

STORES

A hypermarché in the heart of Wales

Located in Llansamlet, the hinterland of Swansea, a Tesco Extra has had a continental-style makeover.

John Ryan reports.

One of the things about supermarkets is they are frequently hard to navigate.

As a shopper venturing into hypermarket territory, this problem multiplies and all too frequently it becomes a matter of wandering around in hope that you'll get to where you need to be.

Something of the kind may underpin the design of the Tesco Extra in Llansamlet, just outside Swansea.

Every little Extra helps

Open in its revamped form for a little over three weeks, this is a very large store at 80,000 sq ft, with everything from a large, semi-discrete F&F clothing shop-in-shop, to homewares and food and drink.

Standing at the threshold, the first thing that is evident is F&F, with the attention grabbed by an outsize digital screen positioned in the middle of the space given to clothing.

The F&F shop-in-shop occupies around a quarter of the store's total selling area and other high-level indicators are dotted around the space, with the white neon 'Kids' sign being particularly prominent.

F&F is a quality brand that works well as a fashion store, but here it is far from the top highlight.

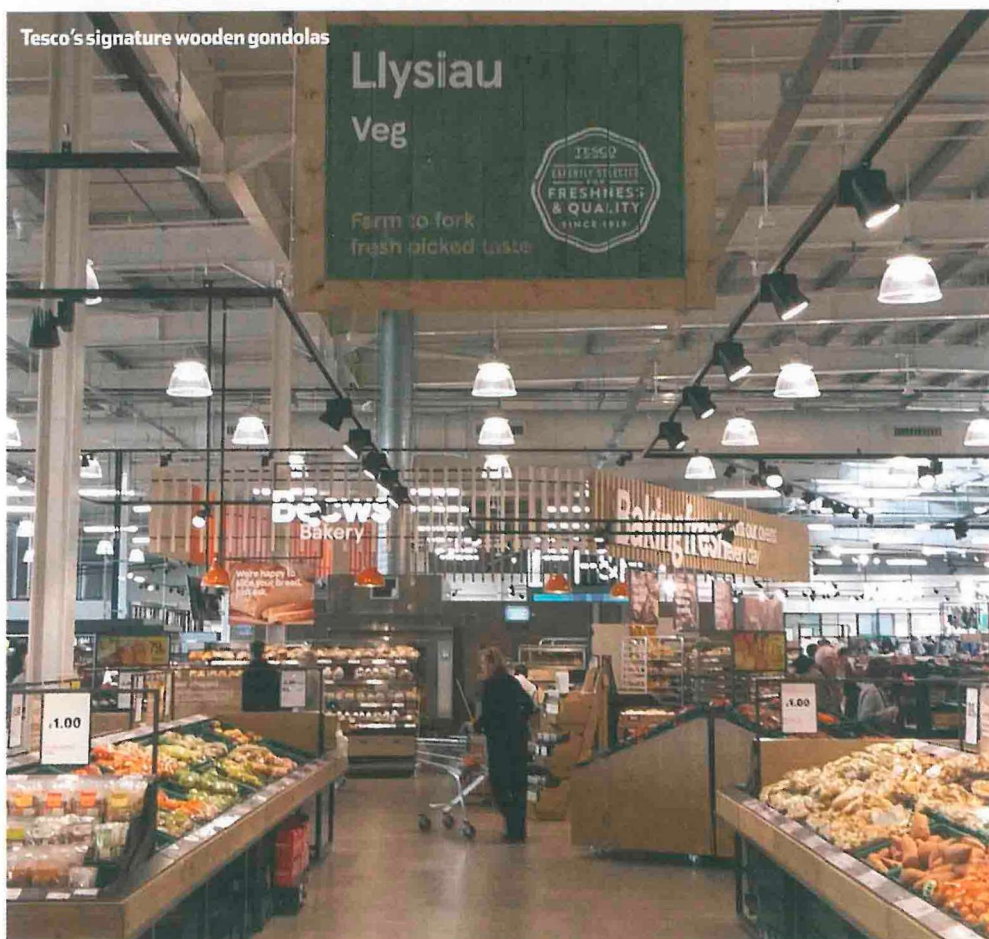
Fresh food offer

That honour falls to the food counters and the area devoted to 'Fresh'.

The Welsh language predominates as much in-store as it does on the road signs that become bi-lingual immediately after crossing the Severn bridge. A big white sign stating 'Becws' has the word 'Bakery' directly beneath it.

What makes it striking are the vertically suspended posts that collectively form a plain wood curtain, throwing into contrast the signage placed in front of it.

