

## Black and white Legacy By Donovan White (Projects Writer)



Panache arrives as the Legacy Group creates entire biospheres for the elite with additions of Legacy Corner and DaVinci Hotel and Suites to its Legacy portfolio.

Founded by Bart Dorrestein (CEO Legacy Hotels and Resorts) and the late Bruno Corte, Dorrestein lives his business partners' luxuriant tradition by leaving a legacy of African hospitality and residential properties built and run to highest international standards. The group now offers their clientele the ultimate lifestyle experience in shopping, living, wellness and gaming, through Legacy Corner.

This mixed use facility encompasses Legacy Corner Mall, The DaVinci Hotel and Suites, The DaVinci Spa and Gym and The Marco PoloV. 'This Legacy Lifestyle Experience' provides the architecturally astounding with post-modernistic interiors. This complex began its construction in September 2007 and finished in May 2010, in time for the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

### **Inviting reception**

The Legacy Group wanted this iconic development to be contemporary in nature but with a classical edge. Architect, Franc Brugman from Bentel Associates International (BAI) says Legacy Corner is a fantastic new addition to the Sandton skyline. Visually, the 17 storey building is a careful balance between embracing the classical elements of its neighbouring buildings, and a more contemporary architecture.

Maria Paschini, BAI architect, says this is a building that has achieved timeless elegance through the use of 'old' and 'new' materials. Aesthetics are incumbent of elegant textures and finishes that compliment and respect the existing architectural fabric of the buildings in the existing precinct. Naboomspruit sandstone and Zimbabwe black granite were specified for the lower levels of the building along with thermally efficient coloured glass, and plaster with a finish of Gamma Zenith Hagar spray applied.

The design brief given to world renowned interior designer, Stephen Falcke, was to create a contemporary hotel set entirely in black and white. Paschini says the client wanted it to be timeless while reflecting a contemporary feel in the internal architecture which the architects extended to a boutique type of hotel and mall, which was pre-empted by the constraints of the

narrow site. Falcke says in *The Legacy Inspires* magazine that he wanted to marry design and architecture. "I enjoy using things that you wouldn't normally use like patterns, colours and something rough with something smooth, again making the contrasts that begins to form textures of design." Every inch of the internal architecture is a South African master piece of art.

With *Legacy* its detail that counts. Artist, Mbongeni Buthelezi added his black and white touch to the DaVinci lobby through his 3.6m high textured frieze constructed out of recycled plastic collected off the streets of Johannesburg. Deliberately ambiguous, this mural spans 36m, consists of nine separate panels and leaves admirers to construct their own images out of the close up haze as it reflects democratic South African life. Inviting mosaics at the entrance and on the structural pillars of *Legacy Corner Mall* are shaded with white grouting to add to and reflect its sophistication.



### **Cosmopolitan Communal areas**

Falcke says a sense of passion is portrayed while styles of contemporary trend embody the DaVinci. Black and White design angles allow one to envision the creativity that lies within this establishment. From carpets to wallpaper revealing never-ending trees and South African artwork strategically, yet generously placed, guests are surrounded by the surreal they can admire or even purchase. When entering 'This Legacy Lifestyle experience', everything from the foyer to hallways and elevator is a work of art, allowing clients to live in an art gallery. Handcrafted chandeliers hang in the lobby from rounded bulk heads protruding from the white concrete roof while ironmongery and a glass staircase add finishing touches to glossy black tiled floors and rose mosaic rectangular pillars.

Contemporary artist, Bron Stofberg used oil based paints to create nine glossy 'wet look' paintings. Her linear black, white, grey and silver canvasses were used in three elevators and for the lift lobbies. Falcke told Jenny Crwys-Williams in a Talk Radio 702 interview that he placed glass over Stofberg's elevator art and mirrored the opposite side of the elevator.

### **Personal touch**

With the main aim of providing privacy and exclusivity to urban and suburban professionals staying longer than one month, clients enjoy lavish lifestyles in the 50 en suite single, double and triple bed roomed apartment suites and four two-story penthouses. "The DaVinci was a great challenge for me", Falcke says. He designed a mock up room and then designed the

chandeliers, furniture, and design pieces to be placed into a melting pot to make it look like a second home. Furniture for the hotel rooms, lobby, reception area and swimming pool were specified to reflect the sophisticated and elegant clientele expected to visit the hotel. Mahogany timber floors and custom made furniture provide grandeur and compliment the black granite floor tiles and polished white ceramic wall tiles, says Paschini.

Legacy requested a spacious feel in the hotel rooms and apartments due to space constraints which resulted from the narrow site. As a result bathrooms were designed with glass sliding doors leading into the main bathroom area and glass cubicles were constructed for the shower and toilet areas. Duravit's Vero bathroom series washbasins, toilets and urinals for public areas have clear cut, classic rectangular forms appreciated by purists and individualists alike. Stainless steel handrails, trim and ironmongery in conjunction with low flow shower heads round off the bathroom area.

The penthouses have an open feel with 360 degree panoramic views made possible by full height glass windows. The penthouses had to be comfortable which meant that the glass would have to be specified to prevent thermal build up of heat. Solarvue neutral HL low E 7,38mm laminated safety glass was used in this case.

### **Social spheres at your service**

"Service is our creed", says Dorrestein. Guests can enjoy the endless edge black coloured swimming pool and timber pool deck or the convenience of luxurious shopping an elevator trip away. The triple storey mall achieves a sophisticated European feel through the use of black, white and grey seen in every aspect of Legacy Corner Mall's tree patterned mosaic pillars, grey Italian porcelain floor tiles and black granite wall panels.

