

Bahrain International new terminal opens with triple the retail area

Bahrain International Airport has opened its new passenger terminal building as of January 28. At 210,000 square meters, the new terminal will allow the airport to serve 14 million passengers per year. This opening is an important cornerstone in the Kingdom's Economic Vision 2030, which is aimed in part at attracting more business and tourism, in addition to increasing hub activity at the airport.



Now the new terminal has opened, Bahrain Duty Free has triple the floorspace

As part of the overall vision, the decision was also made to bring shopping in the airport up to a higher level. Bahrain Duty Free, which won the concessions for duty free and specialty retail, has almost tripled its floorspace, from 1,600 square meters to 4,700 square meters. The company is pledging to deliver an experience and store environments at “world class” level in the new facility, CEO & Board Director Bassam Al Wardi told *Gulf-Africa Duty Free* recently. In addition to its strengthened position as anchor retailer at the airport, Bahrain Duty Free is also beginning its journey in a joint venture with Gulf Air Group Holding, signed in 2018.

Space for luxury

The unique “boutique” design of the terminal creates an environment that motivates passengers to enjoy the amenities. Passengers can move through the space quickly, which leaves ample time for shopping and enjoying a meal. The ceilings are high and the design, which was inspired by the local environment of sand dunes and water is inviting.



The new larger space offers room to display luxury goods, which made more partnerships possible for the retailer

Al Wardi says: “The new environment is bright, spacious, and with a wide perspective. It is beautifully laid out and is very different to what you will see anywhere else. We believe we have one of the very best duty free shops in the region.”



The new environment is beautifully laid out, and very different to what travellers find in other airports

With the newly expanded floorspace, Bahrain Duty Free now has the opportunity to better showcase the major categories. In the past, the limited floorspace meant the company was not able to offer appropriate area for luxury brands, but that has now changed.

Al Wardi says brands will be able to express themselves much better in the new space; this has brought about new partnerships with brands including Le Labo, Frédéric Malle, Roja Parfums, Kiehl's and Makeup Forever, and greatly expanded space for already existing brands such as La Mer.



The new store offers more room for all categories

With more space available, Bahrain Duty Free has partnered with brands to create stand-alone stores of over 50 square meters each for Michael Kors, Ralph Lauren, Emporio Armani and Victoria's Secret, and the retailer has also created a new specially designed sunglasses concept.

Much more to offer

The retailer is offering other innovations at the new airport to create a distinctive shopping environment with value-added services. These include a special VIP area with personal service for shoppers, where they can relax and browse as well as view the offer and purchase.



The new terminal is LEED gold certified, in keeping with the Kingdom's Economic Vision 2030, which focuses on sustainability in addition to economic improvements

“We have created niche, semi-private areas where high-end, high-value shoppers can go to relax, have a coffee, pay through a VIP Express service, perhaps with their purchase gift wrapped or packaged differently. It appeals to some travelers and is also a more personal and private way to shop and transact in COVID times,” says Al Wardi.

Bahrain Duty Free has also increased the space for its cigar offering from 25 square meters previously to 40 square meters and introduced a 58 square meters smoking lounge. Visitors have the chance to buy from all categories in this striking area, with personal service and refreshments.

While these changes are already extensive, Bahrain Duty Free has also made departure shopping even easier — and safer — with a shop & collect facility. Travelers can place their orders on departure, receive a digital receipt and then collect, with no contact necessary, through the locker on arrival. The retailer is developing a similar plan for online click & collect services, which will be introduced in coming months.