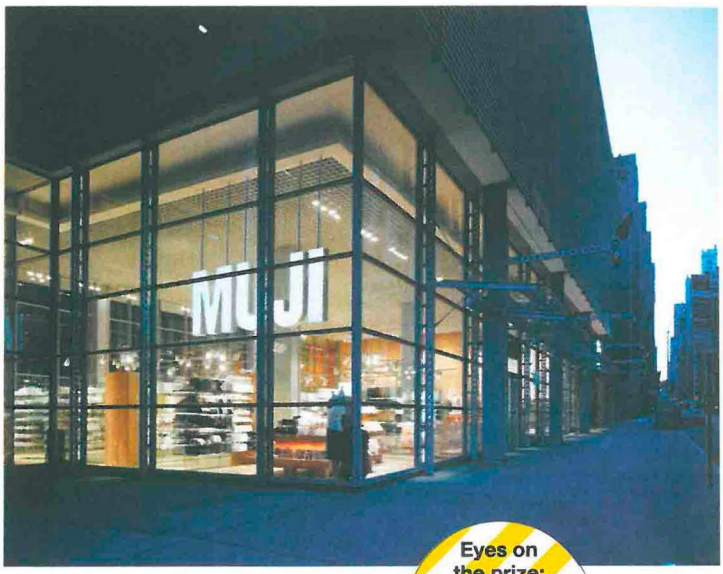
SM: From our point of view, food, living and travel are all related; they're a core part of our customers' lives. It might look like we're diversifying but for us it's all part of the same thing. We don't design things specifically for travel purposes; we create something for daily life that you can use on your travels and vice versa. It's our approach to minimalise.

M: *What's your favourite Muji product?*

SM: I've been loyal to our gel pen. It's made in Japan and costs ¥80 [€0.60]. I sign contracts with it. I have a Montblanc pen but nothing beats this pen for cost performance. You can use it until the last drop of ink runs out. — FW

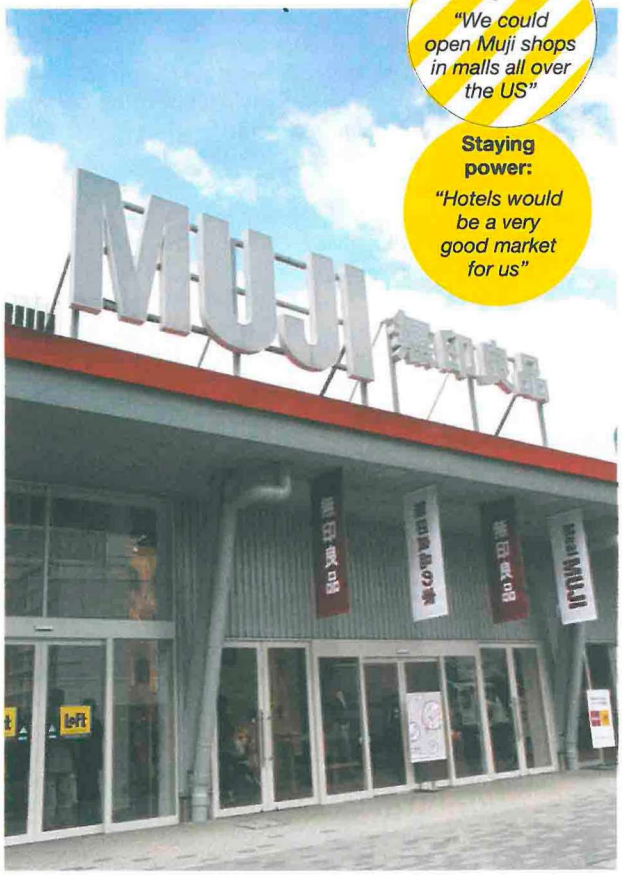
In numbers

Number of products: 6,477 (clothing: 1,977; lifestyle: 3,970; food: 530)
Shops in Japan: 401
Shops overseas: 301
Biggest shop: Yurakucho, Tokyo. 3,277 sqm plus a café (402 sq m)



Eyes on the prize:
"We could open Muji shops in malls all over the US"

Staying power:
"Hotels would be a very good market for us"



