

REGIONAL REPORT - UAE



Summer is Here so Where to Go? Why Not Come to Dubai?

By Mounir Ajam

Temperatures are only in the 40° to 50° C (104° to 122° F) but you can still Ski; yes Ski and we mean **snow skiing** or snowboarding **and not water skiing**. Where else can you combine such heat with snow? Of course if you like to shop instead of to ski you can do that as well. What other attractions are here? You can witness the signs of awakening the giant of this small but global city and Region.



In our first article, we would like to highlight the City / Emirate that we are reporting from. In a recent article to a Regional construction magazine we highlighted “Construction cranes are everywhere, dominating the skyline. Buildings are appearing like a forest growing rapidly from our fertile grounds. Islands are emerging out of the relatively calm Gulf water and skyscrapers are reaching higher and higher into the clouds.”

Dubai is a global city in an Arab country, the United Arab Emirates and it is situated in the Middle East on the Arabian Gulf. Over the last 5-15 years this City / Emirate has seen a tremendous growth in all aspects of life. A few years back if you visited Dubai in the summer you will find it a deserted place, nowadays finding a hotel room in the middle of summer is a challenge. On the 21st of June this year, Dubai is celebrating 10 years of the **Dubai Shopping Festival** (DSF) and officially launching this year DSF with a bang. DSF is a major event that last 10 weeks and combines shopping with various entertainment events for all ages (www.mydsf.com/). The organizer promises to live up to the DSF mascot name “Modhesh”, which the Arabic word for “Amazing”.

Shopping is not the only reason people come to Dubai. The leadership of Dubai, the Maktoum Family and currently under the rule of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, has done a great job in converting what used to be a small city into a name that has achieved global recognition and the respect of many from around the globe. In future articles we would highlight some of the new wonders that are being rooted in Dubai that has and will continue to amaze the casual and sophisticated observer.





What is making Dubai a place is truly “Modhesh”? Is it the ski slope that opened in Dubai or the ski dome that will come in the future? Or is it one of the most recognized and successful airlines, Emirates, that has won many awards? Is it the real estate or the iconic projects that brought some of the best names in business to Dubai?

Or is it the sense of “open for business” that brought many (including the author of this article—who is Lebanese-American) to the free zones established to help convert Dubai to a Knowledge Economy? What is bringing the best names in pharmaceuticals and medicine to Dubai HealthCare City? What is bringing Studio City to the new world of Dubailand? What is bringing so many famous people to the islands that are being created here from Palm Jumeirah to the Palm Deira that is larger than Paris?

In cities around the world we hear of projects and these projects might be a building, a hospital, a school, a factory, a college, etc. In Dubai we talk about a healthcare city, an industrial city, an academic city, a business bay with numerous towers, a cultural village, a sport city, and a hotel district that is expected to shadow Las Vegas. Welcome to Dubai where we are sure that you will be “moundahesh”; i.e. amazed.

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On June 21, 2007 the City of Dubai launches the 10th Annual Dubai Shopping Festival (DSF) also known as Dubai Summer Surprises (DSS). DSS/DSF is an annual shopping and entertainment event that has helped Dubai becomes a regional summer destination in the HOT summers of the United Arab Emirates (www.mydsf.com/). This annual event is a major project with a tremendous amount of organization and planning with numerous diverse stakeholders. It is a challenge to understand and meet the requirements of the various stakeholders of DSS but it seems that year after year the project team that leads this effort has been successful; a recent local media article states that hotel reservation this summer is already about 15% higher than last year. This year opening ceremony is a 2 million dirham event (slightly more than 0.5 million US Dollar).

On another note, local media has reported that the construction of the world's first golf course designed by Tiger Woods began in Dubai this week. This new project is called “Al Ruwaya” golf course and it will be part of “The Tiger Woods Dubai project, a private residential golf community and resort being developed by Dubai Holding subsidiary Tatweer”; from ArabianBusiness.com (<http://www.arabianbusiness.com/>).

This project is located in Dubailand along with some other major projects like the Dubai Universal Studios that was announced recently. Dubailand will be featured in future articles and reports.



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