



DESIGN REPORT

MONOCLE STRASSE —*Global*

Preface

The best streets evolve over time with an odd assortment of places and people. That's why our perfect street contains a mixture of old and new from our favourite city haunts around the world. [Issue 55 . volume 06 . July/August 2012](#)

Credits

Writer: [Hugo Macdonald](#)

Illustrator: [Nishant Choksi](#)

Streets to inspire Bits of the following do it best:

Sophienstrasse, Berlin

Formosa Street, London

Ravnsborggade, Copenhagen

Braunerstrasse, Vienna

Yrjonkatu, Helsinki

Sacramento, San Francisco

Kyu-Yamate Dori, Tokyo

Soi Langsuan, Bangkok

Tung Street, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong

Queen Street, Woollahra, Sydney



Mellow drama - The streetscape

This is a street of mixed materials. Exposed brick rubs side-by-side with stone, plaster, wood, steel and glass facades, creating contrasts of texture and age. The predominant colours are reds, oranges and browns, which age beautifully without looking shabby. The heights and depths of buildings are mixed too, adding a gentle drama of light, shade and space. Street signs are a jumble of fonts and colours. Some hang perpendicular for ease of viewing when walking down the street, others are flat. Somehow the chaotic jumble of style and texture works perfectly.

Fast food - Restaurants

Though most of the street's charm comes from the way people live with each other and use it, we've selected a handful of businesses that would fit in. Golden Brown, an import from Tokyo, serves burgers that people cross the city for. They're made using entirely fresh ingredients, so are more than just a guilty pleasure.

Firm footing - The pavement

It's deep: no less than two metres and in some places – outside a café where there's room for tables and chairs – as much as four. It's a concrete slab pavement, scrubbed weekly by the council, though store and café proprietors tend to their own patch daily.

Under cover - The galleria

A series of elegant arches lead to a covered galleria of small shops and a great café with seating in the shade. It can get crowded when there's a downpour, but the café provides extra seating, spotting an opportunity to scoop up a bit of extra business.

Heavens above - Street action

A number of balconies – both residential and for cafés – means there's always reason to look up. Smoking diners know not to dip ash on to unsuspecting old ladies in the street below.

Flower power - Sensible shrubbery

Small cherry trees create a natural barrier between the one-way traffic and the pavement. When the trees bloom in spring, the community hosts a weekend "sakura" street party. The blossom means extra hours clearing the pavements, but shops take it in turns to share the workload.

High lights - Street lighting

The street is lit with a mixture of sconces above shop windows and copper lanterns in between. The odd neon sign provides a dose of kitsch. Overall there's enough light to feel safe, but not so much as to drown first floor residents who overlook the street.

Happy families - Services

Elsewhere it's a mixture of thriving independent family-owned services that you only find on secondary streets these days – the chemist, locksmith, camera shop and hardware store. All have been here for decades and are crucial parts of the community jigsaw.

Shady goings on - Awnings & shutters

Awnings are used by most shops for keeping direct sunlight out. Residents favour shutters over grey air-con boxes on their facades. In the morning, they lie in bed and hear awnings being unfurled below, a natural alarm clock signalling the start of the day.

Good butt - Ashtrays

On the subject of smoking, this isn't a street that tuts when someone lights up. There are brass ashtrays rooted discretely at the edge of the pavement, encouraging the proper disposal of butts and smoking away from shop entrances.

Hidden pleasures - Alleyways

Most of the buildings are sandwiched together but there's an alleyway or two, to service the odd late night tryst.

Sitting pretty - Street furniture

Oak benches dot the pavement – good for resting elderly legs, meeting friends and people watching.

Bottoms up - Dive bar

Cheaper basement rents favour smaller start-ups. Hugo's Hideaway is a split-level café by day and dive bar by night. Din from the piano and karaoke are kept under street level by good insulation. No one ever complains about the noise.

Midnight feast - Convenience store

We've taken Natural Lawson from Japan as our convenience store of choice. Open 24 hours, seven days, 365 days a year, it's the beating heart of the street with the best pick-n-mix selection for miles around.

Chop n change - Barber

Mario opened the barber on this street over 50 years ago. Though he's hung up his scissors he still mans the till and sits down for a gossip with regulars. His son Luigi works wonders with a hot towel and cutthroat razor on beards, while grandson Luca has recently joined the fold and can be called upon for a more directional trim.

Best buns - Bakery

Andersen – another Japanese import, makes bread and Danish pastries better than the Danes. The smell of fresh baking leads to stampedes, particularly when the Spandauer (pastry filled with marzipan and custard cream) come out of the oven. Noriko, who runs this branch, bakes birthday cakes and special bread orders for her favourite customers.

Home sweet home - Monocle outpost

We moved in next door so we could be first in line for Andersen's fresh baked goods. Then we debuted our shop-café concept to make full use of them. We have a three-man office upstairs and a three-bed apartment and terrace on the top floor for special guests too.

Fat tush - Lebanese food

To satisfy our weekly Levantine cravings we persuaded Diwan to open a second joint away from their Marylebone flagship. We still need to remind them about the sauces every time we order, but regardless – it's the best Lebanese outside Beirut.

Cops and Kobans - Police station

A smart policeman sits in his Koban (sometimes hers) and by mere presence alone keeps the streets clean of any crime. The odd lost wallet and travel card gets handed in and duly returned. Bikes are never stolen and cars never speed.

Deli Belly - Delicatessen

Visini (a native from Como) is where we head to stock up on salami and Italian ingredients for a lengthy summer evening feast on the terrace. As well as all the basics, they do a meaty parmigiana melanzane to take home and make their own prosecco too, which locals get hooked on come summertime.

Under the covers - Bookshop

It's no surprise we have a branch of Daunt around the corner. As well as the endless supply of travel literature, good fiction and non-fiction, authors come for regular readings, which always creates a buzz. Residents here are a bookish bunch and it's like having a celebrity in town.

Everybody needs them - Community centre

Hailing from Kagoshima, the Good Neighbors space is a succinct blend of local craft and design store, event space and home to the local retail association. They meet monthly to plan for indoor markets, mini-concerts, exhibitions and pop-ups in temporary empty spaces in the neighbourhood.

New kid on the block - Concept store

Townhouse, a producer and retailer from Zurich, is the latest addition to the neighbourhood. Working with small local fashion and design producers they sell a range of clothes, accessories and design products that showcase manufacturing in the region. It's the perfect one-stop shop for sorting your Christmas shopping.

Sausage stop -Café

The perfect street is not complete without a place to gorge on sausages, and Viennese institution Café Pruckel has obliged. Inside it's a smokey den of wooden newspaper holders and silent folk putting the finishing touches to their novels, tapping away at laptops. The first floor terrace is packed on clear days, year round (with rugs and heaters in winter) for locals who brunch well into the evening. Cheese omelettes, frankfurters, cappucinos and beer are on tap. In summer they open a mobile hot dog stand on the street corner outside Hugo's Hideaway, providing late night sausages to tipsy homegoers.