Shopfronts were incorporated into this scheme and even though a few tenants chose to design their own the interior design flows. Along with low lux lighting in hallways, grey porcelain tiled floor become slick shop front glass windows to place the stores in the spotlight. Stores such as 312 Couture and Moloko Fashions come with a contemporary yet minimalist look and feel. Falcke says the use of non-colour attracted him because the surroundings provide a beautiful canvass for colourful fashion to stand out against the interior design. Energy saving escalators connect stores such as the Art Afrique gallery, Vodacom 3G, MTN Cellular, Colours, Aldo Bru, Giovanni Uomo, The Vault, Geri Ziffereli, Manna Boutique and, Exclusive Books. Many of the shops however are designed with neutral shells and high end shop fronts. All the design identity however comes from individual shop's interior design.

Maximilien restaurant makes use of vast expanding windows and decks that overlook Sandton. The bar's brown bamboo flooring, the dining areas French oak floors and finishes, along with power pressed ceilings, and antique mirrors give it a New York French bistro character (much like Balthazar Restaurant in New York). "It gives a very warm vibe" says Varoom interior designer, Vanessa Preston, as she talks of the silver pewter moulding around the bar with lion's heads that give it an African feel. The Marco Polo is a two floored entertainment centre with architecture and interiors that mimic the renaissance period through its Venetian design.

The DaVinci Hotel reception and lounge area offer the discerning visitor the chance to relax

and take in the Sandton atmosphere. Overlooking the terrace and black pool, the DaVinci Gym's techno-gym equipment, including a kinesis wall, are placed on a quartz floor, with inlaid flower design. The Legacy Group makes its debut into the spa and wellness arena. The DaVinci Spa was designed by Design Crew's Jane Pitt, who brought her own interpretation of the black and white theme. Walls are clad in beveled edged mirrored tiles, reflecting the cool calm interiors. The reception area opens into a manicure and pedicure lounge. Six treatment rooms, including a double suite with steam shower, makes up the spa. The unique cave-like rasul and spa bath completes this relaxing environment.

### **Elitist Energy**

Because the Legacy Group commits itself to the Heritage Environmental Rating Programme in Africa, sustainability was an important part of the design brief. Brugman says he strived to include sustainable technologies into the building's design as much as possible. Generally we looked at the most energy efficient products that were within budget, says Paschini. Originally 2.4MVA was requested, but Eskom agreed on 2.2MVA.

The entire team implemented energy savings ranging from energy saving escalators, strict lighting designs, energy saving card readers in rooms, timers on external and basement lights, lower wattage lamps with higher efficient fittings, local switching in all individual rooms and, electronic control gear on fittings. Gas cooking is used where possible and power factor correction is installed in the sub-station.

BIA and wet services engineers, Watsol, undertook shadow reports to track the sun's position in relation to the building for optimal energy generation within the indirect solar water heating system installed on the roof. These panels produce 30 000 litres of water everyday heated to 60°C. Aiding this process is the electrical boilers and heat exchange technology that collects hot water produced by the air conditioning chiller units for water heating. Water saving water closets (wc) and urinals were also used. Insulation on hot water pipes and performance glass is used to reduce air conditioning heat loads. A Building Management System (BMS) assists with monitoring future energy consumptions and enhancing the water and HVAC portions of the building envelope. Brugman says they were aiming for a thermally efficient facade to ensure that there will be no thermal build up in the structure, especially in the north and west facing facade", he says.

### **Challenges and magnificence achieved**

Paschini says difficulties came when reducing the amount of glass used. A specific colour of glass for spandrel panels had to match the black-bronze colour of the aluminium powder coating. This colour was also chosen from a supplier that had it in their standard range. More difficulties came when designing the moulding for the punch out windows that had a contemporary feel, but fitted in with the architectural elements of the surrounding buildings. In addition to space constraints, mouldings also had to be light weight and manufactured for quick and easy installation. High density polyurethane was settled upon.

Because of its size and weight, the porte cochere steel structure was manufactured off site and installed over a public holiday. Access to site for installation of many elements was difficult as the building occupies most of the site. A crane was built inside the building and removed at the end with this portion of the building only being finished at the end of the

programme.

Internally many changes had to be accommodated for. Requirements, such as the swimming pool specifications, changed continuously as the project evolved. Curved glass for the oval staircase installation problems came when it could only be installed after the specified light fitting had arrived, which was fairly late in the project, says Paschini. Fire regulations with regards to fire breaks between occupancies and between hotel rooms and apartments, changed the spatial feel of the hotel rooms from the interior and services needed to be accommodated for in very narrow ceiling voids and ducts at hotel and apartment level due to the space constraints.

Budget is always a factor, says Paschini. Changes in requirements, such as the reduction of glass, impacted on the programme which resulted in the building not being completed as per the original programme. As a result BIA did not meet the budget nor the scheduled due date. Basements and retail were to be completed by 15 November 2008 and the hotel was to be completed by 1 July 2009. The retail section opened September 2009 and the hotel opened end May 2010.

#### **Last but not least**

Graced with a holistic lifestyle, Sandton now takes advantage Legacy formula of charisma, elegance and committed service. Clientele need only breathe for themselves as 'This Legacy Lifestyle' provides everything else from first class accommodation to dining, socialising, entertainment and shopping. "One could speak of the opulence of the rooms and their bathrooms, the restaurant and lounge, the fitness centre and health spa or even just get lost in the allure of the strange peace created by the contrasting black and white decor." concludes Dorrestein.