

platzammeer



History of a new Namibian landmark

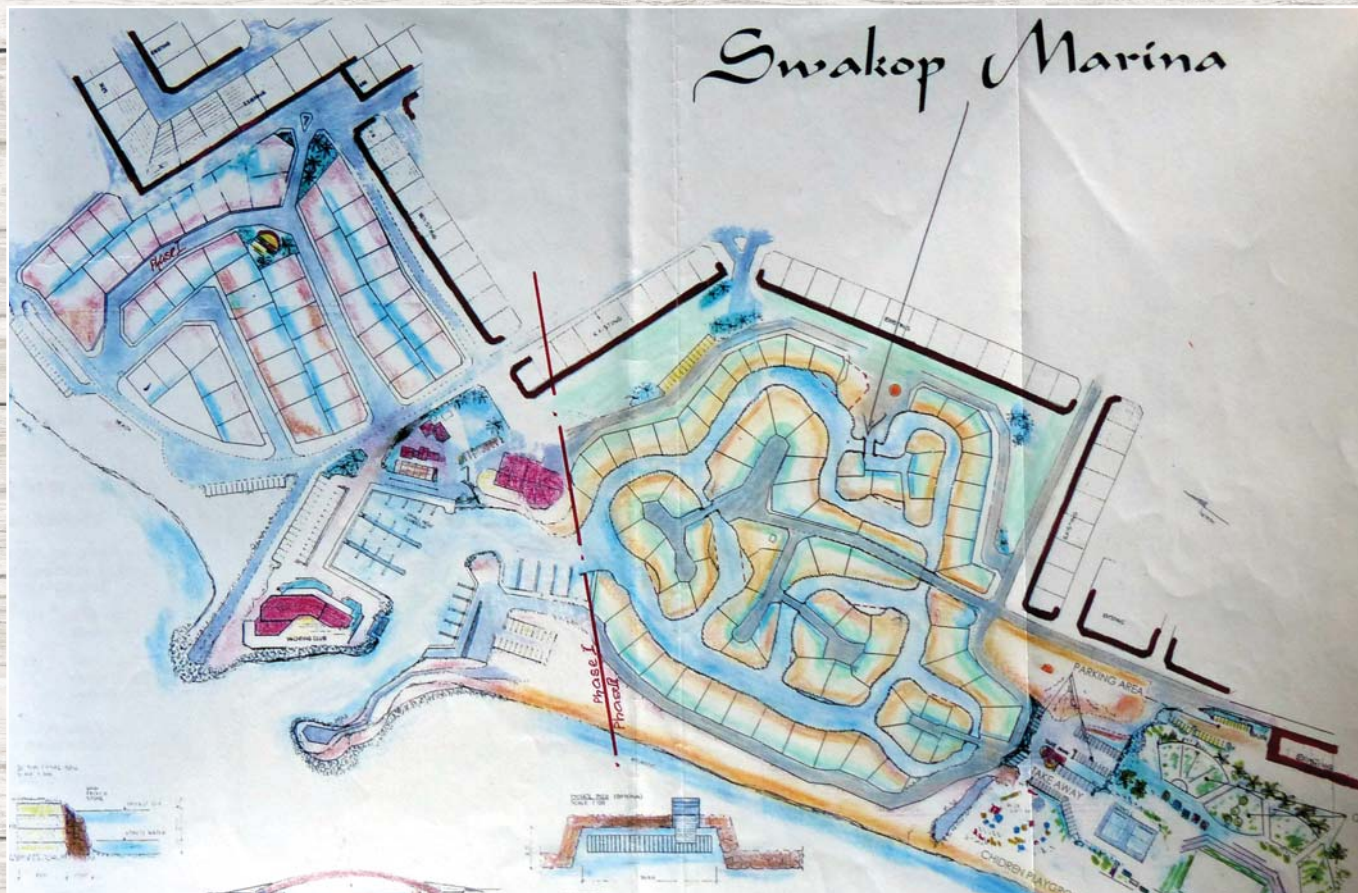


The story of the ultimate  
**LIFESTYLE AND RETAIL**  
destination on the coast  
of Swakopmund, Namibia



Swakopmund, Namibia





First Layout Proposal of the Waterfront by Messrs AP-Plan Edwin Köhle



# Early investigations



During 1994 the Council of Swakopmund commissioned an investigation of the coastline along its seaward municipal boundary to establish where on the beach development possibilities exist. This was done as part of Council's Long Term Development Plan to develop a number of node points along the beach, thereby releasing the pressure on the Mole Area.

