

The Elusive Element of Convenience

The issue of convenience is a strange one in Gaborone. In a city with an abundance of malls and shopping centres, one might have assumed the convenience factor had been satisfied to death. The thing is, though populated with all the necessary stores, the type of stores on offer remain pretty standard, and even simple aspects such as supermarket opening hours are unfavourable. The elusive convenience factor, then, is precisely that: elusive.

Imagine that stroke of joy when you realise you can in fact go out for a pretty memorable sushi dinner (yes, *in Gaborone!*) and that you can still pop into the supermarket after 9pm for whatever last minute things you may need. The convenience stretches further in that you can find your decor, furnishings and the latest LG flat screen TV all in one place without having to walk a mile just to get from one end of the shops to the other. This is certainly not news to those who frequent Sebele Shopping Centre, a mall which has made it its mission to be “conveniently yours.”

Sebele Centre boasts an impressive collection of tenants that includes Pick ‘n Pay, Woolworths, Milky Lane, restaurants, hardware and furniture shops, professional services outlets, and a pharmacy. Conveniently located on one of the city’s busiest roads, the A1, Sebele Centre has proved that even in a city filled to the brim with massive malls, it can often be easy to lose sight of the fact that, at the end of the day, what we really want is a convenient place with quality products which can be accessed from all points of the compass.

The Centre has somewhat of a niche market, specialty store feel. It is geared almost towards a lifestyle and home décor market beyond the generics of your run-of-the-mill franchise stores. Whilst furnishing one’s home ought to be a joyous process, it can often become a tedious task when you are forced to zig-zag across town from one shop to another. Now, this need no longer be the case. From furnishings in Mukwa Interiors to décor and gifts from Mma Bolao, soft furnishings from Hugo Interiors and bedding from The Linen Box, the mall pretty much has it covered. Those looking to deck their homes out with the latest electronics need go no further than the iStore for computer gadgets or the LG store for state of the art appliances and flat screens. There is also a strong food element, including a Chinese restaurant, Mintt Cafe and fast food outlets Debonnairs, Milky Lane and the newly opened Barcelos.

With shopping malls popping up all over the show, there’s something rather wonderful and full of character about Sebele Centre. It has exactly what you need, without going overboard, and you get a real sense that their “conveniently yours” slogan is a genuine one. Sebele Centre has personality; and it’s this personality that enables this average-sized go-to centre to stand out against a sea of megamalls. Even when it is all the way across town for some people it maintains that once-elusive appeal of convenience, and yet still has the draw of being able to satisfy that sushi craving and late night supermarket run.

As the city develops exponentially, the irony lies in the fact that there is some disparity between what we hope will happen and what actually happens. Instead of making our lives easier and more convenient, the increasing abundance of malls and shopping centres actually leaves us painfully spoilt for choice. You find yourself trapped in tiring parking lots, confused by a multitude of entrances and wasting a whole hour to get into the supermarket just for a quick milk run. It is refreshing, then, to find a place that has not lost sight of what it means to make the shopper’s

experience easier, more convenient, and actually enjoyable, all the while offering something that is just a little bit different.

Sebele Centre is a Prime Time development. For more information, go to www.primetime.co.bw, email: info@primetime.co.bw or call +267 3956080.