

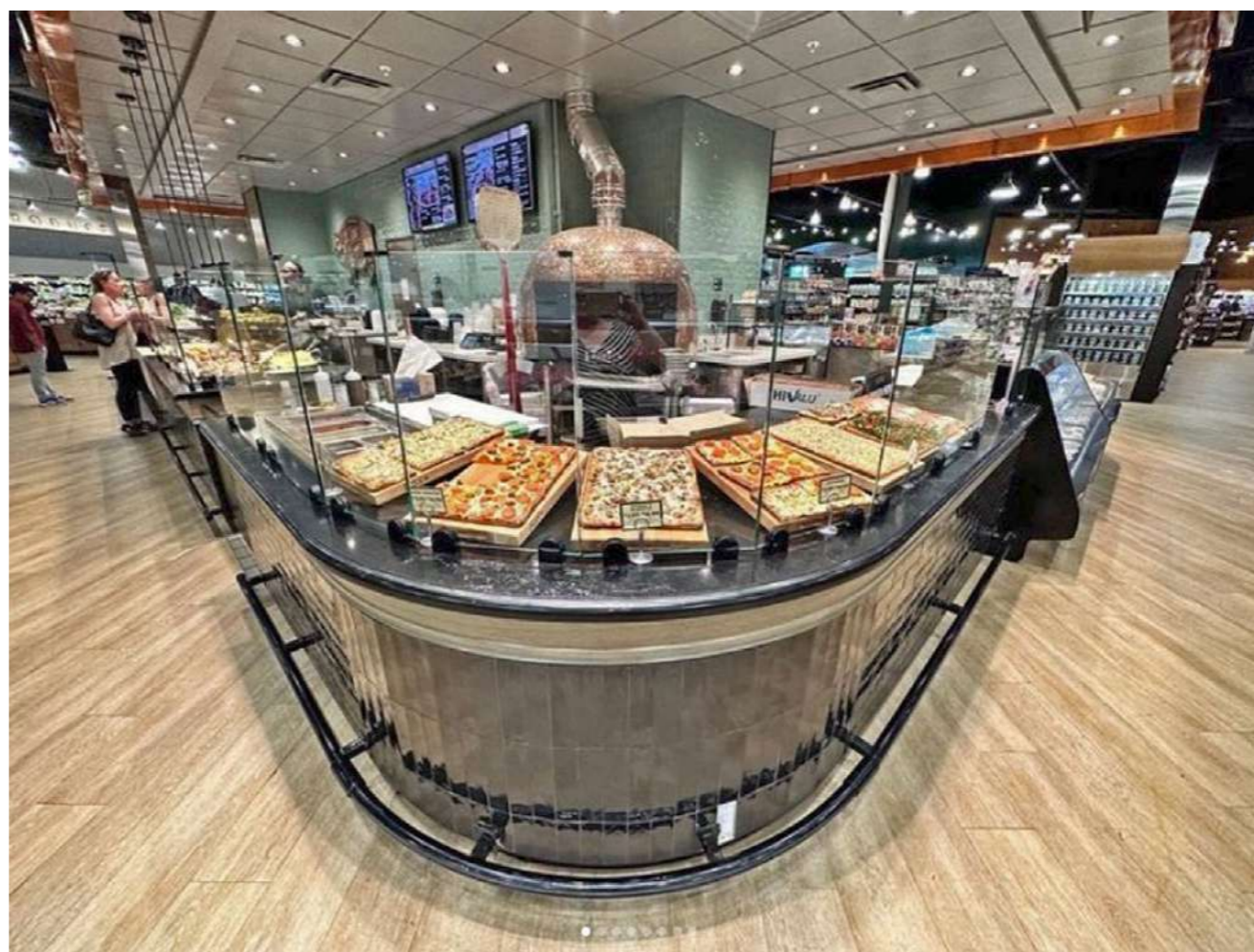
Designing spaces to reflect your store's brand

A good balance of creativity and functionality shapes and inspires the shopping experience. Great store design manages the flow of the shopper and directs them on a journey through the aisles; it engages them and excites them. Regardless of floor space and footprint, a well-designed store is a space where shoppers feel comfortable, confident, and catered to.

