

Creating a Sense of Place: Vienna Airport and MK Illumination light up for Christmas

AUSTRIA. Vienna Airport has partnered with MK Illumination to present an extraordinary display of decorations and lights over the Christmas and holiday period.

[MK Illumination](#) specialises in conceptual lighting. The joint project aims to create a Sense of Place through the use of subtle lighting displays and photo points featuring large snow globes. The globes offer travellers ‘greetings from Vienna’ with many featuring backdrops of the city’s most famous attractions including the Viennese Prater, St. Stephen’s Cathedral, the Spanish Riding School, and the State Opera.



A new airport festive lighting experience provides a warm welcome to Vienna.

MK Illumination Designer Sonja Brandmaier said the project was inspired by a ‘travel connects’ concept.

“Vienna Airport is an international hub that brings people together from around the globe,” she said. “This is particularly true over the Christmas season, as people ‘go home’, visit loved ones abroad, or meet at a convenient airport to travel together.

“We wanted to combine the airport experience with inspired and inspiring light, taking into account the different seasonal expectations of travellers from different countries and cultures.”



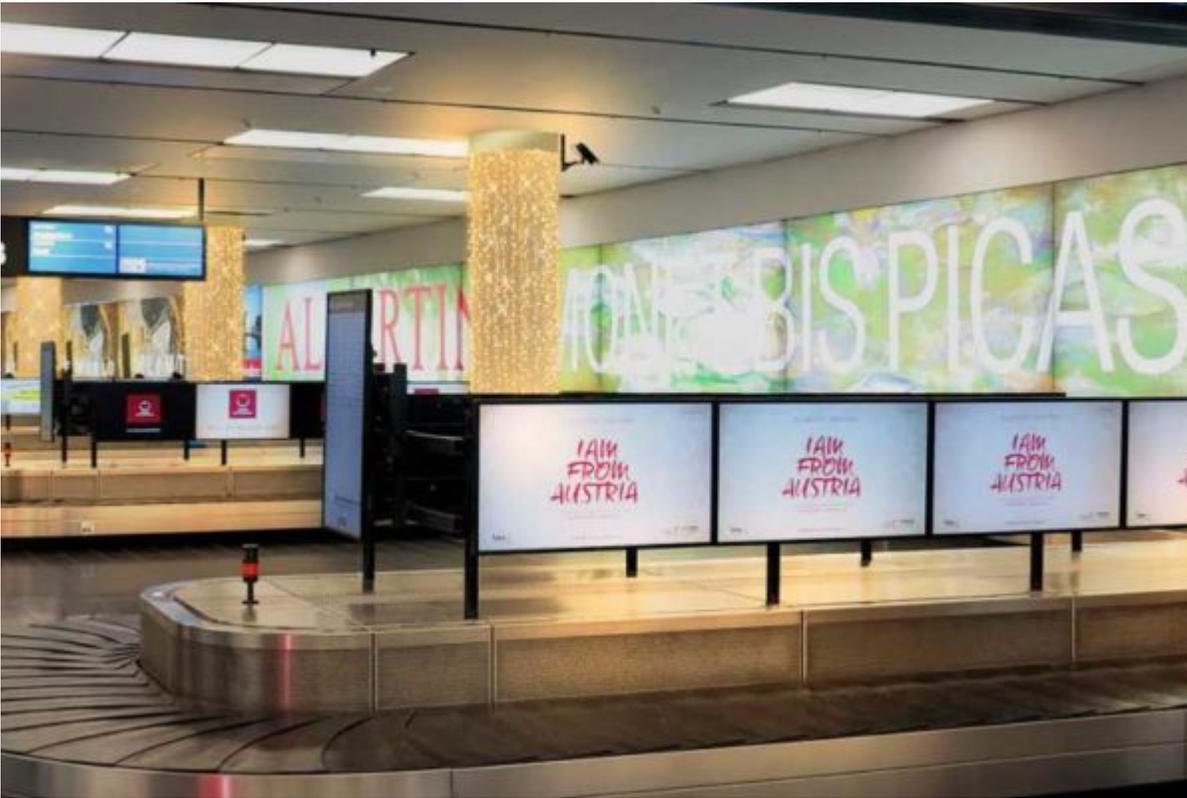
Vienna Airports and MK Illumination aim to offer a calming, seasonal atmosphere throughout the passenger journey.