And beneath all of this is the bakery counter itself, consisting of tiered shelves and a healthy



For more content on Tesco, including updates on its Booker deal, head to Retail-week.com/Tesco



The F&F shop-in-shop occupies a quarter of the store

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looking offer of brown and white breads that wouldn't look out of place in an artisan bakery.

And in the area behind the counter, faux brick walls provide the setting for a rather more dense display of baked produce.

The bakery area has a distinctly continental hypermarket look and feel (anybody who can recall Carrefour's 'Planet' hypermarket experiment in Lyons will feel at home with this one), setting the tone in many ways for what follows.

Beyond bakery lies the 'Pysgod, Dofednod a Cig' ('Frozen Fish, Poultry & Meat') counters and these really do prompt the feeling that you have found yourself in one of the big French grocers' outposts.

Wood, tiles, blackboards with 'localised' messages such as 'Try our Welsh cheese with crackers & chutneys' and a lot of natural daylight, lend the store a market feel.

And in the middle of all of this is the fresh fruit and veg area, with equipment heights that are lower than anything else and with wood-clad mid-floor gondolas – a trait that has been one of the defining characteristics of Tesco interiors for a while now.

Beers, wines and spirits

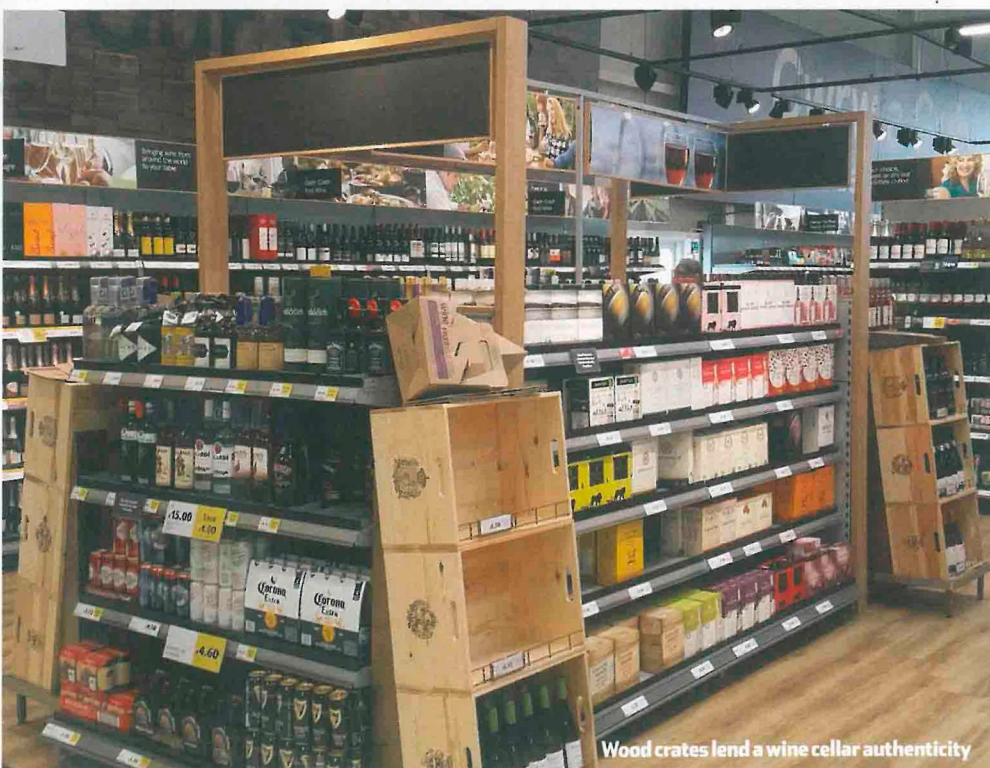
As for the drinks offer ('Diodydd'), in this store there is a four-tiered mid-shop unit that has wooden wine crates stacked against its ends in order, perhaps to lend a piece of French wine-cellar authenticity.

A pity that a number of these were empty on the day of visiting (and nothing had been written on the blackboards at either end of the unit), but nonetheless, it was an effective piece of dressing for what would otherwise have been a fairly standard piece of equipment.

Stepping into Tesco Llansamlet, just a short-drive from downtown Swansea, is like walking into a parallel grocery universe in which the only clue about where you happen to be is provided by the Welsh language signage.

At any one time, Tesco is always tinkering with the way it does things in-store and this location stands as evidence of this. What sets it apart however, is the way in which a very large store has been given a makeover that is consistent throughout.

The store manager said that in the two weeks since the revamp (which took a fortnight to affect), there had been little but praise for what has been done. Small wonder, as this is well worth the long trip beyond Cardiff to take a look at.



Wood crates lend a wine cellar authenticity