

IAADFS announces new name and identity as the Travel Retail Alliance of the Americas



Rene Riedi and Michael Payne announced the rebranded Travel Retail Alliance of the Americas.

In its annual press conference in Cannes, The International Association of Airport and Duty Free Stores (IAADFS) announced its new name and identity: **Travel Retail Alliance of the Americas (TRAA)**.

The Association says that the new name reflects both the evolution of the travel retail industry and the organization's expanded vision for serving operators, brands, suppliers, and industry partners throughout the Americas and beyond.

The organization also announced that the Summit of the Americas will return to the Palm Beach Convention Center in Palm Beach, Florida, in both 2027 and 2028. Additional event details will be announced in the coming months.

For nearly six decades, IAADFS has played a leading role in connecting the duty free and travel retail community.

"As the industry has grown beyond its traditional airport duty free roots, the organization has evolved alongside it. Today, travel retail encompasses a diverse ecosystem of businesses and experiences, including duty free, food and beverage, specialty retail, cruise and ferry retail, border stores, airports, and numerous supporting partners that collectively shape the traveler journey," they said.

The transition to TRAA signals a broader vision focused on strengthening relationships, fostering collaboration, and supporting the continued growth of travel retail across the Americas.

"Travel retail has always been a relation-

ship-driven business," said Rene Riedi, Chairman of the Board of the Travel Retail Alliance of the Americas. "The partnerships formed between operators, brands, airports, and industry stakeholders are what drive innovation, create opportunity, and ultimately enhance the traveler experience. TRAA reflects our commitment to bringing the industry together and helping shape a strong, connected, and future-ready marketplace across the Americas."

The name Travel Retail Alliance of the Americas was intentionally selected to reflect the collaborative nature of the industry and the organization's role as a convening force for the region, says the group.

According to the official announcement, the word Alliance underscores TRAA's commitment to uniting diverse stakeholders around common goals while strengthening the industry's collective voice on issues affecting travel retail throughout the hemisphere.

As TRAA, the organization will focus on five strategic priorities:

1. Collaboration & Connection – Bringing operators, brands, and partners together to strengthen relationships and create new opportunities for business growth.
2. Advocacy & Representation – Serving as a unified voice for travel retail across the Americas.
3. Innovation & Growth – Advancing conversations around emerging trends, technology, and the future of the traveler experience.
4. Intelligence & Insights – Providing valuable industry information, education, and market perspectives.
5. Sustainability & Responsibility – Supporting responsible business practices that contribute to the long-term success of the industry.

TRAA will continue to produce the Summit of the Americas, and also plans to strengthen year-round engagement opportunities, advocacy efforts, industry intelligence, and member services.

"This is much more than a rebrand," said Natalie DeHart, Executive Director of TRAA. "It is a reflection of where our industry is today and where it is headed tomorrow. Our members told us they wanted an organization that creates value throughout the year, strengthens connections between operators and brands, and helps the industry navigate change. TRAA is designed to meet those expectations while building on the strong foundation established by IAADFS."

ASUTIL returns to Panama in 2027 under the theme *Transformation*



ASUTIL's 2027 Conference was announced in Cannes. Seen above, ASUTIL Vice President Gustavo Fagundes, President Enrique Urioste, Secretary General Carlos Loaiza and Augustin de la Guardia, CEO of Motta Internacional, which will be hosting the event.

The 2027 ASUTIL Conference will take place next June in Panama under the theme TRANSFORMATION, the Association announced during its annual press conference in Cannes.

Attendance will be limited and the Association is offering an exclusive registration window for ASUTIL members and Punta Cana 2026 attendees throughout January.

The event will bring together travel retail leaders from Latin America and the Caribbean to share perspectives, turn ideas into action and explore new opportunities in a changing industry, said the organizers.

ASUTIL last held its conference in Panama in 2015. Twelve years later, its return offers an opportunity to look at both the destination and the industry with fresh eyes, reflecting on how they have evolved and what lies ahead for the region, says the Association.

Limited attendance and priority registration

Attendance at ASUTIL 2027 will remain limited to preserve the quality of networking and the close connections that distinguish the conference, notes the Association.

Registration will follow the same phased approach, beginning with an exclusive window from January 1 to 31, 2027, for ASUTIL members and participants who attended Punta Cana 2026. Any remaining places will become available for general registration on February 1, 2027.

