



Yas Mall

Setting benchmarks in design and sustainability

With an Estidama Pearl rating of 2 for sustainable design, construction and operation of malls, and with its unique mix of brands in a shopping environment that emphasises the natural, Yas Mall moves centre-stage, complementing Yas Island's growing global reputation as a leisure and entertainment destination, **Dennis Daniel** reports

Yas Mall is a retail and entertainment destination that preserves the spirit of Yas Island, Abu Dhabi's showpiece leisure and entertainment location. Its 2.5 million sqft of GLA makes Aldar Properties the largest owner and manager of retail space in the capital. The flagship retail development is designed as more than a shopping destination, providing visitors a wide range of retail, dining and entertainment offerings within a vibrant environment that's a unique mix of art, design and brands, the overarching theme being sustainability.

The mall's design, especially its strong sense of height, light and space, is integral

to the visitor experience. Bathed in natural light, it abounds in natural scenery, its bright avenues, streets, boulevards and squares making for easy navigation and allowing customers to enjoy an outdoor shopping experience indoors. Its heart is the Town Square, the largest enclosed gathering space in any shopping centre in the Middle East, naturally-lit and surrounded by greenery and water features.

Another unique attraction is the mall's spectacular hanging paper fibre art, designed by Dutch artist Peter Gentenaar, who specialises in paper sculptures that are widely displayed in cities across Europe. In addition, three sculptures by acclaimed

international artist Marco Cianfanelli, known for his work in South Africa's Freedom Park, are displayed at key locations in the mall, while periodic exhibitions to entice art aficionados are also on the agenda.

"Yas Mall is a milestone for Aldar that reinforces our commitment to the community, setting new benchmarks in design, retail, entertainment and dining, adding breadth and depth to Abu Dhabi's ever-diversifying retail landscape. It's a vibrant everyday getaway for UAE residents and tourists alike, a place to gather, complementing the Yas Island experience that includes Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, the Yas Marina Circuit, Yas Links golf course,

Yas Waterworld and the island's seven hotels. It promises an unparalleled shopping experience with its wide array of brands brought to the capital and region for the first time," observes Mohammed Khalifa Al Mubarak, CEO, Aldar Properties.

There are few leisure destinations in the world comparable to Yas Island, adds Talal Al Dhiyebi, executive director-asset management, Aldar Properties, listing more leisure-cum-entertainment properties on the island that Yas Mall complements, such as Yas Marina & Yacht Club, Yas Viceroy Hotel, Yas Plaza and its hotels, Yas Links Club House and Yas Retail Park.

"We offer a 'Destination Yas' package to a global audience, especially those living within eight hours of flying time from the UAE. Visitors can come, stay, shop, be entertained and have a great experience - all in a single visit. Yas Mall is directly accessible from the highway and has around 10,000 covered parking spaces. It's also within easy reach of the capital and the Abu Dhabi International Airport - and less than an hour from Dubai," Al Dhiyebi points out.

New brands, unique store concepts and entertainment

Yas Mall houses over 370 food and beverage (F&B) and entertainment brands. The fully leased mall opened in November with 220 stores, including its key anchor stores Marks & Spencer, Debenhams, Geant, Vox Cinemas and a large number of F&B outlets. The remaining stores are in different stages of fit-out and are scheduled to open in early 2015.

Aldar is encouraging its tenants to launch outlets that are unique in design and shopper experience. Chalhoub Group, known for managing retail outlets and building brands, is creating its first owned brand department store. Debenhams is opening its largest outlet outside the UK, with shoppers there having access to a personal stylist.

Retail brands debuting in Abu Dhabi and the UAE include the first Hamleys, Hollister, Brooks Brothers and Geant Hypermarket in Abu Dhabi; and the first Lego store, standalone Under Armour store, two-level Go Sports store and Joe Fresh in the UAE.

Yas Mall offers more than 60 F&B options, including outdoor dining on Cascade Walk and cafes spilling out onto Town Square. F&B brands include the capital's first Cheesecake



Mohammed Khalifa Al Mubarak

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Factory, Angelina, PF Changs, Shakespeare and Co, Jamba Juice, Champions League Café, Pie Face and Paul; as well as the region's first Rogo's Rollercoaster Restaurant, where diners receive their food orders on a roller coaster.

The entertainment offerings include the first Fun Works in the UAE, the region's largest adventure play system, with a 60,000 sqft area dedicated to play learning and edutainment that features activities ranging from science and arts to theatre and construction. Adults looking for some active fun also have options, such as the region's first Softair Battlezone in which they can experience the thrill of competition. The 20-screen Vox Cinemas features the biggest Max screen in Abu Dhabi, three Gold Cinemas and 4DX technology to engage all five senses. The

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mall is also directly linked to Ferrari World Abu Dhabi.

“A lot of meticulous planning has gone into operation and management of the mall to create awareness, attract footfall, increase dwell time, convert footfall into sales, improve customer service and build brand loyalty to get visitors to return. That's important - generating repeat visits. We've



Talal Al Dhiyebi

favoured flagship retail stores with a wider range of products compared to other stores of the same brands elsewhere in the UAE. We also want to differentiate the mall experience with more generous spaces, natural lighting and greenery,” Al Diyabi explains.

“A lesser known fact is that we are one of most energy efficient malls in the region, built around green principles, with 80% of the steel and 50% of the wood used in construction being recycled or sustainably sourced. In addition, 20% of all materials were procured locally. Yas Mall has an Estidama Pearl rating of 2, complying with the rating agency's framework for sustainable design, construction and operation of malls,” he concludes. ■