

# Egg aims to disrupt SA retail's status quo

 By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

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"The world is not as it was, and neither is retail. A new approach was needed that challenged the status quo and offered a way for local brands to be seen and bring excitement back to shopping malls like never before." These were the words of retail entrepreneur Paul Simon, founder of YDE, when describing the thinking behind one of South Africa's most innovative new retail attractions, Egg.



Arie Fabian (left) and Paul Simon (right).

The 2,700m<sup>2</sup> multi-brand, experiential shopping space launched in Cape Town's Cavendish Square on 1 December, and is the result of a 50-50 joint venture between retail mavens Paul Simon and Arie Fabian, and Old Mutual Property.

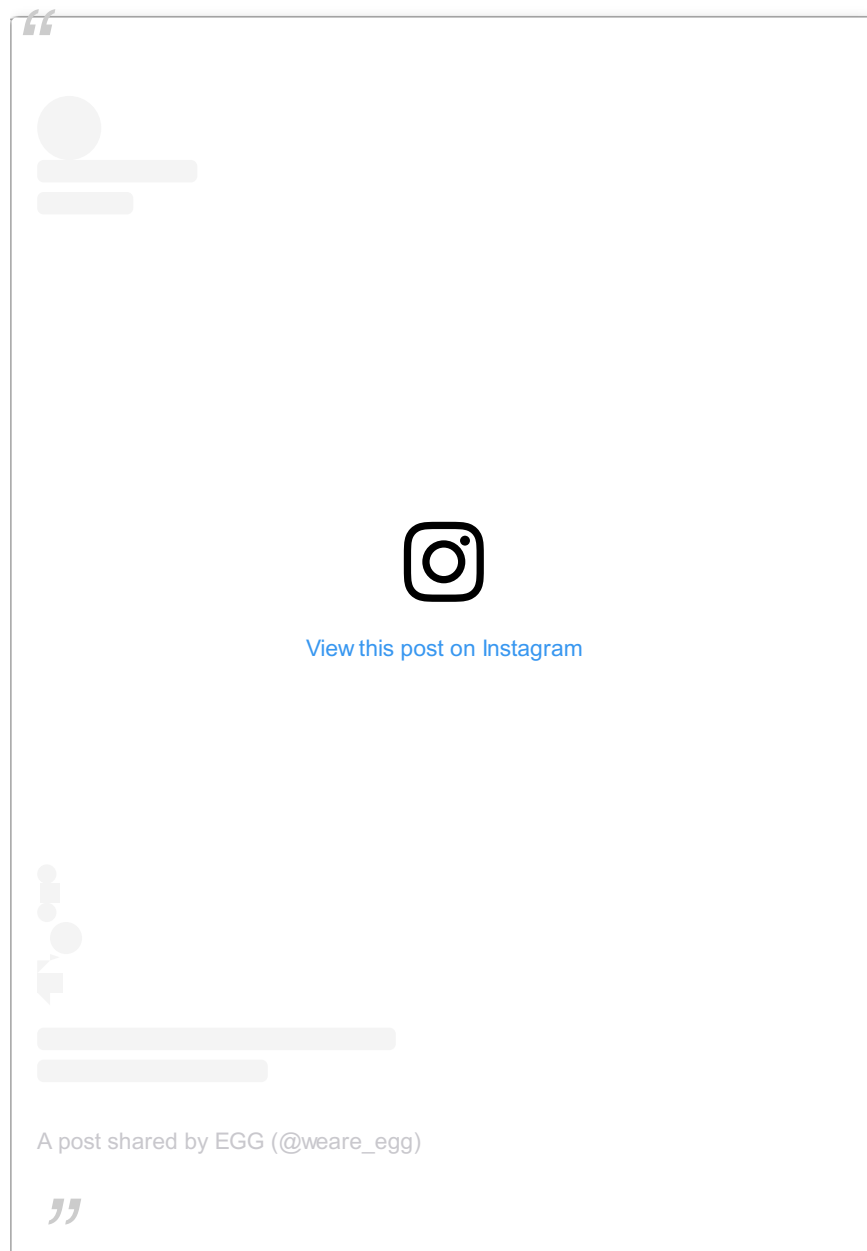
Egg houses 250 local and international brands across fashion, wellness, food, jewellery, beauty, living and customisation, making them easily accessible in a suburban retail shopping centre as well as online via the soon-to-launch Egg online platform.

Approximately 80% of the brands are local and a significant amount are SMMEs who may have otherwise found it difficult to maintain a sustainable presence in a leading shopping mall.

Working with South African design studio TDC & Co, Egg has created a visually arresting retail space that's chock-full of

interesting details, digital enhancements, and value-added services to entice shoppers to linger longer.

Within its first two trading days, Egg attracted approximately 7,000 shoppers.



### Experiential retail

In addition to an extensive range of fashion and footwear, Egg boasts a one-stop beauty shop including a makeup service, hair salon and barber, nail bar and piercing studio. An in-store photographic studio is available for use by any of Egg's brand partners, or for customers who'd like to treat themselves to a photoshoot.





Product personalisation services are also on offer, with a t-shirt customisation station and an artist hotdesk featuring local creatives able to bring customers' artistic ideas to life on products and apparel.