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ASUTIL returns to Panama in 2027 under the theme *Transformation*

TFWA renews partnership with the City of Cannes for World Exhibition & Conference

Continued from page 1.

Transformation

The theme for ASUTIL 2027 is *Transformation*, which ASUTIL says is a word that requires new ways of thinking and acting. For travel retail in Latin America and the Caribbean, this means questioning familiar approaches, adapting to new realities and recognizing opportunities as they emerge.

The region's diversity of markets, experiences and business perspectives is a strength in that process, said the ASUTIL Board members. Panama will provide a meeting point to bring those perspectives together and explore how ideas can translate into action.

The conference's visual identity represents an industry that adapts and develops new approaches while retaining the experience, relationships and identity that make the region distinctive.

The results of this year's event in Punta Cana provide a strong foundation for that next chapter, said the organizers.

Building on Punta Cana's success

The successful 25th ASUTIL Conference, held in Punta Cana this past June, welcomed more than 370 participants, an increase of 14.2% over Lima 2025 and the highest attendance across the last four editions.

The event in Punta Cana also had the support of 20 sponsors and an exhibition area featuring 16 stands.

In feedback for a post-event survey, 95.2% of respondents rated their overall experience four or five out of five. For networking opportunities, that figure reached 98.4%, with two-thirds of respondents awarding the category the highest score.

"These results reinforce a defining feature of the ASUTIL Conference: an environment that encourages personal connections, meaningful exchanges across markets and professional relationships that continue long after the event," say the organizers.

Dates and venue will be announced shortly.



TFWA President Sarah Branquinho and SEMEC President Nicolas Gorjux signing the agreement to renew its partnership in Cannes on Sept. 28.

TFWA has renewed its partnership with the City of Cannes, securing the French city as the host destination for the TFWA World Exhibition & Conference.

The agreement was formally signed by TFWA President Sarah Branquinho and SEMEC President Nicolas Gorjux in Cannes on Monday, September 28, reaffirming the long-standing relationship between TFWA and the City of Cannes.

The TFWA World Exhibition & Conference has been held in Cannes for more than four decades, bringing together leading brands, retailers, transport operators and other industry stakeholders from across the global duty free and travel retail community.

The renewal provides continuity for TFWA's flagship annual event, which will return to the Palais des Festivals in autumn 2027.

Speaking about the renewed partnership, TFWA President Sarah Branquinho said:

"TFWA is delighted to announce the extension of its partnership agreement with SEMEC, confirming Cannes as the host city for TFWA World Exhibition & Conference from 2027 for at least three further years.

"The strong spirit of partnership we share with the city, Le Palais des Festivals and our local partners has been instrumental to the continued success of our flagship event. Over the years, Cannes has become much more than a destination: for one week each year, it is the global meeting place and home of the duty free and travel retail industry."

Further details of the TFWA World Exhibition & Conference 2027 to come.

TFWA elects new Management Committee and Board

TFWA has announced its new Management Committee and Board for 2026–2028. These senior representatives from a broad spectrum of brands across the duty free and travel retail industry will help guide the Association through the next two years.

The election took place on Wednesday morning, September 30th, 2026, with members choosing TFWA's new Management Committee.

The Annual General Assembly took place on Thursday morning, October 1, followed by the first Management Committee meeting, during which the new Board members were elected. Board members also hold a two-year mandate.

The Board Members for 2026-2028 are:

Jean-Pierre Bombet, Spa Development / Be Relax, as Vice-President Finance

Priscilla Haibe de Walque, Payot, as Vice-President Corporate (newly elected)

Irene Giatra, Estée Lauder Companies, as Vice-President Commercial (newly elected)

Alessio Crivelli, EssilorLuxottica, as Vice-President Marketing

Sam Gerber, WorldConnect, as Vice-President Conference & Research

TFWA President Sarah Branquinho welcomed the returning and new Management Committee representatives from 40 companies, and the new TFWA Board, adding:

"I extend my sincere thanks to our outgoing Management Committee members, and to Board members Erin Lillis from Lacoste and Loukia Alepochoriti from Imperial Brands PLC, who did not stand for re-election, for their dedication and contribution to TFWA during their terms. Their active participation and commitment to the Association have been greatly valued, and I look forward to building on this work with the new Board."

