

*Aldo Papone
Awards 2001*

*"An Appraisal
of Dubai as a
Sports Tourism
Destination"*

Archbishop Beck High School, Liverpool

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Introduction to the Aldo Papone Awards

The purpose of these awards is to involve teachers and students in schools and colleges in Global Partnership countries, in the production of high-quality case study materials for use in the classroom. These materials can be shared among all GTTP members, and are aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning in relation to key themes related to Travel and Tourism. This year's topic will be 'Sports Tourism'.

All member schools and colleges of the UK Travel & Tourism Programme were invited to submit a suggested plan for the production of a Sports Tourism Case Study that would support the delivery of UK Travel and Tourism related programmes of study, and that would be relevant to Global Partner schools and colleges. The chosen case study must have materials for students and a teachers' manual to maximise the value of the study.

In 2001, the winning school or college will also present their case study at a Global Youth Conference in Philadelphia in November 2001.

Case Study

Introduction

In 1989 only 630,000 visitors came to Dubai. In 2000 over 3 million were recorded representing a 380% increase over the decade. The UK has played a significant part in this growth. In 1989 Dubai recorded only 39,000 UK arrivals whereas in 2000 the figure was 252,000 – a massive 550% increase! Within this overall growth, the significance of Sports Tourism as an element of the total Dubai tourism product can be illustrated by the recent findings of a survey of UK tour operators promoting Dubai –

- 65% offered golfing holidays
- 10% had packages based on watersports
- 28.8% had packages associated with the Dubai Desert Classic (golf)
- 16.7% had packages associated with the Dubai Rugby Sevens
- 12.5% had racing packages in March for the Dubai World Cup

These trends look set to continue. The importance of Tourism to Dubai's economic diversification can be seen from the fact that it now contributes over 11% of Gross Domestic Product making it one of the emirate's more important and fastest growing sectors. Dubai is well placed to take advantage of the increasing global trend for *Leisure Travel* and to provide a different experience for an increasingly adventurous travelling public who constantly demand alternative destinations. The key building blocks to this expansion include the following components.

1. *Dubai Government's Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing (DTCM) is the main organisation for the promotion and development of tourism. Furthermore, the Department has taken over the licensing of hotels, hotel apartments, tour operators, tourist transport companies and travel agents. It has a supervisory role covering all tourist, archaeological and heritage sites, tourism conferences and exhibitions, the operation of tourist information services and the organisation and licensing of tour guides.*
2. *The support of the Dubai Royal Family e.g. HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and UAE Minister of Defence is the DTCM's Chairman and he has been the driving force behind many of the emirate's most spectacular development schemes.*
3. *A variety of natural attractions including miles of clean uncrowded beaches, desert dunes, the Hatta mountains and year-round sunshine.*
4. *The cultural attractions of the built environment including the souks and dhow wharves, Middle Eastern windtowers, mosques, palaces and heritage sites.*
5. *An open skies policy has stimulated Dubai's growth as a major international aviation hub thus providing the accessibility so essential for tourism. The UK being*

particularly well served with nearly 70 scheduled non-stop flights a week from Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester and Birmingham.

6. *The Government provides ongoing development to the infrastructure and the construction of the Port Rashid cruise line terminal is just one of a series of innovations aimed at widening the total tourism base within Dubai. It is hoped that this will do for cruising what Dubai Duty Free did for air traffic arrivals.*
7. *The Government has a direct stake in the tourism sector through the development and ownership of a number of the major hotels as well as spectacular theme parks such as "Wild Wadi". This investment is not just a matter of expenditure, it is that quality must be paramount. The creation of the Burj Al Arab Hotel being a suitable illustration of this philosophy.*
8. *Government commitment to the tourism industry has helped to generate significant private sector investment. Hotel and apartment complexes have been extensively developed and a variety of local tour companies now offer a range of tourist experiences from 4x4 desert safaris to dhow cruises.*
9. *Dubai has developed a strategy of staging major events designed to enhance its position in the global tourism market place. Along with the Dubai Shopping Festival, Dubai Summer Surprises and the Dubai Air Show are major international sporting events.*

The Dubai Sporting Calendar

Dubai has earned a well-deserved reputation as the sporting capital of the Middle East and the calendar of events attracts top personalities from all over the world. Such programmes help Dubai to function as an all-year destination. Key events in the sporting calendar include the following.

EVENT & TYPE	VENUE	DATE
Jet Ski Competition and Races	Dubai Creek	Early August
Laser and Sailing Regatta	Dubai Creek	Early August
Traditional Dhow Sailing Race (22 ft)	Dubai Creek	Early August
Emirates Grand Prix & Dubai Duty Free Grand Prix UIM Class One Offshore Power Boat Racing	Mina Seyahi	November
Dubai Rugby Sevens	Dubai Exiles Rugby Club	November/Early December
Eid Camel Races	Dubai Course	December

Dubai Marathon	t.b.a.	January
Dubai Tennis Open Men's & Women's	Dubai Tennis Stadium	February
Jebel Ali Hotel & Golf Resort Challenge Match	Jebel Ali Hotel & Golf Resort	February
Dubai Desert Classic Pro Am Tournament	Dubai Creek Golf & Yacht Club	March
Dubai Desert Classic	Emirates Golf Club	March
Dubai World Cup Races	Nad Al Sheba	March
Dubai - Muscat Sailing Race	Dubai Creek	March
UAE Marlboro Desert Challenge – Rally	Start at Hyatt Regency	November

Dubai's Sporting Facilities

The variety of sports available is on a par with the best resorts in Europe and Asia, while there are others unique to the region. Dubai's climate and first-class sporting facilities make it an ideal destination for visitors who enjoy an action-packed holiday. Enthusiasts wishing to participate in the following activities will find that they are well-catered for:

- *Golf*
- *Watersports*
- *Sand-skiing*
- *Go-karting*
- *Ice-skating*
- *Jogging*
- *Diving*
- *Fishing*
- *Horse Riding*
- *Flying*
- *Ten-pin Bowling*
- *Shooting & Archery*

All the major hotels in Dubai boast very well-equipped sports centres and holidaymakers will find floodlit all-weather tennis, squash and badminton courts, swimming pools, snooker, table-tennis and fully equipped health and fitness centres at their disposal as part of their accommodation package.

