



# The Moodie Davitt Report

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Championing food & beverage excellence at airports

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On location at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol Lounge 2

# THE WORLD'S TOP 25

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# Adding the human touch in Amsterdam



With seven themed ‘worlds’, a range of branded concepts and the highly effective integration of retail, dining and other services, the newly completed Lounge 2 adds a fresh dimension to commercial at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol. **Dermot Davitt** paid a visit last month ahead of the official opening to bring you this report, and in the pages that follow we tour the terminal in the company of Schiphol’s leading concessionaire partners.





“We did not want Schiphol to look like just another airport. It had to be different. We put a lot of effort into creating the experience and humanising the airport. It had to have that human touch.” The words of Schiphol Group Manager Commercial Development Gideon Ruig, reflecting on the planning and execution of the new Lounge 2 at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol.

Having paid a visit in late June (the official opening took place on 1 July) we can say that this is one of the most eye-catching commercial environments to open at a European airport in recent years. It follows

a €50 million investment from the airport company, and more from its business partners.

The renovation, begun in September 2014, added around +20% more space for retail and dining. It extended the floor space in Lounge 2 Departures to around 16,000sq m over two levels.

The development, which saw the refurbishment of the entire consumer and commercial offer, allowed for the introduction of new brands and concepts. These include a revitalised See Buy Fly core category travel retail offer from Kappé Schiphol and Schiphol Airport Retail; the first Johnnie Walker House in Europe, in collaboration with Diageo



GTME; branded boutiques new to the airport from Gucci and Bottega Veneta to complement the presence of Hermès and Burberry stores; and The Fashion Gallery – all through Lagardère Travel Retail.

Lounge 2 also houses a powerful watches & jewellery offer from Gassan that includes stand-alone stores from Rolex, Bulgari and Omega, consumer services such as spa concept XpresSpa and a broad and impressive dining mix from HMSHost. The latter features local concepts Amsterdam Bread Co, a Heineken-themed bar and a highly innovative café collaboration with Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Frames Bar & Bites.

Also included are a family-oriented street food zone and particular highlights in Café Cocó – a retail-to-food collaboration with Schiphol Airport Retail – plus the latest evolution of the Starbucks Evenings concept, complete with Starbucks Reserve coffee offer. This is housed in Starbucks The Pavilion, at 470sq m the largest Starbucks airport store in the region.

Key themes on which the new-look lounge was planned were relaxation, surprise and a heavy emphasis on Dutch Sense of Place, which shines through in the design and architecture, fixtures, concepts and products.

“We know that time is an issue for people at the

**A new Dutch dimension: Schiphol Group's Tanja Dik, Anne-Marie Zuidweg and Gideon Ruig at the entrance to the renovated Lounge 2**

we  
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engaging  
spaces



Lounge 2, Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (NL) © Thijs Wolzak

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airport,” says Ruig. “We wanted to maximise this time and make it enjoyable and relaxing. That was one goal. We also wanted people to be surprised. That means telling stories about our country and about Schiphol – and there are many small stories that we tell right across the lounge. The other focus was the Dutch theme. The environment had to be comfortable and social. You see that in the ceilings, floors and lighting. The design does not run in straight lines, as you might expect; there are little imperfections that make for a more human space.

“The natural floor and ceilings make a great base for the concepts developed by the business partners. This was overseen by the architect Kossmann Dejong (see panel). They had not worked in an airport space before, but they knew how to tell stories and looked for non-traditional design in many areas. And all of this had to fit within a similar footprint to what we had before, as we didn’t have the space to expand the terminal.”

The airport developed the base themes into seven distinct ‘worlds’ which are bundled together across

**Widening the appeal:  
Luxury is one of seven  
themed ‘worlds’ across  
Lounge 2**



the Lounge 2 space. The worlds are See Buy Fly, Family, Wellness, Travel & Culture, Luxury, Fashion & Lifestyle and Modern Dutch.

“We created the framework, but we wanted the business partners to excel with their own concepts within that,” says Schiphol Group Commercial Services & Media Director Anne-Marie Zuidweg. “And they have delivered.”

Schiphol Group Consumer Products & Services Director Tanja Dik adds: “This is an evolution for Schiphol, to cluster our services together in this way. Luxury is one example where we have given the brands a logical space or ‘world’ in our commercial areas.”

What is especially impressive is how the various ‘worlds’ fit together coherently, with retail and dining brands to match each theme. And a walk through the facility shows that it is working. Anyone familiar with the old Lounge 2 will remember it more as a corridor between gates with some shops to each side and dining one level above. Now it has multiple points on which the traveller can break their journey and sit, recharge their devices, eat or browse the stores – all with excellent views over the apron and runway, unlike previously. And encouraging people to linger is vital here: 61% of Lounge 2’s 15 million travellers each year are in transit.

With this project, Schiphol has radically improved the integration of retail, dining and services and encouraged more cross-category linkages. “We are not siloed any more; today the airport has to be about the integration of services,” says Zuidweg. “It is about bundling these together in an efficient way that appeals to how travellers want to journey through the airport.”

With the introduction last year of central security, travellers now enter the non-Schengen zone on the upper level with views right over the terminal – allowing them the opportunity to orientate themselves and choose what services and stores to browse.

The large concrete floor tiles below and the LED lighting above offer directional flows and help that orientation. The lighting in particular changes to powerful effect from zone to zone, assisting passengers with their wayfinding.

Relaxation areas, featuring bespoke seating design and power sockets, are dotted through the terminal to encourage travellers to linger within the commercial area.



