

New mall puts squeeze on traders

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East London shopping centres and stores have blamed the newly opened Hemingways Mall for preventing them from enjoying a bumper festive season.

Although all shopping centres and stores have been quite busy in the days leading up to Christmas, some claim the new Hemingways Mall had taken over their popularity.

Nikita Benskin of Musica in Beacon Bay's Retail Park said the store had experienced a huge drop in sales compared to last year.

She attributed this to more people choosing to shop at Hemingways.

Raj Moodley of Boardmans in Beacon Bay said the festive season did not go too well for them, even though they had sold a lot of furniture.

"We have had a drop in sales from last year," Moodley said.

"Because there is a new mall, things won't be the same."

Vincent Park shopping centre manager Joseph Parsley said although he could not quote sales figures, it was generally "fair" compared to last year.

"Things have slowed down due to the economy and the new Hemingways Mall," he said, adding that a "cut of their pie" had been taken away.

Crazy Store's Nolitha Saville, in Beacon Bay, said many people had walked through the shop's doors but few had purchased goods.

Sales down, but...

Although other shops said sales were down this festive season compared to last year, they could not say what the reasons were.

Reggie's Lwandiswa Mdladlamba said they had been busy two weeks before Christmas, but things had slowed down.

General manager of Hemingways Mall Rachel Klaasen said the centre had been very busy during the festive shopping period.

“We have a variety of shops, a food court and entertainment. We are a mega-mall and that is what attracts people.

We are easily accessible with ample parking and that is why people enjoy shopping at Hemingways.

“We are a one-stop mall.”

Woolworths pay point controller at Hemingways, Bradley Gawie, said they had had a very busy time.

“Our sales picked up Christmas Day; the gift wrapping podium was packed.

“We want to thank all our customers for their loyal support.”

Gregory Mckay, manager of Barons Select at Hemingways, said the days leading to Christmas had been chaotic and that the shop and café had been very busy.

He said the move from King's Mall in Gonubie had been a good one for Barons, with excellent sales.

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