Watersports

Dubai's geographical location (55E, 25N) on the southern shore of the Arabian Gulf makes it an ideal holiday destination for the watersports enthusiast. This south-eastern part of the Arabian peninsula enjoys a sub-tropical climate with average temperatures of 18C in January, 33C in July and less than 150 mm of precipitation. Visitors can count on sunshine and comfortable water temperatures all year round as well as a choice of well-established clubs and leisure companies specialising in a range of activities.

Scuba Diving

Dubai offers a range of opportunities for both advanced divers and for beginners. The *Professional Association of Diving Instructors* and *British Sub Aqua Club* approved tuition is available from a variety of providers. Local waters contain a variety of submerged wrecks which as well as attracting a variety of tropical fish species also make for fascinating diving. The nearby sheltered waters of the Gulf of Oman enjoy a global reputation for their coral reefs and sea temperatures are warm enough between May and October for wetsuits not to be needed. The main scuba providers run courses and tuition can be found in the following languages – English, Arabic, French, German, Italian, Russian, Japanese, Swedish, Farsi, Hindi and Urdu. This variety of course and tuition provision is but one illustration of Dubai's appeal to a global market of scuba enthusiasts. The following currently provide scuba diving services in Dubai:-

- *Scuba International*
- *Dubai Diving & Watersports Centre*
- *Inner Space Diving Centre*
- *Lukhma Divers*
- *Dubai Sports Diving Club*
- *Scubatec Diving Centre*
- *Sun Tours*
- *Scuba Dubai*
- *The Jumeirah Beach Hotel*
- *Al Boom Marine – Diving Unlimited*
- *Le Meridien Mina Seyahi Resort*
- *The Ritz Carlton Dubai*

Deep Sea Fishing

The warmth and shelter of the Gulf attracts a large variety of fish. There are substantial numbers of the local hammour, barracuda, shark and sail fish. It is common for local operators to offer half or full day trips to the best fishing waters some 12 miles offshore. The leading providers of such services in Dubai are currently:-

- *Arabian Sail Charters*

- *Club Joumana (The Jebel Ali Hotel)*
- *Dubai Creek Golf & Yacht Club*
- *Sun Tours*
- *Metropolitan Resort & Beach Club*
- *The Jumeirah Beach Hotel*
- *Creek Cruises*
- *Le Meridien Mina Seyahi Resort*
- *The Ritz Carlton Dubai*

Water-Skiing

Dubai's reputation as a water-skiers' paradise is now well established. Each year, the Dubai Water Sports Association invites top performers from Europe and the United States for a week-long competition and festival. The warm waters of the Gulf and the year-round sunshine provide the basic ingredients for the development of the sport. Local facilities are such that Dubai can now attract advanced skiers as well as beginners and there is a range of opportunities available for visitors. The main providers include:-

- *Dubai Water Sports Association*
- *Club Joumana (The Jebel Ali Hotel)*
- *Dubai Marine Beach Resort & Spa*
- *Le Mirage*
- *Metropolitan Resort & Beach Club*
- *Radisson SAS Hotel, Jumeirah Beach*
- *Sun Tours*
- *The Jumeirah Beach Hotel*
- *The Ritz Carlton Dubai*

Sailing and Windsurfing

Sailing is one of the most popular leisure activities in Dubai and it is a pastime enjoyed by both residents and visitors alike. The interest in sailing is part of Dubai's maritime heritage. Conditions are near perfect with minimal tides and currents in the Gulf. Winds are usually predictable and reassuring for the beginner but strong enough to challenge the experienced sailor. The Dubai International Marine Club hosts a number of racing events for vessels ranging from traditional dhows to modern yachts. The Club is also the home base for the Victory powerboat team. There is an extensive list of providers in Dubai as well as two private sailing clubs primarily for members with their own boats or boards (Dubai Offshore Sailing Club & Jebel Ali Sailing Club). These leading providers include the following:-

- *Arabian Sail Charters*
- *Club Joumana (The Jebel Ali Hotel)*

- *Le Mirage*
- *Hilton Beach Club*
- *Metropolitan Resort & Beach Club*
- *Radisson SAS Hotel, Jumeirah Beach*
- *Sun Tours*
- *The Jumeirah Beach Hotel*
- *Le Meridien Mina Seyahi Resort*
- *Oasis Beach Hotel*
- *The Ritz Carlton Dubai*

Golf

Dubai, the home of the PGA Desert Classic and pioneer of the sport in the Middle East, is well established as the premier golf destination in the region. All of its championship-standard grass courses are open to visitors. Besides the many individual enthusiasts looking for a game or two as part of their holiday, the emirate is attracting a growing number of specialised golf tours from the UK thanks to the quality of its courses and the diversity of the challenges they offer. The economic significance of "Golf Tourism" can be illustrated by the fact that the International Association of Golf Tour Operators now estimates that the average long-haul destination spend is £1,250 per person. One of the Association's members, Longshot Golf Holidays, currently offers a three-night short break to Dubai for £595. IAGTO chief executive Peter Walton has calculated that Golf Tourism in the UK grew by 12% during 2000 and a proportion of this and future growth will be to Dubai.

