



Lighting the Randlords Bar

By Anthony Tischhauser, Pamboukian lightdesign

South Point Properties, owners of more than 40 buildings in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, approached Silvio Rech and Lesley Carstens Architecture and Interior Design with the request that they evaluate South Point's portfolio.

Until then, South Point had been concerned mainly with the development of quality housing for students and had given little thought to the design of the thousands of square metres of public space and retail opportunities surrounding their buildings.

Silvio Rech explains, "We saw the opportunity to fast track the healing process through high-design with a super-plan concept that included urban design, architecture, interiors and pieces of art and furniture. Randlords, the top-end signature-style rooftop bar, is only a small and first part of the 40-building super-plan."

Conceived as an all-day lounge for breakfast, lunch and light evening meals, the Randlords Bar in South Point Towers, corner of De Korte and Station Streets in Braamfontein now serves as a venue for corporate functions and events. It was the spectacular changing panoramic views of Johannesburg city centre from sunset to sunrise, from the 22nd and 23rd floors, that inspired the architects to apply a 'sophisticated signature African language' to the roof top lounge. This aesthetic is contrasted with high-density urban design ideas; the lounge is boxed in by floor to ceiling glass and the restrooms are celebrated as 'places' to meet and chat.

Approached by the architects to consult on the lighting we treated the glass box on the 22nd floor as a lantern. The central core that contains the lift lobby, kitchen and access to the restrooms is treated as the central light feature and major source of light. A narrow strip of colour changing Osram DRAGONeye RGB LEDs, recessed in-ground between the timber floor and wall,

Photographs above and left by Natalie Payne.

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washes up the natural rough plaster surface. The LED strip also forms the threshold between the orange floor of the open lift lobby and the lounge area. The architects chose a highly reflective charcoal mirror ceiling that picks up faint reflections from the city below as well as the wash from the LEDs, creating the illusion of a taller space. This indirect ambient lighting sets the general mood for the lounge.

Parcan PAR 30 (75W) luminaries suspended from the ceiling cast pools of atmospheric light, picking up theatrical groups of furniture. The large moulded black bar is lit from within by a blue tape LED strip that runs around the entire inner perimeter. This minimal source is caught and reflected by the glasses and other shiny surfaces. The glass ball chandelier (made of chrome connectors and 300 glass balls) is a feature developed by the architects, as is the ceramic tools chandelier in the VIP area (right). LED strip lighting under the strip counters against the glass panes gently lights the floor perimeter immediately below.

The existing tubular vertical black tubes of the stair balustrade to the restrooms are interspersed with a cascade of vertical fluorescents that articulate the routes to the restrooms – red upstairs to the gents and blue downstairs the ladies. The restrooms with areas of glass sheeting also from floor to ceiling permit exquisite views to the streets below. The lighting is deliberately kept low with vertical task fluorescent lights either side of the washbasins. Each of the ladies' cubicles is fitted with a circular halo-like circline fluorescent tube. Spotlights pick up features in the men's restrooms which, as with the ladies, are fitted with a couch and widescreen TV.

The balustrades of the wide stair that leads to the upper open viewing area are fitted with ribbon LED strip light that picks up the treads of the stairs. No outdoor lighting was required but for brassieres by the architects. ●



Photograph by Natalie Payne.

Photograph by Dook (Courtesy VESI).

