

GLOBAL RETAIL

All the world's a store

The first MAPIC was dominated by Western Europe's big five but in the intervening 20 years Cannes has become the central meeting point for a globalised retail industry, with representatives attending from around the world. Mark Faithfull reports



IT IS tempting to use MAPIC purely as the barometer of geographical retail ascendancy and indeed it is ideally placed to provide just such a service. But to do so would be too simple. Long standing attendees in Cannes will recall the years when the booming health of certain markets was particularly apparent: the Middle East, Russia, Turkey and Central and Eastern Europe are just some examples. Now rubbing shoulders with those regions, the mature Western European nations and growing presences from further afield are simply what visitors expect from the event.

Other changes have been far softer, yet just as significant. In the beginning MAPIC was a traditional retail real estate fair, at a time when the retail real estate industry itself had very set parameters. Fast forward 20 years and MAPIC 2014 will include its third Digital Summit on innovation and digital in retail, host F&B operators and leisure, focus on transport hubs and continue to dedicate areas within the show to innovation from a broad spectrum of businesses. Likewise, visitors will also arrive from all of those disciplines.

Mirroring the retail destinations and tenants it brings together, MAPIC is now a multi-faceted event curating the diverse companies and concepts that occupy malls, high streets, retail parks and designer outlets around the world. In compiling our annual tour of a few of the markets and companies that will feature at this year's MAPIC, national divisions become increasingly blurred. The following features are punctuated by examples of Sovereign Wealth investors, Australian developers, pan-European co-ventures, Middle Eastern franchisees operating in the CEE, British retailers opening online and with stores across Europe and the Spanish head of an Irish retailer spearheading US market entry. Such stories encapsulate why in November once again the world will come together in Cannes.

Fashion retailers like Benetton have stepped out internationally