Brandmaier said MK Illumination aimed to offer travellers a positive, shareable experience, while creating a Sense of Place and telling a tale about past and present Vienna.

She said the snow globes act as “cultural ambassadors” to share Vienna’s highlights. “The result is something experiential, an opportunity for travellers to share an experience and a taste of Vienna, even if they are simply in transit.

“This truly is a design that combines story, continuity and commercial relevance, and it’s a design that will continue to deliver year-round thanks to the neutrality and flexibility of the lighting designs.”

The snow globes, with different backdrops, can be used in future in-airport communication and advertising platforms.



The project has added a festive touch to all areas of the airport.

MK Illumination Sales and Project Manager Austria Andreas Frischmann underlined the importance of securing an atmosphere lighting project at the airport over the Christmas period.

“Austria is our home market, the seat of our heritage, and the place where MK Illumination started out 22 years ago,” he said. “Location aside, Vienna Airport has an ongoing commitment to being a world-class airport, and it’s a privilege to work with the passionate people at the airport who make this happen.”

Frischmann said finding the right approach to the project was not easy considering space restrictions and safety and security constraints associated with airports. “Equally challenging was the question of how to exceed international travellers’ expectations, because each traveller represents a different definition of what Christmas is or isn’t,” he explained.

“Managing these expectations was – and is – mission critical because Vienna Airport is a gateway to the world and it is often the first and last experience travellers have when passing through Austria.

“Thanks to our excellent working relationship with Vienna Airport and the combination of their insights, our expertise and the diverse talents of our combined teams, we have created a Sense of Place using Christmas positioning at Vienna Airport. The end result is one of which we’re all proud, one which will transform the airport into an unforgettable Christmas beacon that illuminates the city of Vienna, and Austria too,” Frischmann said.

MK Illumination pointed out that Erin Perzy, a surgical instruments mechanic from Vienna, patented the snow globe in 1900 after the first version was shown at the Paris World Exhibition in 1878. He and his family were responsible for catapulting the invention into the popular tourist souvenir that it is today.

“Although this is a little-known fact, it’s one of the golden threads that weaves its way through a design that brings together light, travel, people, and the rich history of Vienna,” MK Illumination added.

Vienna Airport Senior Vice President Center Management Bjørn Olsson considered the collaboration with MK Illumination in relation to future developments at the airport.

“I believe that passenger experience will be one of the most important factors within the customer journey in the future, and atmosphere lighting will play a huge role.”

He noted “massive” passenger growth, which is driving the development of non-aviation revenues, and said the airport was planning for the future and, at the same time, adapting and optimising existing infrastructure and commercial spaces.



Vienna Airport Senior Vice President Center Management Bjørn Olsson believes atmosphere lighting plays a “fundamental” part in securing a Sense of Place.

“With strong passenger development also come constraints within the airport’s capacity during peak times. This is where we find it interesting to realise atmosphere lighting projects,” Olsson said.

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Olsson said Vienna Airport was determined to offer a “great passenger experience”, adding that the Christmas lighting will add a calming, seasonal atmosphere at a busy time.

“Stress levels have a negative impact on the commercial business and if we can help passengers de-stress at an early stage by delivering beautiful Christmas decorations already from the check-in hall it will hopefully have a positive impact on the passengers’ dwell time and therefore on commercial performance.”

Olsson said the use of atmosphere lighting fits well with plans to optimise the existing terminal environment.

“When it comes to terminal developments such as those we are implementing here in Vienna... there is no doubt that atmosphere lighting is one of the fundamental basics to implement a Sense of Place.”

“We are trying to optimise the commercial offering with changes in terms of redevelopment of the shopping units, diversification of the commercial offer and products, and so on.”

He described the terminal infrastructure as “more operations-driven than commercial” and said atmosphere lighting could boost overall customer satisfaction and prove a good investment considering Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ).

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Olsson emphasised the positive role that Sense of Place and passenger experience have on the passenger journey.

“A positive passenger journey will always lead to improved commercial results in the long term. This will be hard to measure but we strongly believe that [the collaboration with MK Illumination] is a strategic investment for Vienna Airport in delivering a positive airport experience.

“MK Illumination is a professional and trustworthy partner and I’m convinced we will create a successful implementation with measurable results afterward,” he concluded.

MK Illumination is regarded as a world leader in the experience lighting industry. It developed the QuickFix system and Buy Smart purchasing model to assist airports in achieving their lighting objectives.

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