It is not surprising that the Dubai Government's Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing now refers to the emirate as being "*The Classic Golf Destination*" in its promotional literature. Dubai has the unique distinction of being the only golfing centre in the world to host major international tournaments on both the European and Asian PGA circuits. The major courses have established a central reservations office at "*Dubai Golf*" for advance and group bookings and a customised Internet site at www.dubaigolf.com indicate the significance of the sport to the destination's total tourism product. Further growth is to be expected following the 2001 opening of a Colin Montgomerie signature course at the prestigious Emirates Hills development plus a Gary Norman course to follow. Golfing facilities in Dubai at the start of 2001 included the following venues.

Emirates Golf Club

- *The Middle East's first championship grass course was voted the number one course on the European PGA Tour by players who competed in the Dubai Desert Classic*
- *The Majalis Course was opened in 1988 and is playable by leading tournament professionals and competent weekend golfers alike*
- *The 18-hole course is 7,100 yards playing to a par of 72*

- *A second course was opened in 1996 and is dominated by a spectacular landscaped wadi*
- *The Wadi Course's 18 holes also play to a par of 72*
- *The spectacular 5,500 sq. m clubhouse building, designed in the style of a group of Bedouin tents, is one of the most recognised landmarks in international golf.*

Dubai Creek Golf and Yacht Club

- *Opened in January 1993, this is Dubai's second world class golf course*
- *The course is the centrepiece of a 80-hectare sports and leisure complex that also contains a 113-berth marina*
- *This club is the venue for the European Tour Event, the Dubai Desert Classic*
- *In 1995 the club made its debut as a venue on the Asian PGA Tour*
- *The 18-hole course is par 72 and is 6,839 yards in length*
- *There is also a 9-hole par 3 course that is fully floodlit.*

Dubai Golf and Racing Club

- *Dubai's third grass course has been developed alongside the Nad Al Sheba racecourse*
- *This is the only fully floodlit 18-hole course in the Middle East*
- *The par 71 6,428 yard course is built around eight lakes, three of which are for irrigation*

There are also a variety of other options for the golfing enthusiast. The Dubai Country Club can offer the visitor a game on sand at the oldest course in the emirate. The course features "browns" instead of "greens". Golfers carry a small piece of artificial turf with them and use it to play off when on the fairways. This 18-hole par 71 course is a challenging 6,431 yards and the 9-hole course is 2,270 yards with a par of 32.

The Jebel Ali Hotel and Golf Resort boasts a superbly designed 9-hole course set within its resort complex. This par 36 course offers golfers the opportunity to play either a 9 or an 18 hole round. Five of the holes are designed around a salt-water lake, featuring three wooden bridges. At Hatta Fort, the mountain resort hotel, golfers can enjoy a floodlit mini-golf course as well as a 9-hole 1,057 yard cross-country fun course. The Hyatt Regency Dubai has a 9-hole pitch and putt course as well as an 18-hole crazy golf course ideal for children and beginners.

In addition to the various courses themselves are the extensive facilities offered by the principal venues. These are attractions in their own right and they contribute significantly to the visitor appeal of Dubai as a golfing destination. It is common to find the following provision:-

- *Clubhouse with panoramic views*
- *Driving range with PGA professional instruction available*
- *Well stocked professional shops*
- *Video swing analysis*
- *Additional leisure and recreation facilities*

Activities

Dubai offers the travel enthusiast the opportunity to experience unique sights and sounds. A variety of tours and safaris are organised to the highest international standards. Major local companies are well-equipped with a full destination management service covering hotel bookings, airport transfers, ground transport and a daily programme of tours and activities with multi-lingual guides. They can also offer the required expertise for organising business-related travel, including original and exciting incentive programmes.

The recent expansion of Dubai as a destination for both *Leisure* and *Business* travellers has been matched by the growth of local inbound tour operators. The 2001 edition of the Government of Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing's "Tourism Manual" provides a detailed listing of some 94 such operations. All these operators offer a range of standardised tours.

Desert Safaris

The majesty and tranquillity of the desert can be experienced in a choice of exciting half-day, full-day and overnight safaris. These action-packed trips cover varied terrain ranging from desert to mountain and frequently include remote camel and goat farms as well as isolated villages. Highlights of a Dubai safari will usually include the following:

- *Dune driving in four-wheel-drive vehicles*
- *Wadi-bashing – exploring the wadis or dry beds of streams that flow after the winter rains from the Hajar mountains, with the option of a swim in one of the many rock pools*
- *Sand-skiing – using special skis to negotiate the slopes of high dunes in the emirate's interior*
- *Camel riding – a major tourist attraction*
- *Desert feasts – these are popular with visitors as an evening activity. A traditional Arabian barbecue under the stars follows spectacular sunset views. These can be tailored to meet every taste from a romantic peaceful experience to elaborate fun-packed evenings complete with music, belly-dancing and displays of falconry*
- *Bedouin village – some operators offer the opportunity to experience the traditional desert way of life outside Dubai*

For those who want to try a desert safari with a difference, there is Al Maha; a unique luxury resort set in 3,300 acres of dunes off the main highway between Dubai and Al Ain. The resort combines tourism with conservation and has a five-year animal reintroduction programme which will eventually see the endangered Arabian oryx roaming free.

Dubai is also marketing itself as "*The Birdwatcher's Paradise*". With nearly 400 species of birds observed in the emirate, together with a tidal wetland right on the city's doorstep, Dubai is now home to birdwatching tour agencies and environmental groups. The Khor Dubai Wildlife Sanctuary, established by Local Order in 1993, is home to 1,000 plus migrating Greater Flamingoes during the winter months.