Mr Edwin Köhle of the company AP-Plan approached Council to get involved in this investigation; in fact, at his own risk and cost, he took over the investigation along the coast with the aim to develop a Marina (waterfront) at a suitable site.

On 28 April 1994 Council resolved to accept the offer of Mr Edwin Köhle with

reference to a resolution (d) (vii): *"Submission of plans for approval by Council together with the consent from property owners directly adjacent to the proposed Waterfront Development."*

More than a year later, on 8 August 1995, Council's Management Committee reiterated its stance in this regard by resolving: *"That the developers, Messrs AP-Plan*

*Edwin Köhle at this stage be informed that, should this project for whatever reason fail, for example due to resistance from property owners in the area, Council shall not be held liable for any costs incurred regarding the investigations done by Mr Köhle or the firms assigned by him for the investigations, as was initially decided by Council."*

A study was undertaken by a consortium under leadership of Messrs CSIR EMATEK coastal and marine specialists together with GFJ ING, marine engineers and Chris Mulder Associates, architects and urban planners. A final report was submitted to Council by Messrs Chris Mulder and Associates.

The investigation confirmed the feasibility of constructing

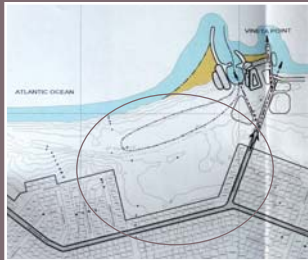
a small craft harbour north of the Mole basin. The proposed development extended far beyond the area originally considered by Council, which even included a golf estate, but Council remained with the area originally applied for this development indicated by the red circle.

For the next couple of years no progress was made with the development of the Waterfront and Council resolved on 27 April 2000 to apply some pressure on the developer, who in the meantime took partners on board as part of securing finance for the project.

The developers were now officially referred to as the Swakopmund Waterfront Development Company.

# Public scoping

On 18 August 2001 a public scoping exercise was held at Vineta Point, Swakopmund. The report on the public scoping exercise was presented to a Special Management Committee Meeting held on 21 September 2001, where the project and feedback was explained by displayed drawings.



*Proposed new development area for the Waterfront compared to initial area applied for in circle.*

The architects Messrs Roxin and Mould also gave their input on matters such as the Market Analysis/Strategic Planning Proposal and Implementation Proposals.

An additional public hearing was held in Windhoek during October 2001. This meeting was attended by Germina Shitaleni and Prescilla Kavita and the Chief Executive Officer. During these two public scoping exercises it was proposed that the development be relocated directly adjacent to the beach, which rendered resolution (d) (vii) of April 1994 no longer

applicable as the adjacent property owners no longer were directly affected (see area indicated by the red circle). Generally speaking, these property owners were relieved that the development was moved directly beside the sea.

In order to prevent any future development in the area now known as the Paddock, the adjacent property owners applied to Council to develop the Paddock into a Public Open Space at their own cost, including the maintenance thereof. Council undertook to assist with plants where and when possible.

The new concept designs of the Waterfront as well as the establishment of the Paddock Gardens was approved by Council on 29 November 2001.

The Paddock Gardens were laid out and constructed and proved to be a viable concept of developing gardens on a Public Private Partnership basis. After 15 years the gardens are still being maintained by and at the cost of the adjacent neighbours.