The principles of store design

How a store is designed is part of its brand. Franchise or chain stores should provide a similar, familiar experience, whereas flagship stores, independent stores, and owner-managed stores have a little more leeway – and occasionally more expectations placed on them. If a store is intended to be a standout space, it needs to reflect that in everything – from interior design to stock, product displays, and customer care. Good design can bolster your reputation; bad design can damage it.

Apart from the physical space and other architectural considerations such as natural lighting, HVAC options, building materials, furnishings, flooring, and display cases, store design also relies on the intangible, on feelings and emotions, atmosphere, and on how shoppers perceive the space. Retailers should create an experience that not only welcomes shoppers, but also drives them to make purchases and encourages them to return. There are a few basic principles to keep in mind.



Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. <https://progressivegrocer.com/>

Floor plan: Most retailers use a grid layout, which allows them to arrange products in aisles that enable customers to browse at their leisure. This is a logical configuration that is easy to navigate, familiar to shoppers, and maximizes product display. A more modern approach disrupts the classic grid layout with a more freestyle, market-like feel that encourages slower browsing, a more meandering path, and more exciting standalone and island displays.

Looking good: A store's entrance and displays must be attractive, engaging, and eye-catching. These critical areas of any store should encourage shoppers to firstly want to come inside, and then to interact with and purchase the products on display. It's a good idea to mix promotional and sale displays with occasion displays (think celebrations), product launches, and those impulse purchases that are hard to resist – baked goods, novel luxury or imported items, spoils and treats.

If a store is intended to be a standout space, it needs to reflect that in everything – from interior design to stock, product displays, and customer care. Good design can bolster your reputation, bad design can damage it.

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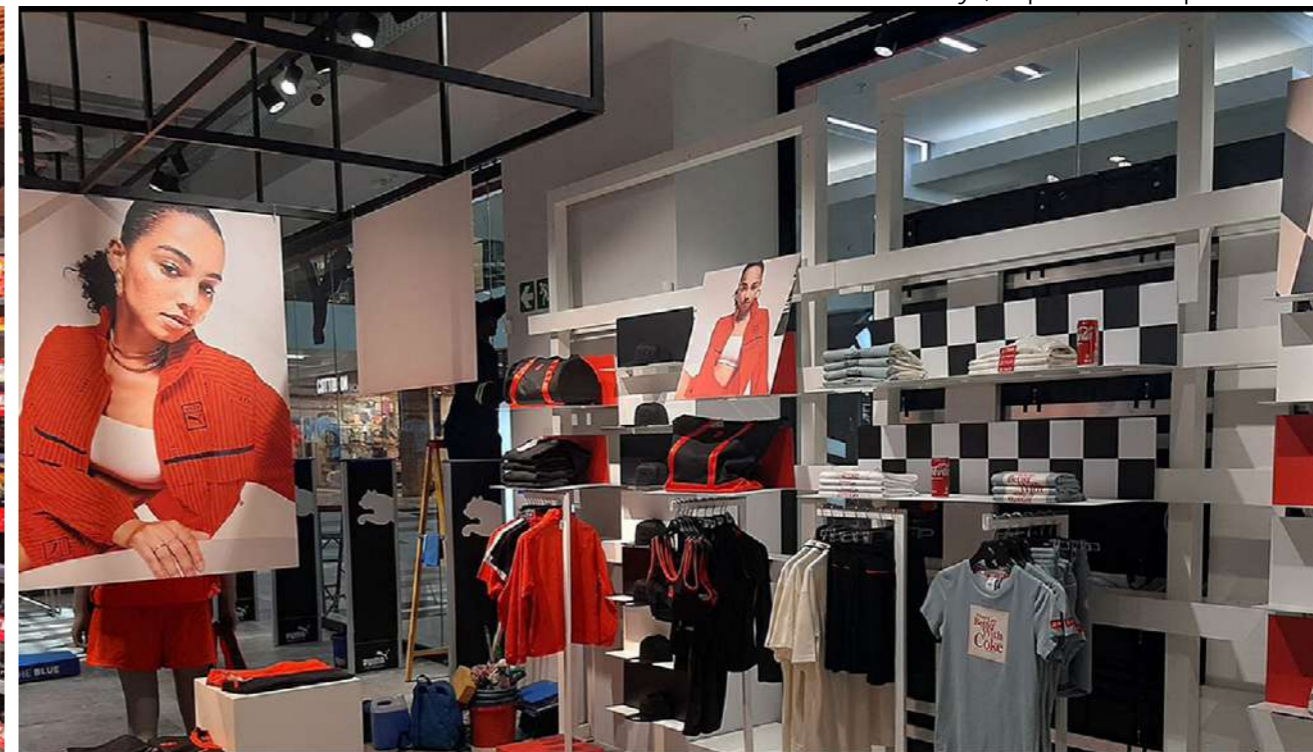


