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EXPLORING DUBAI'S
LATEST FRONTIERS

— FEBRUARY 2024 —

Dubai's Unique Vision for Holistic Growth & Global Leadership

A city synonymous with innovation and transformation, Dubai has consistently embraced change throughout its history. From its origins as a small trading port to its current status as a global hub for tourism, trade, and investment, Dubai's ability to reinvent itself has been a driving force in its exceptional journey. Now, as it builds towards its 200th anniversary, the city is embarking on a new chapter with the Dubai Economic Agenda 'D33', a visionary roadmap for the future, under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

D33, launched at the beginning of 2023, unveils an ambitious agenda with far-reaching goals for the next decade. The plan envisions Dubai among the world's top three economic cities, top three international destinations for tourism and business, top four global financial hubs, and top five leading logistic hubs, among other targets. With 100 transformative projects in the pipeline, Dubai aims to become the most important global business centre by 2033, when it marks the bicentenary of its establishment, doubling its economy and creating a ripe environment for associations to thrive.

In an interview for the Middle East Economy magazine, Hussain Sajwani, founder of Dubai-based real estate developer DAMAC Properties, commented: *"As someone who has closely watched and been a part of Dubai's growth story over many decades, I believe this D33 agenda has no parallel and is set to turbocharge the growth and development of Dubai in ways unimaginable with the new wave of opportunities it will unleash in various sectors. Opportunities abound and goals are set. It is just a matter of time to see Dubai bounding down the road to holistic economic development, sustainable prosperity, and global leadership in key sectors and industries."*

DUBAI ECONOMIC AGENDA UNFOLDED

Central to the D33 agenda is the theme of economic diversification. While traditional sectors will continue to flourish, the emphasis on future development sectors promises sustainable economic growth and self-sufficiency in key industries, such as technology, education, finance, trade, sustainability, logistics and empowerment of local talent.

Dubai's commitment to being a global tech hub by focusing on innovation and future technologies is a significant draw. The 'Sandbox Dubai' initiative, designed to incubate business innovation through testing and marketing new products and technologies, will attract tech talents and entrepreneurs and boost digital transformation. It presents an excellent opportunity for associations to engage with cutting-edge advancements while connecting with the brightest minds of the digital and manufacturing sectors.

Key to the implementation of D33 is expansion and transfer of knowledge and empowerment of the workforce, with particular interest in Dubai's higher education and human capital development. The plan to integrate 65,000 young Emiratis into the private sector over the next decade demonstrates a commitment to sustainable growth and social development. Moreover, the plan to attract the world's best universities through the 'Dubai Project' is set to upgrade the city's skilled talent, creating a pool for associations to tap into.

Another interesting aspect of the agenda is the development of a scale-up program to promote the growth of SMEs by identifying 400 companies with high potential and supporting their capacity building and global expansion. This initiative, in combination to 'Dubai's Future Economic Corridors 2033' (a program for new partnerships, particularly with Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia) and doubling the size of Dubai's foreign trade by adding 400 cities to Dubai's foreign trade map, open avenues for associations to strengthen international ties and create meaningful partnerships.

Peter Maerevoet, global CFO and regional CEO for Asia at Tradewind Finance, said: *“The initiative will also prove to be a major boost for local SMEs, as Dubai plans to launch a scale-up program for 30 companies to become global unicorns in new economic sectors, demonstrating the UAE’s commitment to supporting local SMEs and homegrown businesses.”*

“The UAE is also focused on ensuring the sustainability of the country’s economy through advanced legislation, policies that safeguard resource sustainability, environmentally friendly energy sources, and government plans and strategies aimed at preserving our natural resources for future generations,” as mentioned by the Emirates News Agency WAM. In light of COP28 taking place in Dubai at the end of 2023, in a recent meeting of the Executive Council, transformative initiatives were approved to stimulate Dubai’s industrial sector, incentivize agricultural technology, and implement policies against single-use plastics.

ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES THAT ENABLE D33

Complementing the D33 agenda, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum announced the “Economic Principles of UAE.” These principles serve as a comprehensive roadmap for the country’s economic development, emphasizing a globally open free-market economy, attraction of top talent, investment in the digital economy, and sustainable and balanced economic practices. These principles align with Dubai’s commitment to

fostering a business-friendly environment and positioning the UAE as a global economic powerhouse.

