



RETAIL ADVENTURE

Ken Nisch – Chairman

While summer vacation is obviously a chance to take a break from every day responsibilities; regardless of how remote or adventuresome your location may be, you are never far from retail. I am reminded of a cartoon illustrating a Tibetan Swami who says to a pilgrim upon his departure, "Now that you have found enlightenment, please be sure to visit our gift shop on the way out." Almost all occasions invite shopping, be it for commemoration, validation or contribution to the experience you just had.

Having the opportunity to visit Turkey this summer afforded a similar set of experiences. Centered at the confluence of culture, geography, history and religion, Istanbul has been one of the world's great marketplaces for thousands of years. This need for commerce created tolerance, diversity and interface between cultures; where in other parts of the world there only would have been conflict. This setting also spawned what is arguably the world's largest and certainly one of the earliest "shopping malls." The **Grand Bazaar** still brings together a group of purchasers from around the world in an atmosphere as similar (artificial and contained) as today's ubiquitous suburban mall. Its very scale and layout almost make time an irrelevant measure, while the labyrinth of corridors (with their inlets and blind alleys) becomes a place where disorientation is the rule of the day. By putting these normal measures of time and place on hold, here the goods, and particularly the salesmanship, take front stage. Merchandise ranging from the lowest of tourist souvenirs to precious icons, handcrafted rugs and heirloom jewelry, sits cheek to jowl.

Regardless of the goods' prices, culture connects these merchants at the Bazaar. The focus is on making the customer welcome, comfortable and appreciated (albeit with a degree of intensity that makes us who are used to the impersonal nature of North American shopping, a bit ill at ease). I've found throughout the phases of welcoming, a ritual of tea or coffee and the dance of negotiation are well choreographed within the setting. Failure to perform "the dance" on either party's behalf is seen as a serious breach of retail etiquette - one that will be gracefully and carefully corrected by the shop's owner or a member of his extended family.

The world of the shopkeeper may be no larger than 400 square feet and it may be in a place that his ancestors have sold much of the same merchandise for the last 400 years. Surely changes have come to pass. Wireless phones allow vendors to compare the customers and forewarn fellow retailers. Plasma screens hang beneath fourteenth century frescos and occasionally Che Guevara and Homer Simpson T-shirts work their way amongst the native handicrafts.

At the end of the day we are all essentially buyers and sellers looking for a transaction. While Homer and Che may not occupy the same place two hundred years from now, I would be surprised if in generations to come, the proprietor whose hospitality and apple tea made for an interesting time today, didn't find his great, great, great-granddaughter extending the gesture to yet another group of customers.

PHOTO DETAILS: GRAND BAZAAR, ISTANBUL TURKEY

HERSHEY'S TIMES SQUARE NAMED RETAIL WONDER

Business Week recently named its **Retail Wonders of the World** and among those represented was JGA-designed **Hershey's Times Square** in New York City. Recognized for "mixing fantasy with the finest in brand management," Hershey's was ranked tops along with **Chanel Tokyo**, **Prada Los Angeles**, **Louis Vuitton Hong Kong**, **Selfridges Birmingham (UK)**, **REI Seattle** and **Dubai Mall**. The stores were called out as those that "take the shopping experience to a new level."

AND THE AWARD GOES TO . . .

... **Yankee Candle**. **Gifts and Decorative Accessories Magazine** named the specialty store as finalist in their annual **Retail Excellence Awards** competition. The Yankee Candle stores have become a well-recognized and popular destination for candle lovers. JGA's new prototype design uses textures typically found in the home: slate, painted wood, brick, stone, decorative plaster - all to reinforce the customer's comfort level via a fresh and bright palette. The Gold and Silver Awards will be presented at a gala to be held during the New York International Gift Fair on Sunday August 13th in Manhattan.

PMA INSPIRED BY JGA

At the recently held **Photo Marketing Association** Annual Conference, members were introduced to a JGA store concept developed to help members combat downward market trends and propel their environments into relevant retail entities for the future. "**The Complete Picture, an Inspiration Center**" showcasing "hands-on" lifestyle experiences was designed to appeal to the PMA retailers' powerful new target consumer, Gen-X moms. The concept store provided photo imaging industry members with concrete retail solutions, organized into comprehensive collections called "Inspiration Centers." Within "The Complete Picture," inspiration zones were designed to delight, surprise and enhance the retail experience by allowing shoppers to discover new solutions. The center is segmented into six areas, including the Camera Café, to address how the consumer engages and interacts with her images.

IN THE NEWS

Many of our views, news and design projects have been published in national, local and trade publications. For more information about the projects In the News, visit www.JGA.com.

CHAIN STORE AGE/Jul.06: Maximum Impact Fixturing

In a fixturing feature by **Marianne Wilson**, **Kirkland's Home** is showcased for its simple metal fixturing system that enhances the shopping experience. Creative director, **Kathi McWilliams** explained, "The overall effect is that the customer feels like she is going in and out of little shops as she walks around the perimeter."

CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS/Jul.06: Largest Architectural Firms

JGA was named among the **Top Architectural Firms** in Southeast Michigan, according to the weekly business journal. Among the JGA local projects of note were **The Henry Ford**, **Godiva Chocolatier** (Lakeside Mall), **H&M** (Briarwood & Lakeside Mall), **The North Face** (Somerset Collection) and **Tapper's Jewelry**.

ACCESSORY MERCHANDISING/Jun.06: Return Engagement

In a feature about consumer return policies, **Ken Nisch** was quoted, "Return policies have become more and more liberal over the years, to the point that if you have anything short of a no-questions-asked policy, customers are quite negative about it. But because of identity theft, merchandise theft, employee theft and people who make excessive returns, called churning, retailers are creating much more stringent guidelines."

CANADIAN RETAILER/Apr.06: Chocolatier Mixes Sweet Brand Recipe

"Enter one of the legendary confectioner's renovated stores and be prepared to tantalize your senses," writes **Rosalind Stefanic** about Canadian chocolatier **Laura Secord's** new prototype. Chocolate is displayed in sleek, vertical glass towers that allow it to be categorized and positioned at consumers' eye-level. **Ken Nisch** added, "While it's all chocolate, you definitely get a sense that there's a lot more choice. What we tried to do is get customers to rediscover **Laura Secord** without walking away from the heritage and history."