*Right: Artist's impression of the proposed Paddock Gardens*



PROPOSED UPGRADING OF VINETA COMMONAGE  
BY GRASSING LARGE AREAS AND  
BEAUTIFYING BY MEANS OF PLANTS.

FISCHREIHER ST

965	964	963	962	961	960	959	958	957	956	955	954	953
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*"Today let us happily and proudly embrace the bright, promising and prosperous future of our vibrant coastal town. This timely and crucial Waterfront Project represents for us development, increased tourism, employment creation, expansion of service sector and indeed industrialisation based on marketable knowledge and appropriate skills. For the Government – Central, Regional, Local – the Waterfront Project is a powerful catalyst which can only but add impetus for speeding up decentralisation, competence and capacity building. Jobs will change the lives of the local residents for the better and provide buying power for families. Municipality will collect taxes and further enhance its capacity to deliver social services. The Governor's team will have more areas for continuing supervision and coordination."*

Extracted from: Address by the Right Honourable Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, MP, on the occasion of the Swakopmund Waterfront Groundbreaking Ceremony, 11 October 2003.



Photo: Maggi Barnard

**SIGNED AND SEALED ...** Witnessing the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement for the Swakopmund Waterfront at the Council meeting on Thursday are, back from left, Councillor Willem van Rooyen (Chairperson of Council Management Committee), Eckart Demasius (Town Clerk), Miriam Valombola

(Deputy Mayor), Sakkie van der Merwe (Investec), Sedi Gaoseb (Director Swakopmund Waterfront) and Brett Jolly (CEO Swakopmund Waterfront). In the front are Mayor Rosina //Hoabes and Chairperson of Naras Investments, Festus Naholo, who signed the agreement. See below.

From The Namibian, 30 September 2003



# Council pushing for progress

During 2002 and 2003 town planning and statutory processes and provision of bulk services were commenced as stated in the agreement with the developers.

Council at that stage sold land to developers at a nominal price; however, this created a problem for the Waterfront Developers as they could not use the land as security for bank loans. Council then resolved to sell the land to the Swakopmund Waterfront Development and other developers henceforth at a market-related price.

These matters caused much delay in the construction of the Waterfront Development and as the Government of Namibia had a vested interest in the development of the Waterfront the Mayor and the CEO were summoned to the

Office of the Prime Minister for discussion on the progress of the development on 4 June 2003, whereafter the press was briefed on the latest developments.

The meeting took place in a very positive atmosphere and both developers and Council shared their views and the stumbling blocks between the parties were successfully removed.

Subsequently the matter was submitted to Council and resolved accordingly and payment for the land was received from the developers.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the development took place in Swakopmund on Saturday, 11 October 2003. Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia Dr Theo-Ben Gurirab

was present at the occasion and gave an emotional address.

Messrs PF Koep & Co acted as legal advisers to the developers from the beginning and as was evident from an application for relaxations of conditions laid down in the development agreement with Council, they were very much in favour of finding ways of speeding up development in phases. Council however was not in favour of considering any amendments to the agreement between the two parties. In order to commence with the construction on site the subdivision of the land had to be completed and this was concluded during March 2004.



*Media Advisory of the Waterfront Development on 4 June 2003.*



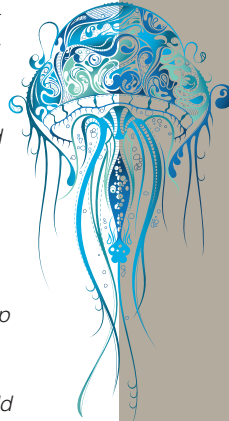
# Below the high water mark

A section of the development fell below the high water mark of the Namibian shoreline. This area had to be utilised for breakwaters, a retaining wall, and a small craft harbour.

The Development Agreement with Council was clear that this portion vests in ownership in the Government of Namibia and is to be reclaimed from the sea and on completion of development will have to be surveyed and transferred to the land owner. The land reclamation application fell under the jurisdiction and authority of the Ministry of Works and Transport, being the custodian of unsurveyed state land.

