



The new mall is designed by renowned architect Jos Galán. The Agbar Tower – seen in the background – is a nearby landmark for Barcelona and is currently being converted into a luxury hotel.

CATALAN REFURBISHMENT

Unibail-Rodamco spends €130 million to give the Glòries mall in Barcelona an all-around sprucing up. IMAGES: UNIBAIL-RODAMCO



When a mall has 16 years under its belt, thoughts begin to turn to refurbishment. Unibail-Rodamco is taking comprehensive action on Glòries in the midst of Barcelona's 22@ district. The mall on Avinguda Diagonal benefits from one of the strongest primary catchment areas in Europe, with 1.8 million people living within ten minutes of the mall by car and public transport. In 2016, Glòries is set to shine in a completely new light. The French company demonstrates a clear commitment to investing in the Catalonian capital with this €130 million project. CEO Christophe Cuvillier considers the city to be a priority for expansion and one of the key strategic areas for real estate in Europe.

The architectural firm commissioned to implement and supervise the refurbishment is L35, led by renowned architect Jos Galán. Likewise, Javier Mariscal, who designed the mascot for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, has been tasked with creating a new graphic image for the shopping center. He will also design the furniture and the mall's urban elements.

EXTENSIVE RANGE OF PLACES TO EAT

The first phase of remodeling is already underway and has required an investment of €22 million. The work, which is due for completion in five months' time, has meant that Carrer Verd street has been opened up and turned into a large, open-air shopping street and pedestrian promenade with two access points. This phase will also see the launch of "New Glòries Market", which is a gourmet area that brings together food shopping, restaurants, and take-away meals. It covers 3,400 sq m and has the capacity to accommodate up to 21 food and leisure establishments, including an 8-screen cinema (Balaña) at street level.

Simon Orchard, the Managing Director of Unibail-Rodamco in Spain, explains: "We would like the center to have an extensive range of places to eat and leisure activities. This is in line with the company's new corporate strategy for these kinds of developments, which is based on the concept of "The Dining Experience", a project that is aimed

GLÒRIES IN NUMBERS

- Date opened: 1997
- Number of visitors in 2012: 12 million
- Estimated number of visitors after refurbishment: 16 million
- Current total area: 56,300 sq m
- Total area after refurbishment: 70,000 sq m
- Total investment: €130 million

at promoting different culinary experiences in large specialized and themed areas.” Overall, 16% of Glòries’ space will be devoted to foodservice after the refurbishment.

A FLAGSHIP AVENUE IS UNDERWAY

The second phase, which will start in mid 2014, will require a further investment of €108 million. The entire top floor will be removed and redesigned with spectacular glass display windows along its perimeter. All retail units can be accessed from the street at ground floor level, as the existing closed galleries and walkways will be removed. A flagship avenue will offer high street retail with international brands displaying their latest collections and concepts.

This will make access to the center easier. In addition to the new Llacuna/Diagonal entrance, significant improvements will also be made to accesses on Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes. The idea is to create more openness, improve access from the Clot district and remove architectural barriers. Unibail-Rodamco strives to realize these alterations in full compliance with the framework of Barcelona City Council’s plans for the comprehensive improvement of public spaces in this quarter.

FURTHER TRANSFORMATION IN DISTRICT 22@

There are three other new projects in progress at the same time, similar to the refurbishment of the Glòries shopping center, that will emphasize the economic, social, and innovative potential of the 22@ district. The first is Torre Agbar – currently the headquarters of the water services company Aigües de Barcelona – which will be converted into a luxury 5-star Grand Hyatt Hotel to attract 1.5 million guests with high purchasing power each year.

The second project is Glòries’ square which is located at the junction of the city’s three major roads, Diagonal, Gran Via, and Meridiana. Work on this square is already underway with the demolition of its ring road. It will be replaced by a park and underground tunnels to transform the square into a new business and social center for Barcelona.



Food and drink in focus: The new Glòries comprises 16% foodservice areas, a high proportion when compared internationally.

The third project is the new open-air flea market Mercat del Encants, formerly known as “Los Encantes”, which was launched in September of 2013. This is one of the oldest markets in Europe and internationally famous for its second-hand goods, among other things. It has now been turned into a spectacular covered market with a single roof construction of aluminum, zinc, and stainless steel, which is quickly becoming a tourist attraction.

BARCELONA AND MADRID AS POSITIVE FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

Regarding the ailing economic situation in the country, Orchard notes: “2016 will be a good time to complete the works on Glòries. Better than 2014 would be.” At the same time, he stresses that trendy Barcelona – like Madrid – sets itself positively apart from the rest of Spain. However, the new Glòries will be up against tough competition in the shopping and tourism destination Barcelona. Its greatest competitor is the 87,000-sq m “Diagonal Mar” which is also located on Avinguda Diagonal. It is owned by Avestus Capital Partners.



SIMON ORCHARD

Managing Director of Unibail-Rodamco in Spain: “From an economic perspective, 2016 is a good time to complete work on Glòries. Better than it would be in 2014.”

