

Track stars

Recently opened retail project *Im Viadukt* is spearheading Zürich's urban regeneration – and giving centre stage to Swiss produce

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The Swiss know a thing or two about cosy. They have a fondness for the well made and authentic. And they are, on the quiet, rather good retailers and shoppers. So it's perhaps little surprise that a grand project in Zürich – Im Viadukt, which brings together a tasty indoor market and some very Swiss shopping experiences – is so good (except, perhaps, that the Swiss do have a tendency to go for the solid at the cost of those surprises on occasion).

As the name suggests, Im Viadukt is housed in a viaduct that cuts through the city. For a century, it separated a working class residential area from the old industrial zone. Built in 1894, a century later the railway proposed tearing it down and building a new one, twice as wide and high. Plans were thwarted by a city vote in 1998, and the viaduct was made a listed building. Yet for years, nobody knew what to do with the arches. In 2004, railway officials launched a competition for ideas. Local architects EM2N came up with a winner, and Im Viadukt, consisting of several commercial spaces in the arches and an open pedestrian area, was born.

"We redesigned the roof to form a pedestrian zone and diverted crossing traffic through the viaduct arches," says Claudio Fetz of Zürich-based PWG, the developer behind Im Viadukt. It was the foundation's biggest project, costing €26m and involving 7,700 sq m of commercial space.

"Over 300 bars and restaurants applied for one of the 52 commercial sites," Fetz continues. "Had we granted them to the best bidders, we would have made a fortune." But Im Viadukt would have turned into yet another homogenous mall. Instead, Fetz and his team carefully selected two restaurants, one café and 49 shop and stall concepts. "Look, you have a carpenter, furniture shops, a book shop, underwear and fashion retailers, all selling Swiss produce and Swiss ideas," he says.

Much of Fetz's effort went into Markthalle, the city's first covered market and a platform for local and national small producers. With 10,000 mostly local visitors turning up for launch day in September, Fetz's vision seems to be working. — (M)



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Arch competitors

Local fruit and veg, the best in publishing and clothes for fashion-weary men – all on sale at Im Viadukt

Fashionslave
Friends club together to launch clothes shop
Barbara Furer (26), Laura Lazura (25) and Selina Stöckli (26) were tired of their boyfriends complaining about the lack of menswear retailers in Zürich. So they pooled their savings and set up Fashionslave in the viaduct last March.

They sell items from established designer Raf Simons and lesser-known Swiss and German talent Aluar Balagan and Juliaandben. Perhaps surprisingly, it's the latter that has really boosted business.

Westflügel
Book shop bucking the global trend
Digital book sales may be starting to surpass bound books this year but Wendelin Hess, one of the founders of small Swiss publishing company Echtzeit, was approached by the Im Viadukt management to set up his traditional book stall Westflügel.

"We don't believe in the way the [book] business is going," says the 42-year-old. "Large retailers push a limited amount of current titles that then disappear in the overwhelming bulk of more recent releases."

Hess has joined forces with *Das Magazin*, a supplement in three Swiss daily newspapers with over a million readers. The magazine publishes weekly critiques by avid readers who recommend books linked to the Westflügel website.

Westflügel has also

partnered with Inch furniture, selling the small Swiss firm's high quality wooden tables and chairs.

Daniel Blunschli
Made to order contemporary furniture
Carpenter and interior designer Daniel Blunschli has split his arched shop into two sections separated by a large glass window so passers-by can see him at work. "Most of my furniture is made to order," he explains.

A conceptual artist in Zürich's underground art scene for years, Blunschli is focused on the idea that function is just as important as aesthetics. His elegant and contemporary furniture uses mainly stainless steel and wood.

Blunschli showcases his own furniture, together with seven other Swiss artists and carpenters. "These solid cherry wood chairs by Werner Hürlimann, with the armrest and back carved from one piece, are some of my favourites," Blunschli says, smiling at an elderly couple peering into his shop from outside. They smile back and step inside.

Bachsermärt
Farmers' market selling local goods
Fabio de Lima isn't a typical Swiss farmer. He emigrated from Portugal to Zürich and speaks a dialect some Swiss refer to as *Ausländerdeutsch* or "foreigners' German". However, De Lima talks about the fruit and vegetables he sells at

the Bachsermärt in the heart of the Markthalle, with the same pride as any of his Swiss counterparts. "Look at these cabbages and lettuces," the 18-year-old says. "You won't find fresher, tastier produce for such a reasonable price anywhere else in Zürich."

The Bachsermärt exclusively sells produce from 15 farmers in the Bachser Valley, 20 minutes by car from Zürich. Dealing directly with farmers means no middlemen, so prices are as low as supermarkets. The stall sells bread, meat, fish and dairy products alongside seasonal fruit and veg.

Tritt Käse
Local and European cheese seller
The smell of strong Swiss cheese fills the air at the back of the Markthalle, Zürich's first covered market. "We sell everything from expensive and exclusive cheeses such as Belper Knolle to more affordable cheeses like Seelisberger," says Vinca Dirlwanger. The 51-year-old has been working for the Tritt family cheese business for over a decade. "It's not just about our exclusive produce – at the heart of the business is Swiss Alpine cheese. Our best selling product is still the *Hausalpkäse* for CHF2.80," she says.

"Tritt Käse started 22 years ago," says Dirlwanger. Today the business makes, buys and sells 150 different products from small dairy farms all over Europe.



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Meet and greet
Monocle chatted to Swiss shoppers as they wandered around Im Viadukt

Hans-Jakob Würsch
Hotel manager
"The market offers carefully selected produce displayed in an incredibly dense area."

Sarah Hauenstein
Graphic designer
"Walking around the market I feel like I'm in a village or farmers' market, not Zürich."

Pascale Heijdemann
Designer
"I come here every day for a stroll around the stands."

Eva Busch and Susanne Lienert
Hair stylists
"We've only just arrived, but there's a very metropolitan feel about the place."

Marlies Bowee
Snack-bar owner
"They've done a great job in restoring the arches and I like the openness."

Melanie Theis
Scientific adviser
"It's a much more exciting place to shop than the main street."

Reto Weber Banker and son Valerio
"I usually hate shopping, but here I feel relaxed and comfortable and I like strolling up and down Im Viadukt."

Verena Creutzberg
Fashion designer
"I live just round the corner and like to pop out for a cup of coffee in the market square and buy some fresh vegetables."

Tanja Gebhard
Jewellery maker
"Ever since the shops in the viaduct have started to open, I've done all my shopping here, from food to clothes."

Dieter Bucher
Social worker
"I work nearby and come here mostly over lunch. I love the architecture and the feel of the place. It has become a real meeting place."

Esther Mahler
Communications project manager
"My husband is a member of the Slow Food organisation, which has a stand here in the Markthalle. I wanted to visit it."