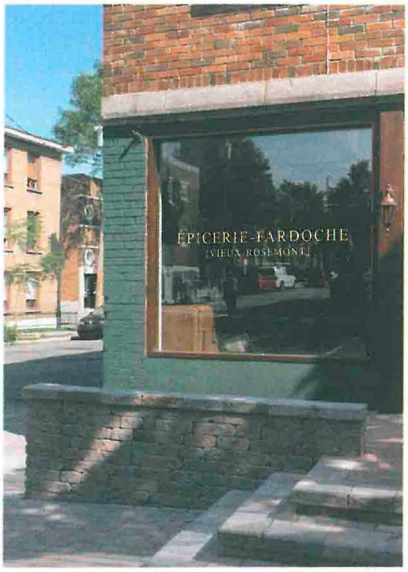
PHOTOGRAPHER: TAKESHI ABE

13

Grocery stores

Montréal

Independent-sector strength



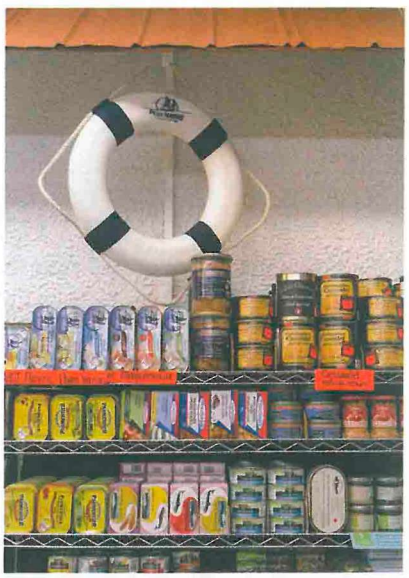
Bruno Carameaux (*pictured opposite, top left*), his shirtsleeves rolled up, is cleaning Brussels sprouts at the counter of the Épicerie Fardoche in the quiet, leafy Rosemont neighbourhood of Montréal. "Here you go," says his manager Vanessa Niewerth, as she brings a box of 10 plucked pigeons to the counter that has just been delivered from a farm in the Québec countryside.

Épicerie Fardoche, which opened in mid July, is one of the newest additions to Montréal's rich independent grocery sector. It's a sector that has largely defied the scramble for the grocery dollar taking place elsewhere in Canada between big-name retailers.

"A lot of our customers come back every day," says Niewerth. "They don't do their shopping for the week all at once. They like the fact that we have a different offering here." On the shelves are watermelon radishes, homemade marinades and compostable coffee filters, largely supplied by the Montréal-based Societé Orignal farmers' collective. "Some people don't even have anything they want to buy. They just come in to say hello."

It is that spirit that has kept Montréal's grocery sector diverse, vibrant and fiercely independent in what is one of the most competitive sectors in retail: it is worth around CA$84bn (€56bn) annually in Canada. The "Big Three" supermarket chains – Loblaws, Sobeys and Metro – are dominant elsewhere in the country, with a 60 to 70 per cent share of the grocery market outside Québec. But they have not built up the same footprint in the French-speaking state. Similarly, the trio's US counterparts, Walmart and CostCo, have struggled to gain the same presence here that they enjoy in the rest of Canada.

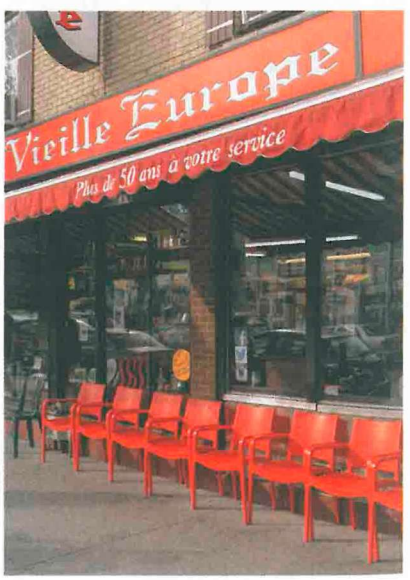
"When Walmart arrived here people said, 'Well, this is it for the independent grocer,'" says Jordan LeBel, a professor of food marketing at the John Molson School of Business, at Montréal's Concordia University. But this was not the case. Walmart's market share in Québec hovers at around 6 per cent and the independent grocery sector has remained firm. "The corner grocery store has always been part of the fabric of Montréal," adds LeBel. "It's almost like a magnet for people in the community."



