

Airport Junction ups the ante in Gaborone

 By [Gwen Watkins](#)

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Retailing in Gaborone just took another upswing with the opening of the Airport Junction, within the newly developed precinct in which Builders Warehouse opened last year.

Built as a joint venture between Eris Property Group and local partner Botswana Insurance Fund Management (Bifm), the 50 000 m² shopping centre will offer 72 new stores for shoppers in the north of Gaborone, particularly the new housing developments planned around the precinct and the nearby Phakalane Golf Estate, which has lacked an upmarket retail destination.

The big opening, which took place this past holiday weekend of 28 April to 1 May, attracted lots of eager buyers and browsers, as this mall is on the scale and attractiveness of modern international centres, with its high ceilings, natural light and A-grade finishes.

Anchored at one end by a SuperSpar and Checkers at the other, the centre offers some retailing firsts for Botswana.

House & Home, a trading division of Shoprite Checkers, and Mr Price Home, complements my favourite, @Home, which has at last arrived in Botswana, with a wonderful selection of homeware but it does lack a little colour. Botswana people love colourful fabrics and ornaments, so it needs to brighten up its offerings. Stuttards and Edgars have opened large stores and niche boutiques, Foschini, Truworths and Miladys round off the South African fashion scene.

Botswana's own economic success story, Mafia Soul, opens soon with its hip-hop young US fashion. (Johannesburg shoppers wanting to see what is on offer can visit the Milpark Shopping Centre and get a warm Gaborone welcome.)

Clicks, CNA, Musica, Cellphone Warehouse and a computer store add value and on the cards is the Wine Shop, hopefully a spot to get good wines, which are in short supply in Gabs. Restaurants abound, with play areas for kids, so the centre could become a major attraction for residents.

It will be interesting to see the effect the new centre has on Sebele Centre, which opened in June last year on the next door stand; it offers a Pick n Pay and a Woolworths as its anchor tenants.

Affecting both precincts is the poor traffic access and this could become a major stumbling block, as only one road has traffic lights and both roads exit onto main arterial roads - the A1 to Francistown and the airport road.

However, as an ardent shopper, I am well situated a kilometre from both vibrant centres, which are a testament to the high

growth of Gaborone and Botswana.

ABOUT GWEN WATKINS

Gwen Watkins is a freelance writer, editor, subeditor and author. Almost 40 years of experience across industrial and commercial writing, as a reporter and PR consultant, has given her expert grounding in brand communication and native advertising. A Master NLP Practitioner, she uses these skills within the creation of copywriting, annual reports, brochures and website copy.

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