

Menlyn Park

A SHOPPING DESTINATION—AND MUCH MORE—IN SOUTH AFRICA’S CAPITAL

By Leah Misbin

The management team at Menlyn Park Shopping Centre in Pretoria, South Africa, has always thought of the retail complex as being about a lot more than shopping. “We want this place to be for everyone—high-end shoppers, families, teenagers using their parents’ money, individuals on a tight budget,” says Megan Meas, Menlyn’s marketing manager.

Menlyn is the largest mall in Africa, housing more than 400 stores and stretching across 1.9 million square feet (177,000 square meters). The mall has made a concerted effort to differentiate itself by creating an atmosphere that is welcoming to the varied population that makes up South Africa, targeting a diverse tenant mix from a range of cost points. In this way, year after year, the mall remains at the top of its game and stands out as one of the best-performing malls in Africa.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MENLYN PARK

The shopping centre houses more than 400 stores, including 21 South African retail tenants.



UNIQUELY SOUTH AFRICAN

“As the biggest fashion hub on the continent, we are all about supporting local talent and business,” says Olive Ndebele, general manager at Menlyn Park. To achieve this, Menlyn’s management is making sure that the mall not only showcases huge international brands, but also brings in local designers. As a result, there are 21 South African retail tenants. Moreover, in 2018 Menlyn Park was named the official home of Project Runway South Africa.

Menlyn Park also strives to promote other types of South African businesses, such as the Zip Zap Circus, which took up residence during the 2018 Christmas shopping season. Zip Zap is a program founded in Cape Town and designed to involve South African children in the circus arts by providing free activities to participants. Its performances in Menlyn Park were quite a draw and demonstrate how the Menlyn management team was able to make creative use of the mall’s central atrium. “We were able to hang trapeze equipment from the metal catwalks that are usually

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Menlyn Park Shopping Centre in Pretoria, South Africa is recognized as one of the best-performing malls on the continent.

used for fashion shows,” points out Martina Heyman, property manager at Menlyn. “It was great to watch.”

ENHANCED AMENITIES

Menlyn Park has a VIP lounge and parking area, available by invitation only. “We use this space not only for our big spenders, but also as a perk to important individuals who may visit us. For example, being in Pretoria, we have quite a few embassies nearby, and we provide cards to some of them to facilitate shopping for their employees, who are ex-pats here and are looking for a convenient shopping experience,” says Meas. The VIP area can also be used by the tenants to host special clients or events.

Boasting 8,000 parking spaces, Menlyn Park has ensured it has the capacity to hold enough cars for its visitors. Given that it has the room, the park has also looked for ways to increase action in the parking areas. The Bus Welcome Centre stands at one of the two entrances off the N1 Highway to Menlyn Park. Individuals can park near it and catch shuttle buses from the Welcome Centre to see a concert at one of the nearby stadiums. As an added benefit, the Welcome Centre has a South African Police Service (SAPS) officer stationed there during working hours, able to quickly respond to safety concerns and certify documents onsite. Menlyn has also created special pensioner parking areas and wider berth parking that can accommodate strollers for parents traveling with children.



More than just a place to go shopping, Menlyn Park positions itself as a lifestyle destination.

The shopping centre also participates in green initiatives that include electric car charging bays in the parking area, tanks for harvesting rain water, a composter for wet waste and a robust recycling program to reduce waste to landfill. The mall boasts an energy-efficient air conditioning system, vertical transportation and low-energy consumption lights.

Soccer (or football, as it’s called outside North America) is the most popular sport in South Africa, and since Menlyn is built on such a large piece of land, it is able to accommodate Fives Futbol as a tenant. Fives Futbol is a soccer court facility available for short-term rentals to companies, teams, parties or individuals who would rather play soccer while their families shop. The all-weather venue, located on the roof of Menlyn Park’s main building, also offers soccer classes and holiday camps.

SOUTH AFRICA’S MALLS IN THE FUTURE

In the U.S. today, retail complexes are facing a challenge from online shopping. Fewer consumers see the need to go to the mall when everything is so readily available with the click of a button. “Here, the online competition hasn’t hurt us yet,” says Ndebele, noting that Wi-Fi, internet services and shipping can still be a bit inconsistent in South Africa. Even so, the Menlyn team is not putting online competition on the back burner. It has worked to offer online experiences, allowing customers to view products and buy them online, then come into the stores to pick them up. On the other hand, “Humans are social beings,” says Ndebele, and “as a result, the mall has positioned itself not only as a shopping destination, but rather as a lifestyle offering. With the continuous innovation, we are confident that as online shopping increases, we will continue to have a steady base of customers willing to come and see what else we have planned.” ■

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