

## A golden «Time Out» with «my time»

**In the course of construction of the new building, the staff restaurant at the cantonal hospital in Aarau had to make way for the construction site. As a replacement, the "Time Out" restaurant was created at an attractive location in the park. Due to the excellent infrastructure of the timber construction, the veteran cafeteria was converted into a catering zone with self-checkout tills as a supplementary offer - only for employees, accessible 24/7. The balance so far is positive.**

*Author: Franziska Honegger*

The ground-breaking ceremony for the new building at the Aarau site of the Kantonsspital Aarau AG has taken place. The necessary construction site was cleared beforehand. The LeClou restaurant, which is mainly frequented by employees, has stood in this place for around 30 years. For the approximately five-year phase until the opening of the gastronomy in the new building, a building for a temporary restaurant was planned and implemented within the existing hospital area. A wooden system construction was created, which turned out to be the most economical solution for the planned period of operation, while at the same time creating a very inviting atmosphere for the guests. Construction work started in April 2020, and the restaurant opened on November 30, 2020. According to Christoph Zehnder, project manager for architecture and construction at the cantonal hospital in Aarau, this short period of time enabled flawless planning and good communication with ERNE AG Holzbau, acting as the general contractor, and the trades involved.

### **Time-out promoting atmosphere**

The building is distinguished from the outside by a golden façade made of OSB panels. Inside, the generous, warm atmosphere of the guest room with around 460 seats, which flows around the core area with a spacious production kitchen and serving areas, has an effect. An acoustic ceiling contributes to the positive perception of the environment. A band of windows runs around the entire building. In precise locations, the windows widen upwards and open out onto the grounds, where mature trees mark the seasons. This not only ensures suitable views, but also serves as shade, which means that blinds can be dispensed with. The furniture, which has been brought in from the old location, especially the colored chairs, comes into its own in the light, wood-dominated environment to such an extent that guests praise the supposedly new furnishings. The old name LeClou was deliberately left behind. The new location was given the name *Time Out* based on suggestions from KSA employees – whereby the name should be the program: A golden break from everyday work.



## Reused interior

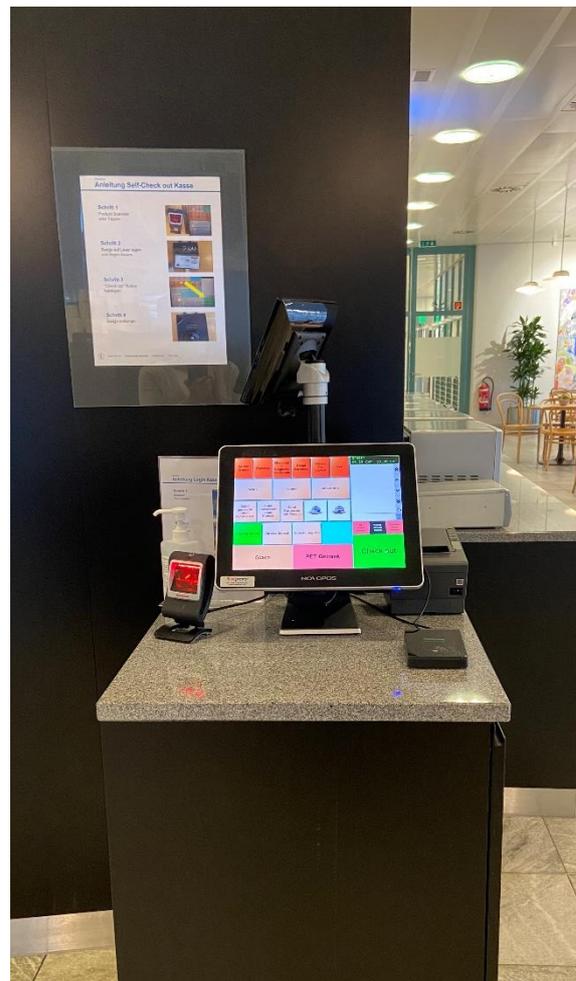
The premise of taking over the existing gastronomy infrastructure as far as possible was beneficial to economic efficiency. With planbar AG, the gastronomy planner commissioned by the general contractor planned the existing buffet facilities, the infrastructure of the production kitchen and the kitchenette with a dishwasher to fit the new area with the involvement of the users. Supplemented with a few new elements, an optimal production and serving area was created that promotes the processes. The almost 30-year-old buffet systems literally shine in a new light and have survived the move well. There are three served serving points available to guests, supplemented by a generous salad and free choice buffet, from which around 750 guests are fed on weekdays. Screens with daily updated photos of the respective offer make it easier for the guests to choose. The offer has been completely revised for the restart in Time Out. The kitchen created new menus and supplemented them with the valued classics. The burgers from the so-called Burger Wednesday hold the sales record, with around 250 sold.

