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Apple Marina Bay Sands – a new gemstone on the Singapore waterfront and a celebration of light

Recently opened to the public, Apple Marina Bay Sands creates a new distinctive presence on Singapore Bay. The 30-metre-diameter structure is a fully glazed dome with a black glass base, complementing the sister pavilions through its scale and materiality.

The design is the result of a close collaboration between Apple's design teams and the integrated engineering and design team at Foster + Partners.

David Summerfield, Foster + Partners said, "Apple Marina Bay Sands is all about the delicate interplay between transparency and shade. The structure dissolves the boundary between the inside and outside, creating a minimal platform that floats gently in the water, looking out over the bay and the spectacular Singapore skyline."

Structurally, the dome acts as a hybrid steel and glass shell, where the grid of steel sections support the weight of the glass and shading, and the curved structural glass panels restrain the steel elements laterally and stiffen the overall form against lateral loads. Integrated solar shading devices keep the interior cool. Each of the 114 panels of glass is carefully selected to meet glazing indices as prescribed by BCA Green Mark, Singapore's own sustainability rating system.

Each of the multifunctional concentric light sunshade rings reduce in size as they progress towards the top of the building, providing acoustic absorption for the store. More importantly, they diffuse and reflect daylight to the baffle above, creating a magical effect and dematerialising the structure. At the top a semi-opaque oculus provides a dramatic shaft of light that travels through the space, reminiscent of the famous Pantheon in Rome.

Stefan Behling, Foster + Partners said, "The dome appears ephemeral. The effect is very calming, and the changing intensity and colour of the light is mesmerising. It is not only a celebration of Apple's incredible products, but a celebration of light."

The garden city ideal of Singapore flows from the promenade into the interior spaces, with ten trees placed along the perimeter providing additional shading and soft shadows through the foliage. Set within leather-topped planters, they also provide comfortable places to sit and enjoy the ambiance of the store and the fantastic views of the marina

The store can be entered through The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands via a beautifully curved stone entrance, flanked by Apple's signature Avenue display on either side of a 45-metre long and 7.6-metre wide space. This leads directly to a set of dramatic escalators that take visitors on a "kaleidoscopic" journey

For further information

Katy Harris
Head of Communications
+44 20 7738 0455
press@fosterandpartners.com
fosterandpartners.com

to the heart of the spectacular domed space. This contrasting transition from the heart of the retail centre to the Apple dome offers the customer a dramatic and exhilarating experience. It culminates with spectacular views across the bay and towards the city. During the day, the dome reflects the colours of the surrounding water and sky, while in the evening the subtle interior lighting provides a warm glow and enhances everyone's experience of Singapore's spectacular skyline.

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