



Qatar Duty Free has opened several new retail and F&B outlets at Doha's new \$15.5bn Hamad International Airport in recent months.

As reported, the airport formally opened its doors five months ago and Qatar Duty Free Senior Vice President Keith Hunter made it clear then that there would be more outlets opening progressively this year.

Since then, a number of additionally planned new retail fashion outlets and F&B facilities have been added in the last few months, including boutiques for Coach, Almotahajiba (an Arabic fashion brand), a full line Hugo Boss outlet and a Montblanc boutique.

Giorgio Armani and Armani Junior (*located near the toys section*) complete the list of retail outlets, while QDF has also opened three F&B facilities, including Le Grand Comptoir (*a brasserie/wine restaurant*), Soprafino an Italian dining concept in conjunction with celebrity chef Massimo Capra from North America, and a Qataf Café which is more of a Middle Eastern inspired Tapas Cafe specialising in Middle Eastern teas and coffee.



QDF RETAIL NOW '90% OPEN'

Asked how close QDF is now to completing its offer, Hunter said: "Well, we still do have a few more stores to open, but we are about 90% open and we are switching them on as is convenient really."

Having said that, Hunter says that the early reaction to the new airport with its 25,000sq m of retail space and 15,000sq m of F&B facilities has been 'amazing' and mostly positive while passengers familiarize themselves with the spacious design – a luxury that was entirely missing in the old congested facility.

Hunter said: "We have seen a lot of changes in the flows in the airport, but we are avoiding any knee-jerk reactions by making any major changes and literally only tweaking offers in various locations."



The iconic teddy bear that has become an unintentional symbol of the airport concourse since it opened.

DOUBLE-DIGIT SALES INCREASE...

"The flows are going to constantly change because we have got so many new routes opening up and even last week we had three new aircraft in one day which was a bit of a record. This is all happening at an amazing pace as well as the airport is still adding new facilities.

"Obviously we have still got the first class lounge to open and that will change some of the flow, so we are just playing along and understanding how the airport works from a flow perspective."



Keith Hunter tries a motorcycle raffle prize out for size at Hamad International Airport.

Having said that, he added that he is now optimistic that the operation is 'well on target' to hit plus-16% in sales by the end of the company's financial year next March. *TRBusiness* currently estimates QDF's annual DF&TR sales at between \$350-400m.

A major interview with Keith Hunter appears in the November issue of TRBusiness which will be available at the MEADFA show in Dubai later this month.