A Thousand Anolis LED Fixtures Illuminate Mall of Africa

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Over a thousand Anolis LED lighting fixtures are lighting three major areas of the Mall of Africa in Midrand, Gauteng, South Africa … the result of a remarkable collaboration between architectural lighting designer Deryl Jan, European LED manufacturer Anolis and South African distributor DWR Distribution, who also took on the exacting specialist installation of this high profile project. **Words by Louise Stickland, Photos by Peter Hassall**

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Mall of Africa opened earlier in 2016 and is the largest single-phase retail experience to be built in Africa to date, covering 550,000 square metres in total with two main shopping levels connecting directly to Waterfall City Park. Its interesting architecture and form was inspired by geographical elements of the African continent.

The Anolis fixtures include 900 x RGBW ArcLine Optic 36s which light the roof above the entranceway and main ground floor level which were specified by Deryl Jan of PPA Lightco.

The fixtures were supplied and installed by DWR Distribution, whose team was project managed by Keith Pugin. They worked closely with Deryl and end-to-end the project consumed the company for a year.

The three aspects of the Mall currently lit with Anolis are the roof, a selection of trees in the adjacent City Park and various other aspects around the park including an underpass which is part of a new road constructed to enable vehicle access to the Mall.



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Anolis was chosen for its quality, proven reliability and for the manufacturer’s willingness to customise and adapt their technology to ensure that Deryl and DWR had exactly the right products needed to deliver world class lighting for this seminal commercial venture.

Lead architect Tia Kanakakis from MDS initially gave Deryl a brief of how she envisioned the lighting should look, inspired by a number of ideas she collected from Las Vegas and other places around the world where lighting is crucial to enhancing atmosphere and moods.

She also wanted lighting to be a central visual feature for the space that accentuated the curves and contours of the building.



Raising the Roof

The roof is constructed out of 963 triangular ETFE inflatable cushions, 432 of which are clear and

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531 opaque, covering a surface area of approximately 3954 square metres.

After considering several options, the decision was made to illuminate only the opaque ETFE panels on all except the outer ring of cushions. The opaque finish took the light extremely well and the effect added a depth and contrast to the honeycomb-like pattern they create.

Deryl has been using Anolis products for some years in his work. “The quality and the engineering are excellent and it’s definitely an LED light-source of choice” he confirmed. He had also had a good experience with Anolis installed in Protea Court, Sandton, Johannesburg – another premium SA retail project on which he worked in 2011 for lighting designer Paul Pamboukian.

“I was already confident of the quality and performance of Anolis so I was extremely keen to stay with the brand for this, and also because they were so knowledgeable and helpful in actioning the bespoke adjustments necessary for the lights to work in this environment” he commented, adding, “At every stage of the process I had seven star service and attention to detail from John Saunders and his team at Anolis in the Czech Republic.

Deryl and DWR looked at the best solutions for smoothly and evenly illuminating the ETFE segments and then conducted an onsite demo with 21 of the Anolis ArcLine Optic 36s that he was suggesting they use. This was also attended by key people from MDS and the project’s developers, Atterbury, after which they could imagine how amazing it would look applied to the whole roof!

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After this, the fixtures were confirmed and ordered with Anolis director John Saunders and the factory in the Czech Republic started manufacturing the order, together with special brackets which were designed and fabricated by DWR to clip the fixtures on to the profile of the roof panels.

The ArcLine Optic 36s in the roof are powered by 114 x ArcPower 384 Rack Mount drivers located in the ceiling area – and run via an MA Lighting grandMA2 replay unit also chosen for its reliability.

The Park, Gardens & Underpass

During one of Deryl's first presentations to the client, Atterbury, he showed some views of the park trees – on the south side of the Mall – coloured in blue, an idea that everyone really liked, so this was adopted as part of the overall architectural lighting scheme.

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Again, for depth and adding a touch of non-uniformity and interest, 70 of the Platanus Acerifolia – more commonly known as London Plane **–** deciduous trees are lit, for which Deryl chose Anolis ArcSource 24 RGBW in-grounds.

These are an adjustable module that can be tilted to maximise the focus. They are RDM-controllable, and can be repositioned as the tree grows which was an important consideration. They are a bright high quality light source with a ‘watch glass’ style front fitted flush to the fixture to reduce the build-up of assorted debris.

They are run via a Nicolaudie stand-alone DMX controller with on-board astronomical clock that switches on and off according to the daylight hours, which was spec’d by DWR.

The Underpass runs below the park and features a long line of concrete central supporting columns. These are transformed from a utilitarian engineering necessity into an elegant architectural feature by 22 x ArcSource 24MC integral lightsources shooting up the sides.

Forty ArcLine outdoor Optic 27 POBs (power on-board) are illuminating the nearby cycle track, attached to the soffits along the underpass and also in the garden area. Along the top of two bridges connecting the park to the Mall are a series of ArcSource 1s lighting the general garden

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areas.