See photo on next page.

L'Occitane en Provence brings Immortelle 'Longevity by Nature' to global travel retail and explores a new Almond fragrance universe

L'Occitane en Provence is strengthening its face care offer in global travel retail with the launch of Divine Targeted Wrinkle Care, the latest addition to the Maison's Immortelle Divine collection. The new treatment also features Immortelle Super Extract, the key ingredient in the range's longevity efficacy. It will be available from October in selected travel retail doors.

The expertly crafted formula of this precision treatment represents the latest evolution of the Maison's long-standing Immortelle expertise and introduces travelers to its 'Longevity by Nature' approach, inspired by the remarkable resilience of the Immortelle flower and more than 25 years of botanical research into its properties.

The new Divine Targeted Wrinkle Care treatment builds on L'Occitane en Provence's long-standing approach to skin vitality and longevity. Rather than focusing on age or isolated visible signs, the Maison considers the connections that enable skin to protect itself, recover and regenerate and maintain its balance over time.

New Almond fragrance

In Cannes, L'Occitane en Provence also previewed new additions to its Amande Sublime Mist collection, due to launch in travel retail in October.

The collection introduces Amande Pistache, a warm woody gourmand combining roasted pistachio, vanilla and cedarwood, and Amande Crème Brûlée, which blends roasted almond with vanilla milk and caramel. They join Amande Délice, with its floral notes of freesia, almond blossom and vanilla, creating a fragrance wardrobe designed for layering and



L'Occitane en Provence is launching Divine Targeted Wrinkle Care.

personalization.

Drawing inspiration from the confectioneries of founder Olivier Baussan in Haute-Provence, the Maison has used NaturePrint technology to capture the character of almonds and pistachios at the peak of the roasting process, translating this sensory moment into fragrance.

Alongside its latest product innovations, L'Occitane en Provence will showcase its upcoming Holiday collection, highlighting festive gifting and seasonal storytelling as the Maison celebrates its landmark 50th anniversary year.

Melanie Laroche, Brand Director, L'Occitane en Provence, Global Travel Retail, comments:

"Our Amande Sublime mist collection brings a new dimension to the Almond universe, with gourmand notes inspired by Haute-Provence and opportunities for fragrance layering. We look forward to introducing these new sensorial experiences to travelers alongside our Holiday collection in this special 50th anniversary year."

2026-2028 TFWA Management Committee



Sol de Janeiro Intense Perfume Mist collection: update

The launch of Sol de Janeiro's new Intense Perfume Mist collection in global travel retail (reported on in *TMI Vol. 27 No. 34*) will be supported by an extensive international roll-out and a program of high-profile airport activations across key markets. In EMEA and the Americas, the collection will be available across all travel retail doors.

Across the Americas, Cheirosa 62, 59 and 74 Intense Perfume Mists will launch in late September in North America and in October in Latin America. Cheirosa 91 Intense will follow in November and mid-December, respectively.

The launch will be supported by a wide-ranging program of airport activations. In the Americas, the launch will be supported by Holiday campaign activations across nine travel retail doors during November and December, including locations in Miami, Washington DC, Atlanta, Texas, Panama, Punta Cana and Colombia.

The launch will be supported by a global 360-degree *Your Endless Summer* campaign. Vibrant Brazilian singer, songwriter and cultural icon IZA is the face of the campaign, which was shot on the shores of Ipanema Beach in Rio de Janeiro.

The global 360-degree campaign brings *Your Endless Summer* to life across earned, owned and paid media, creator partnerships, retail experiences and cultural moments. From premium editorial storytelling to immersive consumer experiences, the campaign invites audiences around the world to discover the next chapter of Sol de Janeiro fragrance.

SOL DE JANEIRO

Guylian breaks out of its shell with a new generation of flavor innovation; strengthens Americas team with Lymarie Prudencio as Channel Lead

Belgian chocolate brand Guylian is expanding its product line beyond its iconic Seashells, introducing what it calls “an increasingly developed portfolio around the travel occasion itself: from gifts that capture a sense of place to flavors that give travelers something new to discover along the way.”

The company has introduced GUYLIAN Voyage. The new collection, crafted for Global Travel Retail, is a curated selection of local East-Asian staples such as Ube and Yuzu.

