

New centre bringing life to CBD

Mixed-use development Tanjong Pagar Centre has offices, a hotel, residential apartments, an F&B-centric mall and a park

Gurveen Kaur

The \$3.2-billion mega mixed-use development Tanjong Pagar Centre has been injecting a fresh lease of life into the Central Business District (CBD) since its retail tenants began opening for business in November last year.

Located directly above Tanjong Pagar MRT station, it claims to be the tallest building in Singapore and has a gross floor area of 1.7 mil-

lion sq ft and is bounded by four roads: Wallich Street, Choon Guan Road, Peck Seah Street and Maxwell Road.

The 64-storey integrated development by GuocoLand has offices, a hotel, residential apartments, an F&B-centric mall and a park.

One-third of the 43 food establishments in the mall are new in Singapore, including the Japan Rail Cafe by Japan's largest rail operator, East Japan Railway Company (JR East); Hattendo Singapore from Hiroshima, Japan, that is well known for its soft, chilled cream buns; and SBCD Korean Tofu House.

Once fully leased, there will be a total of 48 F&B tenants.

Soon to open are Pura Brasa, a chic Spanish eatery by the creators of the Josper oven; Shard, a modern

wine and tapas bar and restaurant merging Asian and Spanish flavours; and Blue Lotus Chinese Grill House + Wine Bar, a new concept by the people behind Blue Lotus Chinese Eating House at Sentosa that will serve modern Chinese cuisine.

Foot traffic has been encouraging so far, says Ms Valerie Wong, GuocoLand Singapore's general manager, commercial. She says about 1.6 million people have visited the centre monthly since it opened.

Special attention was paid to the food tenants, which make up 70 per cent of the retail selection.

"We wanted a good mix, with places for office workers to have after-hour drinks and others with child-friendly menus," Ms Wong says.

Ms Makoto Yamataka, general manager of Japan Rail Cafe, says business there has been good since it opened in December, even on weekends.

"We expected weekends to be quieter, but it is unexpectedly busy as well," she says.

"This is a good sign as we foresee Tanjong Pagar Centre will enjoy 'hype' as a leisure ground for casual hangouts and family outings on weekends."

On the street level is a green oasis, the 150,000 sq ft Urban Park, which is half completed. It features a green lawn, rooftop gardens and a wide, open space sheltered by a glass canopy for recreational and lifestyle events.

The Sofitel Hotels & Resorts chain will open its third hotel, Sofi-

tel Singapore City Centre, with 223 rooms in the compound, in the third quarter.

The 181-unit Wallich Residence sits atop the offices. It is slated to open in the second half of the year.

So far, 17 units have been sold.

The development's varied lifestyle offerings are part of GuocoLand's strategy to not just target the corporate crowd, but the residents living nearby too.

Ms Wong says her company is aware the CBD is not as buzzing on weekends, compared to weekdays.

"It's something we took into consideration when we conceptualised and designed the Urban Park and F&B offerings."

Tanjong Pagar Centre (above) has an Urban Park (above left), which will take up 150,000 sq ft when it is completed.

PHOTOS: FELINE LIM, GUOCOLAND SINGAPORE



An artist's impression of the Urban Park, which will have an open green lawn and six rooftop gardens when it is completed. PHOTO: GUOCOLAND SINGAPORE

Urban Park

The megastructure Tanjong Pagar Centre is not just a concrete behemoth. On the street level is a 150,000 sq ft landscaped Urban Park that will add generous touches of green in the Central Business District.

Office workers can go for a short jog around the open green lawn, take a breather on the steps of a viewing gallery or explore the six

rooftop gardens. In the middle of the park is the 30,000 sq ft City Room, a sprawling events space covered by a glass canopy with solar power.

When the park is completed in the third quarter of the year, the City Room will be buzzing with activity, especially on weekends, says Ms Valerie Wong, general manager, commercial of GuocoLand Sin-

gapore, the complex's developer.

"We have a big space and can hold many types of events so it's a place people can visit on weekends too," she says.

The City Room can hold up to 2,000 people. Ms Wong says the company has arranged for one of its tenants, the Virgin Active gym, to hold fitness classes regularly.

Also planned is a variety of com-

munity and cultural events, including farmers' markets and concerts. After all, the area is fully equipped with a sound system and lights.

The surrounding restaurants are encouraged to organise activities in the park too.

For example, gastrobar Starker Signature will soon introduce acoustic music performances by local emerging talents six nights a week.

F&B offerings

Since last November, a wide mix of restaurants, cafes and grab-and-go kiosks has progressively opened for business at Tanjong Pagar Centre's six-storey mall.

There will be close to 50 eateries once the mall is fully leased, making up 70 per cent of the retail tenants, says developer GuocoLand. Of these, 14 are new-to-market concepts.

