

BEYOND THE TRADITIONAL

Despite the rise of e-commerce, the evolution of brick-and-mortar malls keeps them relevant and growing. By **TREVOR CRIGHTON**

Liberty Two Degrees (L2D) chief operations officer Jonathan Sinden says shopping malls have transcended their traditional shopping function to become thriving community and lifestyle centres. “The appeal of the physical store lies in its ability to provide a holistic offering: from retail therapy, shopping for essentials, going to the cinema and enjoying a meal with family and friends at a restaurant to exercising at the gym, watching a live show, or settling a baby at a Baby Care Lounge – all without leaving the mall,” he elaborates.

BUILDING EXPERIENCES

Sinden believes that the rise of e-commerce poses challenges for traditional mall models that do not implement innovative solutions specifically tailored to comprehend and satisfy customers’ needs. “Shopping experiences have shifted from just product sales to focusing on customer interactions and delighting shoppers while leveraging extraordinary immersive experiences,” he says.

“Brick-and-mortar retail contributes significantly to revitalising local economies and the broader

“BRICK-AND-MORTAR RETAIL CONTRIBUTES SIGNIFICANTLY TO REVITALISING LOCAL ECONOMIES AND THE BROADER FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE.” – JONATHAN SINDEN

financial landscape. We differentiate ourselves through delivering extraordinary customer and tenant service experiences to stay at the forefront of an evolving retail environment and investing in passionate people to drive execution.”

EMBRACING TECH

Technology plays a key role in enhancing the customer experience and smart environments are not only being leveraged to enhance consumers’ shopping experiences, but also for the benefit of retailers in the shopping mall environment. “As L2D, we have invested in ensuring our malls are smart, sustainable, agile and continue to benefit generations. Marrying the bricks and mortar and online retail offering ensures we can achieve this,” he explains.

“Smart metering systems, smart recycle and reward platforms, smart parking systems, smart digital signage, smart cameras, digital gift cards, mobile apps, self-service kiosks and free Wi-Fi are all part of this omnichannel experience.” ■

THE HOTEL BOOM

South Africa’s hotel industry is blossoming and building on its impressive contribution to gross domestic product, writes **TREVOR CRIGHTON**

The broader tourism industry, according to Alan Campbell, sales and marketing director at ANEW Hotels & Resort, contributes 7.6 per cent of South Africa’s gross domestic product (GDP), narrowly ahead of the automotive and mining industries (approximately 7.5 per cent). Despite numerous domestic challenges, it remains one of the most resilient sectors in the country’s economy.

but tourism has been a consistent growth area for South Africa. The growth potential is particularly evident in emerging commercial hubs such as the Limpopo province, where there is a growing demand for infrastructure development to support tourism activities.”

here. These include market cyclicalities, dependence on tourism trends, operational complexities and regulatory uncertainties.”



Victoria & Alfred Hotel (exterior)

GROWING AND GROWING

Janus Schoeman, general manager for pre-openings, transitions and projects for Newmark Hotels & Reserves, says the group’s portfolio of properties has seen exciting developments and is poised for further growth that will complement its existing offering. “Our portfolio currently consists of 25 properties, which has more than doubled in size in the last three years. This includes new additions to the portfolio in strategic areas, including the Cape Winelands, Johannesburg, Limpopo, Mauritius and Nigeria,” he says.

Campbell notes that despite the tough challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, ANEW Hotels & Resorts has added 14 properties to its portfolio. BON Hotels opened six hotels during the pandemic and a further 14 since 2023. ■

ADDING VALUE

“Tourism encompasses various investment opportunities: accommodation, dining, entertainment venues and landmarks – all of which contribute to capturing the hearts and minds of locals and international visitors,” says Campbell. “The COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly impacted the tourism sector globally,



BON Hotels Waterfront Richards Bay

BON Hotels CEO Guy Stehlik says investing in hotels offers several strategic advantages for South African and international property investors, including a reliable source of income generated from multiple revenue streams and a contribution to portfolio diversification, spreading risk across different asset classes and market segments. “However, it’s essential for South African investors to carefully navigate the unique risks associated with hotel investments



ANEW Hotel Green Point Cape Town (exterior)