

Partners

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Biography

At the beginning of the 1920s, Therese Mölk opened her first grocery shop in Innsbruck. By the 1960s the company had 30 shops. In 1974, when the third generation of the family took over the company, some of the shops were altered according to the MPREIS concept, which was based on a discount philosophy. This led to a rapid increase in turnover which in turn led to a development giving priority to architectural appearances, the product range and its presentation. Now, in 2004, the MPREIS network of outlets encompasses 123 supermarkets with a 36% share of the Tyrolean grocery sales market.

mpreis family enterprise

Awards

- 2004 Tirolissimo: Award of the Tyrolean Chamber of Industry for extraordinary performance in the areas of advertising and market communication
- 2003 Wood Construction Award Tyrol: commendation for commercial buildings: MPREIS Kematen, MPREIS Weißenbach
- 2003 3rd BTW Building Promoters Award for Tyrol: award winner for commercial buildings: SUPERM Wattens Bahnhofstraße
- 2003 MAECENAS 2003 Commendation from the Austrian Art Sponsorship Award for literary delicatessen paper
- 2003 "Fit for Future" for future-oriented activities in apprenticeship training, Award by the Federal Ministry for Economics and Labour
- 2002 Prize-winning Austrian Apprentice Training Company, Award by the Federal Ministry for Economics and Labour
- 2002 Architecture Award of the State of Tyrol: MPREIS Wenus
- 2001 Austrian ZV Building Promoters Award: MPREIS Wenus
- 2001 Wood Construction Award Tyrol: commendation in the special category Commitment to Construction Promotion MPREIS Innsbruck Fischerhäuslweg, MPREIS Zams, MPREIS Steinach, MPREIS Mayrhofen, MPREIS Kramsach
- 1999 Austrian ZV Building Promoters Award, MPREIS Steinach am Brenner
- 1993 Award from the Federal State of Tyrol for New Construction, MPREIS Lienz, Iseltalerstraße

Exhibitions

- 2003 Participation in the exhibition "Austria West" with five supermarkets (Wenus, Telfs, Innsbruck-Saggen, St. Johann, Steinach am Brenner) Exhibition locations: Milan, Dornbirn, Prague, Munich, New York, Helsinki
- 1996 The Architecture of the Market – ten selected MPREIS markets in Tyrol, Architekturforum Tyrol, Innsbruck

Publications

- 2004 Liesbeth Waechter-Böhm: "Architekturqualität im Supermarkt – Das Phänomen MPREIS" [Architectural quality in the supermarket – the MPREIS phenomenon], in: DETAIL Konzept, no. 3, pp.147–151
- 2004 Fulvio Irace, Maria Giulia Zunino: "L'architettura del Tirolo non è più tirolese" [Architecture in Tyrol is no longer Tyrolean], in: ABITARE, no. 435, pp. 88–89
- 2003 Judit Solt: "Local Heroes", in: archithese. Zeitschrift und Schriftenreihe für Architektur Branding, no. 6, pp. 26–33
- 2002 Otto Kapfinger: Bauen in Tirol seit 1980. Ein Führer zu 260 sehenswerten Bauten [Building in Tyrol. A guide to 260 remarkable buildings], Architekturforum Tyrol (Ed.), Verlag Anton Pustet, Salzburg, (16 MPREIS markets are presented in detail)
- 2002 Gert Walden: "Unternehmenskultur Volkswagen MPREIS Bang & Olufsen Prada" [Enterprise culture Volkswagen MPREIS Bang & Olufsen Prada], in: Baumeister, no. 5, pp. 60–67, Munich (grocery market MPREIS in Wenus, Tyrol)
- 2002 Gabriele Reiterer: "Trouvailles in Tirol. Ein Führer zur neuen Architektur" [Trouvailles in Tyrol. A guide to the new architecture], in: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 9.8.2002
- 2001 "Was soll man schon von einem Land halten, das aussieht wie ein Schnitzel? Eine Liebeserklärung an Österreich, Super Märkte. Ein Besuch in den schicksten Läden des Landes" [What should we think of a country that looks like a schnitzel? A declaration of love for Austria, Super Markets. A visit to the country's fanciest shops.], in: Süddeutsche Zeitung, Magazin, no. 21, pp. 36–41, 25.5.2001

www.mpreis.at

In its real scrutiny of creations of reality the exhibition in the Austrian Pavilion communicates the multi-layered and constantly fluctuating opportunities provided by architecture, taking as examples the activities of four young architects' teams and the philosophy of a client.

pool – the next ENTERprise – AllesWirdGut – querkraft

Four distinctive, individual attitudes offer an insight into the multiplicity of concepts and methods used in this young and ambitious architecture scene, working interactively in teams and networks to change the concept of architecture to include multifunctional effectiveness. Their work has made them the current driving force in an expanding architecture landscape in Austria. The nextroom architecture database creates for them the necessary publicity and puts their high quality on display.

