

# Siñeriz Shopping welcomes the opening of new land duty free stores on the Brazilian side of the border

One of the largest land duty free operations in Uruguay sees the opening of the new land duty free stores on the Brazilian side of the border as something that is good for everyone – not just operators in Brazil.

Siñeriz Shopping Commercial Manager Hilmi H. Abdullah Neto says more choices will attract more consumers with a spillover effect that is beneficial to all.

In an exclusive interview with *Americas Duty Free*, Abdullah Neto said competition among border stores in Latin America is a good thing. “The consumer will be more tempted to travel to shop at the border, not only because they will have more stores options, but because now they will be able to buy twice the value they could buy before,” he said.

“Now they will be able to buy US\$300 in the Brazilian side, and US\$300 in the other side of the border,” he said, referring to the purchase limits that have been established for consumers doing duty free shopping.

The Brazil border business kicked off with the Dufry Group’s store opening in Uruguaina, in Rio Grande do Sol, at the border with Argentina in August. Two other smaller stores opened in Barra do Quaraí and Jaguarão, both towns near the border with Uruguay in July.

Abdullah Neto says he doesn’t expect the Brazilian border stores to really impact Siñeriz at its location in Rivera, Uruguay. “There isn’t any Brazilian store project on our border yet, of course soon things can change, but at the end of the day, it will be great for everyone, more options, more visitors,” he said.

“It will be more attractive to the people to come to the borders on vacations to purchase products at half of the price they find in their cities,” he added.

Still Sineriz does not discount the possibility of expanding its operation into Brazil. In an earlier interview, Abdullah Neto indicated the company has been looking at establishing a duty free business in Brazil, but has reached no decision yet.

“We still don’t have a specific and consolidated plan for the Brazilian side,” he said. “As you can see in our stores, we prioritize the quality, the standard of what we do, so we don’t think we are in a rush to see who can open first,” he said.

“The only difference of who opens now and who opens in six months is that one of the stores can say that it was the first. But at the end of the day, it means nothing if your store doesn’t attract the people,” he said. “As we do in every project, when we decide to do, something we will do it with Siñeriz quality, but at the moment we doesn’t have any concrete plans.”

In the meantime, Abdullah Neto says Siñeriz is paying special attention to its wine collection, noting that the company offers consumers more than 8,000 wine labels, with each label selected individually.

“We work with exclusivity,” Abdullah Neto said. “It means that only we have these products in Uruguay, from a massive US\$3 Chilean wine to a rare French wine that can cost thousands of dollars.

“At this time in the year we have consumers that travel more than 3,000 kilometers to reach our stores because of the variety we have. It’s almost impossible that we can’t find a perfect product, for a specific moment and that can fit in the gap that the consumer wants to spend,” he added.

Abdullah Neto says other changes at the store include refreshing their chocolate display, and of course getting ready for the holiday season.

“As the saying goes, we hope for the best, but are preparing for the worst,” Abdullah Neto said in a veiled reference to Argentina where elections are scheduled for the end of October. But still, he says he is optimistic.

“We are expecting a good end of the year. In this last two months, the turbulence has increased with the USA and China competition and heightened by Argentina’s situation, but we expect that the region will overcome gradually until December,” Abdullah Neto concluded.