

Cape Town CBD booms in wake of party

The brand new MyCiTi shuttle service, a major station revamp and a generally enhanced CBD have all played their part in bringing business back to Cape Town's CBD, as have the burst of new restaurants, eateries, boutiques and other stores. National retailers like Pick n Pay, Mr Price and Woolworths are seeing the CBD potential.

Picbel Arcade

In one major development, Pick 'n Pay, in the Picbel Parkade, Strand Street, has undergone a major expansion to meet escalating demand and alleviate customer waiting times.

Paddy Gutmer, financial director of Tanin Trading, the company that owns the Pick n Pay Strand Street franchise, says the store opened in 2002 with a trading area of 963 square metres. "Turnovers have grown since then, with businesses and locals returning to the city centre. The size of the store had proved to be too small and became overcrowded during peak periods such as lunchtime and at the end of office hours.

"The area of the store has been expanded by a further 612 square metres, to increase the fresh food area, alleviate customer waiting times at these areas and at the checkout tills. Storage areas have also been increased to hold a larger product range," he says.

Gutmer adds that tourism has played a major part in businesses making the decision to return and his company hopes the City Council will continue to provide and maintain "a clean, safe and well regulated environment".

Growthpoint Properties, which owns the shopping centre, invested some R10 million in this expansion and upgrade project. Jewel Harris of Growthpoint notes that in addition to the Picbel Parkade, the company owns several properties in and around the Cape Town CBD. "We are positive about the future of the city and our property investments in the CBD. In managing these assets, we proactively strive to unlock increased value by improving and enhancing our properties to the benefit of both the clients which occupy the buildings and the community in general."

St George's Mall

Meanwhile Brad Jacklin, real estate manager of the Mr Price Group (Real Estate Division), says the company is pleased at its recent move into St George's Mall, almost opposite Independent Newspapers and Mandel Rhodes Place.

"The reason for locating our store in this area was to maximize the trading opportunity for our Apparel brand due to the foot-traffic in both St Georges Mall and in Adderley Street," says Jacklin. "We wanted a store of approximately 1000 sqm in this area, as we were confident about the future of Cape Town CBD."

Woolworths' upgrade

Andrew Levermore, Woolworths group director: retail operations, says the company's stores are designed and strategically located to meet customers' needs for a convenient shopping experience. "The company

has a customer base in the CBD and we are working hard to meet the needs of this exciting and dynamic market place. The store in Adderley Street has served the CBD of Cape Town for many years and we are investing in the future of the store through refurbishment and modernisation. The process began in April, and changes have included the replacement of flooring and shop fittings, as well as refreshing the store's light and signage."

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