Egg's centre court avails itself for art installations and activations by any of the brand partners. This is where events, masterclasses, workshops and the like will happen, adding an element of retail theatre and providing a space where brands and business owners can interact with customers.



An impressive and varied food offering is provided covering everything from coffee and bagels, to fresh juices, poke, burgers, salads and desserts. Cape Town favourites like Rosetta Roastery, Scheckter's Raw, The Pot Luck Club, Pizza Proper and Unframed Ice-cream form part of the line-up.

Visitors can tuck into their grub in a leafy green area inside Egg, and make use of the store's high-speed Wi-Fi while they're at it.





## 'Phydigital' focus

Egg aims to be a truly omnichannel retailer by combining a world-class in-store shopping experience with an innovative e-commerce platform and interactive consumer app. According to the founders, online and physical retail work optimally when they're combined.

When the Egg app launches in January, customers will be able to shop directly from the app for delivery, or have goods ready for collection at the in-store click-and-collect counter in as little as 15 minutes. The app will also greet customers on entry and track a shopper's whereabouts in store so that when they tap the 'help' icon a store assistant can easily find them.



## Giving local SMMEs a leg up

The Egg concept allows smaller businesses to enter the shopping mall setting without the red tape that comes with leases of this nature. Brand partners also benefit from access to business support and advice on costing, planning, data, supply chain and service elements that traditionally challenge startups.

"We only do well if our brands do well. We need to sell product, so it's in our best interest to help them succeed," Simon said.

He added, "Retail startups generally prioritise the sexy side of their fledgling brands over the business basics. Building a sustainable retail brand requires that startups obsess as much about, costing, planning, data, supply chain and service as they do about the product, store and décor design."

The company's vendor platform allows brand partners to manage their Egg store remotely, with access to live sales, stock tracking and merchandise management.







Egg offers month-to-month leases with minimal setup costs, and flexible 2,5, 5 and 10m2 store size options, as well as the potential to outgrow Egg's offering and take up an independent store within the mall. The company promises "affordable rental and commission benchmarked against relevant sectors and designed to ensure sustainability".

Its plug-and-play retail support ecosystem means that all the facilities required to start trading immediately are provided, including all the necessary premises requirements. Vendors only need to provide stock and services in the case of food and beauty service providers.

The brand mix inside Egg is not static, but will evolve to bring in fresh talent and cater to consumer demand, something Simon feels is missing from the current shopping centre environment. "Agility is missing from retail, especially from shopping centres. Long-term leases don't allow centres to change tenants quickly enough to cater to changing consumer needs."

The Egg concept is expected to expand to Johannesburg and Durban over the next 36 months, and possibly abroad.

Here, Simon shares more on the inspiration behind Egg.

### **■ How does Egg endeavour to provide consumers with a modern omnichannel shopping experience?**

We're uniting omnichannels in a multidimensional shopping experience that combines retail, e-commerce and an interactive consumer app, while appealing to a new generation of consumer that is seeking an all-inclusive entertainment, locally-sourced, learning and lifestyle fulfilment experience from a trip to the mall.

Your in-store experience will be enhanced by the Egg app – while you're shopping in an Egg store, you can call for assistance from the Egg team, who are there to help you to make the most out of what's on offer. Water is just a tap away: request refreshment on the app and you'll be able to quench your thirst at our water fountain.

While you're browsing brands and discovering your new favourites, you can simply scan a QR code to find out everything you'd like to know about our partners. And soon, you'll be able to shop online too – even while you're in-store – and once you've checked out, we'll be able to drop off your items at a click-and-collect booth so you can skip the queues.

### **■ What factors have guided the decisions on where the Egg stores will be located?**

We're doing it on a case-by-case basis for now, however, we can confirm that the next locations will be at The Zone in Rosebank (Johannesburg) and Gateway (Durban).

### **■ What is the criteria for the brands that form part of the Egg retail experience?**

The criteria is based on what the consumer wants. We will monitor what's selling and will use this as a basis for brands we support in the future. However, with 80% of the store being local, this is where we will place most of our efforts.

### **■ How do smaller brands stand to benefit from being part of the Egg concept?**

Egg will be providing small businesses with access to a world-class omnichannel platform including e-commerce that will be managed by Egg on behalf of each vendor partner. In addition, vendors will receive business support with all live sales and stock tracking, merchandise management (storage, replenishment, visual merchandising) supported on the Egg vendor platform – enabling SMMEs to manage their stores remotely.



Innovative retail concept Egg to launch in SA this November

16 Nov 2020



### **■ What inspired the design of the Egg physical retail space in Cavendish Square?**

We were inspired by the future of retail as well as the egg itself. We've abandoned the rigidity of a typical department store and have embraced a circular approach in order to create a unique shopping experience that hasn't been seen before. The archways in particular have been designed to welcome people in and appeal to all their senses through the use of integrated digital enhancements.

## ■ What role do you believe physical stores will play in the future of retail?

People are travelling to stores less and less, so we needed to create something experiential that could only be felt in person. This also allows the brands involved to interact with customers like never before and create the bonds needed to sustain their future development.

I'm a firm believer that brick and mortar retail is not going anywhere soon – even with the rise of e-commerce. I found that the two should operate in tandem to create the optimal shopping experience, meaning that they don't, and shouldn't have to be mutually exclusive.

For more information, visit [Egg online](#).

## ABOUT LAUREN HARTZENBERG

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