

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**IT’S DESTINATION CHRISTMAS AT MELROSE ARCH!**

Melrose Arch is bringing the magic back to Christmas this festive season with a dazzling array of Christmas lights throughout the precinct and plenty of fun for the whole family.

Remember the days when families used to pile in their cars and drive through the streets of Johannesburg, Durban or Cape Town, admiring the beautiful Christmas lights on display? Those days may be long gone but Melrose Arch is reviving the tradition. From 16 November to 3 January, families will be able to visit Melrose Arch and walk through the streets and Retail Galleria, which will be decorated with Christmas lights galore. Baubles, fairies, a giant teddy bear, stars, reindeer, toys, gifts and more – everything children love and associate with Christmas will be up in lights.

“We’re very excited about the festive season,” says Mike Vermaak, MD of Melrose Arch. “The holiday season is a special time of the year, a time for families to celebrate and enjoy spending time together, and what better place to do that than at Melrose Arch? You can park your car and safely walk around the precinct with your family, enjoying the spectacular lights and doing some Christmas shopping before going to one of our top-quality restaurants for dinner. It’s an experience you won’t find anywhere else in Johannesburg.”

The Christmas lights will be turned on at a special ceremony in Melrose Arch’s High Street on Thursday, 16 November at 6.30pm. The public is invited to attend and watch as the lights are turned on. From 6.30pm to 8pm, there’ll be plenty of entertainment, including performances by the Smile Foundation ambassadors Harry Sideropoulos, Loyiso Bala and Tshedi Mholo of Malaika. At 7.30pm, when the lights are switched on, the Grammy Award-winning Soweto Gospel Choir will start singing Christmas carols and the public is welcome to join in. Candles will be on sale for a nominal fee and all proceeds will be donated to Melrose Arch’s CSI partner, the Smile Foundation.

The Smile Foundation is a South African NGO that assists children with any type of treatable facial abnormality, such as cleft palate and lip, burn victims and Moebius syndrome, to receive corrective plastic and reconstructive surgery.

Hedley Lewis, Smile Foundation Executive Director – Finance and Fundraising, says the foundation is grateful for this incredible support from Melrose Arch. “Christmas is such a special time for children; they are captivated by its magic, which illicits such a sense of wonder in them. Through festive initiatives like this with Melrose Arch – which children absolutely love – we are able to help hundreds more South African children, and give them the gift of a smile. By correcting facial anomalies and burn scarring, we help give these children a shot at a normal life, so they too may experience everyday joys, like the magic of Christmas,” he says.

Every weekend, from 17 November to 24 December, there will be a host of family fun, including choirs, Christmas carols, street entertainment, Santa Claus, magicians and more. (Check the website, [www.melrosearch.co.za](http://www.melrosearch.co.za), or visit Melrose Arch’s Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/atmelrosearch](http://www.facebook.com/atmelrosearch), for the schedule of entertainment, all of which is free.)

The end of the year is a busy time for everyone so to make life easier, extended shopping hours will help customers get all their shopping done in time. From 16 November to 16 December, all stores will stay open from 9am to 7pm Monday to Saturday and 9am to 5pm Sunday and public holidays (and remember, 24 November is Black Friday, so there will be amazing bargains up for grabs, as well as free parking at Melrose Arch for the day upon presentation of a till slip at the Concierge Desk).

The Grinch may have stolen Christmas but Melrose Arch is bringing it back in a big way this year!

For more information, please contact the Melrose Arch Marketing Department on (011) 684-0002.

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