

Milan Malpensa's 8,000sq m makeover

By Kevin Rozario | Wednesday, 21 May 2014 14:42

Today SEA, the operator of Italy's Milan Malpensa Airport (MXP), marked the first milestone in a major retail revamp and airport expansion, with the opening of the Piazza del Lusso – claimed to be one of the largest airport shopping areas in Europe.



In advance of EXPO 2015, to be held in Italy's leading commercial city, SEA has undertaken a €30m (\$41m) restyling project at MXP, earlier than originally planned.

Piazza del Lusso is the centrepiece of a new retail area that will eventually be accessible to all passengers whether they are travelling to a Schengen or a non-Schengen destination.

With 8,000sq m and 46 new sales spaces – including 2,000sq m for the main duty free and travel retail unit – the new mall will increase the total retail surface in the departures area to 23,000sq m offering some 100 restaurants, bars and shops.

According to SEA, the appearance of the new Piazza del Lusso resembles a modern version of the famed Galleria Vittorio Emanuele in the centre of Milan and is designed as a destination in its own right.



Italian style is in strong evidence, with the lighting created by lighting designer Cinzia Ferrara one of the distinctive features, as well as a host of top home grown luxury houses including Bulgari, Ermenegildo Zegna, Etro, the **first Giorgio Armani store** at a European airport, Gucci, Moncler (French-Italian), Salvatore Ferragamo and Tod's. Other high-end houses include Hermès and Montblanc. A Davide Oldani café completes the picture (*left*).

Steel and glass structure

Once the restyling of MXP is completed, the airport will be “an elegant, bright and airy state-

of-the-art steel and glass facility, featuring an aerodynamic design, marble floors, and zinc-titanium cladding” according to SEA. The architectural designer is Gregorio Caccia Dominioni.

Terminal 1, expected to be completed by April 2015, will have a total surface area of 350,000sq m, 90 boarding gates and up to 270 check-in desks, 41 loading bridges. It will be the first Italian airport to accommodate two Airbus A380s simultaneously.

Caccia Dominioni says: “The works, whether of new construction or restyling projects, are inspired by the Lombard architectural and design tradition, characterised by the search for innovative materials and special details aimed at achieving overall harmony.

Lighting expert Ferrara adds: “Constantly alternating full and empty spaces in the drop ceiling create a light-and-shade effect... a sort of chiaroscuro dear to the Italian pictorial tradition, an effect that changes according to how one looks at it, inspired by many of Giò Ponti’s designs.” Ponti was a key architect, industrial designer, and furniture designer of the 20th century Italy.

Falling passenger numbers

The attention to detail and the strong brand names will be needed to counter MXP’s falling passenger numbers. Last year the second busiest airport in Italy saw traffic dip below 18m (to 17.995m), a -3.1% fall, the biggest drop among Italy’s top five airports. SEA’s other major managed airport, Milan Linate, also saw traffic decline last year by -2.1% to 9.034m.



SEA President Pietro Modiano (*right*), comments: “Malpensa is pivotal in the Milan airport system. It is strategic for this country, and SEA is investing in an infrastructure that was able to grow even during the crisis and is now seeing the signs – albeit still weak – of an upcoming recovery. What we see today is only the beginning of Malpensa’s new success story unfolding before our eyes.”