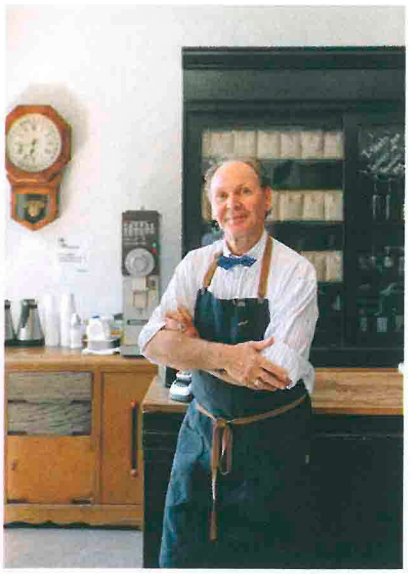
"Here you're not a number: you're part of the family," says 21-year-old Jonathan Lalime, who is taking a break from making sandwiches at the Lalime *dépanneur* (a Canadian-French neologism that means "convenience store", taken from the French verb *dépanner*, "to help out"). The store was opened by his grandfather in 1959 and is now owned by his uncle and managed by his father. It is this sense of tradition that these independent grocers keep alive.

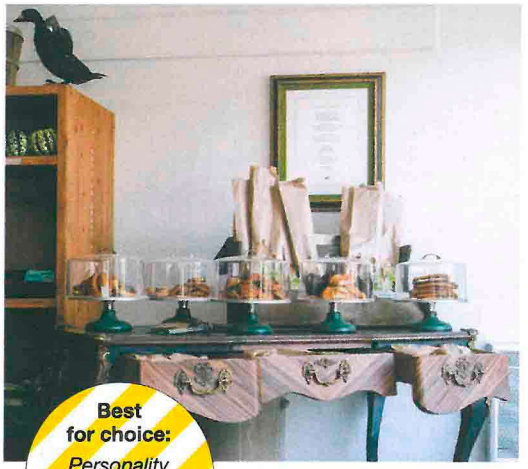
With no Brussels sprouts left to scrub at Épicerie Fardoche, Carameaux removes his apron and prepares to end his shift for the day. "We would love to open more stores," says manager Niewerth. "But we don't want to become a chain; we want to keep our personality."

She has plans to begin a delivery service for the elderly in the area and to publish a cookbook with recipes from people who live in the neighbourhood. "We have our plans," she says. "But we're still very new so we're just trying to do our best for now." — TLE

