

LET IT

Flow

Original and spectacular water elements like fountains and waterfalls are not just eye-catchers in shopping malls, they also have a positive influence on the quality of stay. In any case, they are often used as a design element.

A fountain was built on the ground floor of one of four rotundas at Limbecker Platz in Essen.

A stainless steel pool forms the base of the fountain. The pool is covered in natural stone and encompasses the fountain, while the heart is on the underground level in the so-called fountain chamber. All technical components necessary to operate the system are located there. Building Services is responsible for regularly monitoring factors like the PH value and servicing the equipment. The fountain is checked during each center walk-through and cleaned whenever necessary.



Is the use of water in shopping centers growing in popularity? Markus Pichler, Managing Director of Austria Unibail-Rodamco, says yes. "Water is part of our life and therefore also an exciting element for shopping centers." Andreas Fuchs, Director of Creative Design at ECE (see interview p. 44), says no, because water is just one of many design elements, and the integration of water elements simply depends on the target group and design theme of the individual shopping center.

Generally the installation of fountains and pools is seen purely as a design element. If the shopping center is near a body of water, developers tend to incorporate water into the name of the center. In some centers the proximity and the integration of water elements is also reflected in the architecture and mall design. Examples of this are Bluewater in London, Rhein-Galerie Ludwigs-hafen, which opened in 2010, and Donau Zentrum in Vienna, which was refurbished last year. In the last example the element of water plays a central role in the façade and interior design. It not only is implemented in its conventional form, but also in waves and drops.

VISUAL ATTRACTIONS IN THE MALL

Many developers rely on the element of water – sometimes in a dramatic way and not limited to outside the mall. "Water plays an important role in our shopping center," states Ernő Koncz, Corporate Communications at TriGranit Development Corporation. We can thank TriGranit that "Niagara Falls" has been admired in Budapest's WestEnd City Center since November 1999. The giant Niagara Falls-like fountain is a unique and spectacular element in the mall. TriGranit also banks on the magnetism of water in their Tropical Square at Silensia City Center in Katowice, opened in 2005. The company has installed an impressive fountain with a 13-meter high water jet. The Hungarian developer also designed a river in the Polus Center Constanta, which has been sold to Immofinanz. According to the company, water plays an important role for the people living in the harbor town on the Black Sea coast. A combination of a water basin and fountain provide a connection between the outside and inside in Eurovea, opened in 2010. The 17x9 meter water/light attraction is located in an outdoor square. The

floor is made of glass, so the splashing water can be seen from the mall below. The water/light feature is designed to operate all year and has numerous jets, which can be programmed. The exhaust air from the mall ventilation warms the water so that it can be used during the winter. The fountain cannot be heard in the mall due to the thickness of the glass floor. "The water/light system has multiple purposes. It is a water feature and a fountain. The stone edge around the fountain serves as public seating. In addition, the floor acts as a skylight and allows natural daylight into the ground floor retail level below, which continues under the square," explains Mike de Mug, Retail Director at Ballymore Group. The Wiener Stadion Center presents water in its frozen form; the two elevator towers at the plaza are encased in a thick, colorful, sparkling coat of ice all year round. The frozen waterfall is 23 meters high. Varena, an SES center, boasts a "modern interpretation of an Italian fountain" in its plaza. Combined with a waterfall, it connects the mall to the garage levels and brings the freshness of water into the space.

The Dubai Mall also features a spectacular waterfall, which reaches through the entire height of the mall, traversing all four levels, and is adorned with art sculptures of human divers made of fiberglass to create a dynamic visual spectrum that complements the rhythmic flow of water. The waterfall comprises two cylindrical structures, 30 meters in diameter and 24 meters high, with an overhead reservoir feeding the recycled water. Well-lit in the night and reflecting sunlight by day, the cascading water feature also offers a branding platform for retailers. The Dubai Mall already features two fountains at the Food Court area, and according to the landlord, water-themed attractions are particularly appealing for the visitors. A choice of coffee shops and retail kiosks overlook the waterfall, giving visitors a relaxing ambience to meet. Several palm trees are also set up to replicate the atmosphere of a desert oasis, and various in-mall activities are held around the waterfall to sustain visitor interest.