Details of the complete range of activity options available to Dubai visitors can be obtained from the leading operators, including:

- *Net Tours* www.nettoursdubai.com
- *Arabian Adventures* www.arabian-adventures.com
- *Alpha Tours* www.alphatoursdubai.com
- *Orient Tours* www.orient-tours-uae.com
- *Desert Adventures Tourism* www.desertadventures.com
- *Incentive Productions* www.incentiveproductions.com
- *Sunflower Tours* www.sunflowerdubai.com

Sports Facilities

In addition to watersports, golf and desert activities, Dubai offers a range of extra sporting options available to both residents and visitors alike. Indeed, the 2001 edition of the Tourism Manual includes the following activities for those who are interested in a more active visit to the emirate.

Go-Karting

Dubai has the Middle East's first fully-equipped indoor go-kart facility, Formula One. Outdoor races are held at the track beside the Jebel Ali Hotel. For visitors, the track is open on Fridays from October through to May. A smaller facility is also available at Al Nasr Leisureland.

Horse Riding

There are several riding centres, including the Dubai Equestrian Centre, The Jebel Ali Equestrian Centre and the Jebel Ali Hotel Riding Stables. Dubai also has a riding association for the disabled.

Flying

Planes may be hired from the Emirates Flying School at Dubai International Airport.

Ice-Skating

Dubai has two ice rinks open year round located at Al Nasr Leisureland and the Hyatt Regency Galleria. Skates may be hired and instruction is available. The rinks are closed to the public during special instruction periods and during special events.

Ten-Pin Bowling

Thunder Bowl, a state of the art 20-lane bowling centre opened in 1998. Ten-pin bowling is also available at Al Nasr Leisureland.

Tennis

Tennis is one of the most popular sporting options, particularly during the winter months. Courts are available at all the major hotels and there are several other facilities throughout the city. The Dubai tennis stadium at the Aviation Club is also home to the ATP Dubai Open which attracts many international stars.

Jogging

Dubai is ideal for joggers. It is flat and spacious with many parks and uncrowded beaches and pavements. The largest parks are Jumeirah Beach Park, Mushrif Park, Al Mamzar Park and Safa Park.

Cycling

Cycling tours round the mountain enclave of Hatta offer a different sort of excursion for enthusiasts. A series of routes take the cyclist through dry stream beds, remote villages and small farms.

Shooting and Archery

The Jebel Ali Shooting Club offers pistol, skeet and trap shooting as well as a laser shooting simulator. The floodlit facility also provides tuition at its shooting academy. The Hatta Fort Hotel has supervised clay-pigeon shooting and archery ranges open to visitors and non-residents.

Rugby and Football

Both sports are available locally to individual club members and provide playing opportunities for the members of visiting tour/competition sides.

The Promotion Of Dubai's "Sports Tourism"

Sponsorship – Dubai Duty Free Case Study

Sponsorship and the support of international sporting events has been an integral part of Dubai Duty Free's marketing strategy since 1983, and it has proved to be a highly successful platform for the global promotion of Dubai and its world-class sporting, leisure and business facilities. The strategy will also have had a beneficial effect for Dubai Duty Free as arrivals at the international airport have risen by 380% during the past decade.

There is little doubt that Dubai Duty Free's involvement with sport in the emirate has helped in awareness raising at the global scale. The company's commitment to tennis over many years is well known. Many of the leading female players in the world, such as Martina Hingis, Mary Pierce and Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, recently competed in Dubai for the first time, challenging for honours in the \$565,000 Dubai Duty Free Women's Open, which was part of a two-week festival of tennis incorporated within the Dubai Tennis Championships. Similarly, the \$1,000,000 Dubai Duty Free Men's Open got underway with players such as the world's number two Marat Safin, Olympic Champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Australian Pat Rafter adding to the event's prestige.

The Dubai Tennis Championships is the largest event on Dubai Duty Free's sporting calendar and one which attracts consistently high quality fields and, in turn, annual TV audiences of around 325 million worldwide. With press coverage in the top international media calculated at over \$130 million, the Dubai Tennis Championships has set the seal on Dubai's reputation as the sports capital of the Middle East.

Dubai Duty Free prides itself on its commitment to tennis at all levels, as demonstrated by its backing for the Dubai Aviation Cup which will be held at the Aviation Club towards the end of the year. The world's richest non-ranking tournament attracts regional and international players keen to make their mark.

Dubai Duty Free is also a keen supporter of golf at all levels. The retailer is a supporter of the Dubai Desert Classic, which made headlines around the world this year thanks to the presence of golfing superstar 'Tiger' Woods. The operation organises a series of tournaments including the Dubai Duty Free UAE Nationals Cup, due to be staged on April 27 at the Dubai Creek Golf and Yacht Club. This event is open to all UAE national golfers who hold a valid handicap certificate. Other competitions are the June 15 Dubai Duty Free Golf Cup, the Dubai Duty Free UGA Seniors Cup and the November Dubai Duty Free Golf World Cup.

Another sport which attracts international coverage is world championship powerboat racing. The UIM Class One Championship has been sponsored by Dubai Duty Free for ten years and attracts one of the highest TV audiences of any sport in the world.

Horse racing continues to play a vital role in Dubai Duty Free's portfolio of sports sponsorship, as shown by the award-winning retailer's support of the Dubai World Cup, the world's richest race. Dubai Duty Free is one of the founding sponsors for this headline event which attracts the top horses and jockeys from around the world. The

company also supports the \$2 million Dubai Duty Free race, which has been upgraded to a Group II event and is now recognised as a true international race in its own right.

