

Freeport A'Famosa opens near Malacca, Malaysia



Freeport Retail delivers a new outlet center, 100 percent leased, in shopper-dense Malaysia.

When Malaysia's deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi officially opened Freeport A' Famosa Outlet on Jan. 28, the 180,000-sf center had actually been open for two months and had already been visited by more than 650,000 shoppers.

That's a number that most outlet centers would be happy to see after six months of operation, but the shoppers flooding into A' Famosa were there to check out the center's 70-plus tenants, which include Nike, Cotton On, Esprit, Levi's, Triumph, Puma, G2000, Samsonite, Saccor, Geox, Folli Follie, U.S. Polo Association and Forever 21.

Clearly the shoppers are liking what they see.

"The center is trading well ahead of target," said Chris Milliken, one of the founding directors of Freeport Retail, which developed the 100 percent leased project with Langkah Realiti, owner of the adjacent A'Famosa Golf Resort.

"The tenants are delighted with the trade and



Freeport A'Famosa Outlet was developed in Malaysia by UK outlet company Freeport Retail and Langkah Realiti, owner of the adjacent A'Famosa Golf Resort.

are reporting outstanding numbers,” he said. “We are seeing trade from both the 45-minute catchment population and the 16 million tourists that visit Malacca every year.”

Milliken said he expects Freeport A’Famosa to attract more than 3 million visitors the first year – when most outlet centers are hoping to draw 1 million shoppers during their opening 12 months. The expectation is reasonable as Freeport A’Famosa’s market includes 9.3 million residents and those millions of annual visitors. That potential footfall and the center’s stellar performance have Freeport Retail deep in the planning stages of an expansion.

“Phase 2 is fully consented,” Milliken said, “and with demand for units already being registered, we plan to be open at the end of this year.” The second phase will add another 40 tenants, as well as another 1,000 free parking spaces to the center’s existing 1,600 spaces.

Outlet expertise

One of the original outlet-center developers in Europe, Freeport Retail opened nine outlet centers between 1994 and 2004, all of which are still operating with new owners. A’Famosa Outlet is the developer’s first project in more than a decade, and Freeport Retail will continue to handle management, marketing leasing. The center is two minutes from A’Famosa golf resort and just 30 minutes from Malacca, which is a key tourist destination.

At the top of Freeport Retail’s agenda for keeping the center a top performer



Chris Milliken, one of the founding directors of Freeport Retail, co-developer of Freeport A’Famosa Outlet, stands in front of a windmill that is part of the center’s architectural homage to Malacca’s Dutch heritage.

is marketing, both in ad campaigns and on-site activities. Recent crowd pleasers at the center include hosting 60 finalists for the Miss Tourism Queen of the Year International 2015, bringing a group of 45 fashion bloggers to the center, making sure there were plenty of Chinese New Year deals and a three-week daily performance schedule by the Kun Seng Keng lion dance troupe.

“We carried out significant consumer research at the start of the project,” Milliken said, “and it was clear that our customers were looking for much more than a pure shopping experience – people were wanting a day out in a different and interesting environment.”

A fashion forum and both offline and online activity has been built around Freeport A’Famosa, and the excite-

ment from those initiatives has helped increase traffic and employment in the town of Alor Gajah, where the center is.

The architecture of the center, themed on Malacca’s Dutch heritage, offers a series of open-air plazas featuring a windmill, fountains, gardens and a carousel.

Freeport Retail’s pipeline

Freeport sees Asia as a major opportunity and has launched its second outlet project in the region 30 minutes south of Manila in the Philippines.

“The site is within 10 minutes of Tagaytay, which is the region’s premier weekend and second home location” he said, adding that Freeport Retail’s partners are prominent residential and hotel developers in the Philippines.

Elsewhere, Freeport Retail continues to be active in Europe, most recently in France. The developer has obtained all the necessary consents to start construction on the 270,000-sf The Village in Villefontaine near Lyon. The site is in the Isere Valley 15 minutes from Lyon and adjacent to the main Autoroute de la Maurienne, which links Lyon to Chambéry and Geneva via the A43 and to Grenoble by the A48.

This project is a joint venture with Compagnie de Phalsbourg, a developer of retail parks in France. Designed by Italian architect Gianni Ranaulo, construction was scheduled to have started in March and is planned to open in November 2017. 🌐

FREEPORT A’FAMOSA OUTLET TENANTS INCLUDE

Akemeiuchi	Focus Point	MoodBoard	Spa Ceylon
Beverly Hills Polo Club	Folli Follie	MyNews.com	Sports Empire
Brooks	Forever 21	Naquirkee	Star Ted
Camel Active	G2000	Nature Republic	Stay Fit
Carlo Rino	Geox	Nike	TFA Outlet
Chai	Hush Puppies	Obermain	Toy World
City Chain	Hyper Gear	Only FJ Benjamin	Triumph
Clarks	IL Fragrance	Optical 88	U.S. Polo Assn.
Cosas United	Italia Sportivo	PappaRich	Vero Moda
Cotton On	Kickers	Playboy Malaysia	Victoria’s Secret
Crocs	Kutsu Kutsu	Poney	Voir
Cuero Empire	Levi’s	Puma	Wacoal
Curiosity	Li-Ning	Rip Curl	West 57 th St. Cafe
Daphne	Local Celebrities	Sacoor	Wonder Rococo
Elle	Lux Lux	Samsonite	Young Hearts
Esprit	MarryBrown	Sembonia	
Florsheim	Melinda Looi	Skechers	