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Breathing room: It's not always possible to allow customers as much space as they might like in aisles and around corners, but be aware of how pillars and posts, as well as tight corners and narrow aisles that are tricky to navigate with a trolley or pram, can negatively affect the shopper's experience.

Organisation: A store's layout does need to be logical and sensible. Monitor buyer behaviour to understand how your customers expect to shop and what products they expect to find where. Also ensure that your shelves and displays are well-organised, tidy and well-stocked. A customer who has to search for what they want can easily become frustrated and leave without making a purchase. There also needs to be a product flow that directs customers to new, unexpected, or undersold products in order to encourage more browsing and impulse purchases.

Pace yourself: Eye level is buy level, or so they say, so remember to place key products at the right height. These can be essentials, best-sellers, or premium products, depending on your target market, location, time of year, and what brand and category managers want to highlight. Locating basics such as bread, sugar, tea and coffee, the butchery, and the deli counter towards the rear and sides of a store motivates consumers to traverse the floor in order to reach what they need. Spacing these categories out can also slow the journey through the store, creating more opportunities for impulse buys and browsing.

Welcome: The entrance to a store can be commanding or insipid. Good use of space and visual impact is crucial. A dull entrance is as uninspiring as a cluttered one, and even if space is at a premium, a well-organised and good-looking entrance can go a long way to making shoppers feel welcome, comfortable, and relaxed, which is good for business.



Image by Firkanfdemir, www.canva.com



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Design trends:

Understanding colour theory and chromotherapy is no new-age fad. Chromotherapy, also known as colour therapy, is the use of colour and coloured light for therapeutic

effects. The use of sunlight and colours for healing can be traced back to ancient Greece, Egypt, China and India. Consumers can and do respond subconsciously to colour palettes and lighting, so making the right choices means being informed and engaging professionals.



Experiential shopping:

This is an important trend that is gaining popularity among consumers internationally and appeals to a range of shoppers across demographics. For some, immersing themselves in the shopping experience is part of

the appeal, and catering to that can ensure brand loyalty and return visits. Engaging the senses, interacting with customers, and providing spaces that enable and promote this are essential to creating positive and memorable customer experiences.

Adaptable and agile: Flexibility is key for today's consumer – from a multitude of payment options to agile spaces, modern and efficient points of sale, a relevant and meaningful range, access to online shopping, click and collect, and home delivery options – all these are expected and even demanded by modern shoppers.



The annual South African Council of Shopping Centres' (SACSC) Retail Design & Development Awards (RDDA) celebrate shopping centre design excellence and recognise exceptional shopping centre design that, together with economic success, showcases innovation, sustainability, and high standards of design and execution.

In 2022 Checkers Foods Franschhoek, located in the picturesque wine valley in the Western Cape, was named joint winner of the Spectrum Award for best retail development and design at the SACSC awards.



Amanda Stops

Amanda Stops, CEO of SACSC, said, "The development and design of shopping centres is a multidimensional and sophisticated discipline. It's a creative, technical and commercial discipline that brings architecture, interior design, retail principles, consumer dynamics, environmental innovation and technology together in the conception and construction of retail space. Our industry is constantly innovating, creating and challenging itself, and raising the bar for development and design, and we are proud to acknowledge this excellence."

The Checkers Foods store is situated in a former small unit shopping arcade, and the existing

frontage units create a 'village market' concept. The store makes the most of its unique design and quaint setting and is an innovative example of reusing and reimagining an existing space.



Willem Hunlun

"Checkers Foods in Franschhoek was the first of the smaller format concept stores to open in the Western Cape. We wanted its design to honour the style and charm of the town, as well as the architecture of the building in which it is located. We are extremely proud of this beautiful store," says Willem Hunlun, COO of Checkers.