Promotion Of “Sports Tourism” In Dubai

The Role Of The Dubai Department Of Tourism & Commerce Marketing

Dubai's tourism potential was clearly identified during the 1980s. For some time, Dubai had already evolved into the leading port, trading centre and exhibition venue in the Gulf. The city had the basic infrastructure of hotels and travel-related services catering to business visitors and this offered a good starting point on which to build leisure tourism. Thus, in order to maximise both business and leisure tourism opportunities, in 1989 the Dubai Commerce and Tourism Promotion Board (DCTPB) was established. While most countries promote tourism separately from trade and investment, in Dubai's case the combination seemed quite logical. The worldwide promotional activities of the DCTPB and its 1997 successor, the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) are widely credited with being one of the key elements in Dubai's current tourism boom. The government agency has won international awards and recognition as the leading exponent of destination marketing in the Middle East and it has become a model to be emulated by other destinations.

The DTCM's key areas of responsibility are the international promotion of Dubai's tourism/commerce interests and to act as the body responsible for the planning, supervision and development of the emirate's tourism sector. In terms of marketing, the DTCM undertakes the following:

- *The planning and implementation of international promotion/publicity activities*
- *International exhibition participation*
- *Marketing visits*
- *Presentations and road shows*
- *Familiarisation and assisted visits*
- *Advertising and media relations*
- *Brochure production and distribution*
- *Enquiry information services*

The DTCM has established a global network of overseas offices to aid its promotional strategy and their current publications list the following locations:

- *DTCM in Dubai (www.dubaitourism.com)*
- *Philadelphia – North America (East and Central)*
- *Santa Monica – North America (West Coast)*
- *London – UK and Ireland*
- *Paris – France*

- *Frankfurt/Main – Germany*
- *Stockholm – Scandinavia*
- *Milan – Italy*
- *Moscow – Russian Federation, CIS and Baltic States*
- *Nairobi – Kenya and East Africa*
- *Johannesburg – South Africa*
- *Mumbai – India*
- *Hong Kong – China and Far East*
- *Tokyo – Japan*
- *Sydney – Australia and New Zealand*

The DTCM's range of publicity materials gives significant emphasis to "Sports Tourism" opportunities available in Dubai and frequent reference is made to the emirate being a location for

- *The Classic Golf Destination*
- *The Watersports Resort*
- *The Birdwatcher's Paradise*
- *Tours and Safaris*

Dubai Sports Tourism Facilities – Al Nasr Leisureland Case Study

Al Nasr Leisureland opened on October 10th 1979 with the objective of bringing a wide range of leisure activities within the reach of the largest number of people, rather than making it an exclusive reserve for the chosen few. Over the years, Al Nasr Leisureland has made a significant contribution to the field of sport and entertainment, not only in Dubai but also the wider UAE. Consequently it has become one of the most popular and prestigious venues for recreation. The organisation enjoys the support of HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum who, as Club President, has clearly been an influential force in the club's evolution and development.

When it opened, Al Nasr Leisureland was the biggest sports and entertainment complex in the whole of the United Arab Emirates. Members of the resident and visiting public had the opportunity to take part in a whole variety of leisure pastimes. Two decades after its inception, the facility still boasts the biggest swimming pool with wave system in the emirate. However, the opening of the Wild Wadi Water Park, at a site adjacent to the Jumeirah Beach Hotel, has not diminished Leisureland's overall public appeal. The reason for this is the wide variety of other activities available within the 44-acre complex.

The Leisureland complex took almost three years to build and develop at an initial cost of 60 million UAE Dirhams, approximately £12 million at current exchange rates. In addition to the swimming facility, an impressive array of sport and recreational facilities were created including:

- *Sport – Ice Rink, Bowling alleys, Tennis courts, Squash courts, Go-kart track*

- *Leisure – “Fruit Garden & Luna Park”, Games Room, Sauna & Fitness Centre*
- *Entertainment – Restaurants, Bars, Coffee Shops and Night Club*

Several of these were particularly important features in terms of sporting provision within Dubai. The Tennis Centre staged the Dubai Golden Tennis Tournament in 1980. The \$125,000 first prize attracted international stars such as Vilas, Fibak, Nastase and Tanner and proved to be an effective forerunner of the very successful Dubai Open of more recent years. The courts at Leisureland have also held the Peter Burwash International Tennis Show and the International Tennis Federation Exhibition Matches and Coaching Clinics. The complex stages a series of annual activities that also attract significant numbers of both participants and visitors. The calendar of events include:

- *6-a-side field hockey*
- *Ramadan 5-a-side football tournament*
- *Ramadan tennis tournament*
- *Members tennis tournament*
- *Alba squash tournament*
- *Members squash tournament*
- *Filipino bowling tournament*
- *Couple bowling tournament*
- *Ice Hockey tournament*
- *D.S.F. Ice Hockey Tournament*
- *An Eid Days Ice Show*
- *Series of stage shows and events*

Al Nasr Leisureland operates a club membership scheme. There are three user categories available; Adult (over 18), Student (12 to 17) and Child (3 to 11). In addition to club members, guests and day visitors can also gain access to all facilities. Sports coaching and tuition is available to both individuals and groups in the following:

- *Swimming*
- *Tennis*
- *Squash*
- *Boxing*
- *Ice Skating*
- *Summer Camp activities (5 to 12 year olds) during May, June, July & August*

Outbound Sports Tourism from the UK

Investigation of Sweet Chariot Leisure Limited

The company was formed in March 1998 and it concentrates on providing sports tours and travel for sports people. It has arranged well over 300 tours for separate group

customers including schools, colleges, universities and clubs. Travel destinations vary and tours are just as likely to be arranged to Ireland or South Africa. The increasing scale of Sweet Chariot's operations can be gauged from the following facts:

- *Official Tour Operator for The Times sponsored "Student European Rugby Championships" for the past three years*
- *The official and exclusive Tour Operator for the Czech Lacrosse Association*
- *The official and exclusive UK agent for the Victoria Falls and Sun City 10-a-side competitions in 2000, 2001 and 2002*
- *An official Tour Operator for the Rugby Football Union for Women*

Such operational experiences have allowed the company to expand its range of products and services available to clients and promotional materials now refer to the organisation being a *"one stop sports tour travel shop"* for any club or group wishing to undertake a sporting tour. Sweet Chariot offers to arrange the following aspects for customers:

- *Flights*
- *Coach transfers*
- *Ferry bookings*
- *Hotel bookings*
- *Hostel accommodation bookings*
- *Billeting arrangements*
- *Fixture arrangements*
- *Insurance packages*
- *Tour escorts*
- *Local liaisons*
- *Tour clothing, kit & leisurewear*
- *A variety of other services*

The company's travel professionals have cumulative sports travel experience of over 30 years and they have, between them, organised well over 900 group sports tours to every continent and over 40 countries. They also have experience in dealing with individual spectators to worldwide destinations and since Sweet Chariot was formed some 700 individuals have travelled to watch International Rugby, including the 2001 British Lions Tour to Australia.

The company is now expanding its involvement with schools and in November 2000 a "schools newsletter" was launched to introduce the range of services available. It is now possible for Sweet Charity to offer sports tours in the following:

- *Cricket*
- *Hockey*
- *Lacrosse*
- *Netball*

- *Rugby*
- *Soccer*

The company also organises its own tournaments and it also arranges incoming tours for schools and junior club sides from outside of the United Kingdom.

Sweet Chariot's Head Office operation is in Epsom and a northern office in Durham is also maintained. The company holds an ATOL Licence and has purchased Travel Organisers Failure Cover for all non-licensable business. Further details of products and services are to be found on the company web site (www.sweetchariot.co.uk). The company has already sent one large incentive group to Dubai and it will only be a matter of time before they regularly feature packages to the major events like the Dubai World Cup, the Dubai Desert Classic and the Dubai Rugby 7's as do many other UK operators.

The Jebel Ali Hotel & Golf Resort Case Study



Set in 128 acres of landscaped grounds overlooking the Arabian Gulf, the Jebel Ali is one of three properties in Dubai operated by Dutco Hotels. The Jebel Ali is set on a vast expanse of sandy beach some 45 minutes drive away from the airport and city centre. The range of guest facilities is impressive and there has been a Dhs. 55 million (US\$ 15 million approx.) refurbishment to provide additional luxurious levels of comfort and relaxation for visiting guests. The hotel was built in 1981 and has undergone a series of developments to bring it up to its present international 5-star standard. It is a member of "*The Leading Hotels of the World*" and has to meet exacting quality control criteria for service and facility provision.

The property has a total of 406 rooms. There are 262 rooms in the main hotel, comprising golfview and seaview rooms and 15 large superior golfview rooms located on the 5th floor. An additional 144 deluxe rooms are situated in six low rise units in the Royal Palm Tree Court. In-room facilities include direct dial telephone, tea & coffee-making facilities, mini bar, safe deposit box, bathrobes, hairdryers and satellite television. All rooms in the main hotel have a viewing balcony and rooms in the Royal Palm Tree Court have a large sit-out balcony or terrace.

There are extensive sport and recreation facilities available including two freshwater pools, a sea water pool, windsurfing, beach volleyball, table tennis, badminton, squash, snooker room, horse riding, bicycle rides, 9 hole par 36 golf course, floodlit driving range, putting green, beauty and hair salon with massage and sauna. There is also a marina and a shooting club with pistol and clay shooting ranges.



Apart from these services, the hotel also offers:

- *Complimentary shuttle service to Dubai city centre*
- *Meet and greet transfers*

- *Executive rooms on the Royal Peacock Floor & Royal Jasmine Court*
- *Private business lounge & business facilities*
- *Reading room, library & children's playground*
- *Facilities for the disabled – with special room adaptations*
- *Incentive programmes e.g. 'Club Al Safir' & 'Premiere Plus' membership schemes*
- *Tropical gardens surrounding the accommodation blocks that are linked by a series of cascading water courses and a network of footpaths and bridges*
- *Daily camel rides on the beach and varied evening entertainment programmes.*

The hotel is an important sponsor for many of Dubai's sporting activities and golf and horse racing are but two examples. The Jebel Ali has a commercial involvement with the Dubai World Cup and is the official caterer and hotel for the event. The significance of this can be illustrated by the following corporate hospitality package provided for the 2001 race in the "Al Dana Marquee". The Al Dana package, which translates from Arabic as the "ultimate pearl" and costs Dhs.1000 per person, is a fully inclusive food and beverage arrangement at the world's richest race. The venue is a luxurious marquee situated within the International Village, overlooking the Nad Al Sheba racetrack. The marquee is only a short walk from the winning post, main parade ring and grandstands. The excitement of each race can be viewed from the private garden area or the grandstand seating located within the compound, exclusively for marquee patrons. Group and individual bookings are accommodated on tables of 10 and space to a maximum of 1500 people is sold on a first come first served basis. The package for the Al Dana Marquee includes the following:

- *Full pre-event documentation to include entrance badge and badge wallet*
- *Reserved seating in the marquee*
- *Reserved car park pass*
- *Complimentary official magazines and racecards on arrival*
- *Race coverage on closed circuit television monitors*
- *Access to private grandstand*
- *Live entertainment featuring guest compere; cash bar for additional drinks and service after racing*
- *Access to all areas of the International Village and Public Enclosure*
- *Full food and beverage package –*
 - *Afternoon Tea*
 - *Two glasses of champagne*
 - *Lavish dinner buffet featuring live cooking stations*
 - *Complimentary beer, table wines and soft drinks for a specified period.*

Further details of the Jebel Ali and its various facilities can be found on its web site www.jebelalihotel.com and details about the Dubai World Cup are provided in the following section.

