The Shopkeepers

Storefront Businesses and the Future of Retail
Owner Ilse Böge founded the licorice shop in 1997. Whoever thought economics and licorice don’t go together has obviously never met Ilse Böge. The economist turned shopkeeper opened the first licorice store in Germany in 1997.

Böge grew up on the Dutch border, where the treat is plentiful, and was drawn to the unusual candy since childhood. After relocating to Berlin as an adult, she sorely missed having an adequate licorice selection and decided to find out if other people felt the same way.

Soon, Böge began offering her distinctive Dutch licorices at a few local markets in Berlin. She drove her friend Frank’s old Volvo Amazon to Holland to buy goods. The popularity of her handmade sweets led to the opening of her first shop in Kreuzberg. With the help of designer Dirk Soboll, the simple shop began selling 60 licorice varieties. Ten years and 340 varieties later, Böge outgrew the space and moved the shop to its final location just a few doors down from her old storefront.

The new shop lets the candy play the starring role. Set in glass containers on wooden shelves, the tried-and-true sweet brings a level of vintage nostalgia to the modern shop. Kadó, which translates to “present,” stocks licorice from Iceland, Sicily, and beyond. Known for their ginger and cinnamon-flavored licorice crafted in-house, the diverse inventory can cater to even the most difficult taste buds. From the tangy and sweet to the salty and chocolate-coated, the licorice offerings at Kadó will remind you why this “black gold” has been around for hundreds of years.

Licorice Lovers, Berlin, Germany

Owner: Ilse Böge
Corporate Identity: Dirk Soboll
Founded: 1997
Location: Graefestraße 20, Berlin Germany

Casa Del Agua
Local Del Agua, Mexico City, Mexico

A water, tea bar, and roof garden provide a needed refuge from the bustling street life of Mexico City. Inspired by traditional processes, Casa del Agua emerges as a nondescript brand that appeals to a customer base drawn to the well made, the practical, and the timeless.

Man, machine, and nature come together in this tranquil space. The refreshing concept, created by Bosco Quinzaños in 2012, came about after a twenty year career in finance. Ready to do something more meaningful with his time, he decided to transform his personal convictions about ecology, sustainability, wellness, and mindfulness into a business model.

Quinzaños’s 1,075-square-foot storefront with the help of its 1,505-square-foot roof garden produces 105 gallons of water per day. The artisanal factory of sorts supplies local neighbors, restaurants, and families with high-quality, locally produced water. Quinzaños and his staff of six collect rainwater on the rooftop. This water then undergoes a filtration process that includes vapor distillation, re-mineralization, ionization, and concludes with an osmosis hiring. Glass bottles with old-time looking lettering developed by Ignacio Cadena store the purified drinking water and grant the product its distinctive branded identity. A laboratory-like double-height retail and social space on the ground level invites customers to interact with the product and its covetable packaging. The plentiful glass bottles accent the rustic interior finishes designed by Hector Esrawe. Above, the lush rooftop garden integrates light wooden seating areas for visitors to relax, mingle, and unplug from the stress of metropolitan life.

Guests can pull up a seat at the open bar and enjoy the view from the rooftop garden. This rooftop garden acts as a reminder of the benefits of human interaction with nature. The rooftop garden is a symbol of the connection between nature, man, and machine, and a reminder of the importance of sustainability and ecological responsibility.

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This book was conceived, edited, and designed by Gestalten.

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