The 10 Economic Principles of UAE

1. Offer of a globally open free-market economy
2. Attraction of top talent
3. Investment in the digital economy
4. Investment in developing and creating opportunities for its youth
5. Offer of a sustainable and balanced economy
6. Offer of a strong and stable financial system
7. Offer of a strong and fair legislative environment
8. Commitment to the principles of transparency and the rule of law
9. Support of the business community by a strong banking sector
10. Offer of the world’s finest transport and logistics infrastructure



KITE BEACH

Driving Change & Innovation: Insights from the Dubai Association Conference 2024

Dubai's biennial gathering has solidified its place as a key event within the association community. With the upcoming edition featuring crucial themes like artificial intelligence and strategies for managing disruptions, it is poised to be more pertinent and influential than ever before.



DAC CONFERENCE 2022

Every two years, delegates from associations based in the Middle East and beyond indeed gather in the city for the Dubai Association Conference. This flagship event is orchestrated by the Dubai Association Centre (DAC), which acts a gateway to the world's fastest growing economies – offering an ideal setting for global associations to expand within industries and sciences. The

upcoming 2024 edition, slated for February 27-28, is themed 'Value Amplified: Associations Empowering Change.'

Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of Dubai Executive Council, the Dubai Association

Conference is set to offer an influential platform, bringing together sector leaders and experts globally to underscore the crucial role played by associations. Beyond meeting the needs of their members, these organizations are recognized as catalysts for positive change within their communities and broader societies.

Presented by the Dubai Association Centre and hosted at the Dubai World Trade Centre, the upcoming 2024 edition is poised to delve into cutting-edge strategies, exemplary practices, and collaborative methodologies. Tailored for association executives and influential stakeholders with pivotal roles in leadership and management—including government officials and strategic partners—the conference is designed to yield concrete and enduring benefits for communities and societies. With a specific focus on immediate civic, economic, and social development in the region, DAC seeks to make a meaningful impact.

Mike Van der Vijver, DAC program curator and event designer, explains what associations can expect in February: *“The Dubai Association Conference’s program for this year is shaped by insights gathered from purposeful interviews with association executives. The sessions will focus on current, high-priority topics such as AI applications for associations, work-life balance, and strategies for dealing with disruptive events. One groundbreaking session will explore handling disruptions from both external and internal sources.”*

The program will prioritize interactive sessions and open dialogue, fostering robust participation from all delegates.

“Additionally, participants will engage in assessing and establishing the impact and value created by events, taking a strategic approach to understand their contributions to association goals. This conference aims to provide a concise yet impactful experience for

attendees, addressing key challenges and fostering strategic thinking in association management,” Van der Vijver says.

In previous iterations of the Dubai Association Conference, critical themes and priorities for associations were dissected, drawing global experts and solidifying Dubai’s ascendance as a hub for associations. The inaugural 2017 event, themed ‘Building a Community,’ set a strong foundation, while the 2019 edition crafted a compelling program under the banner ‘Driving Change: The Societal Impact of Associations.’ The 2022 conference centered around ‘Associations and the New World: Resilience & Reinvention.’ Notably, DAC forged a strategic partnership with the American Society of Association Executives, bringing in a distinguished group of top executives led by ASAE President and CEO, Michelle Mason.



His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General, Dubai’s Department of Economy and Tourism and Dubai World Trade Centre Authority, said: *“Through the Dubai Association Centre Conference, the city has consistently demonstrated a commitment to not only developing a vibrant association community here, but also offering a platform to navigate change and forge new paths for the sector globally. As Dubai’s own economy continues to evolve to meet the goals of the Dubai Economic Agenda - D33 - the city will provide an ideal setting to explore the theme around empowering change, and we look forward to once again welcoming global leaders and experts, as well as stakeholders from across the region, to embrace a collaborative spirit.”*

Visit www.dubaiassociationconference.com to find out more about the event

Dubai Association Centre

The Dubai Association Centre (DAC), initiated in 2014 to streamline the licensing of professional societies and trade organizations, has evolved into a symbol of the rapid advancements achievable through collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors.

Functioning within the framework of Dubai’s business-friendly policies, Dubai has attracted foreign business and investment with free-trade zones, zero income tax, and favorable corporate taxation. But beyond its economic endeavors, the city is actively transitioning into a knowledge-based economy, with DAC exemplifying this progress by supporting associations that contribute to educational and professional standards,

engage with regulators for sustainable development, and serve as a talent attractor.