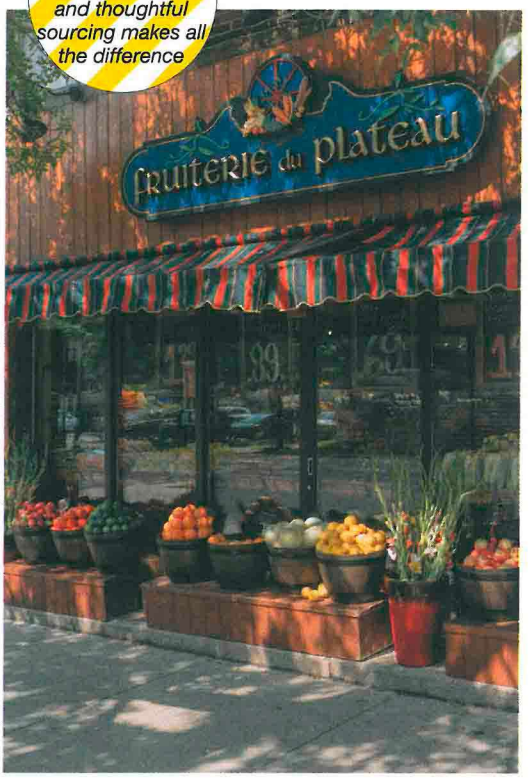


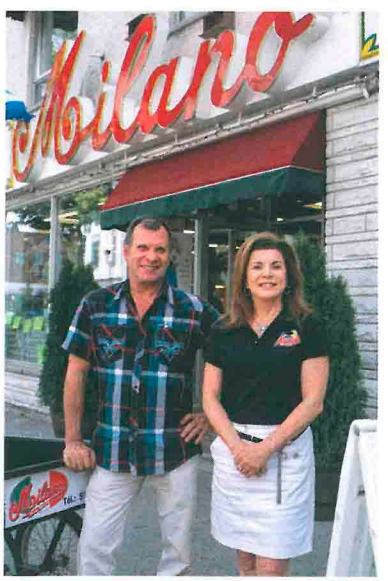
Monocle fix: *Bureaucracy threatens to stifle entrepreneurs in Montréal's grocery sector. Independent grocers seeking to expand report delays in meetings with city officials to even get the process started. Entrepreneurial ambition should not be held hostage to political paperwork.*





Best for choice:
Personality and thoughtful sourcing makes all the difference





14

Lars-Åke Tollemark

Solna

Managing director, Unibail-Rodamco Nordic

In November the global retail giant Unibail-Rodamco opens one of its largest shopping centres to date in Solna, seven minutes from central Stockholm. The 120,000 sq m Mall of Scandinavia was designed by Swedish architects Wingårdhs and cost €645m.

Q What's the drive behind this project?

A *The Swedish retail market has had a fantastic development over the past 10 to 12 years. Stockholm needs a mall of an international standard.*

Q What makes it stand out from its competitors?

A *The design is absolutely top class and we've invested a lot in it. Also, it's a shopping mall but 30 per cent of it is for entertainment and food. We've got a gym, an Imax cinema and restaurateurs like Melker Andersson and Peter Nordin.*

Q The mall has many big international brands but is there space for smaller, niche brands?

A *When it comes to smaller brands we have got the Design Gallery, where we rent out space to young designers and new brands. We have also got two pop-up units dedicated to fashion, lifestyle and music.* — ENA

mallofscandinavia.se

PHOTOGRAPHER: ALEXI HOBBS

15

Itoya

Tokyo

Stationery king

Staying relevant – and commercially viable – is a challenge for many shops with long pedigrees. Tokyo's best-known stationery shop, Itoya, is one such institution. In business since 1904, Itoya has recently undergone a radical overhaul that included the demolition of its main shop in Ginza, two years in temporary premises and a grand reopening this summer. The new incarnation of Ginza Itoya, which was overseen by fifth-generation president Akira Ito, is bold and inspiring; it would be hard to find a better stationery shop.

From the vast revolving door to a large clock that marks the hour with the timely tapping of a woodpecker, it is clear that this is no mere facelift. The Itoya team has deconstructed the old format. The inventory has been pared down and new elements (such as homeware) have been added. "Customers can buy so much online, we had to give them something that was unique to Ginza," says merchandiser Machiko Kuroiwa. Highlights of the new 13-floor shop include: a wrapping station where gifts are transformed with paper and ribbons; the Note Couture section, where customers can design their own notebook; the writing corner where shoppers can post a card or letter; and the Memory Tailor, who can transform phone pictures into a photo album. The seventh floor, which has more than 1,000 types of paper, is a collaboration with Tokyo paper maker Takeo.

There is plenty to entice newcomers but the old customers have not been forgotten. And at the heart of the new Itoya is an undimmed passion for pens and paper. As Kuroiwa puts it: "Japan really is a wonderland for stationery-lovers." — FW

ito-ya.co.jp/ginza

Why it works: *The selection is still first rate (look no further for pen refills) but now Itoya also spurs shoppers to linger.*

Best for selection: *Know your customer and focus your offer*

PHOTOGRAPHER: KOHEI TAKE

Pen & Ink Bar

Best for reinvention:
Know your USP but develop lots of new ones too

16

Heritage firms

Rio de Janeiro

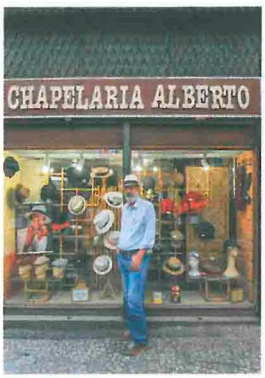
Perfecting retail

Rio de Janeiro's retail has gone through a complete transformation over the past few decades. One after another, shopping malls have cropped up along the Avenida das Américas in Barra da Tijuca, an upscale neighbourhood modelled on a modern US city. Barra, as it's more commonly known, stands in stark contrast to cobbled streets of the European-style city centre, where traditional family-run retailers once ruled, with many shuttering in the face of this competition.

