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European retailers use Global Village to test regional market

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High footfall makes it an ideal platform for overseas businesses

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Image Credit: Zarina
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Customers throng the Dubai Mall to check out offers by its retail outlets. DSF attracts many tourists from the GCC and subcontinent.

because of low consumer confidence. The launch of the Spanish pavilion at the Dubai Shopping Festival's Global Village is an example of European retailers utilising the platform to test their brands in the Middle East.

In a country that is famous for the quality of its olive oil, Fermin Rodriguez Jimenez's name carries a lot of weight in Spain. His position as one of the country's most prominent olive oil-tasters and owner of an olive oil farm and company means he knows what he's talking about when it comes to all things olive-related.

Success

In Dubai, however, his name gets lost among the sea of international franchises that have populated the shopping malls.

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Groupon Cupones para Restaurantes

 Hamburguesas Hasta un -70%*	 Donuts Hasta un -60%*	 Filetes Hasta un -65%*
 Sushi Hasta un -70%*	 Almuerzo Hasta un -50%*	 Helados Hasta un -60%*

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*Ejemplo de próximo descuento

With a stall in the Spain pavilion in the Global Village, the husband-and-wife team behind the company is trying to change that.

Their company produces organic olive oil products cultivated on their farm in Andalusia.

The products range from different varieties of virgin olive oil to body products such as creams and essential oils to

Their entry into the country so far has met with considerable success.

"In Dubai we have signed a contract with five-star hotels. Our cosmetics will be placed in some beauty centres and spas. And we are also looking to open a restaurant that is sponsored by our olive oil," said Aisha Goudrar Yazidi, co-founder of Aceites Vizcantar.

Yazidi said she came to the UAE to try and sell her products in a different market. Things aren't looking good for Spanish businesses. Spain recently approved a \$19 billion (Dh69.77 billion) package of spending cuts and tax increases after Budget Minister Cristobal Montoro said the country was close to entering a recession.

As Spanish consumers get ready to save, ailing Spanish businesses such as Aceites Vizcantar are looking more towards buoyant markets such as the UAE.

"In Spain our products are considered gourmet, so there has been a stagnation of sales. Here we've had a lot of interest," said Yazidi.

"The Global Village is a good place for the promotion of products. Especially for us Europeans who don't know the Arab market because we are so far away. Here you make it accessible to all people," she added.

ZERO VinZero is another Spanish company looking to break into the UAE market.

Fermented beverage

Its product, non-alcoholic wine, caters specifically to the Muslim population.

"It is wine with no sugar or gas, only grapes. It's very
d f h lth " id W i D i h h d f l t

The wine is produced in the vineyards of the Dehesa de Santa Marta region.

The grapes are fermented, filtered and aged in the traditional method of fermentation.

At the end of the process the alcohol is removed, allowing Muslim consumers to enjoy the pleasure and properties of a fermented beverage which has been made alcohol-free.

On the back of the positive response the company has received at the Global Village, they hope to be able to sell their product to local supermarkets such as Carrefour and Spinneys.

"A lot of people like it. We are seeing a lot of people buying in bulk. Hopefully in the future we will go to Saudi Arabia as well," said Darwish.

Tucked away in the entrance is Al Andalus Food. The curious selection of food on display has caught visitors' interest.

"At the Global Village we are focused on introducing and selling three products; non-alcoholic, low-calorie sangria, a Spanish version of Nesquik and Spanish branded waffles," said Samar Al Masri, marketing manager of Al Andalus Food.

According to Al Masri, they are using the Global Village's high footfall to test their products in an eager market.

"We came to test the market and we've found that people are very happy about Spanish products. They come and search for it. We've seen many customers come back and bring more customers," said Samar.

"The sangria is the most popular. We were not expecting this kind of response from the people," she said.

With over 2,500 exhibitors and an expected footfall of around 5 million visitors, the Global Village provides the perfect low-risk entry point for new companies to test their products.