

Golden Mile hotel restored

Tsogo Sun's nine seafront hotels and Suncoast entertainment destination carry the memories of hundreds of thousands of travellers and holiday makers across generations, and the group's investment into the rejuvenation of this elegant, mature and ambitious city is seeing to it that Durban holds its own into the future.

The Durban beachfront remains a vital part of Tsogo Sun's operations, contributing some 25% of its total EBITDA in an area stretching from Garden Court South Beach to the Suncoast Casino and Entertainment World at the northern end of the Golden Mile. "Over the last few years, we have invested significantly in refurbishing and upgrading our hotels on the beachfront in response to the outstanding work that the City of Durban undertook upgrading the promenade," says Tsogo Sun CEO, Marcel von Aulock.



"We brought the Elangeni and Maharani hotels together to create the most exciting destination complex and the largest hotel in the group - the Southern Sun Elangeni & Maharani - and we have just finished a complete refurbishment of the Garden Court Marine Parade, an Art Deco masterpiece."

The Garden Court Marine Parade, as it's now known, was opened in 1985, becoming yet another Tsogo Sun landmark on the Durban beachfront. Constructed at a cost of R45 million, it set a new standard in South African architecture and, exactly 30 years later, has just been given a R110 million refurbishment to restore it to its former glory.

"Tsogo Sun's Development team painstakingly retained the core elements of the 70s architecture, and combined it with the modernity of today's technology in a seamless way so that the guest experiences a fresh, modern product of a world class standard," says John Aritho, General Manager of the Garden Court Marine Parade.

With a unique dome that has become an iconic picture of Durban and art décor theming that the group was determined to retain, the Garden Court Marine Parade, with 352 sea-facing rooms, occupies a prominent space on the beachfront.

Touch-ups and re-colouring

The renovations include touch-ups and re-colouring in all the hotel's public areas, reception, conference rooms, guest

toilets, lifts and lift foyers and corridors. The entire lobby now features light Brazilian tiles presenting a clean, crisp look. The pool area on the 30th floor boasts sweeping views of the Durban beachfront, harbour and city, and has been revamped with new furniture including a mobile bar that is ideal for events.

Guest rooms and bathrooms now have minimalistic new furnishings throughout with emphasis on a cleaner, more contemporary look with simple uncluttered lines. New rooms have been added, increasing the offering from 346 rooms to 352 rooms.

The hotel offers an array of features, including conferencing and events venues, free high speed Wi-Fi, a new open air gym, hotel shuttle, bicycle rental and self-service business facilities. The upgraded conference facilities are able to accommodate over 500 delegates in various layouts.

The restaurant has been designed in a contemporary fresh style and the bar area also has been refreshed with a relaxed café look.

The response from the market to the refurbishment, says John, has been overwhelmingly positive. "We've grown our conferencing business as a result of the revamp of our conference centre, which has boosted our occupancy out of season. Event organisers who confess to not having been in this part of Durban for 20 years are now bringing their events to the hotel. Everyone is so proud to see Durban returning to where it was in the 80s. Tsogo Sun's investment in our beachfront hotels has been a great driver for business, one that supports what the City has done and that's been highly recognised by local government and Durban Tourism."

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