A written statement of support from the Government for this process was issued to Her Worship The Mayor of

Swakopmund on 18 June 2004 by then Prime Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab: *"It is hereby once again confirmed that the Government of the Republic of Namibia fully supports this project and as such it has no objection that the section of the Swakopmund Waterfront Development below the high water mark would be reclaimed from the sea by the developer and that the Government of the Republic of Namibia may transfer ownership of the reclaimed land to the developer bearing in mind that legal and technical issues would have been resolved and after the land has been duly surveyed and is capable of registration."*





# Access point to the beach



*Historic impression of the  
Waterfront Development*

Based on investigations and findings from an Environmental Impact Assessment conducted by Dr Voges in March 2006, the following very positive conclusions amongst others were made:

- The development was in line with the Long Term Plan for Swakopmund which recommends nodal development on the open beach areas.
- The local community supports the development in general. They are mostly concerned about the delays in the commencement of the construction of the harbour and surrounding developments.
- The development will be a multi-purpose destination for the local community and tourists.
- Local public and tourists will have a harbouring and launching site with the necessary facilities.

- All of the beach area from the Mole is classified as public open space. The development will thus not result in restricted beach access to the public except for the relatively small area which will be occupied by the development itself.
- The development will not inhibit public beach access since it will be linked to existing and future developments on all sides. As another destination on the undeveloped beach, it can be linked to the walkway from the Mole.

Since then only residential units have been constructed by the Waterfront Development Company. Shortly after the residential phase, due to financial difficulties, the Bank became owners of the waterfront property.

# A small craft harbour



Artist's impression of Albert's Investment Number Eight's development proposal, designed by Boogertman & Partners

During 2008 a new developer, Albert's Investments Number Eight (Pty) Limited, took over the development with a new design and changes to the layout.

As part of this new design, the size of the breakwater was reduced, the developers realising that a yacht harbour would not be feasible. Instead they opted for a "Mole-type" of design where the breakwater would only supply sufficient safety for small motorised boats to launch. Boats would no longer anchor at sea. The proposed amendments to the design were approved by Council on 29 January 2009 where it was resolved that the conceptual drawings be replaced by the conceptual drawings of architects Boogertman & Partners.

The new design required the developers to hold another public scoping exercise which was done at the end of January 2009, with report back to Council being given early February 2009. This latest design was generally well accepted by the public at large.

This developer was also not successful in turning the concept into reality as financial constraints hindered the commencement of works.

# Safari takes ownership

Safari Investments RSA Limited approached Council in 2009 to enquire about the status of the development. Ultimately Safari Investments RSA Limited took ownership of the development entity and submitted a new design to Council for consideration.

The new design was considered by Council on 30 September 2009. In terms of Council's policy a public scoping exercise had to be held as Safari's design differed from the previous design. On 10 February 2010 a scoping exercise in the form of an open day was held in the foyer of the old Municipal Building.

Seeing that feedback of the Public Scoping held on 10 February 2010 was not entirely positive the developers were reminded to submit revised plans to Council's Aesthetics Committee for consideration. Only after such favourable consideration by the Aesthetics Committee and feedback to the public would the developer be in a position to submit building plans for approval.

Whilst refining the design, *Safari Investments Namibia (Pty) Limited* and *Safari Developments Swakopmund (Pty) Limited* signed their development agreement with the Municipality of Swakopmund in October 2010 as the new investor and developer entities of the Waterfront respectively, generally referred to as Safari. Safari has since its involvement been fully committed to the successful development of the waterfront in line with Council's vision for this site.

*Artist's impression of the waterfront at night*





# The market was ready



The market was a key factor to the success of the development and extensive research and surveys were initiated by Safari at this stage. It was critical to determine the exact demand and specific requirements of the public in order to ensure that in its finer detail and design the development would be spot on.