Earlier this year, the brand also launched the limited-edition Japanese Matcha variant of its individually wrapped Seahorses. This innovation is part of a flavor range available in newly designed sharing pouches.

Guylian is also leveraging premiumization through flavor innovation for its Travel Retail souvenir collection. While the category has traditionally focused on pack-design, Guylian’s Destinations Collection brings flavor into the concept. Vibrant, postcard-styled packaging is paired with a selection of Belgian-inspired pralines featuring Dame Blanche and Cerise Intense.

New leadership for next phase of Global Travel Retail growth

Guylian is strengthening its Global Travel Retail team with the appointment of Lymarie Prudencio as Channel Lead for the Americas. With deep expertise in the channel and a proven track record of driving growth across the region, she brings

the experience and commercial focus to turn Guylian’s global ambitions into action.

In her new role, Prudencio will lead the further development of Guylian’s business across North and South America, spanning both Duty Free and Duty Paid. Working closely with partners across the region, she will focus on strengthening the brand’s presence, unlocking new opportunities and supporting the next phase of growth.

Her appointment forms part of a broader push to strengthen Guylian’s Global Travel Retail business through experienced leadership, closer partnerships and a more ambitious innovation pipeline.

“I am happy to welcome Lymarie to Guylian, and personally excited to work with her again. I know firsthand the experience, network and energy she brings, and I am confident she will make a real impact on our performance in the Americas. We are entering an exciting new phase for our GTR business as we strengthen the team with deep industry expertise and senior leaders who are well known across the channel.

“At the same time, we are bringing more innovation into Travel Retail — from new concepts to new categories such as drinks. We are committed to deepen our partnerships and create real differentiation and energize the channel, ultimately leading to a stronger role for Guylian in the category,” commented Leen Baeten, CEO Guylian.



Lymarie Prudencio (left) has been appointed Guylian’s Channel Lead for the Americas. She reports to Leen Baeten (right), CEO Guylian.



Mondelēz WTR tops Advantage Group International’s 2026 Travel Retail benchmark rankings

Mondelēz World Travel Retail (WTR) has been ranked #1 in Advantage Group International (AGI)’s 2026 Global Travel Retail Voice of Customer CORE benchmark, retaining the top position for the second consecutive year. The annual benchmark captures feedback from retail partners across the channel, providing a direct assessment of supplier performance from the customers they work with every day.

The result comes less than a year after Mondelēz WTR introduced Destination: Value, its industry growth vision for improving consideration, conversion and value throughout the shopper journey. Since its launch in October 2025, Mondelez reports that it has been working to bring the vision to life through products and experiences that put the traveler first.

Advantage Report, AGI’s benchmarking program, assesses supplier-retailer relationship performance across the competencies that drive successful partnerships. This year, retailers highlighted strategic alignment, supply chain excellence, and collaborative business planning as the capabilities that matter most.

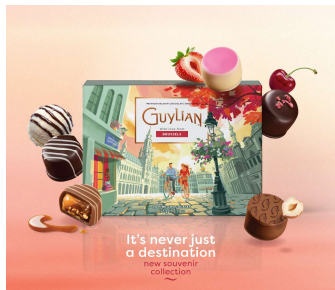
Notably, factors such as trust and consistently delivering on commitments have grown in importance, and it is in these areas where

Mondelēz continues to stand out, with customers ranking the company as their #1 supplier partner.

These priorities are reflected in how Mondelēz WTR works with its customers. Teams across the organization involve retail partners early in the planning process to agree objectives and develop joint business plans informed by shopper and category insights. Close communication and supply chain coordination help turn those plans into consistent execution across markets.

That approach can also be seen in Mondelēz WTR’s shopper-facing activity. Over the past year, the company worked with retailers on hyper-limited Toblerone launches tailored to individual airports and on The Ultimate Gift Campaign, its first-ever global charity auction on the travel-retail channel. The auction was delivered across nine airports in support of local charities.

“Being ranked number one for the second consecutive year, and for the seventh time overall, means a great deal because it comes directly from the people we work with every day,” said Joost Rosmuller, Vice President and Managing Director, Mondelēz World Travel Retail.



Lindt & Sprüngli GTR premieres new Ube creation in Cannes



Lindt & Sprüngli Global Travel Retail continues its “Flavours of the World. Created by Lindt” journey with the premiere of Lindt Bali Style Chocolate at the TFWA World Exhibition & Conference in Cannes, where the company offered the first opportunity to taste handcrafted bars created specially for the occasion.

