

The Design Solution demonstrates the local power of design

By **Jas Ryat** on January, 29 2019 | Airlines & Airports



The elegant centerpiece of the perfumes and cosmetics zone at Toulouse-Blagnac Airport is the Fragrance Garden, celebrating the French city's love of gardens and flowers (Design concept image courtesy/copyright of The Design Solution)

Specialist airport design consultancy The Design Solution has highlighted the retail transformation created at Toulouse-Blagnac Airport as a powerful demonstration of how regional airports can adopt local themes to develop an authentic Sense of Place.

The holistic design program at Toulouse-Blagnac includes the enlargement, reconfiguration and refurbishment of the airport's commercial areas across a total of 1,800 square meters of retail space, focused on the new walkthrough duty free store (1,700 square meters), operated by Dufry.

Having worked with Toulouse-Blagnac Airport in creating a strong commercial plan, the London-based consultancy was subsequently appointed by Dufry to design the main duty free shop.

The commercial plan formulated a new retail layout, involving the construction of a new security area, the conversion of an existing check-in area to form the new duty free shop and the transformation of the old duty free shops into a new retail area.

The main duty free store presents a "multi-paced retail experience that offers in-store category

destinations tailored to each key customer profile”, The Design Solution said.

Dynamic designs sought to convey the story of a historic city that blends old and new – from its architectural heritage to its leading role in the aerospace industry as the home of Airbus.

Complementing this is the characterful mood of the city’s streets, especially the bustling street markets, it added.

A mood of luxury and a modern edge

The store has a central island heart that anchors the liquor and food categories. Radiating from this are perfumes and cosmetics/beauty and local food and wine, giving passengers attractive vistas to each side of the main walkway. Category adjacencies were finely tuned to maximise footfall, dwell time and penetration.

The city’s familiar soft tones of dusty pink and terracotta are subtly echoed across the space, creating modern counterpoints to the backdrop of traditionally styled timber wall panelling that aims to reflect the classic grandeur of the city’s architectural heritage.

In liquor, for example, the panelling in opulent golden tones projects a mood of luxury, while a modern edge is inserted by the contemporary design of the humidor, featuring rose-toned glass that complements the classically-styled walls.

Local products are prominent across the categories but particularly in the vibrant Terre d’Occitanie space where local specialities are celebrated, including cheese, foie gras, olive oils, wine and confectionery. Natural wood tones dominate the space, including the dramatic back wall seemingly made of traditional wine boxes, celebrating the region’s great wines. A classic Citroen van seeks to add a stylish touch of fun and in-store theatre.



Local specialities are celebrated in the vibrant Terre d’Occitanie space (Design concept image courtesy/copyright of The Design Solution)

The perfumes and cosmetics/beauty area stretches out through the first half of the store, creating a huge back wall opportunity for the dynamic sharing of product stories. The elegant centerpiece is the

Fragrance Garden, celebrating the region's natural beauty and the city's love of gardens and flowers.

Two rose gold-framed room dividers create a stylish backdrop to the space and host a series of merchandising niches personalized by local brands. Artificial box hedging and grass on the floor colorfully extend the garden imagery, adding color, shape and texture.

The use of local woods throughout the store reflects the region's natural beauty, including ceiling spaces formed with timber louvers, with lighting between, creating the feeling of an outdoor space.

Informal branding and signage

Street-style chalkboards and decorative canvas awnings project off the walls, creating informal branding and signage spaces and classic typography, commonly used across the city, is used to list products and the latest offers and promotions.

The walkthrough store also incorporates a number of specialist product zones targeting customer profiles, including a Kids' Zone, a strong digital focus in the Contentainment area and a performance space to add to the lively street market mood.

Within the main store there are also dedicated spaces for specialist category concepts Suncatcher (sunglasses) and TimeBox (watches), designed by The Design Solution to incorporate a local element.

Nick Taylor, Director, The Design Solution, emphasized the cohesion of commercial imperatives and design aesthetics at Toulouse-Blagnac Airport: "This exciting development at Toulouse-Blagnac perfectly blends commercial imperatives and innovative design ambitions. Dufry's retail planning meticulously aligns the commercial offer to the needs of the passenger profile and The Design Solution's interior design supports this ethos to drive a unique experience for the customer and an optimally effective commercial space for the retailer and the airport.

"Along with a number of other airport locations we've worked with, such as Heraklion, Montego Bay, Nice and Wroclaw, I see Toulouse-Blagnac as part of a pioneering wave of ambitious regional and relatively smaller airports committed to matching any major hub in expressing a unique local personality for their airport."