

## ALL ABOARD:

# TRAVEL RETAIL

The future of travel retail should be calm, relaxing and stress-free, finds Retail Focus.

For passengers travelling from airports and train stations, particularly at unsociable hours, the last thing they want is a stressful retail experience. Especially at airports, where some passengers are nervous flyers, stressed and tired. It can be somewhat overwhelming for those who just want to catch their flight on time and find the nearest coffee stop.

### RAIL

With the completion of Crossrail edging nearer, travel is about to get a lot easier and more convenient for passengers wanting to cross London quickly, and that means a host of new retail experiences (The remaining Elizabeth Line is scheduled to open on 9 December 2018). Crossrail has integrated the designs for 12 major property developments over and around its central London stations and other key infrastructure as part of the project. Development plans cover more than 278,709 sq m of high quality office, retail and residential space between Paddington and Woolwich.

The new-look Tottenham Court Road station has cost £1 billion to redevelop. 'Crossrail is not just delivering major new stations in the West End but transforming the areas around the stations. It is the site of our largest property development and urban regeneration programme, which will deliver new retail, office, residential space, new squares, paths and greenery, and attract new businesses and customers,' said Andrew Wolstenholme, Crossrail chief executive, when work began on the station. The development includes 46,451 sq m of premium retail, office and residential accommodation above the ticket halls at the corner of Charing Cross Road and Oxford Street, and the corner of Oxford Street and Dean Street. It also includes a new West End theatre.

London Bridge, part of the Thameslink Programme, has undergone a £1 billion redevelopment, including a huge new concourse, modern facilities, two new entrances on Tooley Street and 15 fully accessible platforms. It also includes 8,547 sq m of new retail and more than 70 retail units - the most ever in a Network Rail station.

'The transformation of London Bridge station is one of the most ambitious projects that Network Rail has undertaken. It gives us the opportunity to use our expertise to create a great environment and produce a retail offer that exceeds people's expectations,' says Hamish Kiernan, commercial director of retail for Network Rail property.

'We understand that stations, large and small, and their

surrounding areas are increasingly becoming the hubs of modern local communities. They are being recognised as places where people can travel, live, work and play, and at the same time provide the catalyst for housing, regeneration and economic growth in our towns and cities.

'As such we're working exceptionally hard to bring in established, quality brands and create a diverse and eclectic mix of retailers, food and beverage outlets, and places for entertainment,' says Kiernan.

The third busiest railway station in Scotland, Glasgow Queen Street, is being expanded to form a larger facility with superior services for growing passenger numbers. The station platforms will be expanded to accommodate eight-car trains, and the overhead line on the high-level platforms of the station will be electrified as part of the £120 million redevelopment. The waiting areas, entrances, and catering and retail spaces will also be extended, and new lighting and public address systems will be installed.

### AIR

Airside, CallisonRTKL has worked, and is currently working, on duty-free retail for Singapore Changi, Incheon and Hong Kong International. Rather than designing individual stores, the company is creating defined districts within retail.

'Travel retail has become a more sophisticated and engaging experience. Retailers are quickly moving away from store layouts based purely on efficiency and with the same line-up of brands to spaces that encourage longer dwell times, shop-in-shop layouts and a wider mix of brands, category types and local merchandise. Operators are also offering more opportunities for customers to engage directly with products. Virtual mirrors allow customers to try on makeup and digital touch screens allow customers to learn about different types, tastes and price points of whiskey,' says Kevin Horn, vice president of CallisonRTKL.

In terms of new experiences in travel retail, Horn says retailers are providing a higher level of service, programme and amenities. 'Cosmetic and perfume stores offer spa treatments for those long layovers as well as personal beauty consultants. Wine and spirit stores offer tasting events and brand ambassadors who can help select the perfect bottle of scotch. Programmed pop-up events are also starting to make their way into airport retail with a focus on promoting exclusive brands that can only be purchased in airport locations,' says Horn.



Text: Lindsey Dennis



**Above:** CallisonRTKL created a defined retail district within the new Terminal 2 at Incheon International Airport, South Korea, including a sculptural digital element, The Infinity Loop.

**Left:** gpstudio's Beauty&You concept for The Shilla Duty Free at Hong Kong International Airport.

**Below left:** The Western Arcade in the refurbished London Bridge station includes retailers such as MAC, Ted Baker and Cath Kidston.

