Dubai Duty Free caps of 2023 with all-time sales record



The Gold Shop in Concourse C

The new year began on a high note for Dubai Duty Free with the operation announcing an all-time sales record of Dhs7.885 billion (US\$2.16 billion) for 2023. This represents a 24.39% increase over the previous year and is up 6.40% vs. pre-pandemic in 2019.

December finished with record monthly sales of Dhs807.6 million (US\$221 million), an 8.37% increase compared to 2022. December sales were further fueled by the retailer's 40th Anniversary celebrations when the operation offered a 25% discount on December 20, which resulted in a total of Dhs54.1 million (US\$14.8 million) during the 24-hour shopping spree.

Reflecting on the year at Dubai Duty Free, Colm McLoughlin, Executive Vice Chairman & CEO, said, "We are thrilled to have achieved our target sales for the year, a record month in December and a record year in 2023, which culminated with our celebrations of our milestone 40th Anniversary. Overall, it has been a fantastic year and I would like to thank our Chairman H.H. Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum for his unwavering support. Thanks also to our great team of staff, our suppliers, the media and, of course, our customers, for their contribution to our continued growth and success over four decades."

Dubai Duty Free recorded over 20 million sales transactions throughout 2023 (or an average of 55,000 sales transactions per day), while 55.2 million units of merchandise were sold. The top fiveselling categories for the year were Perfumes, followed by Liquor, Gold, Cigarettes & Tobacco and Electronics. With sales of Dhs1.366 billion (US\$374million). Perfumes contributed 17% of total sales and retained its position as the top-selling category. Sales of Liquor reached Dhs1.130 billion 1 (US\$310 million) and accounted for 14% of the total annual sales. Meanwhile, Gold recorded sales of Dhs773,506 million (US\$212 million) and contributed 10% towards total revenue. Cigarettes & Tobacco came in fourth place with sales amounted to Dhs745,694 million (\$US204 million) and accounted for 9.5% of total revenue while Electronics came in fifth place with sales of Dhs628 million (US\$172 million) and accounted for 8% of total annual sales.

Online sales accounted for 2% of the overall sales tally for 2023 and reached Dhs164 million (US\$45 million).

Sales in Departures across the operation reached Dhs7.062 billion (US\$1.93 billion) representing 90% of total annual sales, while Arrivals sales totaled Dhs612 million (US\$168 million), representing 8% of total annual sales.

In terms of top source markets for Dubai Duty Free sales, India is number one with Dhs973 million (US\$266 million) sales, followed by Russia with Dhs759 million (US\$208 million), China with Dhs564 million (US\$154 million), Saudi Arabia with Dhs512 million (US\$140 million), and the UK is in fifth place with sales of Dhs373 million (US\$102 million).

Meanwhile, in line with the growth of the operation, the rehiring and recruitment of staff continued with the total employee count now standing at 5,500. Throughout the year, the operation received a total of 18 awards, including its 22nd consecutive Business Traveller Middle East Award for "Best Airport for Duty Free Shopping in the Middle East", the Gulf Business "Retail Company of the Year" award and its seventeenth consecutive Global Traveler Award for "Best Duty Free Shopping in the World." McLoughlin was also the recipient of personal awards including the unique and one-time Pearl Achievement Award for "Outstanding Contribution to the Travel Industry," which was created to mark the 30th edition of the Arabian Travel Market. He was also presented with the inaugural "Frontier Pioneer" Award at the Frontier Awards in Cannes in October.

Looking ahead, Dubai Duty Free will continue to enhance its retail operation which includes major refurbishment plans in Concourse B, which will be completed early this year. It is also working on the scheduled renovations of three Arrival shops in the first quarter of 2024, with construction to continue until the second to third quarter of 2024. Concourse A (two Perfumes and Cosmetics Shops and Fashion area) will also be refurbished starting in the second quarter of 2024 and will be finished in early to mid-2025 with three new boutiques of major fashion brands.

Dubai Duty Free will also maintain its busy events and promotional calendar which includes the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships. The event will take place at Dubai Duty Free Tennis Stadium from February 18 – March 2.