

Cityscape

Abu Dhabi

DAILY NEWS



Day one - May 8, 2007

INSIDE



Be introduced to the future



Eco Islands reveals Abu Dhabi strategy



Union brings the winning formula



After hours information on Abu Dhabi

Welcome to the \$400B show

More than \$400 billion worth of real estate development projects are on show at the first-ever Cityscape Abu Dhabi.

With 200 exhibitors from 50 different countries represented, the show is expected to draw more than 12,000 participants.

Cityscape Abu Dhabi 2007 is being held under the patronage of His Highness General Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces.

Against a background of \$270 billion' worth of real estate development in the federal capital, Cityscape Abu Dhabi has attracted the city's real estate heavyweights, including the Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC), Sorouh Real Estate, Aldar Properties, Tamouh Investments and Al Qudra Holdings.

"This is the first time that the Cityscape brand has ventured into Abu Dhabi," said Rohan Marwaha, Group Director, Cityscape.

"We have been overwhelmed by the positive response and the invaluable support from His Highness Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, as well as the Abu Dhabi government and key local regional and international industry players.

"This is an ideal opportunity especially for Abu Dhabi to showcase some of its spectacular projects to an international audience."

Cityscape Abu Dhabi will follow the brand's formula of bringing together the key people in the real estate development, investment and architectural communities for three days of intense networking.

The exhibition is being complemented by two parallel conferences. One will focus on waterfront developments while the other will concentrate on real estate finance and development.

The Waterfront Development Conference will be addressed by 40 speakers representing some of the world's most iconic waterfront developments.

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Big hit: All the players are pictured before they took part in the first Cityscape Abu Dhabi Golf Classic sponsored by Sorouh yesterday.

Golf Day gets show off to a flyer

Cityscape Abu Dhabi got off to a flying start yesterday with the inaugural Cityscape Abu Dhabi Golf Classic sponsored by Sorouh.

More than 90 leading real estate industry professionals competed in teams of two for the chance to become the inaugural Cityscape Abu Dhabi Golf Champions.

Played on the Abu Dhabi National Golf course, the afternoon competition allowed all players to enjoy the excitement, friendly competition and camaraderie that can only be experienced by playing with fellow real estate industry peers and colleagues.

For all the results of the day's competitions, turn to page six.

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The future is here today

There could not be a more dramatic setting to showcase the best that Abu Dhabi real estate has to offer – the brand new Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC).

And the venue for Cityscape Abu Dhabi 2007 is itself a record-breaking example of the dynamism of the real estate scene in the capital. It had set new records even before it opened its doors recently.

Cityscape Abu Dhabi 2007 is one of the first exhibitions and conferences to be held at the new, purpose-built exhibition. IIR, organisers of the Cityscape event, is one of four official Foundation partners for the new venue.

Phase 1 of the new facility – the most modern in the world – includes 28,000 square metres of fully interconnecting exhibition floor space spread over seven halls; two luxury conference rooms capable of staging events for up to 1,000 people; 16 meeting rooms on the centre's mezzanine level, and a VIP entrance and majlis.

All needs are catered for. The centre also features a 2,000 square metre food court with eight outlets, retail space featuring an Etihad

booking office, car rental facilities and business centres.

"We had a dream to create the world's most modern exhibition and conference centre in the UAE capital city and today that vision becomes a reality," said His Excellency Sheikh Sultan Bin Tahoon Al Nahyan, Chairman of ADNEC at the opening of the facility.

The creation of ADNEC is in line with government plans to diversify the economy of Abu Dhabi. It is a part of the strategy to attract three million visitors a year to the emirate by 2015. Current figures show that that figure will hit one million in 2008.

"The visitors that ADNEC will attract will directly benefit the people of Abu Dhabi through the economic impact of their visit," said Sheikh Sultan. "Cities around the world have experienced the commercial and cultural benefits which are generated by successful exhibition, conference and entertainment events venues.

"We have one of the world's most flexible venues, a beautiful location and the full support of the Abu Dhabi government so

the people of Abu Dhabi can look forward to a positive future."

What you see now is just the first phase of the development. Phase 2 is now beginning and is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2008. When complete, ADNEC will provide 55,000 square metres of exhibition space, making it one of the biggest exhibition centres in the Middle East.