**Below:** Designed by Lumsden, the Harry Potter store in Heathrow T5 brings a touch of Hogwarts magic to passengers.



CallisonRTKL recently completed projects for both Shilla Duty Free on the operator's side and Incheon Airport Authority on the airport side for the new Terminal 2 at Incheon, the largest airport in South Korea. 'Working with the airport authority we provided planning and design strategy and criteria for the creation of a defined retail district within the terminal. We also designed a sculptural digital element, The Infinity Loop, that acts as an iconic anchor within the district. Working with Shilla we designed eight perfume and cosmetic stores, which include shop-in-shop layouts in the larger locations as well as various digital applications for merchandise promotion and customer engagement,' explains Horn. Gregor Jackson, founding partner of gpstudio, says travel retail

now offers a far deeper customer engagement through digital and physical initiatives. 'Previously, "travel retail" was bordering on being a derogative term, and was price driven, stack it high and shift in volume. Now its developing into being a shopping choice and destination rather than simply a tag on to a journey. It has a long way to go, and a historic persona to still shake off, but is making genuine advancements.'

He says retailers are not just thinking about the 'moment' but now developing connectivity with the consumer prior to the airport, at the airport, during travel, and at their destination and beyond. 'Any smartphone activity that connects the consumer with your brand can only produce traction and ultimately loyalty. >

The physical travel retail experience is closer aligning itself to the downtown retail experience,' says Jackson.

gpstudio's most recent project (opening in July) was for The Shilla Duty Free at Hong Kong International Airport, across all beauty sectors at six sites. 'The brief was "where fashion meets beauty", taking cues from luxury high street retail, an immersive environment, products and services in an atmosphere of discovery and interactivity. Taking inspiration from Hong Kong itself, where the experience of natural tranquil is juxtaposed against a high-octane urban environment, the "Beauty&You" brand was born,' says Jackson.

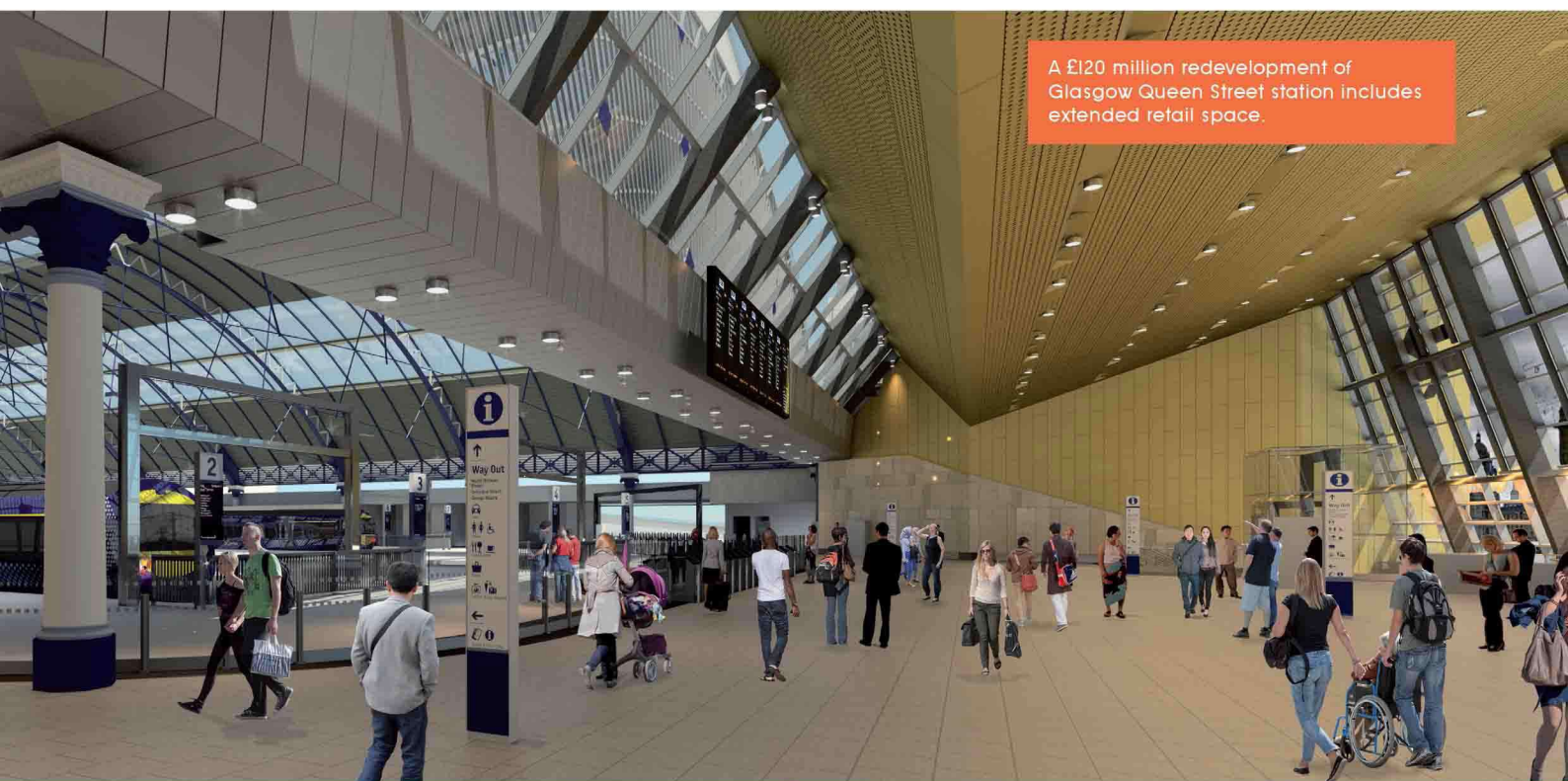
Callum Lumsden, creative director at Lumsden, notes the work of F&B operators within the travel sector in recent years. 'What I am observing recently is a gradual, strategic change of the types of retailers and food outlets being signed up. This has been led by the F&B sector in particular, with brands such as Gordon Ramsey, The Grain Stores and YO! Sushi successfully bringing a touch of fun and theatre back to airside passengers,' says Lumsden. He notes in particular, the Metropolitan Museum Store at JFK Airport and the Muji 'To Go' store at Hong Kong Airport - 'full of great travel products of every description' - as examples of something different and innovative.