With the 2016 Olympics around the corner, action is being taken. The city has been classified as a Unesco World Heritage Site since 2012 and in June 2013 city hall started including businesses as part of the heritage site. "These retailers are very important to connect us to our history," says Washington Fajardo, president of the Rio Heritage Institute and the City Council of Cultural Heritage Protection.

About 40 businesses have been included in the initiative so far. City hall has teamed up with Sebrae, a not-for-profit organisation that specialises in helping small Brazilian businesses grow. It is working closely with retailers, helping them build up their brands and update their administration.

Chapelaria Alberto, a shirt and hat retailer that sits on the corner of a busy downtown street, is 121



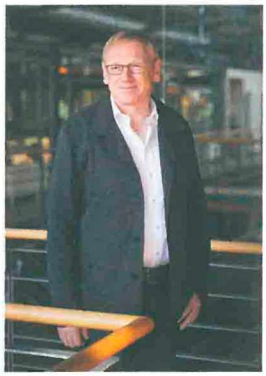
years old. The business has had its ups and downs, according to Luis Eduardo Fadel, who runs the shop with his sister. "But being included on the list as a heritage retailer has helped us get more exposure."

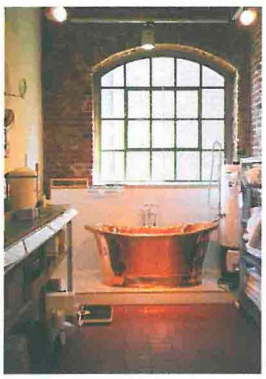
A few streets over is Charutaria Syria. Founded in 1912, it was named after the Middle Eastern country of the founder's birth. Today the tobacco shop has turned to selling wine and pastries, as fewer and fewer people opt for quality cigars. Being part of the initiative will undoubtedly help in its efforts to diversify and attract new custormers.

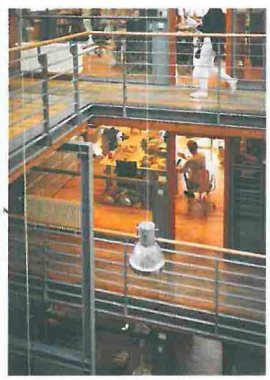
The city centre's restoration will take time. And it must be noted that this is only a part of a much bigger project for the city. As Rio gears up to host the Olympics, major infrastructure projects in and around the historical centre are looking to revive it in the hopes of making the city more cohesive – but rejuvenating these hidden retail gems is equally important. — SR

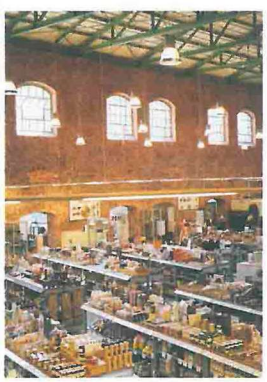
rio.rj.gov.br

Why it works: *Protecting heritage retailers is vital economically and culturally.*









17

Manufactum

Germany

Maturing nicely

Born in the 1980s as a catalogue company with a belief that well-made products could outlast a tide of cheap imports, Manufactum has amassed an almost cultish following in its native Germany. Now with eight shops around the country it provides tools for any manner of home or office improvements, from kitchen goodies to garden plants and stationery; it's even branched out into clothing. This autumn, the company is launching a womenswear collection with shop events in Berlin and Frankfurt and a home-textile collection.

Despite staying true to the values of its founder – and Green party politician – Thomas Hoof, the shop has adapted through the years and is shaking off the nostalgic feel that its homespun products once inspired. "In the late 1980s, Manufactum was about preserving and protecting crafts that were in danger of getting lost," says co-managing director Manfred Ritter *(pictured)*. "But a younger clientele needs to discover it as something new to them, a new journey."