To date, foodies have been flocking to the centre to try out the pillowy chilled cream buns from popular Japanese chain Hattendo (01-05), silky smooth tofu served in a soontofu, a hearty Korean broth at SBCD Korean Tofu House (B1-01/02), and Chalong's (B2-21) charcoal-grilled meat rice bowls.

Mr Brandon Chu, the marketing specialist for SBCD Korean Tofu House, which opened in January, says it can sell at least 220 to 240 soontofu bowls during lunchtime.

The tofu is handmade daily and the broth comes in 11 varieties, such as seafood or ham and cheese, and is served with hot-stone rice and banchan (Korean side dishes).

Mr Daisuke Ishioka, chief executive of Hattendo Singapore, declines to reveal the number of cream buns sold, but says the outlet has been "doing very well" since opening in January. The cream buns come in a variety of flavours, including melon and custard.

Later this month, he intends to introduce a bigger savoury menu, with items such as rosti and sandwiches.

Pura Brasa (01-16), a chic eatery from Spain by the creators of Josper charcoal oven, will open its first outlet outside Spain at the centre next month.

Naturally, there will be plenty of Spanish grilled items, including grilled octopus on mashed potatoes and red pepper from La Vera, and paella. Prices will range from \$6 for



The assorted soontofu soup from SBCD Korean Tofu House (top) and cream buns from Hattendo.

PHOTOS: HATTENDO SINGAPORE, SBCD KOREAN TOFU HOUSE

appetisers and \$15 for mains.

Chinese restaurant Blue Lotus Chinese Eating House in Sentosa Cove, famed for its signature chilli pomelo crab, will open a new-age Chinese cuisine offshoot in Tanjong Pagar Centre later this year.

Its owner, Mr Ricky Ng, noticed a lack of modern Chinese cuisine in the area and decided to open Blue Lotus Chinese Grill House + Wine Bar (01-13), to attract office workers and residents who might not want to get their hands dirty while eating crab. Instead of a whole crab, a crab claw will be served with la mian and doused in the chilli pomelo sauce.

Other dishes include a pan-seared barramundi served with assam curry and a refined version of Singaporean staple chicken rice served in cast-iron bowl.

Lunch sets start from \$18.

The infinity pool at Wallich Residence, which will open in the second half of the year. It will have 181 luxury units. PHOTO: GUOCOLAND SINGAPORE



Wallich Residence

Up to 181 homeowners will have the privilege of living in what is said to be Singapore's tallest building when Wallich Residence at Tanjong Pagar Centre opens in the second half of the year.

The luxury units sit above the offices in Guoco Tower, occupying levels 39 to 64, which are between 180m and 290m above ground.

Residents will enjoy unparalleled bird's-eye views of the city and

beyond, including of Sentosa island and the Singapore Strait.

The piece de resistance is the super penthouse, a magnificent 21,108 sq ft residence spread over the top three levels. That is about 18 times bigger than an average five-room HDB flat. Equivalent to a Good Class Bungalow in the sky, it has a rooftop terrace with a 12m-long pool, jacuzzi room and around-the-clock butler service.

There are four other penthouses and a mixture of one- to four-bedroom units. Facilities for the homes include an infinity pool, a library and a residents-only observation deck on level 62.

Ms Dora Chng, GuocoLand Singapore's general manager (residential), says 17 units have been sold so far. According to the URA Realis caveats data, the average price for past units sold is \$3,100 psf.

Sofitel Singapore City Centre

French luxury hotel chain Sofitel Hotels & Resorts is opening its third outlet in Singapore at the Tanjong Pagar Centre later this year.

The 223-room, 20-storey Sofitel Singapore City Centre will be its flagship hotel, targeting business travellers or those looking to host an event in the heart of the Central Business District.

Mr Wouter de Graaf, the hotel's general manager, says that more than 20,000 sq ft of the hotel's space is taken up by 10 multi-use meeting rooms. There is also an 8,600 sq ft ballroom and direct lift access to the Tanjong Pagar MRT station.

The interiors are adorned with botanical details inspired by the symmetry of French gardens and Singapore's vibrant green spaces.

The rooms and suites range in size from 38 sq m and rates start at \$400+, inclusive of breakfast and Internet access.

Other facilities include a 30m infinity pool and free access to the



The Joaquim Suite at the 20-storey, 223-room Sofitel Singapore City Centre.

PHOTO: SOFTEL SINGAPORE CITY CENTRE

Virgin Active gym located on the sixth floor in the complex.

Apart from the wide variety of eateries in Tanjong Pagar Centre, Sofitel guests can dine within the hotel at Racines Restaurant, which will serve French classics alongside contemporary Chinese delights using custom-built Marrone stoves from Italy. The restaurant will be helmed by executive chef

Jean-Charles Dubois, who had headed the kitchens at Balzac Brasserie and Raffles Grill at Raffles Hotel.

Managed by AccorHotels, the hotel is accepting bookings and reservations for September onwards. Sofitel's two other outlets here are Sofitel So Singapore in Robinson Road and Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort & Spa.