Jackie Bronkhorst

Pretoria-based design specialists Stunning Creations, led by Jackie Bronkhorst, head designer, have delivered a number of innovative store launches and revamps for the SPAR and SPAR TOPS-owned brands across Gauteng. In 2023, Food Lover's Market Bothasig in the Western Cape was named joint winner of the retail design – store category – in the Council's RDDA.





Food Lover's Bothasig

The judging panel said, "Continuing their trend of creating the most experiential in-store food spaces, Food Lover's Market has taken the style ethos to the external architecture, providing a classic 'farmers market' look to the façade, big barn doors and timber cladding. Inside the clear sight lines together with stone floors and timber bulkheads provide a holistic design message to the shopper." ■ CONTINUED OVERLEAF



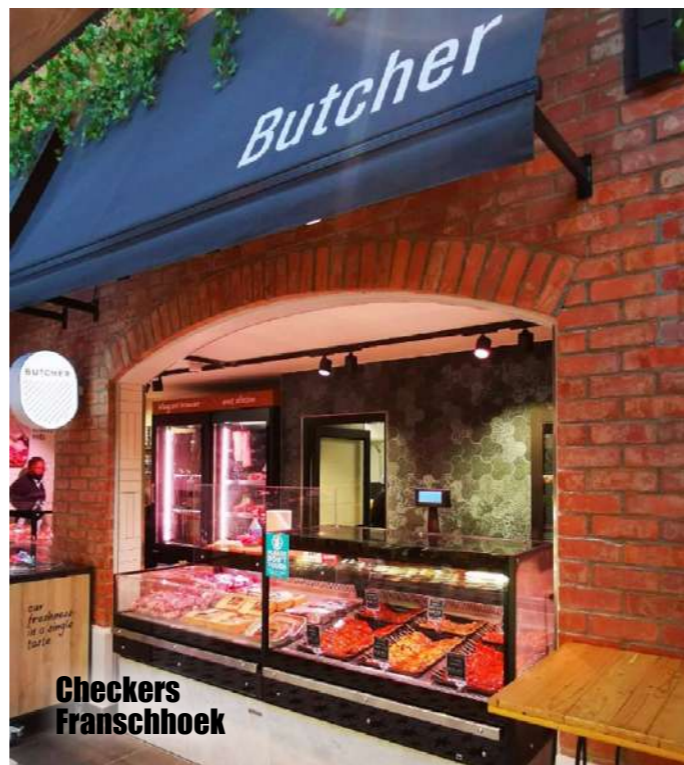
Food Lover's Bothasig



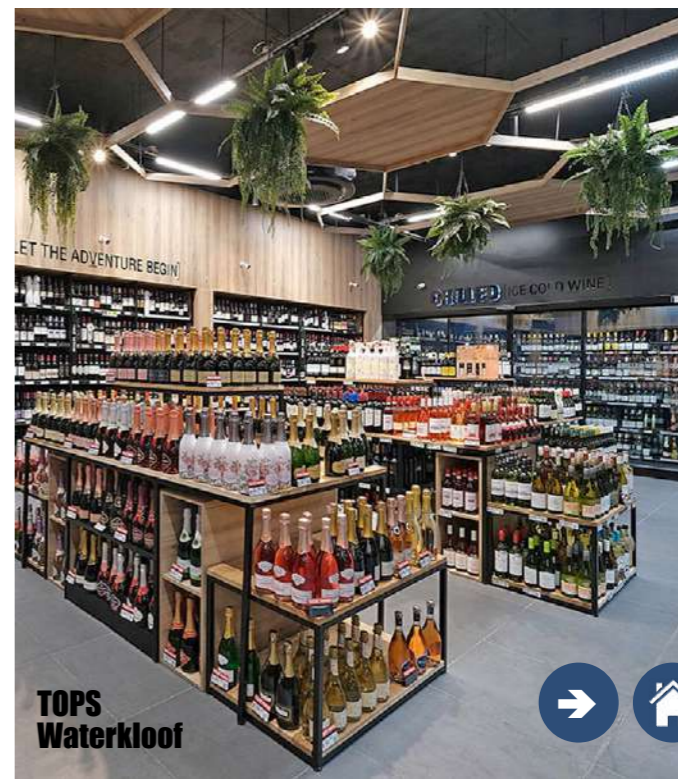
SPAR Birchgate



Food Lover's Bothasig



Checkers Franschhoek



TOPS Waterloof

TOPS & SPAR, www.stunningcreations.co.za

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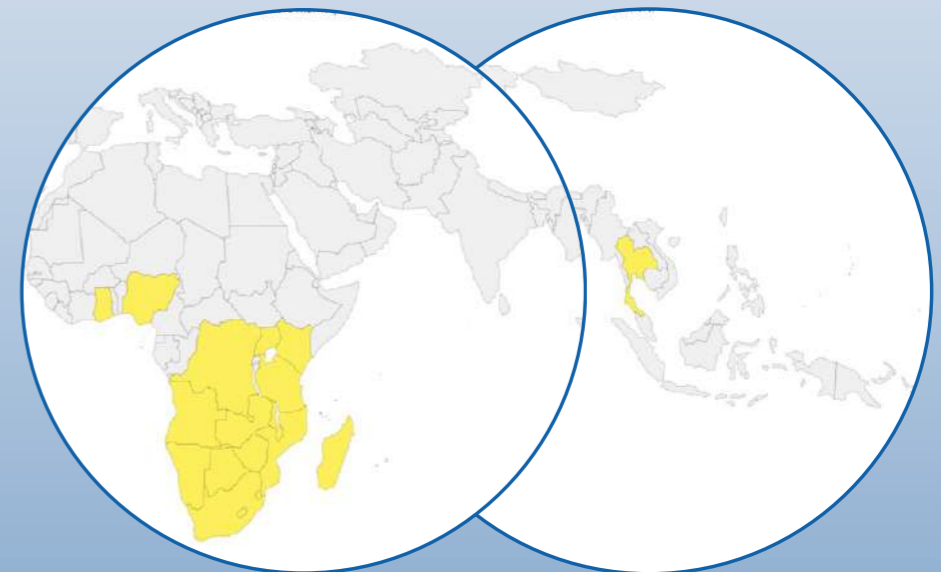


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BRJ INC, Eliseevsky, Moscow, Russia. <https://wanderwisdom.com/>



SHOP! Design Awards Silver Award El Palacio de Hierro Satélite Category Department Store (New or Remodeled).



Harrods, London. Photo: Megan Eaves, <https://wanderwisdom.com/>

Teatro Italia, Venice, Italy. Jorge Fanganillo, <https://wanderwisdom.com/>



EuroShop Retail Design Award 2023 Category Food Winner Interspar am Schottentor in Vienna.



Saints Road Foodland,
South Australia.
Glenn Hester Photography.

International inspiration