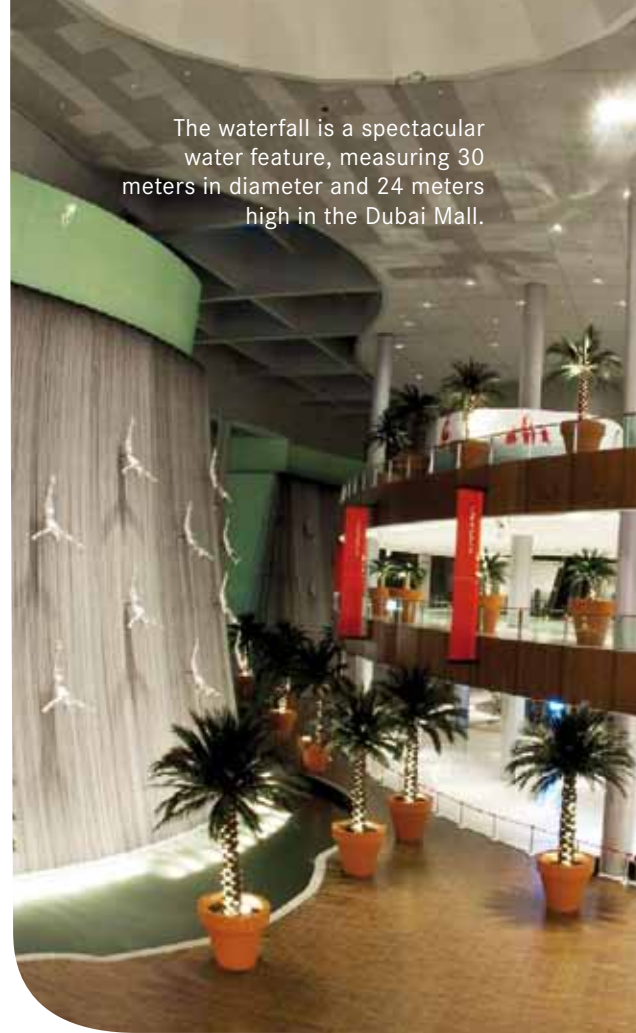
CONTRIBUTING TO A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE

When water is incorporated, it is often done in a



In the Bonarka City Center in Krakow palm trees and water fountains communicate a slight southern touch.

Atmosphere with the sound of water: Varena features a modern interpretation of an Italian fountain. Combined with a waterfall, it connects the mall to the garage levels and brings the freshness of water into the space.



The waterfall is a spectacular water feature, measuring 30 meters in diameter and 24 meters high in the Dubai Mall.

» [1] THE WATER EFFECT

The positive effect of flowing water is created by the increased amount of negative ions in the air. Negative ions not only clean and freshen the air, they also give the oxygen activated energy, which is why they are sometimes called "air vitamins". The air is purified naturally; the more negative ions there are in the air, the fresher it is. The "air vitamins" have a positive effect on people's sense of well-being and neutralize positive ions. Too many positive ions can disrupt well-being. Negative and positive refer to an electrical charge of plus and minus applied to the ions. There is no connection to our linguistic assessment of good and bad.

spectacular way. "The days of the traditional fountain are over," says Markus Pichler, Managing Director of Austria Unibail-Rodamco. But he also believes that the implementation of water should not be overdone. Large shopping centers always offer spots where water elements make architectural sense. Unibail-Rodamco, for example, installed a wall of water in their Donau Zentrum. Why do developers and architects favor water as a design element? According to György Tábori, Public Relations Director at TriGranit Management Corporation, developers prefer having fountains or something similar because this gives a natural element to the mall. As Tábori says, the positive effect of such natural elements is that visitors stay longer: "People like water very much." And Ernő Koncz, Corporate Communications at TriGranit Development Corporation adds:

"A fountain makes a mall much more comfortable and environmental friendly." "We mainly use water as a design element, but water is also connected to well-being for a lot of visitors and improves the subjective indoor climate," says Markus Pichler. According to Andrei Florian, Architect at ATP Architekten und Ingenieure, in some cases the sound of water and a fine mist around the fountain can actually be a welcome aspect of the indoor climate, but the effect of water is primarily psychological. In principle, the architect sees no particular reason for water attractions in a shopping center. "Shopping center operators like to include the water theme. People think it contributes to well-being. I believe this comes from a baroque need for nature – like in every parking area, palace garden, or city square: the taming and exhibition of nature."

WATER INCREASES THE SENSE OF WELL-BEING

According to Feng Shui consultant, Thomas Lepka, shopping centers can definitely capitalize on the effect^[1] of water. But the water, which represents wealth in Feng Shui philosophy, should be in motion. "Water is part of life," says Lepka and adds, "Fountains are one of the most important tools for shopping centers to foster wealth and health." According to Lepka, correctly placed fountains that are designed to optimally correspond in size and shape with the company "provide an excellent way to increase sales, lengthen customers' stay, and boost footfall." The emphasis here is on the correct placement, because a fountain can just as easily block energy. Mistakes that often happen are, for example, the flow of water is directed towards the entrance resulting in less Qi coming into the center, the fountain water seems dirty and smells of chlorine, jets are blocked, or the fountain acts as a barrier in the mall. A fountain needs space around it in order for it to be

able to release its energy. Instead of chlorine and decalcifiers, the Feng Shui consultant recommends the use of microorganisms.

Water elements have to be regularly inspected and serviced, otherwise a negative effect is created and, according to Ernő Koncz, Corporate Communications at TriGranit Development Corporation, the fountain becomes like "a dead part in the mall." The maintenance needs of modern systems are quite low and do not result in significant additional costs, says Pichler of Unibail-Rodamco Austria. The safety restrictions depend on the respective systems. In any case, careful planning is a must. The sound produced by fountains is not a problem, according to Feng Shui consultant Lepka. However, in an office space it could be disruptive. The water wall in Donau Zentrum does not make any noise, says Pichler. It just creates a pleasant splashing sound in the background. ❖

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