Surveys proved that the greater majority of residents are in strong support of the development and that the timing of developing a waterfront lifestyle centre for Swakopmund is in fact most opportune: 95% of respondents' views regarding the Waterfront were positive; 85% of respondents regarded the location as good to very good; and between 85% and 100% of respondents said they will support the development.

The community was clear that they would welcome an asset which will be respectful of its heritage and positively

contribute to the lifestyle and convenience of its people.

Swakopmund was at the time ranked among the fastest growing towns in Southern Africa. Retail demand was expected to increase to 66 268m<sup>2</sup> in 2016. It was found that there will be a net effective shortfall of ±37 000m<sup>2</sup> in retail supply by 2016.

The Waterfront would cover much of this shortfall in retail facilities right on the periphery of the town where future expansion and roads were already underway.

Other catalysts for further local market growth in Namibia were also evident as the Namibian economy pointed to very positive growth and investment prospects:

- The Namibian government focused on long-term strategies to create more integrated transport and infrastructure across the country, in line with their VISION 2030 policy.
- Major port expansion underway at Walvis Bay deepwater harbour.
- Opening of large uranium mines in the area.
- Improved road linkages with Windhoek.
- Gas fuels in the vicinity.
- Erongo seawater desalination plant (30km north of Swakopmund) largest of its kind in Southern Africa with excess water to serve local communities and industrial activities.
- Retailers reported year-on-year growth in sales of as much as 20% with growing retail, wholesale and distribution markets.
- Strong and vibrant tourist industry with continuous influx of people.



*Artist's impressions of Platz am Meer*



*Earthworks and civil works at the Waterfront*





# Start of civil works

After lengthy discussions a meeting with Council was secured in February 2012 during which an amended design was discussed for the development then called La Mer. Certain design issues were raised and changes were made before finally submitting the design to the Aesthetics Committee for evaluation.

On Tuesday, 20 March 2012 representatives of the developer sought an urgent meeting with the Mayor requesting special permission to at least commence with the civil works on account of the generally favourable weather conditions at that time of the year, especially with regard to the construction of the breakwater. Following these discussions the matter was submitted to a Special Management Meeting, thereafter to a Council Meeting for consideration which was held on 26 April 2012, and Council gave permission for commencement of the civil works.

At that stage Aesthetics Committee approval had not yet been obtained, and Council insisted on submission of documentary proof that the developer fulfilled all legal requirements, specifically with regard to environmental clearance for the development in the light of the recently proclaimed Environmental Act.



# Aesthetic and environmental approval

During September 2012 Safari requested a meeting with the Aesthetics Committee to discuss the latest design proposals for the Waterfront Development and during November 2012 the submission was received by the Secretary of the Aesthetics Committee for evaluation. This time the submissions passed and the developer was informed accordingly.



On 24 January 2013 Council received a letter from Messrs Weder, Kauta and Hoveka, Safari Investments' legal advisor, confirming the contents of a meeting with the Environmental Commissioner from which it was clear that all the environmental requirements were fully met by the developer.

However, with the civil works now underway, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism required the first submission of an Environmental Management Plan for the construction activities of the Waterfront Development.

The official *Environmental Management Plan for the Proposed Construction of La Mer Swakopmund Waterfront Development* was prepared by LM Environmental Consulting and submitted to the MET on 5 December 2012.

An Environmental Clearance Certificate was issued by the Office of the Environmental Commissioner on 19 July 2013.

Having successfully met all requirements, building plan approval was given to the developer on 24 June 2014 and construction of the building could finally commence.

# Groundbreaking ceremony

Erongo Governor Cleophas Mutjavikua, on the occasion of the site handover and groundbreaking ceremony on 12 August 2014, stated: **“This is an important project for the region and they have full support on political level. We have to utilise the coast to create work and grow the economy, and we will not hesitate to do so.”**

The Governor was firm in acknowledging that facilities like the Waterfront Development promote tourism and investments that in turn will result in a booming economy and job creation. The name of the development was officially changed from La Mer to Platz am Meer.

