

Retail designer TDS waxes lyrical about Kypriaka store at Larnaca



ARI's new Kypriaka concept store at Larnaca Airport offers specialist foods, wines, spirits and crafted souvenirs from the island

Airport retail design specialist The Design Solution (TDS) has unveiled details of Kypriaka, the vibrant new destination store at Larnaca Airport, developed in partnership with travel retailer Aer Rianta International (ARI) and airport operator Hermes.

TDS was appointed by Hermes and ARI to develop the terminal's commercial planning and passenger flow strategies and also design the locally-themed centerpiece of the new retail offer, the Kypriaka destination store.

The €20 million development program at Larnaca Airport incorporates a powerful new sense of place through the Kypriaka (meaning Cypriot-produced) concept store for ARI, which offers specialist foods, wines, spirits and crafted souvenirs from the island.

As forerunners in the integration of locational themes and walkthrough stores in airport retail design, TDS has developed a powerfully authentic expression of the traditions, culture and spirit of Cyprus across the airport's new food and gifting destination store.

The core design inspiration was an iconic song among Cypriots called 'Xrysoprasino Fyllo' (Gold Green Leaf) by composer Mikis Theodorakis - famous for his soundtrack to the film 'Zorba the Greek' - and adapted from a poem by Leonidas Malenish celebrating the beauty and spirit of Cyprus.

The lyrical celebration of the island's natural beauty and independent spirit is represented across the retail space.

Lyrics: 'Xrysoprasino Fyllo'

Land of the lemon tree, of the olive tree

Land of the embrace, of the joy

*Land of the pine tree, of the cypress tree,
of the young lads, of love*

Golden-green leaf thrown in the sea

Christos Malecos, Lead Senior Designer at TDS, explained how the Larnaca project was a personal as well as professional challenge: "As a Cypriot, it was a privilege to work on this innovative store with Hermes, ARI, Cyprus Airports F&B and Cyprus Airports Duty Free and I wanted it to be a great store experience that shared a genuine expression of my homeland. To give Kypriaka its unique look and feel, we drew upon some key aspects of Cypriot landscapes and lifestyle and translated them into a design language.

"The overall color palette takes its cues from the colors of the landscape: green hues of the olive trees, winery vines and citrus trees, and the golden tones of the sandy shores, hay bales and vibrant leaves in the summer months. This gives a soft, natural feeling, one which will encourage passengers to dwell in the shop. We were also inspired by the craftsmanship in famous villages such as Lefkara, the delicacy of the white lace, and ruggedness of the white stone-clad buildings.

"The design blends the themes of the island's best loved song with one of the most essential elements of the Cypriot lifestyle - the village square - the hub of daily village life. We have classic elements of Cypriot village life expressed across the store."

Overhead, the giant, sculptural, dual-toned olive leaves provide a dramatic canopy to the store. Stone-effect porcelain tiles of the floor and category wall-bays clad in local stone and timber all reflect indigenous building materials and styles. The traditional crafts of lacemaking and pottery are expressed in the intricate filigree and decorative patterns of the display units, selling souvenirs and sharing the heritage story behind the locally-crafted pieces of lace, ceramics and jewelry.

Vine-woven baskets, another ancient craft of the island, are used for a range of product displays, and this traditional focus is combined with a more contemporary edge among the fixtures.

Authentic feeling of Cyprus

Malecos continues: "From the Troödos mountains we celebrate Commandaria dessert wine and a range of spirits and, of course, no Cypriot larder is without halloumi; having finally attained protected designation of origin (PDO) from the EU just a few weeks ago (October 1, 2021), it takes center stage with its own presentation unit, bordered with olive leaves.

"We were determined to ensure we created a design that presents an authentic, convincing tone that avoids touristic clichés and, crucially, resonates as strongly with Cypriot travelers as well as the island's vital tourist traffic. As a Cypriot, I genuinely feel that this store shares a sincere flavor of my homeland and I'm especially looking forward to hearing from family and friends what they think of it when they next travel through Larnaca."

Andrew Baker, General Manager of Cyprus Duty Free/CTC ARI, summarised passengers' first reactions to the new store: "The new Kypriaka design has been a huge success for Cyprus Duty Free, bringing to our retail space that authentic feeling of Cyprus in terms of great architecture taken from the history of this beautiful country. The natural raw materials used within the shop are taken from the local landscapes, along with many of the design details, the colors and aromas of the country. Complementing this is a wonderful range of Cypriot products that customers have reacted to so

positively.

“The space is comfortable to walk through and the atmosphere is one of a genuine Cypriot agora or marketplace which can be found in many of the towns and villages of Cyprus, bringing a true sense of place to the retail space.”

The development project, the largest in the airport’s history, reached across more than 6,700 square meters of revitalized retail and F&B outlets and, due to the Covid crisis, took 20 months to complete.

The project also features cultural and architectural expressions of Cyprus across the terminal, including the stunning artwork ‘Volant Migrants’ by Cypriot artist Maria Loizidou, welcoming passengers at the entrance.