Following the successful launches of Lindt Dubai Style Chocolate and Lindt Tokyo Style Chocolate, the Lindt Bali Style Chocolate is inspired by the culinary diversity and flavors of Southeast Asia, featuring Ube, the vibrant purple yam, at the heart of the creation.

The chocolate bar combines Lindt milk chocolate with Ube, cashew and coconut filling, caramel pieces, and vanilla. Ube, the purple yam root pronounced “oo-beh”, originally comes from the Philippines. In Bali, it is traditionally used to enhance desserts. Its distinctive flavor profile features notes of vanilla, pistachio, hazelnut, chestnut, coconut, and buttery caramel. The Ube used for this creation comes from Indonesia, reinforcing the authenticity of the Bali-inspired recipe.

The vivid color of Ube is also reflected in the product presentation. The packaging features a blush pink, berry, and gold palette, with the vivid purple Ube filling

prominently displayed in the product imagery.

The Cannes premiere will introduce Lindt Bali Style Chocolate to the travel retail industry ahead of its wider commercial launch later in the year.

An exclusive pre-launch will follow at Zurich Airport in October 2026, before Lindt Bali Style Chocolate is introduced at selected global travel retail locations from November. In 2026, it will be available exclusively through Global Travel Retail and Lindt Retail Stores.

Flavors of the World

Lindt Bali Style Chocolate marks the latest chapter in “Flavours of the World. Created by Lindt”, a platform that brings destination-inspired chocolate experiences to travelers through distinctive flavors and premium craftsmanship.

Peter Zehnder, CEO Global Travel Retail at Lindt & Sprüngli, said: “Travel retail is an environment where the journey itself shapes what people are open to discovering. With ‘Flavours of the World. Created by Lindt,’ we want to create something travelers come to recognize and look forward to seeing in new destinations. Bali Style builds on that through Ube, a flavor many travelers may still be discovering for the first time. We are delighted to offer our retail partners the very first taste of our latest creation in Cannes.”

The Hershey Company names Amanda Almond President, International, succeeding Rohit Grover

The Hershey Company has named Amanda Almond as President, International, effective Oct. 12, succeeding Rohit Grover. Almond brings more than 30 years of consumer goods and retail experience to the role.

She joins Hershey from Vinarchy, where she served as regional managing director for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, following 12 years in senior regional leadership roles at Bacardi. She will be based in Hershey's U.K. office.

At global wine company Vinarchy, Almond led a region spanning 57 markets. During her 12 years at Bacardi, she held progressively larger leadership roles built on continued market performance. A high-energy, transformational leader, Almond is known for accelerating growth, bringing teams together and building strong performance cultures that deliver consistent, profitable results.



Amanda Almond

Rohit Grover joined Hershey in 1999 and has spent 27 years building the company's business across its international regions and in the U.S., including eight years as President, International. Almond will work alongside Hershey's International Leadership Team to ensure a seamless transition.

New F&B options debut at U.S. airports

Travelers passing through Miami International Airport (MIA) can now enjoy handcrafted Açai bowls and smoothies with the opening of **SAMBAZON Açai Bowls** in Concourse D's North Terminal Marketplace near Gate D29.

SAMBAZON Açai Bowls offers fully customizable bowls made with the brand's signature Certified Organic and Fair-Trade Açai and topped with fresh fruit, granola, nuts, seeds, and other wholesome ingredients. As the world's first Certified Organic and Fair-Trade Açai company and the largest exporter of Açai from Brazil, SAMBAZON has pioneered the category for more than 25 years.

SSP America has opened two iconic American F&B brands at **John F. Kennedy International Airport's (JFK) Terminal 5 (T5)**. **Dunkin'**, located in T5's Center Node, brings one of America's most recognizable coffee-and-donuts brands to JetBlue's flagship terminal.

Shake Shack, also located in T5's Center Node, is one of New York City's most recognizable restaurant brands that has grown from a hometown favorite into a global hospitality brand with more than 705 locations system-wide.

The openings are part of the \$100 million T5 Refresh, a collaboration among JetBlue, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and Fraport USA. Once complete, the program will introduce more than 40 new concessions and customer experiences, including shops, restaurants, communal spaces, and NYC-inspired art installations.