Lumsden's most recent airport retail project is the Harry Potter store in Heathrow T5, bringing a touch of Hogwarts magic to passengers. The store is soon to be relocated into a bigger space due to its enormous popularity. 'It stands out designwise against its competitors in the gift sector due to creative theming and brings a breath of fresh air to a traveller's pre-flight experience,' says Lumsden. 'I believe it is testament to just how open travellers are to an experiential offer no matter how anxious they might be before catching a flight.'

Ollie Patterson, marketing manager at Mynt Design, spends a lot of time travelling for work. 'The thing I've noticed the most is the scale of the airports, particularly in Germany, has grown. Some of these areas feel a lot less chaotic than certain UK airports. The experience is much more relaxed and the calmness certainly helps to encourage dwell time in-store. I'm looking forward to revisiting Dubai later in the year to see first-hand the updates in travel retail there, and also I'll be visiting new regions of Asia for the first time and again, look forward to these experiences,' says Patterson. 'We're hearing a lot of talk about the evolution of airport retail, but in reality, we don't think the experience will radically change for a long time.'

Airports can be some of the busiest and most stressful places at times. 'Have you ever had the pleasure of a bam flight from Stansted? I have. Hideous,' adds Patterson.

'There are talks of these types of stores becoming high-tech-led environments with integrated online experiences and rewards for customer loyalty. The truth is, no one has time for that level of concentration at an airport. We should be using technology to make the consumers' lives easier, and less stressful and complicated,' he believes. 'These stores need to act as relaxing escapes from the bustling restaurants and central foyers. Simple sensory additions in store such as live plants, ambient lighting, calming music, well-crafted and playful projection mapping, etc, will help to drastically change the pace from the struggle of having to navigate busy airport seating areas and, in turn, will encourage more people to visit these stores. The stores don't need to feel flat, they just don't need to be overly high-tech. Investing in genuine customer relationships and adding relevant value to their airport experience, in my view, is key to a successful travel retail concept.' **RF**



A £120 million redevelopment of Glasgow Queen Street station includes extended retail space.