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GUCCI AND VERSACE

# Durban no longer an orphan to international fashion

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INTERNATIONAL fashion brand stores have officially opened their doors for the first time in uMhlanga, north of Durban.

The new R600 million Oceans Mall's Platinum Walk high-fashion section was launched on Friday. It is the second phase of the R1.3 billion Oceans Mall project and part of the R4.3bn mixed Oceans Development.

For the first time in Kwazulu-Natal, a mall has been able to attract 12 international fashion brand investors who have invested more than R300m in their stores despite the recent upheavals in the province.

Some of the brands in the Platinum Walk are Gucci, Dolce & Gabbana, Versace and Burberry.

Vivian Reddy, the visionary behind the development and co-owner of Oceans Mall, welcomed an array of guests at the launch.

They included King Misuzulu, Miss SA Ndavi Nokeri, former Miss Universe Zozibini Tunzi, business personnel Sandile Zungu and Shawn Mkhize, and the luxury brand international heads of Dolce & Gabbana, Jimmy Choo, Versace, and Gucci, as well as the cast of the *Real Housewives of Durban*.

The construction of the mall created 3 500 jobs and 1 250 permanent



FROM left, Rob Alexander of Oceans Mall, Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure Sihle Zikalala, King Misuzulu, Vivian Reddy, eThekweni Municipality speaker Thabani Nyawose, and Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry Nomalungelo Gina cut the ribbon at the Oceans Mall in uMhlanga.

jobs. It is the only luxury mall in the country to have 65% black tenants and is 100% black-owned, with the PIC being a co-shareholder.

Reddy said the province and country had met with many challenges. However, South Africa's resilience is what had drawn international investors.

"These international brands have invested in our country," said Reddy.

"We've had the July uprising and flooding in KZN. We had the heads of the international brands visiting the country and despite everything they still saw value in this province. When international brands invest millions in creating world-class shopping, that



MINISTER of Public Works and Infrastructure Sihle Zikalala, His Majesty King Misuzulu Zulu kaZwelithini and Vivian Reddy at Oceans Mall.

shows confidence in the people of SA.

"We are a nation of believers and we are resilient. International brands opening up here shows hope. It was not easy to sell South Africa given all our problems but we sold Durban and it is no longer an orphan to international fashion," said Reddy.

King Misuzulu said Durban was the gateway to Africa.

"I am proud of the community and



MEDIA personality Somizi Mhlongo, together with 'Real Housewives' cast member Sorisha Naidoo-Reddy and husband Vivian Reddy.

team who put this together. During my father's time (king Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu) I was privileged to sit in a conference room and serve in the background of this project," he said.

"It brings my heart happiness, satisfaction and a way forward (to see this now). It's very difficult to build but it's very easy to destroy and today we have built this structure which has created jobs and families will be fed."