Award-winning design combines functionality with beauty – from eye-catching designs to a seamless and comfortable experience. Expertly highlighting your store's range in state-of-the-art facilities with top-notch customer care and attention to detail is standard for stores that attain international recognition. Underscoring this is an understanding of the importance of sustainability in both business and building practices, employing the latest technologies and solutions to achieve this. It's fair to say that significant investment is required to garner these accolades, but the benefits cannot be overstated.

Following international trends in retail and interior design, with some adaptation for the local market, is the best way to remain fresh, relevant, and exciting. Remember that interior makeovers don't always need to be extensive and cosmetic changes, and quick fixes such as freshening up paint, trimmings and finishes, or updating a colour palette can have a big impact. In addition, changing and updating your in-store displays is an excellent way to present a revitalised look without too much investment.



Food Lover's Castle Gate

The theatre of food Food Lover's Market creates strong brand identity

When it comes to vibrant displays and an appealing shopping experience, Food Lover's Market (FLM) knows a trick or two. Andrew Strickland, Store Design Manager for FLM, shares some top tips for keeping things fresh and fun. He says, "Good store design is vital to creating a friendly and efficient shopping experience." He adds, "It's also important to us that our store design creates a brand identity that sets us apart."



Photo: Rajes Manda

Food Lover's Market, Castle Gate Lifestyle Shopping Centre, Pretoria.

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- Polyurethane injected panels for superior insulation and adhesion.
- High-impact PVC interlock profiles on all edges provides totally sealed insulation and a perfect vapour barrier.
- Tongue and Groove panel options available.
- Easily erected.
- Optional skin finish in Stainless Steel – Grades AISI 304 AIS 403.

