



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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1,250 new jobs, almost 12 million shoppers and three proposals: Union Square celebrates first birthday

- **Aberdeen retail and leisure centre celebrates with record footfall and world first signing of Gio-Goi**
 - **1,250 jobs created in one year – with many going to local unemployed**
 - **Scotland “no longer a two-city choice” for shoppers**

Aberdeen’s newest shopping centre, Union Square, has created around 1,250 new jobs and welcomed almost 12 million* shoppers through its doors since opening a year ago tomorrow [29th October].

On its first anniversary of trading, the shopping and leisure complex claims to have firmly established Aberdeen as a real alternative to Scotland’s traditional shopping destinations in the central belt. Just one day before its first birthday, street-wear designer Gio-Goi – popular with the likes of Lilly Allen, Plan B and Deadmau5 – opened its first worldwide stand-alone store in Union Square, choosing Aberdeen over London, Edinburgh and other major UK cities.

Since opening one year ago**, Union Square has attracted another 19 new retail and leisure brands to the centre and a further ten new restaurants. Over 60 per cent of the newly-opened shops, including oriental food giant wagamama and luxury spa brand PureSpa, are new to Aberdeen, joining a host of major international brands such as Apple, Zara and YO! Sushi.

Providing further proof that Aberdeen retail and leisure can compete with the likes of Glasgow and Edinburgh, Abercrombie & Fitch sister company Hollister and family favourite restaurant Giraffe opened their first Scottish stores in Union Square in the last year.

In twelve months, Union Square has created around 1,250*** jobs, over 900 of which were generated through the centre’s unique scheme, Jobs For U, a partnership run in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus, Skills Development Scotland, and other organisations. A survey of the job applicants revealed that around 74% of the new positions went to people who were previously unemployed and 71% were seeking Jobseeker’s Allowance.

Ryan Manson, General Manager for Union Square, said: “Scotland is no longer a two-city choice for shoppers. The success of Union Square has put Aberdeen firmly on the retail map,



but more importantly, it has boosted the regional economy by creating new jobs and encouraging consumer spending.

“The fact that Aberdeen can now attract new-to-Scotland retailers is yet further evidence of the region’s clout as a shopping destination. By welcoming major brands like Hollister, wagamama and Scotland’s first stand-alone Marks & Spencer Home Store, and creating an evening retail and leisure economy where there wasn’t one before, we are helping to position Aberdeen as a real alternative to central belt shopping.”

In the 2009 UK Venuescore ratings, which rank the UK’s top 2,000 retail venues, Aberdeen moved up from 20th to 17th on the strength of the opening of Union Square. The city is now predicted to move up to 14th, when the full impact of Union Square’s first year of trading has been felt.

Union Square opened for the first time a year ago by welcoming the equivalent of a third of Aberdeen’s population through its doors. It was the only shopping centre to open in Scotland during the recession. Other key facts about Union Square’s first year include:

- There have been **three** marriage proposals (one in Rox, the jewellery store)
- Almost **12 million*** shoppers have walked on average **2666** steps around the centre which is 1.24 miles - this equates to around **14,880,000** miles walked in Union Square
- Which is the equivalent of traveling to the moon and back again (238857 miles each way) about **31** times or around the earth’s equator (24902 miles) about **598** times
- The centre won the prestigious **Shopping Location of the Year Award**
- Customers at YO! Sushi have used over **1,500** litres of Soy Sauce in a year
- Chefs at handmade burger co have turned **298,323** potatoes into chips and have sold almost **8½** miles of Aberdeen Angus Burgers
- Jurys Inns staff have made over **81,000** beds
- Ollie & Nic have sold **7,500** handbags
- **595** romantics have bought a diamond engagement ring from ROX Union Square
- Tinderbox have used **20,243,265** Fairtrade and organic coffee beans since opening
- PURE Spa staff have waxed **510** legs, **594** eyebrows and **370** bikini lines while helping customers burn off **264,000** calories with their Infra-Red Sauna****

New brands still to join the centre this year include Jones the Bootmaker, which will open during the Union Square Birthday weekend on Saturday 30th October, Baguette Express, Subway and The Perfume Shop.



Tom Moore, City Centre Manager, Aberdeen City Council, said: "The opening of Union Square has had a very positive impact on Aberdeen. By improving the city centre shopping and leisure experience and creating a viable evening leisure district, Union Square is keeping people spending in Aberdeen and helping to attract visitors from further afield."

A wide range of activities are planned to celebrate the birthday, including a World Record attempt and party games. For more information on Union Square's birthday celebrations, please visit: <http://www.unionsquareaberdeen.com/website/events.aspx>

For more information on the Union Square World Record, please check out the centre's Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Aberdeen-United-Kingdom/Union-Square-Aberdeen/225378999114>

Union Square – the facts

The Centre

- **One** 203 bedroom Jurys Inn hotel
- **One** 10-screen, 2,400 - seater Cine UK, the largest in Aberdeen
- **One** luxury spa, PureSpa, the first in Aberdeen
- **41** retail brands (including Apple, Zara, Cult and world first, Gio-Goi)
- **19** restaurants and eateries (including new to the city Wagamama and new to Scotland Spur Steakhouse and Giraffe)

Ends

*** Footfall**

- On writing this press release, footfall sat at 11,736,141 and is expected to reach the 12 million mark in the first week of the new trading year.
- Distances are calculated against the 12million mark

**** New since opening**

- Since opening on the 29th October last year, Union Square has welcomed a further **29** new brands to the centre (**red denotes new to the city / Scotland or UK**):
 - **19** new retail / leisure brands have opened (**Jack and Jones, Vero Moda, Marks & Spencer (including first in Scotland dedicated Home Store), Ollie & Nic, Pandora, V Design, Swatch, Accessorize, Clarks, Deichmann, Hollister, Howard's Storage World, Lapis Gold, Internazionale, Pulp, Sony Centre, Fossil, Pure Spa and Gio-Goi**; which opens Thursday and is a world first)
 - **10** new restaurants / eateries have opened (**Wagamama, Juice Master, Muffin Break, Starbucks, Pizza Hut, Zizzi, The Streat, Giraffe, Peckham's, and Prezzo**)

***** Job creation**

- There have been **1248** jobs created at Union Square (**903** of which were created through Jobs for U). Further Jobs for U statistics were pulled together based on sample of 553 successful job applicants:
 - **74%** JobCentre Plus customers through the Jobs for U scheme were previously unemployed
 - **31%** JobCentre Plus customers were priority customers – lone parents/ on incapacity benefits



- **71%** were previously claiming jobseekers allowance (**58%** were for less than 6 months, **13%** for more than 6 months)

**** working on maximum calories thought to be burnt and number of times used

Issued on behalf of Union Square by Grayling.

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Notes to editors:

Union Square

Union Square is a new retail and leisure quarter in the centre of Aberdeen. Developed by Hammerson, the centre includes around 50 retailers across the main mall and shopping park, a variety of restaurants and cafés, a 203 bed Jurys Inn hotel and 10 screen multiplex Cineworld cinema, Aberdeen's largest cinema. The scheme also provides visitors with a new civic square.

Union Square is Aberdeen's most accessible retail and leisure offer with 1,700 car parking spaces, easily reached from all major routes and integrated with the city's bus and rail stations - providing a gateway to the region and encouraging sustainable travel to the city.

www.unionsquareaberdeen.com.