

Sky's the limit for The Leonardo

Constructed using more than 8.7-million kgs of steel, The Leonardo will be Africa's tallest completed* skyscraper upon its opening, say the building's architects, Co-Arc International. That's more metal than in the Eiffel tower, and you don't even see it, as the concrete and masonry structure is what is exposed.



At 233m tall, The Leonardo was deliberately designed to be labour intensive. By the time it reaches completion, it will have taken millions of man-hours by teams involved with everything from bricks and mortar, through the design of air conditioning systems to calculating the impact that high winds could have on the structure during a Highveld storm. In view of the current employment statistics the 18,000 to 20,000 jobs created is a welcome achievement.

So says Patrick McNerney, director of Co-Arc International Architects, who have worked for more than six years to see The Leonardo transformed from a vision represented by a few tentative sketches on paper to the reality of the 233m high pinnacle on Sandton's skyline.

"Working with many multi-disciplinary teams to build Africa's tallest building from out of the hole left by a previous failed development, to the official opening is undoubtedly one of the firm's greatest achievements. The Leonardo is also a natural continuation to our association with South Africa's 'richest square mile' which began in the 1980s with the design of Nelson Mandela Square for the Council and the Michelangelo Hotel for the Legacy Group.

"Now, almost 35 years later, a landmark building is adding to the vision of a vibrant civic precinct. Marking the heart of the

southern commercial centre of the continent, the tower will be completely integrated into the neighbourhood, providing a new residential and lifestyle offering within the CBD and transforming Maude Street in Sandton from that of a financial centre to a lifestyle destination,” says McInerney.

In order to be financially viable, the highly complex skyscraper was designed to be a complete building at a variety of heights. As each construction milestone was reached, and, as sales targets were achieved, the design was adapted to suit the requirements of the next stage.

Unlike most of its neighbours, The Leonardo is a publically accessible building. The public are welcomed into the building through the engaging colonnade and the generosity of the public space at ground level, the public space extending through the lower floors all the way to the 5th floor podium terrace and 55th floor sky deck.

*The Leonardo will be regarded as Africa's tallest building until The Pinnacle Tower I in Nairobi, Kenya is completed in 2020. The Leonardo will remain South Africa's tallest building - overthrowing the Carlton Centre (at 223m), which has held the title since 1973.

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