Cold & Freezer Rooms



Floors – Fabricated and Concrete

Fabricated Floors

- The inside floor finish is 1.5mm Aluminium tread plate glued and screwed to a marine ply base.
- Galvanised plate options available in lieu of the Aluminium Chequer Plate finish.

Concrete Floor

- Concrete floors are used for flush or step-up entry and in permanent structures. Usually a recess of 150–170mm is used to accommodate the foam slab insulation and the concrete screed.



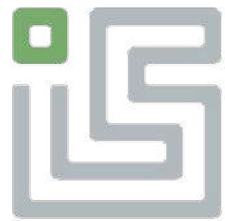
Meat Rails

- Hot Dipped Galvanised system.
- Support structure integrated into insulated panels.
- Optional free-standing continuous galvanised system with bends and switch gear.

Aluminium Chequer Plate

- Installed as an option to protect panels from scratches and light impact damage.
- 1.5mm and 2.0mm thick options.
- Standard height 1 250mm AFFL.





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Up to 40%
Energy Saving



New or Retrofit
Existing cases

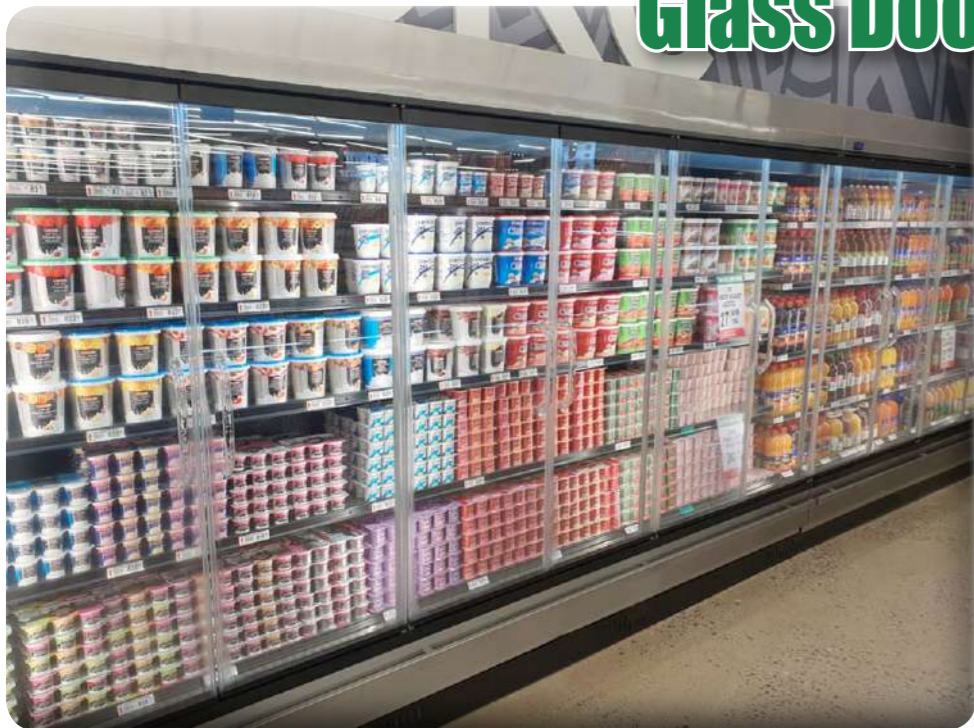


Environment
Respect

Benefits of Airshield Glass Doors

- Reduce Energy consumption.
- Extend Product shelf life.
- Double Glazed Argon filled void for better insulation.
- Optimal Product temperature.
- Glass doors have an option of Mullion lights. Quoted separate.
- Handles included.
- Up to 40% energy saving.
- Solution for new cabinets or retrofitted on existing cabinets.
- Doors are spring loaded.
- Less cold air spillage – warmer aisles.

Airshield Glass Doors



Ways to save

With energy cost rising and food retailers looking to improve the shopping experience environment for customers, Insulated Structures has developed an effective solution to reduce the cost of in-store refrigeration while enhancing the customer experience.

Insulated Structures doors are easy to retrofit on in-store cabinets to reduce the energy required to keep chilled foods at the correct temperature.

