

Engen Colesberg 1-Stop an Oasis in the Karoo

Friday, September 30th

Engen Colesberg 1-Stop officially opened to the public on 30 September 2016 after months of extensive upgrades. The site offers customers passing through the Karoo town a world-class destination to visit with a diverse range of convenience offerings, including: QuickShop, deli area, Butcher's Best Biltong Bar, Corner Bakery, Wimpy, Debonairs, and *Pure Water on Tap* water bar.

A popular stop-over, Engen Colesberg 1-Stop is strategically positioned approximately half-way between Cape Town and Johannesburg, at the interchange where the N1 intersects with the N9 from the Eastern Cape. This makes it an ideal stop for holiday makers, business travellers and truckers. Seelan Naidoo, Engen's Retail Business Manager says the decision to upgrade the transient site was guided by two principles. "Firstly, the development of a large interchange incorporating the N1, the N9 and the access road into Colesberg resulted in the removal of the site's direct access off the N1. This significantly compromised visibility of the facility when travelling south from Gauteng making an intervention necessary to ensure the site offered sufficient appeal to encourage travellers to detour and call on it as their convenience destination of preference."

"Secondly," says Naidoo, "the idea of a multi-branded restaurant offering was born out of a bigger desire to create a leading edge and unique 'fill-up, rest and refresh' customer experience within the Engen 1-Stop environment."

"In collaboration with Famous Brands, various Engen partners, as well as a number of multi-disciplinary consultants, Engen embarked on the project to create a world-class facility," he adds.

The modern architecture and design elements used for the new-look facility further sets it apart from any other forecourt in the country.

The choice of materials and fittings used support the visual concept of a typical farm 'werf' with references such as vine covered pergolas, low stone and gabion walls for defining outdoor spaces, compacted soil and gravelled surfaces for general spaces, and clusters of shade trees associated with the various buildings and outdoor spaces.

Various sustainability initiatives were also introduced, including energy efficient lighting, the use of a grey water system as well as water wise and indigenous landscaping. Engen's approach to landscaping for each site is region and site specific in terms of planting choices and other landscape materials and finishes. As part of the enhanced customer experience, a family section was introduced in the public restroom area. "This enables a parent of the opposite gender to accompany his or her small child to a toilet situated in a non-gender specific section, ensuring security and peace of mind," says Naidoo.

Truck driver facilities include showers and change rooms, a braai area and kitchen facilities as well as a well-lit, paved truck parking lot.

Other features include a dedicated drinking trough and walking area for pets, a kids play area, and several areas to relax, eat or enjoy a coffee while recharging, all ensuring a complete and memorable customer experience for the 'whole family'.

Undertaking a project of this magnitude in an outlying area such as Colesberg also brings about its own logistical challenges. Contractors, consultants and materials had to be sourced and transported from either Johannesburg or Cape Town. Engen did however ensure that the local community was involved in the project. "Both the civil and building contractor employed local labour from the community for the duration of the project, injecting much needed funds into the local economy," says Naidoo. "The civil contractor also used the services of the town's local contractor as a paving sub-contractor to complete the brick paving on the site."

General Manager of Engen Sales and Marketing, Joe Mahlo says completion of the Engen Colesberg 1-Stop is a tribute to the many people who were involved. "It was an ambitious project and we are delighted with the result, which far exceeded our expectations," says Mahlo.

"The biggest challenge and overriding principle was to create something extraordinary to attract motorists who changed their habits due to the inaccessibility of the facility. Making it more appealing and more visible played a big role in the way the project was approached."

Mahlo believes that Engen's cutting-edge convenience continues to provide customers with choice far above its competitors, something which is well reflected at the Engen Colesberg 1-Stop.

"Our efforts to deliver on our brand promise have been acknowledged consistently over the last few years. We are very proud to have retained our ranking as the 'Coolest Petroleum Brand' for the sixth successive year in the Sunday Times Generation Next youth survey, which tracks youth consumer preferences and behaviour, as well as the Sunday Times Top Brand award for the sixth consecutive year," adds Mahlo.