Operated as a joint initiative by Dubai Chambers, Dubai’s Department of Economy and Tourism, and Dubai World Trade Centre, DAC facilitates the establishment of associations in Dubai, offering a formal setting for organizations to create a membership-based community or open a regional representative office. Despite challenges over the last years, DAC has seen continuous growth, with over 70 licensed associations as of November 2023, underscoring its pivotal role in fostering a thriving association ecosystem in Dubai.

Visit www.dubaiassociationcentre.com to find out more about DAC

The Middle East Model for Sustainability

The United Arab Emirates declared 2023 the Year of Sustainability, placing a spotlight on the environment and sectors like energy, transportation, water conservation, and waste management. For Dubai, “safeguarding our future” is a philosophy integrated into every aspect of the innovation-driven, people-centric city.

At Expo 2020 Dubai, sustainability was one of three sub-themes and even had a pavilion, Terra, dedicated to it. Designed with a 120-metre-wide canopy and 18 Energy Trees that generate 4GWh of alternative energy per year, the building – which still stands at Expo City Dubai today – is LEED Platinum-certified and intended to be net zero in energy and water. Terra features a world-class ecosystem equipped with a 5G-enabled network and smart sensors monitoring energy consumption and ensuring the efficiency of light, water and climate conditioning systems.

The pavilion also allows visitors to go on an immersive journey to understand the impact humanity’s decisions are having on the environment and discover how the planet can be preserved for future generations. Even maintaining a large amount of the infrastructure from Expo 2020 Dubai is a feat itself – and a major achievement in sustainability.

Expo City Dubai as a whole acts as a model for a sustainable and smart-built environment through its blend of passive strategies and technology-based solutions. As part of its decarbonisation roadmap and pathway to net zero, its “reduce, remove, offset” approach

includes integrating 15-minute city planning to promote walking and micro-mobility and tackling emissions through projects like mangrove restoration. As host of COP28 UAE, Expo City Dubai is bringing both experts and the public together with themed areas – the delegate-only Blue Zone and open-access Green Zone – dedicated to Energy Transition, Technology and Innovation, and Youth, complete with a program of cultural and educational events.

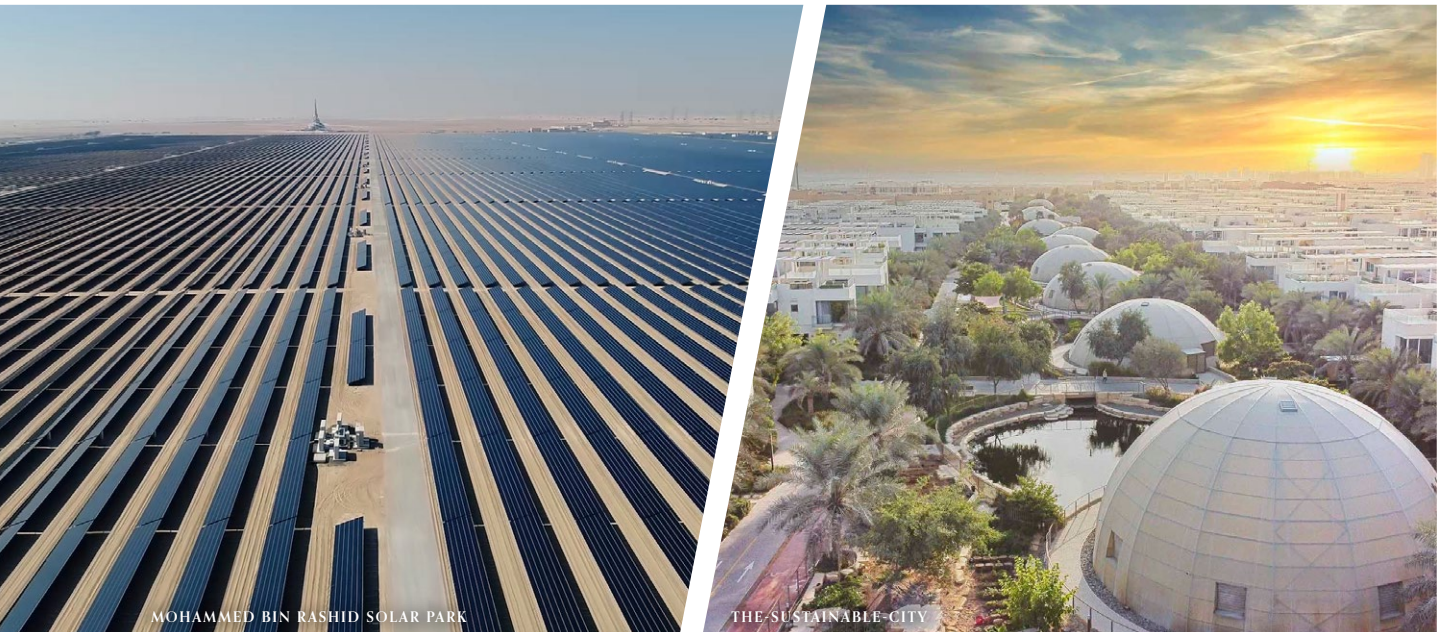
As Marjan Faraidooni, Chief of Education and Culture, Expo City Dubai, put it: “Expo City is proud to be doing its part to propel climate action through learning opportunities

