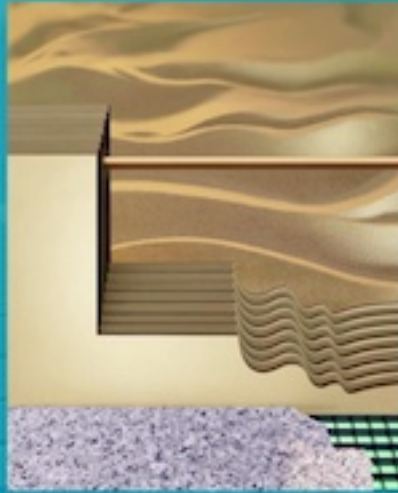


# FRAME

THE GREAT INDOORS

№107 JUL - AUG 2007



## THE FASHION OF FITNESS

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## RETAIL

## MASQUESPACIO's supermarket reverses stereotypes



LUIS BARBERO / SPIN

**COLOGNE** – Supermarket interiors are invariably white and clean. Yet, as it won't have escaped your notice, Solera is decked out in black. If Spanish design consultancy Masquespacio is to be believed, the Cologne-based project could mark the start of a new blueprint – or should we say *blackprint* – for retail interiors.

'We wanted to add some colour to create emotion, without the overall design becoming childish,' says project art director Ana Hernández. 'Black was perfect for providing the "serious" touch and forming an interesting contrast with the scheme's more vivid colours. A brighter colour would have led to visual disorder when combined with the wide range of packaging in the store.'

Perhaps even more surprising than the colour itself, black is closely linked to the cash-and-carry superstore's Spanish product offering. It's just that instead of reinforcing an Iberian identity, Masquespacio wanted to reject any hint of national stereotypes. 'No Spanish flag or bulls – no way,' says Hernández. 'We're convinced that you can represent a culture to a wider public without resorting to the literal or the obvious, yet still remain »



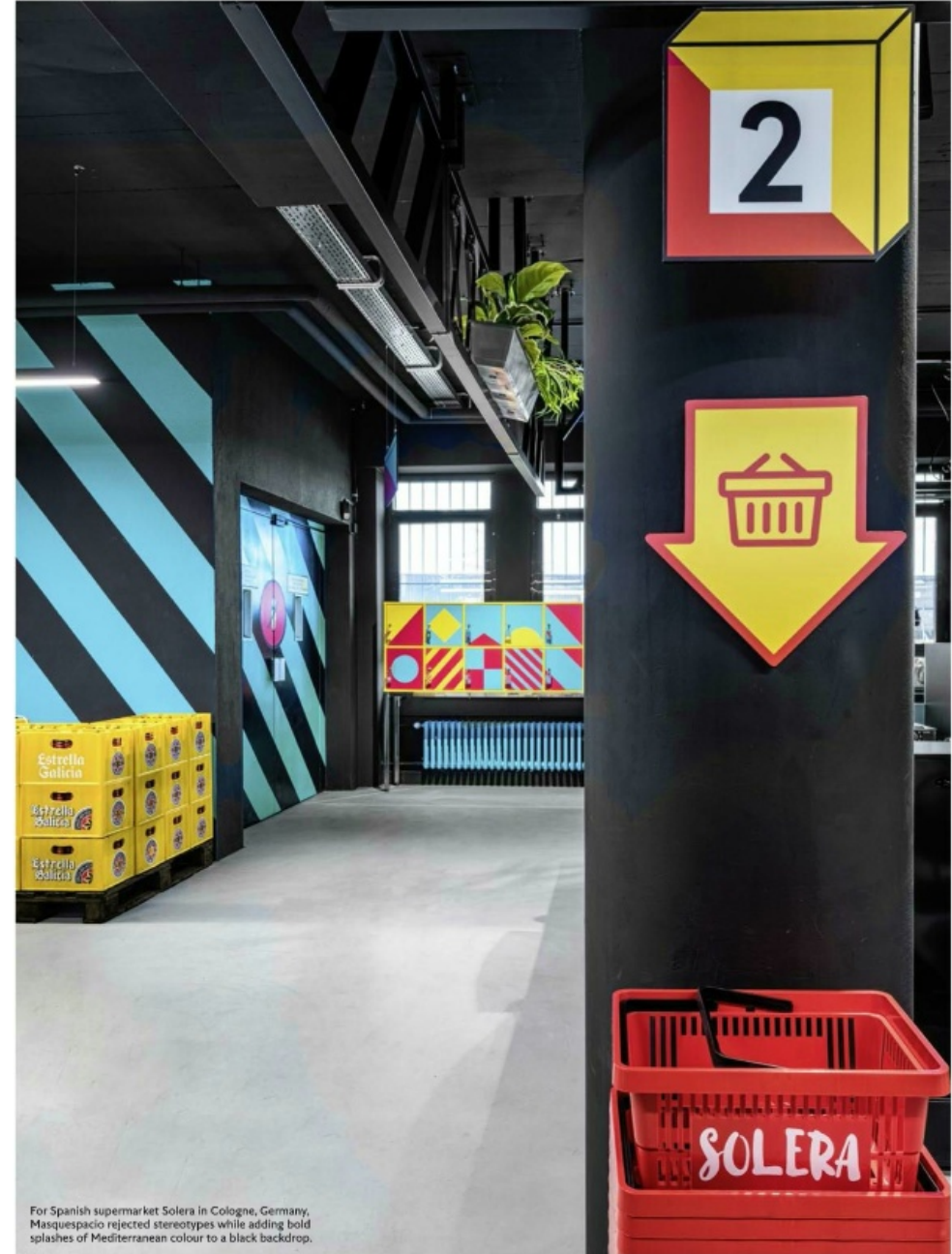
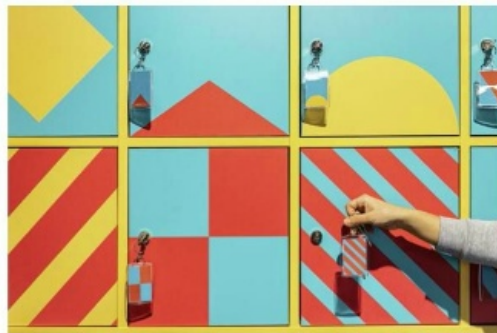


**‘You can represent a culture to a wider public without resorting to the literal or the obvious’**

recognizable! Hints of the owner’s Andalusian origins can be found in the awnings, the Mediterranean tiles and the greenery liberally sprinkled throughout the store. ‘Plants were a priority for us, as they are part of the Mediterranean culture. Although the truth is that they were bought in Germany and aren’t the most Mediterranean options; it’s pretty difficult to find a plant that can survive in Spain as well as in Germany.’

Which leads us to one final question: did Masquespacio ever consider white for Solera? ‘White racks would have been possible, but we thought they would have given the venue a cheaper look.’ To clinch the argument, Hernández points out that black paint has a distinct practical advantage: ‘Black paint is less expensive and easier to find on the market.’ – WG

[masquespacio.com](http://masquespacio.com)



For Spanish supermarket Solera in Cologne, Germany, Masquespacio rejected stereotypes while adding bold splashes of Mediterranean colour to a black backdrop.