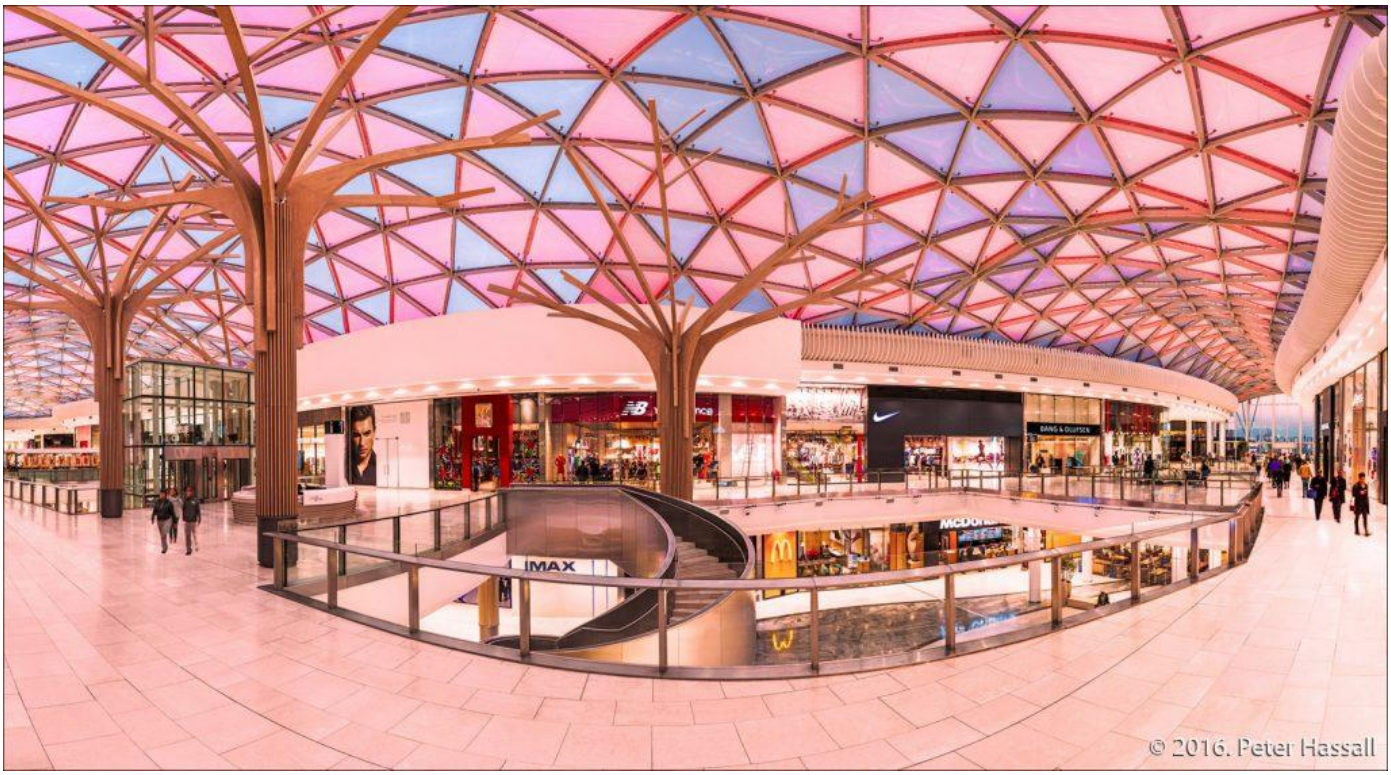
Lighting the park and gardens creates a magical and inviting ambience and draws the whole of this exterior space into the Mall concept.

Installation

There were many challenges involved in the installation, the intense stints of working at height required by the DWR team topped the list

The DWR core crew in addition to Keith included Nick Britz and Bruce Riley with Nick additionally taking on programming of all their parts of the lighting.

DimBright were commissioned to assist DWR on the install and worked a massive amount of overtime and late nights. Carl du Preez produced numerous drawings, renders and schematics



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All working on site had to have additional Work at Height and Rescue certificate training, and some completed level 1 First Aid course, Fire Fighting & Fire Prevention courses. Keith was also the SHE (Safety Health & Environment) representative who had to be present at all times while they were working.

The only access to install the ArcLines in the roof was utilising three 25 metre reach cherry pickers which were hired by DWR for two months.

Manoeuvring these around the site was very tricky and testing due to the myriad of other contractors and numerous obstacles constantly popping up in the way as everyone vied for space, all focussed on finishing their parts of the job as pressure ramped up in the weeks ahead of the grand opening date.

During the summer months, the DWR team was dealing with direct sunlight on the roof, with temperatures peaking at 40 degrees plus – so it was tough although some superlative camaraderie shone through and everyone got a nice tan! Keith also reckons he lost around 9 Kgs in weight with all the walking required which was typically between 15 and 20 Km a day!

They installed over 80 kilometres of Cat 5 cabling in the roof to run the fixtures, a galvanising job which took 4 months alone to complete.

Despite the gruelling installation and the scale and ambition of the overall project, the results are jaw-droppingly stunning, as Deryl delivered the specular, creative – and much talked about – lighting scheme that Tia envisioned … to the delight of her clients.

The roof illuminations in particular were one of the layers of icing on the cake.

Deryl comments, “It was another awesome experience working with both Anolis and DWR. Anolis had the imagination and mind-set to adapt and suit our exact needs which I think is quite exceptional and something I value highly”.

A testament to the strategic importance of the installation, John Saunders flew in to the grand opening in person. He states, “The cooperation between Anolis, the team at DWR and Deryl at PPA Lightco has always been on a different level. Deryl’s exceptional designs combined with the most professional of teams at DWR ensured that Anolis was involved in another phenomenal project in South Africa. I am personally looking forward to working with them again on future projects … so watch this space!”

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Keith concludes that it was a great learning curve and really stretched their skill sets and personality attributes in every way and also strengthened the many relationships involved. . “It was a team effort in every aspect from manufacturing to technical expertise to admin to Amanda Miranda who prepared an impeccable set of handover documents which were much appreciated”

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