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Mars Wrigley ITR puts 'staying power' at the heart of confectionery growth strategy



Mars Wrigley ITR's destination-themed M&M'S tin statues tailored for Singapore Changi airport.

Mars Wrigley ITR has outlined its category growth plans designed to drive passenger footfall and conversion, based on the belief that future category growth requires moving beyond *stopping power* to build genuine *staying power*, keeping travelers engaged for longer once they step into the confectionery area.

More than half of travelers who enter the confectionery aisle make a purchase but travelers attention is increasingly divided, says the company.

In order to drive this growth, the company is focusing on proven blockbuster favorites tailored to key shopper needs, an optimized shopfloor presence and engaging retail experiences that make confectionery a true destination and turn impulse stops into meaningful dwell time.

Product innovation and tailored gifting

In Cannes, Mars Wrigley ITR announced its plans to launch a 440g Twix White Handle Pouch, developed to tap into the fast-growing consumer preference for white chocolate. The travel exclusive format features classic Twix with a white chocolate layer, delivered in a convenient, shareable pouch. The company is also building on regional momentum with the recent launch of the

Galaxy Pistachio Kunafa Pouch, following the success of Galaxy Kunafa as a top performer across select locations.

To address diverse shopper intentions and budgets, Mars Wrigley ITR has structured its gifting portfolio to span accessible entry-level options up to premium gifts.

This strategy is highlighted by the new M&M'S Tin Collection, which features a tiered pricing model ranging from collectible souvenirs to larger family-sharing tins.

The company is also expanding its Sense of Place range with a dedicated bundle bag designed exclusively for the new small M&M'S tins at HPP activations, celebrating local culture through tailored destination imagery, regional greetings and themed M&M'S Characters.



Driving staying power through shopper engagement

Creating shopper engagement is central to keeping travelers in the confectionery area and unlocking category growth. Mars Wrigley ITR continues to drive this through its M&M'S Experience concept and next-generation interactive promotions.

As the latest addition to its global M&M'S Experience concept, Mars Wrigley ITR announced the opening of a new M&M'S Experience shop-in-shop at Kuwait International Airport, developed in partnership with Avolta. The opening marks the seventh M&M'S Experience location globally and the third in the Middle East.

The concept is an example of how experiences can contribute to higher footfall and meaningful dwell time: the multiplayer M&M'S Playhub generates over five hours of daily active playtime with a 40% repeat engagement rate, while the digital 'You & Who' station sees half of all users send personalized video greetings to multiple recipients, extending the retail experience well beyond the airport environment.

Looking ahead to 2027, Mars Wrigley ITR will continue to evolve the M&M'S Experience concept and plans to introduce enhanced gifting stations that turn purchases into personalized travel memories, a deeper Sense of Place across fixtures and retail furniture to give each destination a unique look and feel and new travel-exclusive items.

Alongside these concept enhancements, the company will continue to expand the global M&M'S Experience footprint around the world, with further openings planned throughout 2026 and into 2027.

Mars Wrigley ITR's new M&M'S Tin Collection features a tiered pricing model ranging from collectible souvenirs to larger family-sharing tins.



An De Volder, Market Director, Mars Wrigley ITR, commented:

"Confectionery already has a strong conversion in travel retail, but stopping shoppers is no longer enough to grow the category. We have seen first-hand that our M&M'S Experience locations have the power to outperform the category and deliver tangible growth. By combining an iconic global brand with meaningful dwell time, whether through gaming, personalization or local Sense of Place, we are unlocking incremental growth for our airport and retail partners."

"Mars Wrigley ITR is also driving shopper engagement through the next generation of HPPs, rolling out activations that feature destination-themed M&M'S tin statues created for stopping and staying power and tailored specifically to their locations across international travel hubs.

"The concept is already live at Copenhagen International Airport, Paris Charles de Gaulle airport, Singapore Changi airport and Kuala Lumpur International Airport, with many more locations planned until the end of the year."

An De Volder, adds: "There is a lot more to come, and we look forward to working closely with our retail partners to keep raising the bar for confectionery in international travel retail."

Valrhona and Villars outline key priorities within global travel retail



Valrhona sees opportunities in travel retail beyond the duty free store based on its culinary heritage and expertise.