for the next generation of climate leaders, and activities and experiences that are inclusive, accessible and engaging for all walks of life – because while climate change necessitates every individual rise to the occasion, our potential for impact is maximized when we embark on this journey together.”

SHARED PURPOSE

A pioneer in the Middle East for more than 40 years, Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) is similarly committed to a net zero sustainable future, with pillars in place to continue driving the leading convention and exhibition centre in a sustainable direction. Acting as a role model





MOHAMMED BIN RASHID SOLAR PARK

THE SUSTAINABLE-CITY

and setting an industry standard for others to follow. DWTC has earned international recognition through the Green Globe Certification and formed strategic partnerships with organisations like the Emirates Environmental Group for recycling campaigns and the UAE Food Bank for distributing excess food to those in need. Its Green Meetings initiative also encourages eco-friendly practices like paperless materials and reducing plastic bottle usage at events.

Sustainable initiatives are trickling into every sector of the city as Dubai aims to meet the UAE Net Zero 2050 plan to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 – which would make the Emirates the first in the Middle East and North Africa to hit this target. His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of The Executive Council, has championed plans like Dubai Can, which encourages the use of refillable water bottles and offers access to free and safe drinking water at stations throughout Dubai. He has also extended the single-use ban reduction policy to encourage eco-friendly options

and phase out single-use plastics by 2026. Since being put into action in February 2022, the ban has reduced the consumption of more than 10 million 500ml single-use plastic bottles – a significant achievement in a short amount of time.

SUSTAINABLE STANDARDS

The Emirate has already created The Sustainable City, the first operational net zero energy city in Dubai, which aims to be an international showcase for high-quality sustainable living. The Sustainable City is attempting to challenge global temperature increases through everything from a solar car park with communal electric buggies to the See Institute, a positive energy building which, over a 50-year lifespan, will produce 140% of its energy requirement, therefore offsetting emissions from construction and operation.

Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) has also developed an initiative that goes along with the UAE Year of Sustainability: the Dubai Sustainable Tourism Stamp, which recognizes hotels with the highest adherence to DET's 19 Sustainability Requirements – which

include energy and water efficiency and waste management programs.

The three-tier scheme – which includes Gold, Silver and Bronze awards – will “*champion sustainable practices while setting a benchmark for excellence in environmental stewardship.*” explains Yousuf Lootah, Acting CEO of Corporate Strategy and Performance sector, Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism. “*Supported by Dubai's vibrant hotel industry, this initiative is a strategic step toward achieving our goal of making Dubai a leading destination for global travellers seeking the ultimate sustainability experience. By supporting businesses and encouraging them to adopt eco-friendly practices and reducing their carbon footprint, we are not only safeguarding the environment but also promoting sustainable growth.*”

Aided by projects like Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park, the largest single-site solar park in the world, and smart initiatives to connect solar energy to buildings, Dubai is developing a strong roadmap to reach the national UAE Net Zero 2050 goal – and associations play a large role in this global, connected effort.

Case Study

Soaring to New Heights at IATA's 153rd Slot Conference

In the bustling heart of the Middle East, Dubai recently played host to the 153rd Slot Conference, a pivotal event in the aviation industry organized by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The selection of Dubai for this prestigious gathering was no arbitrary decision; it was a strategic move, considering the city's central location, world-class facilities, and unwavering support from key players such as Dubai Airport, Dubai Economy & Tourism, and Emirates – the host airline for the conference.

The 153rd IATA Slot Conference held at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) from 14 to 17 November 2023 drew a remarkable attendance of over 1,330 individuals who actively participated in the event. This diverse gathering included representatives from 259 distinct airlines, 85 coordinators overseeing well over 300 capacity-constrained airports, and a total of 93 sponsors and exhibitors.

