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**The Life Of Luxury In Dubai**

**By J Schipper**

The United Arab Emirates are a prime tourist destination because they stand out as a remarkable example of how petrodollars can be used to improve the lives of Arabs. In contrast to the poverty for which so much of Arabia is renowned, Dubai features skyscrapers and futuristic amusement parks. Modern Dubai is the product of 20 years of intensive planned development; prior to this, it was a small fishing port of little importance.

The United Arab Emirates, or UAE, is 32,000 square mile political union of seven sheikhdoms, formed when the British left the Gulf region in 1971. The total area of Dubai is approximately 1000 square miles, and it is the second largest emirate in the UAE, after Abu Dhabi. In addition to a federal president and prime minister, each emirate has a separate ruler who oversees the local government. Dubai, a small fishing settlement, was taken over around 1830 by a group of Bani Yas tribesmen from the Liwa oasis, led by the Maktoum family which still rules the tiny nation today. For most of its history, main economic activities were agriculture, fishing and pearl production.

The ruling clan of Dubai was exceptionally progressive, and did their best to make their tiny nation attractive to traders from nations including India and Persia. These businessmen settled in the growing city of Dubai and made it a leading entry port for trade goods. In 1971, the independent emirate joined with the other small sheikhdoms of Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Umm Al Quwain, Fujairah and, in 1972, Ras Al Khaimah to create the federation of United Arab Emirates.

The discovery of oil in 1966 transformed the region by providing funds for the development of a modern, western infrastructure. The Maktoum family, unlike many middle eastern rulers who hoard oil wealth for their private use alone, ensured that the oil revenue was deployed in national development. Much of the modernization is due to the efforts of Sheikh Rasid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, who ruled from 1958 to 1990.

Well informed of the risks of oil-dependency, Sheikh Rashid actively promoted industrial ventures to build his nation's infrastructure. The Aluminium and Cement factory are the result of this endeavour. He also established the Jebel Ali Free Trade Zone, the fifth largest free trade zone in the world. Within 10 years of its inception, it attracted over 900 international companies that include global giants such

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as General Motors, AEG, Aiwa, BP, Ciba, Geigy, Daewoo and Heinz.

Dubai is appealing to tourists as well as business executives. Like the rest of the U.A.E., it has also been actively promoting itself as a vacation destination. In June 1996 World Travel prizes ceremony held in Las Vegas, USA, it won the gold prize for the best destination in the Middle East.

Dubai features the annual Dubai Shopping Festival, the Dubai World Trade Center which hosts innumerable international events and fairs, the Dubai Air Show, the Dubai Summer Surprises, the world's tallest skyscraper, an undersea hotel and even indoor alpine skiing at the Ski Dubai Dome.

The Dubai International Airport is reputed to be the world's second best transit airport. It currently handles 7.3 million passengers per year with a growth rate of 12% that is double that of any other airport in the world. The emirates, which will begin receiving Airbus A380 superjumbos starting April 2007, will hire 8,000 new staff members as cabin crew for its rapidly expanding air fleet. It is investing

\$20 million to expand its crew training facility at the Emirates Training Center in Garhoud.

J Schipper loves the life of luxury.

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### **Dubai Vacation**

#### **By Wayne Armstrong**

Are you looking for a great place to take your next vacation? Are you tired of the same old beaches year in and year out? If so, you may want to consider taking your next vacation to Dubai. Some people have never even heard of Dubai, but the fact of the matter is that it is growing very quickly as a top vacation destination. In addition, Dubai is also becoming very popular among real estate investors who are looking to diversify their portfolio of properties.

The reason that Dubai is becoming so popular among vacationers is that the area offers a lot to do. No matter what your pleasure, you should be able to find something in Dubai that suits your needs. This makes for a great vacation for a couple or a family.

A lot of people simply like to lounge on the beach when they go on vacation. If this sounds like you, Dubai can definitely meet all of your needs. The beaches in Dubai are among the most beautiful in the area, and perhaps in the entire world. All you need to do is plop your chair down on the white sandy beaches and relax the day away.

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But if you are looking for a bit more action while vacationing in Dubai you will not be disappointed; especially if you are interested in water sports. Jumeria Beach is the most popular in Dubai, and you can take advantage of many water sport activities in this area. Everything from sailing to water skiing to paragliding is available. In addition, most of the hotels in the area can set these activities up for you so that you do not have to do a thing.

If you are going to be visiting Dubai with your family you will have plenty of activities to choose from that will keep them entertained for the duration of your trip. One of the most popular family destinations in Dubai is the Wild Wadi Water Amusement Park. At Wild Wadi you can take advantage of large swimming pools and water slides; perfect fun for the entire family. In addition, the Dubai zoo is also among one of the more popular family destinations. You can visit the zoo to become acquainted with some of the wildlife that lives in Dubai and the surrounding areas.

Dubai has a great variety of food offerings including American cuisine. This works out well for vacationers from all over the world.

Overall, a vacation in Dubai can be very exciting. Regardless of if you are going alone, with a partner, or with your entire family there will be plenty of activities to take part in. Plan your Dubai vacation if you are searching for something a bit out of the ordinary

Wayne Armstrong is the owner of a new network of travel sites known as City Visits, which can be found at

<http://www.cityvisits.net>

. One of these sites specialises in supplying information regarding the fabulous city of Dubai. Why not check out the Dubai Visits website at

<http://www.dubaivisits.com>



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