

Siñeriz Shopping looks at opening duty-free store on the Brazilian side of border

Siñeriz Shopping, which has one of the most successful land duty free stores in Uruguay in the town of Rivera, is looking at the possibility of establishing another store on the Brazilian side of the border.

A new Brazilian law, that was years in the making, now allows land duty free stores to operate at border towns in the country, and Siñeriz is one of many companies exploring the opportunities.

“The duty-free Brazilian border shop is not a Siñeriz project, actually it is a Brazilian government project,” according to Siñeriz Shopping Commercial Manager Hilmi H. Abdullah Neto, who gave an exclusive interview to *Americas Duty Free*. “Of course we are studying all the possibilities closely and understand that it is still missing some details for the project to effectively take off,” he said.

And as is always the case, for Siñeriz, for now, the company is playing it close to the chest whatever the company may end up doing on the Brazilian side of the border, “As any other law changes it takes time and patience to align the last details. After the new market starts to work properly we will definitely choose our strategy, now all possibilities are open,” Abdullah Neto said.

But Siñeriz has no worries about any negative impact coming from the possibility of stores opening up on the Brazilian side of the border. “We actually see with very good eyes, we understand that a new market will open and more than that, the fact that the consumer will be allowed to increase their purchases buying US\$300 on each side of the border and not splitting the current US\$300 will be attractive to more visitors than ever. We understand that it will be a win-win,” he said.

The new law has prompted creation of even playing fields on both sides of the border with consumers to be permitted to purchase up to US\$300 in duty free goods.

Currently, Siñeriz operates what may be the largest land duty free center in South America, laying claim to a 10,000 square-foot complex that offers a multitude of services beyond shopping.

Gourmet dining opportunities and movie-going are just some of the options. Last year, Siñeriz opened a *Chiviteria* or place for burgers in their food court, with homemade sauces and craft beer available for purchase. Crepes and coffee can be bought at Fragola Café.

In other words, people come to Siñeriz Shopping to do more than shop. That’s one of the reasons Siñeriz built the center that handles all the immigration and customs transactions that a customer making a land border crossing might need. The mega-complex Siñeriz Shopping Center opened in 2012.

So competition is not an issue for this family-owned company, which has a strong presence and a strong foothold in the region. “I think the impact will be as normal as if any operator opens a new store in your region, but in this case, we will arrive with lot of opportunities,” Abdullah Neto said.