As one of IATA's largest events occurring biannually, the event travels to different locations worldwide. Its inception dates back to 1948, making it a longstanding fixture in the aviation planning calendar. Serving as a crucial juncture for the global airline community, the conference facilitates swift optimization of planned schedules and explores new opportunities for route and network expansion.

At the heart of the conference's objective is to enable airlines to secure slots that offer the most favorable schedules for their customers at coordinated airports. This strategic goal underscores the significance of the Slot Conference in enhancing efficiency and fostering collaboration within the aviation industry.

IDEAL SETTING

Dubai, a city synonymous with forward-thinkingness and innovation, proved to be an ideal setting for the Slot Conference, according to Cassandra Raitsidis, the conference manager.



In an interview with Boardroom, she highlighted the city's attributes as a fast-paced, exciting conference destination. *"With ample choice of hotels and venues for evening receptions at every price point, Dubai provides a dynamic and vibrant backdrop for international events like the Slot Conference,"* Raitsidis emphasized.

The success of the Slot Conference in Dubai was not just about the city's expertise in hosting high-profile events; it was also a testament to the invaluable support received from Dubai Business Events and the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC). Raitsidis shared insights into the collaboration, stating, *"During the site visit, we gained insider knowledge on how to best plan the many different parts of the conference. The DWTC staff were second to none - nothing was too much trouble. We would like to take this opportunity to extend our warm thanks to Dubai Business Events and the DWTC:"*

Dubai proved to be a game-changer for the Conference, witnessing a record-breaking attendance of over 1,330 delegates. Raitsidis proudly declared, *"This is the highest number of attendees we've ever had in the Middle East, and it nears a record for our event globally."* The impressive turnout underscored the city's connectivity and the undeniable allure it holds for hosting global events of such magnitude.



ALREADY RETURNING

As the aviation industry continues to set its sights on Dubai, IATA has already decided to return to the city for its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and World Air Transport Summit on 2-4 June 2024.

"We look forward to gathering the whole sector in Dubai for the 80th IATA AGM in 2024. Dubai is a dynamic city and a major aviation hub connecting the world. The UAE's positive approach to aviation has built a strong airline with a strong hub airport. Together, these make an enormously powerful and positive contribution to the society and economy of the UAE. Holding the AGM in Dubai will be a showcase of what can be achieved by aviation with supportive government policies and decisions," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General.

Typically, around 1,500 attendees from IATA's member airlines, industry associate partners, international and regional associations, as well as prominent manufacturers and suppliers in the industry, participate in this annual meeting. Additionally, a substantial presence of media professionals is a common feature at the event as well.

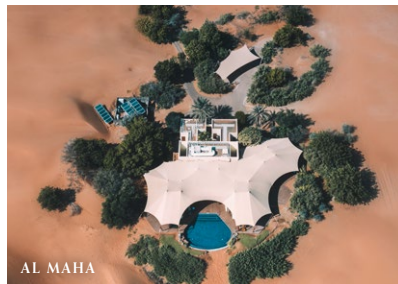
As for Raitsidis, she shared her expectations, saying, *"Heading back to Dubai for this year's AGM, we aim to better showcase the best that Dubai offers to the aviation industry's decision-makers."* Teaming up with Emirates, the host airline, the goal is to make this year's AGM a truly memorable experience, elevating Dubai's profile on the global aviation stage.

Dubai's successful hosting of the 153rd Slot Conference not only marked a milestone for the city but also reinforced its standing as a premier destination for international conferences. With a perfect blend of strategic location, top-notch facilities, and enthusiastic support from key stakeholders, Dubai is undoubtedly soaring to new heights in the world of aviation events.

As the industry eagerly awaits the IATA AGM in Dubai, the city stands poised to once again impress and captivate the aviation community.

A Spotlight on Infrastructure & Innovation

Dubai has always been a city of ambition and grandeur. Its dedication to pushing boundaries and creating visionary projects has made it a global hub for business tourism and innovation. And at the heart of this success lies the city's continuous infrastructure developments.



STEALING THE SPOTLIGHT

At the forefront of Dubai's infrastructure development is Expo City Dubai, which just hosted the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP28). Showcasing its commitment to sustainability, the Dubai Exhibition Centre within Expo City Dubai has been designed as an eco-friendly haven, offering 45,000 square meters of dedicated event space.

Symbolizing the emirate's ambition, it opened on October 1 last year and preserves Expo 2020's key attractions, including Al Wasl Plaza, Garden in the Sky tower, and the Surreal water feature. It is also the world's largest district fully covered by a 5G-enabled network.