*From left to right: Councillor NN Salomon, Fanus Kruger, Mayor Juuso Kombueshe, Hon Cleophas Mutjavikua, Kiki Pashiou, Jannie Verwayen, Francois Marais and Councillor Uahimisa Kaapehi.*







*Namibian Construction team, from left to right: Hans-Peter Schulz, Gerrit Schrader, Riaan Coetzee, Org Van Rensburg, Naftalie Amagulu, Annelien Langenstrassen, Colin Behne, Titus Titus, Daniel Van Wyk, Titus Vanyika, Stefano Strappazzon, Janse Dreyer*

# Namibia construction

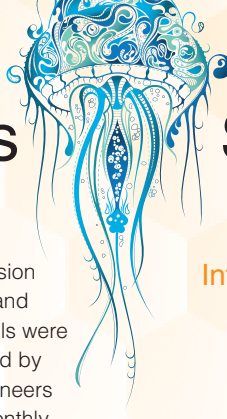
Reputable Namibia Construction (Pty) Limited was appointed the building contractor for the 50 000m<sup>2</sup> structure with retaining wall and breakwaters.

Under leadership of Construction Manager Riaan Coetzee and his devoted team, the long awaited waterfront project was now becoming a reality as the building works proceeded through sun, rain, and stormy seasons. Together with Windhoek Consulting Engineers they showed their ability to not only work within time and budget constraints, but to keep a diverse team of consultants and subcontractors focused on the end product. Today Safari is convinced that no other building contractor would have been able to deliver the same level of excellence for this project.

## Interesting construction facts about Platz am Meer

- **Workers on site:** 350 daily average; ± 920 000 man hours of construction work
- **Rock placed for breakwater:** 135 000 tons
- **Concrete placed:** 15 866m<sup>3</sup> (2 644 truckloads of 6m<sup>3</sup> each – 13km queue of trucks)
- **Bricks used:** 2 764 951 (923 truckloads, a 5,5km queue of trucks)
- **Form work:** 100 579m<sup>2</sup> (16 rugby fields)
- **Brick force:** 70km used
- **Reinforcing bar (Rebar) used:** 1 129 tons
- **Bags of cement:** 135 565 bags/6 780 tons (226 truckloads of 30 tons each, a 2,48km queue of trucks)
- **Plaster:** 43 139m<sup>2</sup> (7 rugby fields)
- **Waterproofing system Sikafloor 326:** a two part, low-VOC solvent free coloured self-smoothing resin with tough-elastic properties
- **First two escalators** for Swakopmund/Erongo area
- **Single roof tiles** used – bituminous product imported from Belgium
- **Exposed carpentry** – European spruce
- **Walkways** translucent sheets – Honeycomb system imported from Europe
- **Drawings A1 & A0 size** – \*16 000 printed drawings and 7 430m<sup>2</sup> = Drawings cover a surface of one and a half rugby fields

# Coastline variations



# Shoreline dynamics

The land reclamation application was still reviewed under the jurisdiction and authority of the Ministry of Works and Transport, being the custodian of unsurveyed state land.

As part of their assessment of the reclaim, The Ministry of Works and Transport instructed the developer to consult with the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources on shoreline erosion and sand deposits, sea level rise, and mitigation measures.

Upon this request erosion and the measure of sand deposits and sea levels were continuously monitored by specialist marine engineers together with three monthly assessments by a land surveyor to track coastline variations. Both current and historical data (earliest measurements date from 1970 courtesy of CSIR) were analysed, covering a long stretch of coast around the development.

The environmental charm of this section of coastline was highly regarded by the authorities and the public, but also by Safari. Its protection was as much in the interest of the developer as of anyone else.

Interim reports were clear, shoreline variations occur steadily over time and the cause and effect thereof requires careful study.

By means of lengthy correspondences from November 2014 to January 2016 the developer kept the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources informed that erosion is being monitored through comprehensive research and conclusions will be submitted to the authorities for their consideration.

