

# **KING OF PRUSSIA**

## **LIFE. AND ALL ITS STORES.**

### **KING OF PRUSSIA MALL HISTORY**

King of Prussia Mall, the East Coast's largest shopping complex, can trace its humble beginnings back to a small community shopping center on a site of only 30 acres. In 1959, Kravco Company, then M.A. Kravitz Company, Inc., began planning a discount strip center, which was to include E.J. Korvette, a discount department store, and a regional supermarket chain.

In 1961, the developer redesigned the architectural plans to create a combination convenience shopping center and open mall, which allowed for three department stores, E.J. Korvette, J.C. Penney and a third to follow at a later date. By 1963 construction was complete and the mall was open to the public. Impressive outdoor amenities situated throughout the open areas included fountains, gazebos and an eight-sided amphitheater, all surrounded by substantial landscaping. The King of Prussia Plaza was an instant success.

In 1965, John Wanamaker Company opened an attractive octagonal, freestanding store with a full line of department store merchandise and became King of Prussia Plaza's first anchor tenant. Wanamaker's entry allowed for a two-level, enclosed mall to be built around the existing J.C. Penney department store, and by 1965 Gimbals had been added to the center. By 1967, King of Prussia Plaza had grown into a true regional shopping center, comprised of both open and enclosed mall areas with approximately 1,300,000 square feet of gross leasable space and over 140 stores.

In the late 1970's, Kravco Company began negotiations with Bamberger's and Bloomingdale's to sign on for a second center, and ultimately the stores agreed to anchor a "fashion-oriented" three-department store mall located directly across Mall Boulevard from King of Prussia Plaza. The architectural design of the new Court at King of Prussia was a two-level configuration fanning out from a central Bloomingdale's location. Aesthetics were maximized with attractive fountain courts, full-size live plants and clear-story skylights that allowed for the introduction of natural light.

Logistics for construction of The Court required the relocation of Mall Boulevard, the construction of a three-level 3,000 car parking structure and the erecting of a bridge over the relocated road to provide a connection between the two centers. Construction of the Court at King of Prussia commenced in early 1980 and the mall opened in August 1981. The mall was an instant success and the 125 high-end stores attracted an affluent shopper class that had not previously frequented the King of Prussia Plaza.

In an effort to ensure King of Prussia Plaza's continuing success with the addition of The Court, a substantial renovation of The Plaza was initiated in 1980. The project consisted of full enclosure of the center, new roofs and skylights, the installation of a

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quarry tile finished floor, new interior landscaping and a stately fountain near Wanamaker's entrance. The end result was a totally renovated "like new" shopping mall that was complete by December 1980, just months prior to the opening of The Court.

In 1981, E.J. Korvette was experiencing financial difficulties, and was subsequently replaced by a new Sears "Store of the Future." Sears' entry into The Plaza allowed for Kravco Company to expand its square footage, develop second level retail space and add The Garden Food Court. A total of 50 new stores were included in the expansion and brought The Plaza to approximately 1.3 million square feet of retail space with over 200 mall shops and 45,000 square feet of office space.

In the early 1990's, Kravco Company attracted new upscale retailers such as Neiman Marcus, Lord & Taylor and Nordstrom to King of Prussia Plaza. The entrance of these high-end retailers brought the number of anchor stores at King of Prussia Mall to eight and resulted in a flood of new designer shops, boutiques and big-name retailers to The Plaza. With such large names in fashion drawing attention to The Plaza, Kravco Company decided to give The Court an aesthetic makeover. The renovation included installation of Italian marble floor tile, stained glass windows, decorative brass planters, cherry wood handrails and full-size trees. The renovation also involved the construction of a glass-covered crosswalk connecting the two malls. Over the following years renovations expanded to include The Plaza, and by 1997 King of Prussia Mall had completed a thorough \$185 million renovation and expansion.

October of 2001 brought the most recent phase of center renovation to fruition when King of Prussia Mall unveiled the all-new Pavilion. The Pavilion, constructed within a renovated department store in The Court, represented King of Prussia Mall's seamless transition into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and confirmed the center's status as one of the most important retail projects of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Currently housing seven department stores, more than 365 specialty shops and over 40 delightful restaurants, King of Prussia Mall encompasses nearly three million square feet of prime retail space and offers three exciting centers, The Plaza, The Court and The Pavilion.

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