

Boxing Day madness! Bargains galore inside

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Richmond mall packed on Christmas

SHOPPING: Thousands flock to Aberdeen Centre to buy very-last-minute holiday gifts

BY DAVID CARRIGG
STAFF REPORTER

Thousands of shoppers turned out for the first Christmas Day buying frenzy at Richmond's Aberdeen Centre mall yesterday.

The throngs packed the mall's five restaurants and enjoyed a light and sound show with a Christmas touch.

Red, green and blue lights at the bottom of a large pond in the centre of the mall lit up as dozens of small fountains shot water metres into the air. The waterworks were perfectly choreographed to Christmas tunes, and white clouds were projected on the ceiling three storeys above the pond, making shoppers forget the heavy rain outside.

Amazingly, not a drop of water hit the dozens of small children sitting on the marble edge of the pond.

Wenissa Huen, mall spokeswoman, said this is the first time the mall has opened on Christmas Day.

"We respect all people's wills and gave each store owner the choice to open, or to go to church and then open," Huen said.

"Most stores opened, to our surprise — even the Starbucks."

The Aberdeen Mall has been at the corner of Cambie Road and Hazelbridge Way since 1990. However, it has completely rebuilt and reopened this summer.

Steven Zhang, manager of The Daiso, which is the mall's anchor tenant, said the eight cash registers in the store were busy almost non-stop during the eight hours the mall was open yesterday.

"We didn't have many people buying Christmas decorations, but lots of people still buying last-minute Christmas gifts," Zhang said.

Huen said the mall management believes it made a great business decision to open Christmas Day and is likely to do it again next Dec. 25.

Opening retail stores on Christmas Day was once banned in B.C.

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Children enjoy the water fountain at Richmond's Aberdeen Centre Mall yesterday. NICK PROCAVLO — THE PROVINCE