On 25 January 2016 Safari was finally in position to submit a comprehensive research report from the marine engineers which covered shoreline variations around the site: *Vineta Ski Boat Harbour – Shoreline Dynamics Study January 2016*.

The study was conclusive in that the proposed harbour layout has an outcome of a dynamically stable shoreline and is thus not a threat to the Vineta marine environment and ultimately fully upholds the ruling Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management Plan for the development. The harbour design was interestingly not a deviation from the harbour design as assessed for development by Dr Voges in the 2006 Environmental Impact Assessment process, it was at most only a slight improvement and only to the benefit of the shoreline and any impact on it. This study was also shared with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.



## Stormy seas

The proof of the resilience and quality of the work came on 29 May 2014, when heavy seas again hit the coast and the breakwater and the retaining wall successfully withstood the test of the waves.

## Whales spotted

**O**n 5 June 2015 the first whales were spotted along the newly constructed breakwaters. This was a special moment, especially as the ocean and the environment is such a key part of the attraction of the site.

*A gradual homecoming to Namibia's coastal waters – Southern right whale*



*The breakwaters and the promenade running alongside, contribute to the quality and function of the public spaces created around Platz am Meer*



# Designed in harmony with the environment

Platz am Meer is situated within the cool climatic belt of the west coast which, compared to inland developments, results in a pleasantly cool environment.

The Architects took full advantage of the unique design opportunities provided by building along the ocean. They decided to utilise this aspect by ventilating the building and drawing fresh air in. Since the building is cooled naturally they could also make full use of daylight via transparent roof sheeting without heating the interior to uncomfortable temperatures. Not having to use mechanical air conditioning or large amounts of electrical lighting substantially reduced the energy consumption by day.

The luxury apartments share the same benefits, with most

designed to cross-ventilate, which in summer months will cool the interiors without any artificial assistance. Big windows overlooking the breakwater not only provide beautiful views, but flood the interior with natural light, again subverting the need for daytime lighting. The addition of the breakwaters and the promenade running alongside, contribute to the quality and function of the public spaces created around the development.

Only high quality materials and suitable techniques for this unique environment were used in its construction.

With the sulphur rich mist in Swakopmund causing aggressive and corrosive conditions, innovative installations were crucial. For example imported self-adhesive roof tiles without metal were used. Such finishes will enhance the lifespan of the building and simultaneously reduce the need for costly maintenance works and frequent improvements.

This careful selection of superior and eco-friendly finishes proved Safari's long-term interest in the development.





# Retail partners

A wide spectrum of quality retailers and restaurants were lining up to bring life and leisure to this new lifestyle development.

Since Safari's first considerations of the development Checkers and Edgars have been very positive and on board to be key partners to the project. They remained fully committed throughout all the challenging phases of planning, negotiating, and marketing of the development. Safari's CEO, Francois Marais had his first meeting with Jarred Halliday from Shoprite Property Division to discuss the deal back in 2009! In addition to Checkers as food anchor and Edgars as fashion anchor, Swakopmund will have its first Woolworths Food which will form a part of the 1 547m<sup>2</sup> Woolworths outlet, while Dis-Chem will offer a full spectrum of pharmaceutical and health products.





*In fond memory of*  
**Carl Heinz Schulz**  
(10 November 1960 – 14 May 2016)



Safari wants to acknowledge every person who contributed to the development of the Platz am Meer lifestyle centre and recreational harbour for the town of Swakopmund.

This is a new Namibian landmark that the local community can be proud of. It offers opportunities, employment, and business initiatives that should be claimed and cultivated for the better of the people. Safari is confident that the Waterfront will become a popular destination, not only attracting the community of Swakopmund to its diverse amenities and activities, but also as a destination of choice even for those from other towns along the coast.

Considering that it is not an exclusive development but a concept that will cater for and attract the wider community, this valuable coastal property was at once made accessible and inviting for all to enjoy. May the charming environment and typical coastal lifestyle of Namibia be celebrated from this place.

