

VOLKSWAGEN AUTOPAVILION GETS A FACELIFT

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After a serious makeover spanning seven months, Volkswagen of South Africa's Auto Pavilion now features a host of multimedia attractions that will draw even more visitors to Uitenhage, the base of the auto manufacturer.

The Auto Pavilion, Place of Cars and Legends, first opened doors in 2004, the result of a need for a modern, state-of-the-art heritage centre to replace the existing museum that housed the Company's old vehicles.

The multi-million rand attraction is unique as it is the only automobile discovery centre on the continent and only the fifth worldwide.



The Auto Pavilion features a vast car collection, including unique vehicles, prototypes and record-breaking cars. Highlights include a cut-through

collapsible new Beetle, as well as a VW Nardo W12, a world record-beating super-car.

Other highlights include 27 static and graphic displays and over 20 interactive exhibits. The interior design and exhibits have been carefully planned and orchestrated with exhibition designers Seipone Exhibits from Cape Town. Seipone worked hand in hand with Tactile Technologies for the design of interactive computer exhibits and relied on Tactile's ELO touch screen technology.

Examples of exhibits include digital flip books, the worlds largest automobile database, brain teasers, knowledge quizzes about cars, a hydrogen manufacturing demonstration in the "Future Technology" section and many more - most of them custom built to world standards. Other imported exhibits are some of the first seen in South Africa.



Life, movement and sound are brought to the Auto Pavilion through touch monitors, video screens with continuous visual loops and moving features. Amazing light technology induces an ambience of excitement within the

building. Fragrance machines, ambient lighting and atmospheric sound machines add to the specific ambience of certain exhibits. All one's senses are therefore addressed.

The centre lends itself to “edutainment, education, brand awareness, nostalgia and a sense of the warmth of belonging to the 'Volkswagen family’,” said Auto Pavilion Manager Johan Wagner.

“From a design perspective, these features are really important because people in South Africa are generally used to the concept of an old fashioned motor museum which is usually indistinguishable from a used car showroom. Our concept is ultra modern and based on the Autostadt - the Volkswagen Group's motoring theme park in Wolfsburg, Germany.”

In terms of its purpose, structure and overall appearance, the Auto Pavilion is a unique, spectacular structure that competes globally. It has certainly made a mark upon those who have visited it. This is exemplified by the fact that more than 70 000 visitors (around 2 000 per month) have taken the time to visit the centre since its opening. These figures have contributed to making Auto Pavilion the most important tourist attraction in Uitenhage.

The Auto Pavilion lends itself well to Volkswagen’s “People’s Cars” philosophy because it shows not only the history and nostalgia associated by South Africans with the Volkswagen of SA brands, but also how the strong connection with modern technology has enabled Volkswagen of SA to lead the passenger sales charts in South Africa.

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