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The Future of Retail

**10 TRENDS CHANGING
THE CONSUMER LANDSCAPE**

**CAPITAL ONE CAFÉ
ESSELUNGA SUPERSTORE
PRODUCT ROUNDUP**



FOOD THE



ATER

By ERIN M. LOEWE

Italian grocer Esselunga rethinks the food shopping experience with a new store format that puts freshly made goods front and center



Photos by ANDREW MEREDITH



For many people, grocery stores are the retailers they visit most. Americans, in particular, probably imagine entering into a produce department, swinging left or right to make their way around the perimeter to specialty departments, and slogging up and down aisles. And typically, most supermarkets have the checkout counters right up front, taking up valuable real estate from more appealing spaces that stand to generate more revenue. But Italy's oldest grocery chain Esselunga is betting that transposing its interior will make a difference in sales and customer satisfaction.

With its nearly 50,000-sq.-ft. Superstore in Brescia, Italy, Esselunga has brought a café and gathering area to the entrance, while shifting its checkout counters 90 degrees to the right in the store. For the transformation, Esselunga partnered with Sydney-based Landini Associates, which wanted to bring celebrating food to the forefront.



Landini Associates is no stranger to developing food retail spaces, having collaborated with many other global players, such as Loblaws, ALDI and Selfridges.

"In the case of supermarkets, placing payment stations in the most prominent and valuable space would seem, to us at Landini, not to make sense," Mark Landini, creative director, said in a statement. "So, we agreed with our client to change this. The front of any high street store is its shop window, normally a place where its product is promoted. That's all we did here; promote Esselunga's ability to make great food."

Esselunga's affinity for all things food is further displayed in the new checkout area, where giant screens feature glimpses behind the scenes of food production from farm to factory and into Esselunga stores. It's an educational and entertaining way for customers to spend their time in the checkout area, which is arguably not most customers' favorite.

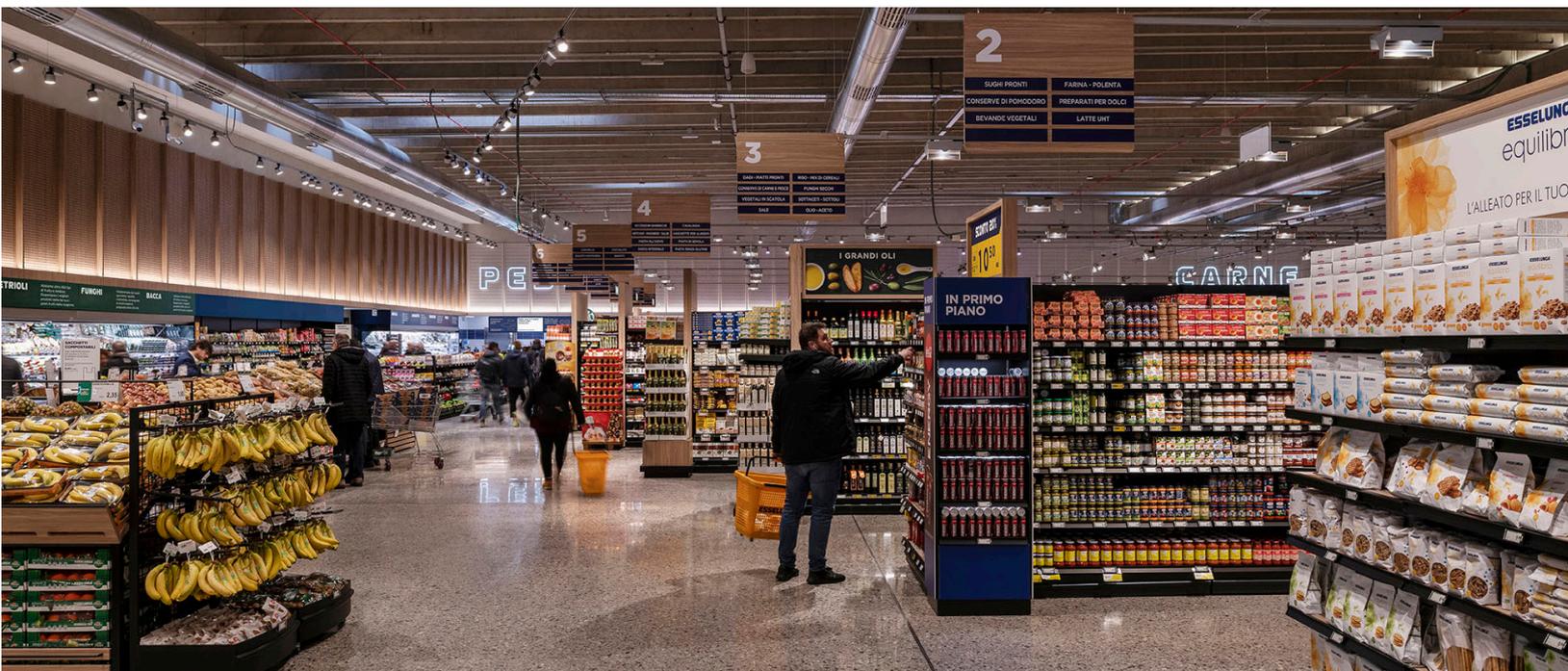
In addition to an updated Bar Atlantic café



(Esselunga's own brand that is present in many of its other stores), the front of the store features a huge glass case that lets customers watch as deli and bakery items are made fresh. The team at Landini Associates refers to this as “the theater of food production.”

The design team also upended the typical aisle format by arranging them in a boomerang shape, enhancing visibility and visual interest. “Requiring customers to read signs so they know what’s in an aisle is tiresome,” explains Paul Gates, associate director of interiors at Landini Associates. “Better to show them instead by staggering the aisles. All this simply makes sense. Blindly following what others have done, just because it’s the norm, doesn’t.”

Beyond its unique aisle layout, the Esselunga Superstore features gleaming polished concrete floors, skylights retained from the previous space and targeted lighting that creates an inviting ambience. “The lighting is intentionally not uniform; we have created highlights and lowlights to add pace, energy, interest and intimacy,” Gates explains.





“Color temperature, color rendition, lux levels and energy efficiency were all considered carefully, and luminaires were tested in prototype scenarios prior to approval.”

Gates also notes that Bar Atlantic’s featured pendants, Splügen Brau by Achille Castiglioni, are a classic Milanese design recognizable from other Esselunga stores.

Throughout the store’s service departments, display screen signage behind the counters communicates Esselunga’s passion for food and customer service. “They take pride in the food, as they source the freshest ingredients, seek the best recipes from all over the world, and acquire the best technology to produce the food they make in their own factories and in-store,” says Mariela Tiqui, Landini Associates’ associate director of graphics.

As far as the future goes, Gates says many of the new designs will make it into new and refurbished Esselunga stores that are already in the pipeline, including an upcoming flagship store that will be included in Italy’s first Westfield development.

Between the innovative store layout and entertaining emphasis on food preparation, Esselunga’s Superstore takes a standard shopping experience and infuses it with excitement.