MPREIS – the architecture of the quotidian

The "MPREIS system" functions as a partnership between company, architects and experts, and thus must be seen "primarily as a communication model whose central power base is made up of a small group of people writing a text together" (Arno Ritter).

The supermarkets, developed for the local context, are distributed over the Alpine map of Tyrol in the form of aesthetic points of orientation. The client, the traditional Tyrolean family company Mlk, responds to the stereotyped supermarket concept of international chain stores with a contrary concept which breaks with the linearity of functional processes using diverse social and cultural propositions.

The combination of Mlk/MPREIS and four architecture teams working out of Vienna was chosen because of the astonishing parallels in their perception of planning commissions. Hybrid enhancements, aiming to go beyond mere functionality, take place on various levels. Open interpretation of interior space, visual continuity with the surrounding space, and transitions between levels of meaning eventually lead to those contemporary solutions whose persuasive power reflects back onto the cultural climate as a *whole*.

“The fact that shoppers are in constant motion, travelling through a department store like railway passengers through the countryside, means the goods for sale as a whole appear to them like an ensemble of objects and price tags which melt into a single pointillist impression.” Wolfgang Schivelbusch

Markets are places where goods are traded and quotidian culture is created. They are the interfaces where various forms of the circulation of goods meet – from their delivery and presentation to their carting off by customers. Markets are the scene of rational and sensual encounters between goods and people. They are also intense arenas of cultural life since on the one hand they represent the day-to-day, and on the other hand they function as the crossroads of social communication. This ancient element is still true in part of old market squares in some countries today. In a rudimentary form, this is also true of the supermarkets which increasingly dominate the grocery business, although in these halls of commodity exchange there is seldom space for social communication, or it is rarely admitted. They are dominated by the strategic arguments of efficiency and cost which lead to the general insignificance of these buildings' design, the unambitious presentation of goods and a banal interior atmosphere. All this is an attempt to attract the consumer by means of pricing. The price tag becomes the all-important factor and the space is reduced to nothing more than a mere container for goods. Under these premises the market squares of yore have atrophied to nothing more than sluices of consumerism and have lost their significance as social spaces.

Apart from this tendency of stripping down the grocery trade to its purely economic aspects or to aestheticise it as an event, the Tyrolean family company MPREIS has been redefining the concept of the grocery market in permanent collaboration with a diverse circle of experts since the 1980s. MPREIS has reworked this concept again and again and taken on innovative design ideas at various levels, or even insisted on them. In the course of this frank process an almost autopoietic microcosm has been created which has led to a dynamic interplay of questions and answers, generating a permeable company philosophy based on the principles of value added and quality. Thus the “MPREIS system” must be seen primarily as a communication model whose central power base is made up of a small group of people writing a text together.

What is unusual for a supermarket chain, is that MPREIS rejects a corporate architecture – a lowest common design denominator – preferring to tailor each market to its size and location. The MPREIS buildings are specifically developed spaces which enter into a dialogue with the context and the landscape. They create an identity for the customers, generate a specific atmosphere for a relatively unchanging product range and in this unusual way communicate a clear corporate identity. The interplay between the standardised commission descriptions for individual architects and the planning process, which in principle is left relatively open by the client, results in individual solutions which are both unique and generally applicable as a basis for discussion about the conceptual development of MPREIS. Thus the choice of the material, the position of the shelves, design, lighting or spatial concept are questioned afresh for each project and “reinvented” again and again as part of the dialogue between the planner and the personally involved client and in the architect’s reaction to existing solutions. A productive arc of tension exists which actively promotes or sometimes unconsciously admits innovation and creative potential in Tyrol. This can be subsumed under heading “the creation of high-quality living space”. The MPREIS supermarkets are architecturally composed and precisely formulated cases for everyday life, functional spaces and at the same time sensual locations which make an important contribution to the increased quality of architectural culture and the acceptance of modern architecture in a – mental – landscape in their time. And one thing should not be forgotten: this concept pays off.