**Telling a story: Kossmann.dejong added quirky elements to the design to surprise travellers**

# The designer's view

“Besides the aim of designing a distinctive lounge, one of the ultimate goals was to transform Lounge 2 into a ‘social lounge’, with surprising elements and places for relaxed encounters.”

That’s how Kossmann.dejong Creative Director Herman Kossmann describes his company’s vision as designer of the interiors at Schiphol’s new-look Lounge 2.

Key to the plan was helping travellers to orientate themselves quickly and allowing them to explore the seven consumer ‘worlds’ at a glance. This was made possible through the striking mezzanine floor entrance and its views across the concourse and taxiways, as well as across the 16,000sq m space.

As reported in our main feature, the various worlds are themed Luxury, Family, Travel & Culture, Modern Dutch, See Buy Fly, Fashion & Lifestyle and Care & Wellness. Each of them integrates different types of food, drink, services and seating.

Importantly, each zone features its own characteristic materials and details to create a distinct atmosphere and identity. Travellers should therefore be attracted to certain worlds and intuitively find their way without specific signage.

The main floor and its large concrete tiles, along with the black-slatted ceiling and LED strips, form the ‘glue’ that holds all different elements together, notes the airport company.

“We’ve tried to take the interior design of Lounge 2 to the next level through the integral design of interior and architecture, together with [airport master architect] Benthem Crouwel NACO,” adds Kossmann.

“We’ve also added an extra layer to the interior by emphasising storytelling. A wide range of exciting objects – like the monumental video clock by Dutch designer Maarten Baas, hordes of ceramic cows, real trees and a spectacular play object in the shape of an aeroplane – offer surprising experiences, food for discussion and possibilities to meet one another. These storytelling elements provoke a lasting experience, and make Lounge 2 part of the travel adventure.”





**Flight of imagination:** A children's zone developed with KLM provides a vibrant space on the upper level



In other neat touches, store fascias in the Wellness area – which houses an XpresSpa unit (introducing haircare to the airport offer), MAC, a pharmacy and perfumery from Kappé and electronics and books offers – carries tree leaves embedded in the design. In a further nod to the landscape and nature of the Netherlands, a number of trees are placed in seating zones around the pier.

## XpresSpa extends Schiphol service

Leading spa and treatment specialist XpresSpa has extended its suite of services at Schiphol Lounge 2, introducing haircare at the airport. Building on its Schiphol offer and portfolio is one way in which the company is aiming to establish itself as a major player beyond its US base.

“It’s the first time we have done haircare at Schiphol, and it’s part of our effort to extend our reach here and into new markets,” says XpresSpa Europe & Middle East Managing Director Patrick Jansen (pictured below). “It builds on our evolution as a company. We have become a retailer too, with popular items such as travel pillows, eye masks and flight socks also playing a role for us.”

Head, neck and back massages are the biggest part of the business, but these are being complemented by manicures and a growing trend towards waxing and facials, which can take place in the private treatment rooms behind the salon. “We are seeing more demand for deep tissue massages, and we can do these more often if we get the space,” says Jansen.

The updated design of the XpresSpa unit blends into Schiphol Airport’s Wellness ‘world’, which features tree leaves embedded in the fascia and has adjacencies to the new MAC boutique and the pharmacy. A striking feature is a large Buddha icon in the heart of the store.

“There are good dynamics for this store here,” says Jansen. “We are on the path taken by many transfer passengers, and in the Wellness zone. It works well.”

Next for the company is the July opening of its first Middle East unit, at Dubai International Concourse B. “This new unit has Arabic features, a tree of life and scents and music,” says Jansen. “We are seeking expansion in Europe and the Middle East now, either directly or maybe even via the franchise route. It’s an exciting period.”



**Within easy reach: Retail, dining and seating are neatly integrated in the comfortable Lounge 2 space**

There are many other flourishes. These include the airport codes in the ceiling of one section of the terminal, the subtle F&B branding built into the food court lighting, the whimsical sculptures of Dutch cows built into the tiling of walls around the terminal and the bicycles that are part of the table seating in the family world.

The family world, adjacent to a new M&M's store and the food court on the upper level, also houses a stunning play area which was developed by the airport in partnership with KLM. This is dominated by a life-size plane feature – built in part from the nose cone of an actual aircraft – with pilot's controls, seating and a full play area within. Nearby seating



allows parents to supervise their children while relaxing or enjoying a meal from the food court.

From this upper level travellers have striking views of one of the most eye-catching features of any European airport terminal: a suspended clock, designed by Maarten Baas, which combines functionality with humour and a social and human dimension. The clock structure houses a silhouette of a man who can be seen moving within, scrubbing out and replacing the hands every minute of every day to create a spectacular 'time machine'.

Ruig (who is leaving for a new senior role at Dubai Airports) says: "We planned all of the space alongside our operations teams, and each of us had to leave our comfort zone for this project. We had to think differently. For example, like every airport we have norms for seating capacity – but we found new ways to deliver it."

Zuidweg adds: "We were focused on customer needs and wants, not just destinations and nationalities. The worlds we created have something for our very diverse audience.

"By clustering the worlds and services, the dimensions are at a more human scale and allow us to target different traveller groups with the same offer, with retail and F&B to match the themes of each world. We have brought together an immersive experience, and much more choice."

Schiphol Group says that it expects the new lounge to help deliver an uplift of +10–15% in commercial sales amid its drive to be seen as 'Europe's preferred airport'. With the blend of new brands and concepts, the integration of services and the warm environment, that's an ambition Schiphol is confident of achieving. 🇳🇱

**Wall flower: The Wellness zone features real leaves pressed into the store fascias – one of many fine design touches**