Committed to sustainability, Expo City Dubai prioritizes eco-friendly initiatives and technology, embodying sustainable urban planning with 123 LEED-certified

buildings and a car-free environment. Mobility options like buggies, e-scooters, and e-bikes are available, and the pedestrianized districts boast 10 km of cycling tracks, a 5 km running track, and 45,000 sqm of parks. As the first UAE community registered under the WELL Community Standard pilot, Expo City Dubai, developed by the International WELL Building Institute, also sets a benchmark for health and well-being, emphasizing thoughtful and intentional spaces to enhance human health. The district is also home to Dubai Exhibition Centre, a dedicated events facility with 45,000 square metres of flexible indoor space.

Adding to the city's event scene is the Grand Hyatt Dubai Conference & Exhibition Centre, a new facility that complements the well-established hotel's popularity among association planners. 5,000

sqm of multi-purpose space have recently been added to the venue, for a total meeting space of 11,500 sqm altogether. With sprawling spaces and state-of-the-art amenities, the Grand Hyatt Dubai Conference & Exhibition Centre has become a sought-after destination for conferences.

And of course Dubai World Trade Centre in Dubai still stands as the city's main conference venue, known for its world-class facilities and ability to accommodate diverse events. With multiple halls and meeting rooms, it offers various capacities to suit different needs. The Sheikh Rashid Hall is the largest, with a capacity of up to 5,000 attendees, making it an ideal space for major conferences and exhibitions. Additionally, the spacious Za'abeel Halls can accommodate up to 3,700 guests, while the smaller meeting rooms and boardrooms provide the perfect

setting for intimate gatherings and board meetings.

REDEFINING EXPERIENCES

Dubai's hospitality sector continues to redefine opulence and extravagant experiences. The SO/ Uptown Dubai, nestled in a prime development area, features luxurious sartorial living and offers fully equipped conference and meeting facilities. With an elegant, full-service ballroom capable of hosting 1,000 guests, it caters to grand events while ensuring utmost sophistication. Remarkably, its proximity to Expo City Dubai further enhances its appeal to those attending a conference nearby.

The Creek Harbour has emerged as a captivating cluster of hotels, with venues such as Address Grand Creek Harbour, Vida Creek Beach Hotel, and Palace Dubai Creek Harbour. These hotels, which have recently opened or are set to open soon, provide a diverse range of options for visitors seeking an unforgettable and immersive experience in Dubai.

Another highly anticipated addition to the city's hotel landscape is The Lana, part of the renowned Dorchester Collection. This waterfront hotel, scheduled to welcome

guests in February 2024, stands on the Dubai Canal, offering breathtaking views of the iconic Burj Khalifa. Exquisite renderings showcase the exceptional architecture and design that will make The Lana a destination in itself.

Dubai's commitment to turning dreams into reality is evident through Marsa Al Arab, the latest addition by the prestigious Jumeirah Group. This grand complex houses the extraordinary Jumeirah Beach Hotel, the iconic Burj Al Arab, the enchanting Madinat Jumeirah, and the thrilling Wild Wadi Waterpark. With the addition of this new hotel, Marsa Al Arab is set to redefine luxury and elevate Dubai's status as a global tourist destination.

Last but not least is the NH Collection Dubai The Palm, which, catering to tourists across various budgets, offers an enticing 4-star experience. Situated on the illustrious Palm Jumeirah, this hotel showcases the diversity of options available even in highly sought-after areas, where affordability intertwines with excellence.

WHEN DELIGHTS AWAIT

Beyond luxurious accommodations, Dubai continues to captivate visitors with a multitude of unique experiences and

attractions. The Dubai Balloon, soaring above the iconic Atlantis, The Palm, offers an unforgettable adventure. Rising up to 300 meters, the tethered balloon provides panoramic views of Palm Jumeirah and the broader Dubai skyline. Private bookings make this experience even more intimate, providing an exclusive adventure for individuals or groups.

Dubai Mall, already a world-renowned shopping and entertainment destination, has recently welcomed a new addition - Chinatown. This vibrant area immerses visitors in the richness of Chinese culture, with an array of shopping and dining options that celebrate diversity and create a melting pot of experiences.

Excitement reaches new heights with the upcoming establishment of Real Madrid World, the first Real Madrid theme park in the Middle East. Devised in collaboration with Dubai Parks and Resorts, this one-of-a-kind attraction will transport fans to the heart of the beloved football club, offering an immersive experience that combines themed restaurants, gaming, and various recreational activities.



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