The Dubai World Cup Case Study

The importance of the Dubai World Cup as an international sporting event has increased by leaps and bounds since its inception in 1996. Each year the best horses in training have their sites set on the rich prizes on offer at the Nad Al Sheba course and in 2001 some US\$ 15.25 million in prize money was available. The event also attracts in excess of 30,000 visitors and makes a considerable contribution to Dubai's position as a global sporting destination.



As the Dubai World Cup grows in stature the facilities at Nad Al Sheba have been both extended and developed. A new Millennium Grandstand has been created to join the Maktoum Grandstand overlooking the dirt and turf racetracks. The Millennium Grandstand offers new levels of spectator comfort along with up-to-date facilities for the media and modern events offices for the Dubai World Cup, the Emirates Racing Association and Dubai Racing Club. The elevated first level contains a new press centre, a kitchen for host caterers Nad Al Sheba Club and offices for event administration. The second level features public seating and refreshment outlets, while third level patrons will enjoy fine dining in the 250-seat Dubai Restaurant. The fourth floor contains bar facilities and the fifth floor houses a lounge for members of the Dubai Racing Club. All facilities offer panoramic views of the Nad Al Sheba course. The three upper levels also house six luxuriously appointed VIP suites. To complement the new stand, the existing Maktoum Grandstand underwent a complete refurbishment. A new Jockey's Room, Weighing Room, Stewards' Complex, and Judge's Box were created and the existing hospitality areas were improved.

The Dubai World Cup and the organisation behind it is quite unique. It is unique because all government departments, the race organisers, sponsors, official suppliers and supporters and the media in both Dubai and the wider UAE are working to support a common aim. This is not only to promote thoroughbred racing's greatest event to the world but also to make sure that the world knows and appreciates Dubai's ambition and sense of purpose to be a centre of excellence. The Dubai World Cup has been developed to support and enhance Dubai's reputation as a destination. It is thus only fitting that the US\$ 6 million Dubai World Cup is the world's richest horse race and that on a Saturday towards the end of March each year it is supported by a further six international championship races.

The event's growth in status and popularity has created many spin-offs and new for 2001 was the involvement of Emirates Holidays offering special travel programmes for international visitors (www.emirates-holidays.com). New corporate hospitality packages have been developed and patrons can now choose from an array of options offering either fully inclusive food and beverage packages or exclusive private entertaining facilities. Either individuals or groups from 10 – 100 people can be accommodated and booking terms and conditions are available from the Dubai World

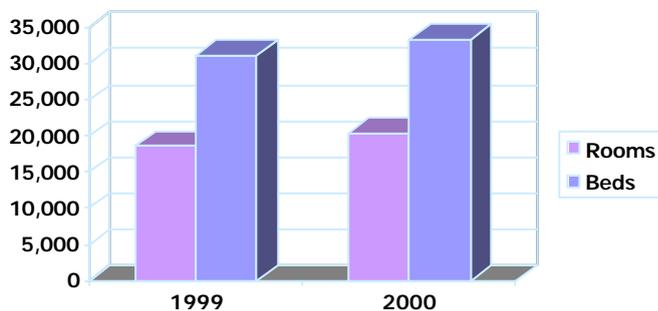
Cup offices (www.dubaiworldcup.com). The event offers a prestigious retail and marketing opportunity for exhibitors and stands are available in the International Village. A limited number of publication stands are also available to select media who wish to book a designated stand from which to distribute or market their racenight editions. A full range of apparel and gift items designed by Bobbin Sport, Official Merchandiser to the Dubai World Cup, is sold from the Pro Shop in the Clubhouse at Nad Al Sheba Club and from designated Official Merchandise stands.



The Dubai World Cup's reputation has helped Nad Al Sheba to develop a tourist and visitor attraction function. The Godolphin Gallery, the inspiration of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, features a collection of glittering trophies, photographic memorabilia and interactive audio-visual presentations. The resident Dubai public trainers host stable-visits for visiting groups, particularly during the week prior to the Dubai World Cup. Furthermore, the reputation of Nad Al Sheba Club is very much enhanced and the venue has developed considerably in recent years.

The Golf operation has been described in an earlier section of the case study. Throughout the horseracing season – November to the beginning of April – Nad Al Sheba Club hosts regular bi-weekly race meetings featuring many of the world's leading horses, jockeys and trainers. Nad Al Sheba Club also has its own private grandstand boxes, with superb views over the Paddock and finishing line. The clubhouse has banqueting and conference rooms offering magnificent views across a gentle landscape of fairways, greens and racetrack, all set amongst the waters and fountains of the club's lakes. The venue has become an ideal meeting place in which to entertain and/or conduct business. By March 2000 the club had launched its own web site (www.nadalshebaclub.com) as part of an overall strategy of making the club more accessible to people. The site is interactive, very user-friendly and is constantly updated with club news, tournaments and with food and beverage promotions.

Tourism In Dubai – The Future



Tourism now contributes over 11% of Dubai's Gross Domestic Product and further expansion is planned. Current hotel statistics indicate this very significant trend and although the actual number of properties only increased by 4.3% the resulting room increase was 9.0% and

total bed spaces have increased by 6.7%. A target of between 10 and 15 million visitors is expected by 2010. How is such growth in tourist numbers to be sustained?