Meanwhile, customers are able to clearly see and access the products on offer. Reduced energy requirements means smaller refrigeration plant selection for new stores. These savings will off-set the initial cost of the doors. Up to 40% reduction in refrigeration requirement has been achieved.



Standard Airshield Glass Doors with a Black Frame.
Heated Hybrid also available in this design.
Heated Hybrid Glass Doors are fitted with a heater to reduce condensation on the doors in Coastal areas.
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Food Lover's Castle Gate ▼



Food Lover's Market, Castle Gate Lifestyle Shopping Centre, Pretoria. Photos taken by Marius Del Carmé of Hamiltons in Creative, provided courtesy of Food Lover's Market.

Strickland shares his top five principles of store design...

- **Good flow** means creating a fluid and efficient transition between in store departments.
- **Inclusion of theatre by means of animatronics and effective signage**, thus creating moments between shopping (all credit to Hamiltons in Creative).
- **Lighting is key.** Although perhaps not the typical stand-out focal point, efficient lighting design can make the world of difference in a store and can be paramount in highlighting product and allowing for comfortably lit spaces.
- **Brand identity** is essential, for us that means keeping that market feel that is so well known to Food Lover's Market: the theatre of food.
- **Keeping a good ratio between front of house (trading) and back of house (storage, prep and staff facilities).**

"All these elements are aligned to highlighting the products in our stores – our goal is always to provide a memorable experience that appeals to our customers and encourages them to return," concludes Strickland. As can be seen from two of their latest store opening in Pretoria and Rustenburg, this goal has certainly been achieved.

Food Lover's Rustenburg ▼



Food Lover's Market, Cornerstone Lifestyle Centre, Rustenburg. Photos taken by Marius Del Carmé of Hamiltons in Creative, provided courtesy of Food Lover's Market.

Trends to watch

Taste, touch, smell. As we move away from the constricts of the past, experiences are becoming more central to retail in all forms. Consumers want immersion, interaction, and involvement. They want to talk to experts, ask questions, and use their senses to experience whatever product, solution, or service they seek. In this instance, creating an immersive experience is not enough – the setting is just as important. Eye-catching, attractive, and comfortable spaces that encourage intimacy and give customers the freedom to experience their shopping experience is key.

One of a kind. Personal buying is becoming the norm. Shoppers want to feel that their store understands them and knows what they want. Introducing opportunities for personalised purchases is fast becoming expected by international consumers. Local markets are catching on quickly, with some brands allowing customers to blend their own coffee or olive oil, or jar their own honey, for example. There are many opportunities here for adventurous retailers.

Personalisation. Delivering a shopping experience that is tailored specifically to a customer has to involve harnessing data collection and analytics around consumer behaviour and employing technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to help understand customers. With predictive AI tracking that allows retailers to have insight into the products and brands preferred by their shopper base, predicting what consumers will purchase and when, and younger generations

<https://www.dartdesign.in/>



who are increasingly comfortable with 'Big Brother' monitoring them, personalised shopping is a reality that's only going to gain momentum.

A shopping extravaganza. Premier and luxury experiences are, as always, popular. Consumers love to feel special, and for many, splurging on luxury goods or shopping at a trending location are highly desirable. Presenting a luxe encounter in both look and feel is a sure-fire way to attract shoppers.

Retail technology. There's no doubt that technology is shaping the retail experience of the future. Retail automation provides extensive payment options, while predictive AI is being used for stock and facilities management. In addition, intriguing advancements in the technologies used in-store are elevating the customer experience. Internationally, robot waiters and staff, AI-powered

shopping assistants, smart carts, autonomous checkout-free stores, and drone delivery are all futuristic visions that are becoming reality.

Sleek and chic. Clean, clever design is vital, whether modern or quaint, market-like or futuristic, abundant or minimalistic. It must look fresh, suit your customer base, and provide an atmosphere that inspires, encourages, and welcomes customers.

There is no excuse for poorly finished design elements or snags that detract from the overall look and feel of a store. Exceptional execution of a first-rate design is the only option for stores looking to create a positive impression. **SR**

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Ann Baker-Keulemans writes on topics related to business, lifestyle, technology, and health, with extensive knowledge on the SA retail and wholesale landscape. Contact annbk@wilkinsross.co.za | www.wilkinsrossglobal.com