Valrhona and Villars highlighted the evolving chocolate market in travel retail at this year's TFWA World Exhibition & Conference, exploring how brands can respond to changing traveler expectations and create stronger connections throughout the travel journey.

The biggest transformation is that airports are becoming destinations rather than simply transit environments, according to Zeyneb Larabi, Global Travel Retail Advisor at Valrhona.

"As retail, restaurants, lounges, hospitality and entertainment are increasingly interconnected, travelers are looking for something memorable during their dwell time, not simply a duty free price advantage. For chocolate, we see three particularly important trends: premiumization; experiential retail; and the convergence of retail and F&B," she says.

Diversification

In a volatile market and with consumer behavior shifting, opportunity cannot be measured by passenger numbers. Diversification is essential, she says.

"We shouldn't look at travel retail purely as duty free distribution. Airlines, lounges, airport F&B, chef partnerships, gifting and retail can form one ecosystem."



Zeyneb Larabi, Global Travel Retail Advisor at Valrhona.

As airport hospitality becomes much more sophisticated, there is a new opportunity for Valrhona to go beyond the traditional chocolate shelf.

"We can be present in the pastry served in a lounge, in a signature dessert created by a chef, in an airline experience, and then offer the traveler a product to take home."

According to Larabi, passengers need a clear reason to stop with a proposition that is easy to see and easy to recognize, tailored to the passenger profile and ideally with an experience or story attached.

"We need to think less about 'global assortment' and more about global brand, and locally relevant execution. Complexity with too many SKUs or products needing too much explanation won't work," she says.

Identity, relevance and emotion key to standout

In an environment where brands only have seconds to attract attention, differentiation for Valrhona comes from its culinary heritage and expertise.

Villars has a different but complementary positioning: its Swiss pedigree, heritage, authenticity and gifting. For both brands, creating a strong emotional connection with the traveler will be increasingly important as the role of the airport evolves.

"The future of travel retail is not only about what travelers buy, but what they discover, taste and remember. Our opportunity is to connect those moments through gastronomy, retail and gifting," says Larabi.

"A brand story needs to be immediately recognizable and translated into contemporary travel retail formats. Winning brands will combine their own DNA with the destination rather than imposing exactly the same execution everywhere."

Quality, authenticity and convenience

In addition to beautiful packaging, consumers also want to understand ingredients, origin, craftsmanship, sustainability and the people who created the product, according to Larabi.

Experience and gifting can also reinforce each other, she says, adding that premium now is the combination of craftsmanship, sourcing and experience.

"For Valrhona, premium starts with the chocolate itself, but it extends to the chef who transforms it, the story behind the cacao, the presentation and the moment in which it is consumed. For Villars, premium can come from authentic Swiss provenance, recipes, quality, beautiful contemporary packaging and strong gifting credentials."

New F&B options debut at U.S. airports: Avolta in Hawaii

Avolta's HMSHost division is collaborating with the State of Hawaii Department of Transportation to introduce new dining and cafe concepts at Daniel K. Inouye International Airport (HNL), Lihue Airport (LIH) and Kahului Airport (OGG).

Operating a range of food and beverage concepts rooted in Hawaii's culinary identity, the new concepts are created in partnership with local brands, producers, and renowned chefs, and will focus on

regional ingredients and menus.

New concepts with some of the most renowned chefs and beloved brands that call Hawaii home will create a strong sense of place and world-class travel experience, says Avolta.

Award-winning chefs like Alan Wong, considered the godfather of modern Hawaiian cuisine, and popular island distillers and brewers will pay homage to Hawaii as a sought-after destination while infusing iconic ingredients and

products into an impressive array of menus.

Also included in the transformation at HNL, LIH, and OGG are refreshed spaces for local favorites like Stinger Rays and Lahaina Chicken, and recognizable brands like Burger King, California Pizza Kitchen, and Dunkin'.

All of the new restaurants and refreshed spaces will integrate elements of Hawaii's beauty and cultural uniqueness, and will offer travelers a better, seamless dining

experience through technology including digital waitlists, QR code order and pay, and self-order kiosks, along with all the benefits of the Club Avolta loyalty program, offering access to exclusive offers and cross-promotions.

The first of these new concepts, Waiialua Bar and Café, opened in HNL's Terminal 1 in December 2025.

Eight more concepts will open across the three airports later this year through the end of 2027.