As good as his word, Ritter has set about showcasing a total of 10,000 products with the aim of introducing new customers to its homeware offer. But rather than just chasing profit, this is a firm that has always grounded itself in selecting products for their functionality, provenance and physical beauty. "Technology and digital media are indispensable but in many cases they leave people feeling disconnected from human nature," says Ritter. "Manufactum wants to connect with their daily lives." — CHR

manufactum.com

Why it works: *Manufactum's just-so design and astonishing selection have made their catalogues an enduring totem.*

PHOTOGRAPHERS: ANDRÉ VIEIRA, RUDIGER NEHMZOW

18

Dax Dasilva

Montréal

CEO and founder, Lightspeed

Lightspeed offers point-of-sale software to retailers. Founded in Montréal a decade ago it has become a success on Québec's tech scene.

Q What's the story behind Lightspeed?

A *I built software all through my teens for the forestry companies in Vancouver. I moved to Montréal in 2001, where I created software for a chain of Apple dealers. After that I wanted to build a new system that would be accessible to all kinds of retailers.*

Q Why did you want to support retailers?

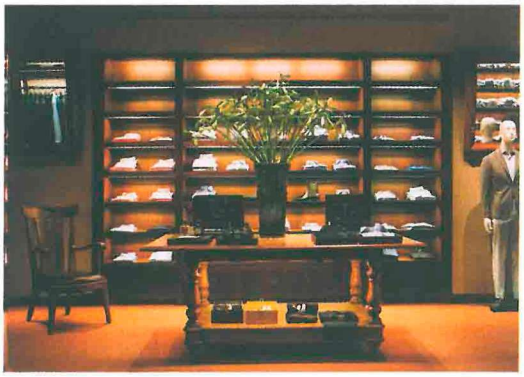
A *Cities and towns are made better by small independent businesses that really add colour and texture to a city. We're putting all our energy behind keeping those independent businesses vital.*

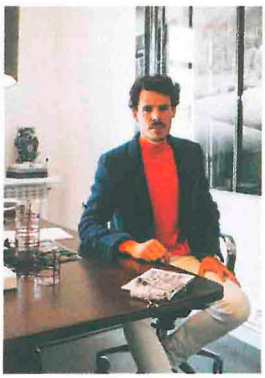
Q What has your growth been like?

A *Our first round of investment came in 2012 from Excel. We had 50 employees back then; now we have more than 300 in seven cities. I think we have created a monster – a benign monster but one that's ready to take on the world.* — TLE

lightspeedpos.com

Best for renovation: *Business federations around the world should take heed*





19

Passeig de Gràcia

Barcelona

Model business association

This year the modernist façades and well-appointed window displays of Barcelona's Passeig de Gràcia received extra colour with the addition of flowerpots and plants; the finishing touches of an €8m facelift that saw pavements widened and bike lanes and public seating installed. The work also included more subtle details, from the restored iron bats perched on streetlights to the Gaudí-designed paving stones.

The renovation has been the avenue's first major change in 40 years because local-authority funds have traditionally been channelled into less-developed districts. For Luis Sans (*pictured bottom, on right with association colleagues*), chairman of Amics del Passeig de Gràcia, an association representing 160 local businesses, the renewal has been more than cosmetic. "The evolution reflects the internationalisation of Barcelona," says Sans, who also heads Santa Eulalia, a four-generation-old family retailer that has called the strip home since 1944 (it first opened on La Rambla in 1843).

But despite the wholesale changes, Sans believes it's crucial to make sure the transformation is sustainable: "Everyone who works for the association does regular inspections to ensure the street is clean."