Ecotourism & The Al Maha Desert Resort

It is generally accepted amongst most nations that approximately 8%-10% of their land area should be put aside for the conservation of their indigenous habitats. The function of such a policy is to ensure that the nation's historic environment is permanently retained as part of its heritage and that the diversity of fauna and flora within the nation is kept intact as a representative sample of the original habitat. It is intended that such conserved areas can function without disturbance or undue intervention from human elements. In order to balance the economic needs of a nation with a conservation requirement an Ecotourism model of conservation was developed.

The main principles of this model are:

- *To protect, conserve and maintain the original environment and its species diversity with minimum interference and intervention from management practices in place*
- *Management practices are to maintain, and where necessary increase, the indigenous diversity through species re-introduction, management of resources and protection of the indigenous habitat*
- *To ensure that areas under conservation management are economically self-sustaining through the introduction of successful, high value tourist practices*
- *To encourage meaningful low-impact tourism activities which emphasise conservation practices, environmental education, the history and culture of indigenous communities and provide the visitor with a sincere educating experience*



Al Maha is the first ecotourism resort in the UAE. Dubai has several environments worthy of conservation within such a framework. Apart from the dune environment at Al Maha there are also the mountain habitat around Hatta and the coast's intertidal strip. Each of these represents a separate, distinct and unique habitat type within Dubai. Each has its own fauna and flora, its own appeal to the visitor and its distinct historic, geological and archaeological merits. Al Maha has been developed with key ecotourism principles underpinning its commercial success.

The environment must be free of intrusive disturbances which devalue the guests' experience of the surroundings. This includes the restriction of all artificial noise from the operation and ambient noise from the resort's surroundings. To restrict as much intrusive lighting as is operationally possible and to remove completely any ambient and direct light which will impinge on the experience of isolation and solitude. The restriction of any human structures which impinge on the natural landscape, confining the development of the resort's own infrastructure to a minimum land area. The land making up the resort must provide a natural, original and unique environment for the guest; where the guest feels a part of the conservation process. This allows the guest to feel that their support is directly contributing to the conservation of the area that they are experiencing.

One of the major contributors to the success of ecotourism resorts world-wide is the fact that the guest has exclusivity. The rate charged is a function of the exclusivity



enjoyed and paid for by the guest. The undisturbed settings, the personal attention and service standards not achievable in large public facilities are the basis of high yield ecotourism products. The guest must be assured of privacy, discretion and an unobtrusive environment. The experience must also be meaningful to the visitor, providing aspects which are educational, comfortable and divergent from normal lifestyle thus assuring the guest that time spent in the resort is an enhancement to their quality of life. It is therefore essential that entry to the resort and its facilities are restricted and that all disruptive elements are excluded. The resort must meet the perceptions and expectations of the guest with regards to:

- *Accommodation*
- *Facilities*
- *Architecture & design*
- *Surroundings*
- *Ambience.*



To meet these criteria Al Maha has adapted traditional historic aspects, with operational requirements, to meet the guest's perception and expectation of the desert and Arabian heritage. A portion of land surrounding the core area of the resort has been demarcated for protection and all activities capable of devaluing the environment are restricted. Isolation has been reinforced by means of the introduction of animal-proof fencing which will allow the establishment of indigenous species in viable breeding numbers within a free-roaming setting. The programme has been very successful and guests are now issued with their own fauna and flora checklist guide to record the various species that they have seen. The variety of headings used provides a suitable illustration of how far the desert resort has now developed in terms of conservation:

- *Grass e.g. herb, dune, basket & cat's tail*
- *Shrub e.g. broombush, dye plant & milkwort*
- *Herb e.g. callous leaf, palm lettuce & Arabian cotton*
- *Plant e.g. crimson wort, spiny disk & dwarf pea plant*
- *Tree e.g. salam, ghaf & sidr*
- *Mammal e.g. sand gazelle, Arabian hare & jird*
- *Reptile e.g. monitor lizard, sand skink & sand snake*
- *Birds are common and may be resident or migrant (300 species recorded)*



The Palm Islands Project



The second way in which Dubai is seeking to sustain its tourism growth is by establishing prestigious new developments. This was clearly the thinking behind the scheme to create the world's largest man made islands. The scheme was officially unveiled in May 2001 at the Arabian Travel Market. The development will involve the creation of

two identical islands in the shape of palm trees and they will each be 5 km in diameter and will extend 5 km offshore. The project is the largest of its kind anywhere in the world and will be visible to the naked eye as far away as the Moon. One island will be created by the Dubai Marina and Royal Mirage Hotel while the second will be constructed just to the south west of the Jebel Ali Hotel. When finally complete, the islands will have added 120 km of sandy beaches to Dubai's coastline. Plans for the first island are well advanced and a system of land use zoning will see the planned establishment of:



- *40 luxury boutique hotels*
- *2000 residential villas*
- *shopping complexes*
- *2 marinas with berths for 150 yachts and up to 50 mega-yachts*
- *the Middle East's first marine park*
- *A monorail system.*



Residential development is carefully planned with only one and two storey buildings being permitted on the 150m wide reefs and fronds that make up the palm tree shape. These residential villas will be developed in a variety of styles and properties will be offered on a 99-year lease to their new owners. However, prices start at over US\$ 500,000 and many properties will be in the region of US\$ 3 million. A scale model of the development dominates the Palm Island show office and there have been plenty of initial enquiries from Germany and the UK. 80 million cubic metres of rock, sand and earth, all taken from local resources, will be needed for each of the islands. The islands will be clearly visible from the moon. They will sustain Dubai's tourism expansion over the next ten years. Further details are to be found on the Dubai Palm Developers web site

www.palmisland.co.ae.



This is but the latest chapter in the expansion of Dubai's tourist infrastructure. Such developments play a vital role in the development of the emirate's economy and they place Dubai firmly on the world map as a major tourism destination.



Wish You Were Here?