## Use of the locations

With this temporary location, the KSA catering service received an excellent infrastructure for guests as well as for the employees of the restaurant and kitchen. The opening hours were initially taken over as usual, with a focus on lunchtime catering from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. In the house opposite was the second location of the KSA restaurant, the Cafeteria Santerra, open to internal and external guests from 6.30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Their tight space conditions in the output and kitchenette area made optimal work processes and limited supply options difficult. In addition, the distribution area's infrastructure was near the end of its useful life. Until the opening of the new hospital building, this could only have been maintained with extensive repair work. This raised the question of how the use of Time Out can be strengthened throughout the day. It turned out that the number of guests is not large enough and that it is therefore not profitable to extend the opening times at both locations.

## Development of my time

This question led to the opening of the catering zone *my time*, in mid-July 2021 on the site of the now former Cafeteria Santerra. Partial dismantling of the old buffet facilities, which protruded into the area, together with additional carpentry work made it possible to design an attractive lounge area, which is accessible 24/7 via employee badges. It is therefore exclusively available to KSA employees. A self-service catering offer tailored to the guests with self-checkout tills supplements the catering offer for employees on the KSA site. The range at my time consists mainly of home-made products such as various sandwiches, tarts, salads, mueslis, desserts and rolls for the mid-morning break. Two coffee machines and a selection of cold drinks ensure an all-round offer.



*Some employees still have to get used to the self-scanning checkout in "my time".*

In addition, employees have an ideal place to prepare and enjoy meals they have brought from home. Hot meals have always been limited at the Santerra. The food was delivered from the main kitchen several hundred meters away and kept warm. The warm catering takes place completely in the Time Out, as well as the catering for the external guests. The latter are guided to the new location by golden signs.

### First experiences

The relocation of the limited warm catering together with the external guests from the Cafeteria Santerra to the Time Out enables the use of its infrastructure from 6.30 a.m. to 7 p.m., with new hot food from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. The production including packaging of the fresh products for *my time* takes place early in the morning in the main kitchen and during the afternoon in the Time Out infrastructure. The employees responsible for the warm meals there are also busy in the kitchen in the afternoon and a 24-hour supply is guaranteed. This offer leads to significant added value for employees working the late and night shifts, which can be measured in terms of sales figures. Their previously available range of fresh produce in unwieldy compartment-type machines has increased with *my time* and is easily accessible. That is greatly appreciated. We were able to change the concept without laying off employees. Corona played an important role here. During Corona, the number of guests fell significantly. Natural losses were not replaced or only temporarily. The momentum for this change of concept was therefore very favorable.



Dr. phil. Franziska  
Honegger  
Hospitality Manager,  
Kantonsspital Aarau AG

### Positive balance – adjustments are underway

After almost three months of operation, Marco Wymann, Head of Restoration, draws a positive balance: "The budgeted turnover of *my time* has already been exceeded by double". This also means that the process organization processes are continuously adjusted with the experience gained. A key element here is coordinating the filling quantity of the products in the coolers over the course of the day. "The guests expect to find full shelves for 24 hours," says Marco Wymann. "Finding the balance between an attractive selection that is accessible 24 hours a day and minimal food waste is a constant development that can only be predicted and planned to a limited extent." Such changes to structures that have been established for decades are also not always well received. Guests who for years combined their morning break in the former cafeteria with a chat with the staff there are very hesitant to make friends with the self-scanning checkout. However, switching to Time Out and its staff is seen as hardly imaginable. On the other hand, there is also a lot of positive feedback, especially from employees who also prefer unattended payment processing in retail.

The adjustments are not complete. It is planned that the offer at *my time* will be supplemented by soups during the cold season, and the kitchen and restaurant teams will also ensure that guests can look forward to an attractive, surprising offer during their time out from everyday work - or as stated in a comment on the KSA's own social media channel: "We were, are and will continue to do so, for the benefit of guests of all kinds".