Back inside Santa Eulalia, Sans is pointing out interior fixtures that have been preserved by his family for decades. "The problem with high streets these days is that they all end up looking the same," he says. "As an association, the best we can do for our members is to act as their eyes and ears but also give them a voice." — LA

barcelonapaseodegracia.com

Why it works: *A well-organised association not only communicates regularly with local authorities but also its members.*

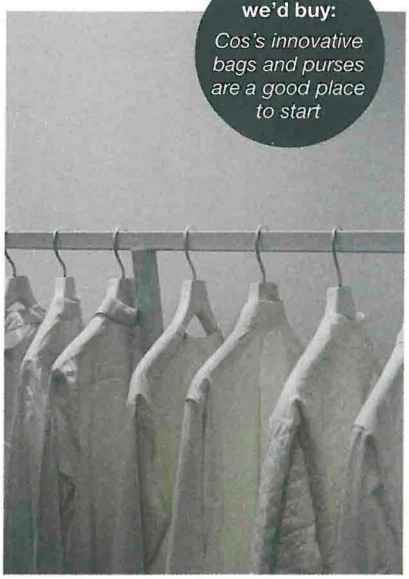
20

Karin Gustaffson

London

Head of womenswear design, Cos

A welcoming retail environment, a passion for mid-century modern design and an understanding of the desires of an international customer: just some of the elements that go into making fashion firm Cos a global giant.



What we'd buy: *Cos's innovative bags and purses are a good place to start*

Since 2007, international retailer Cos has united function and fashion with its simple and elegant clothing. Its unmistakably Scandinavian air can be felt throughout its sparse Dinesen oak-clad shops, which fly the brand's flag in 128 spaces throughout 26 countries. Despite impressive growth to date, the company has opened 12 shops this year and has a further 28 slated to launch by 2016. We caught up with the brand's head of womenswear design Karin Gustaffson to find out more about the importance of sticking to your brand values and how remaining unswayed by the winds of fashion is the key to Cos's ongoing success.

Monocle: *What do you consider your main responsibilities at Cos?*

Karin Gustaffson: I have been working for Cos since 2006, before the first store opened. At the beginning of 2011 I took on the role as head of womenswear design. I work closely with Martin Andersson, who's head of menswear design, so the two of us together set the seasonal direction, the inspiration we want the team to work off.

M: *You have big expansion plans but how do you keep the design and the look of the brand and shops consistent?*

KG: From the beginning the DNA was really strong and it still feels very viable. But obviously we've been lucky with the customers and that it's worked in different countries. I think the fact that the aesthetic is timeless, focusing a lot on modernity and functionality, just lends itself to a collection that lasts beyond one season.

M: *What design decisions were made about Cos's retail spaces?*

KG: The stores are divided into different wardrobes that represent different parts of each collection. But if there's a store opening or it's Christmas, we'll show the perfect little black dress or the nice, white, crisp tuxedo shirt with black trousers. If it's holiday time we'll show off the essentials that we believe everyone needs for summer. We like the store to be a blank canvas and we like the garments, jewellery pieces, shoes and bags to talk for themselves.

M: *How has that design evolved as you've opened more and bigger spaces?*

KG: When we open a new location we always embrace the features within that store. For example, in New York when we opened we found a well in the basement of the property. We'd never take a feature like that out; we'd rather embrace it and renovate it.

M: *Bricks and mortar or online sales?*

KG: We offer both. Part of our DNA is this functional side and everyone's lifestyle is different. We believe our customer is very much an international customer who appreciates quality in the product but also in the shopping experience. We feel it's important to offer them that flexibility. It's not only in the product but also the packaging: the paper that we wrap the garments in; the box that we send them in to be delivered. We try and keep a thread through everything of what's important to us: quality, tactility and functionality.

M: *What are your plans for the future?*

KG: This summer we sponsored Park Nights at the pavilion outside the Serpentine Gallery [in London's Hyde Park]. We also have a collaboration going on with Danish furniture company Hay. What we've done is handpicked a few – well [laughs], quite a lot of – pieces from its collection. We're going to sell its products in three different stores in three different countries [from September]. This autumn we're also sponsoring an exhibition in Donald Judd's old [New York] home, the Judd Foundation – we are going to show his prints for the first time.

M: *How important is a Swedish touch?*

KG: We say we have a Scandinavian heritage and I think in general what we [the Cos team] share in our mindset, likes and aesthetic is mid-century modern design for inspiration. It's a very Scandinavian aesthetic and it doesn't seem to matter where you're from in the world: you like that if you work for Cos. It's something that we all seem to share. — JAF

cosstores.com