ADNEC is the cornerstone of the first significant master planned district in the emirate – Capital Centre. Ultimately, it will become a dynamic centre for commercial, residential, business and leisure. Key features include the Micro-City, a mix of hotel and residential developments, The Galleria retail zone, and The Marina.

Simon Horgan, ADNEC Chief Executive said: "The time is right for this new venue. The unprecedented scale of development in Abu Dhabi has stimulated the demand for exhibitions across a range of sectors and now there is a facility to meet this demand. We already have more than 50 major exhibitions and conferences booked from 2008 and this number is growing quickly.

"The prediction is that ADNEC will expand the exhibition industry in the UAE by at least 25 per cent."

Visitors to Cityscape Abu Dhabi 2007 might like to take the opportunity to talk to the ADNEC team about one aspect of the development – the collapsed timeframe in which it was built.

ADNEC began life by setting records. The first phase was built to a demanding construction schedule which lasted just eight months. It is thought to have been the fastest constructed building of its type anywhere in the world.

Horgan explained how they pulled it off.

"The building process from design through construction, and later in facility management, is more complex than ever," he said. "The vast number of people involved in a project of this scale can lead to disagreements and delays.

"One of our solutions was to bring all the teams together into a single office on site and split them up so a building contractor was sitting next to an architect. Communication was dramatically improved – it's hard to argue with a person you get to know and understand.

"It may sound simple but this approach is very unusual on construction projects of this scale where the main contractors can be adversarial and challenging with each other."

Bob Meikle, Project Director for architectural engineers RMJM, said: "RMJM have been involved in many fast-track projects over the years but none as demanding as the new exhibition facilities for ADNEC."

His view was echoed by Zvonko Stefanposki, Project Manager for consultants Mace International. "In our 27 years of experience this design and total build, is by far the fastest project we have ever seen."

Park Lane project is well underway

KM Properties arrive at Cityscape Abu Dhabi this week, safe in the knowledge that one of its signature buildings is now well under way.

Construction started for Park Lane Tower, one of Dubai's first mixed-use commercial-residential-retail buildings located in Business Bay, in February, and it was sold out soon after its official launch.

Sanjeet Joher, Chief Operating Officer of KM Holding was thrilled with the rapid response, stating: "We are delighted with the success of this project, as we were able to achieve the maximum within a short period of time. The success of the 340 units Park Lane Tower is certainly a testimony to our commitment towards offering world-class properties in the region.

"We would like to thank our investors for showing such confidence in us. We are convinced that their confidence will be rewarded."

The state-of-the-art tower comprises 29 floors spread over commercial office space, residential apartments and retail units. It is

thought to be the first three-way, mixed-use configuration in one building launched in the region. Designed by leading international architectural designer Carlos Ott, Park Lane Tower is destined to be a landmark building due to its aerodynamic form and artistic lighting, which will make it look spectacular and different – by day and night.

Ultra modern facilities have been planned with tenants' business requirements in mind. These include a Voice and Data System, high-speed internet connectivity, Closed Circuit TV System (CCTV), Public Address/ Background Music System (PA/BGM), Access Control System for data exchange, and many others.

The structure is composed of a podium level of two retail floors with residential floors to the bottom of the structure, with office floors above. Ample parking is also available. Scheduled for occupancy in late 2008, Park Lane Tower is located at the heart of Business Bay.

World's biggest to unveil Eco Tower

The World's biggest architectural and engineering company – Nikken – is at Cityscape Abu Dhabi and will unveil its state-of-the-art Eco Tower.

With in excess of 2,000 professional staff and income over \$400 million, Nikken is now officially recognised as the world's largest architectural and engineering company.

Committed to supporting regional growth, Nikken is keen to promote environmentally conscious architecture, according to Hamada Akihiko, senior executive officer and head of international design team at Nikken.

"If realised the Eco Tower will provide the most 'Green Architecture' in the UAE and could achieve up to a 50 per cent saving in energy consumption," he said.

"The Eco Tower employs the most advanced technologies aimed at maintaining optimum performance levels in energy consumption, water conservation and increased levels of human comfort."

NIKKEN's portfolio of projects covers city and urban planning, waterfront development, iconic high rises and highly complex special projects such as airports and sports facilities, equipped with cutting-edge and sophisticated technologies.

In the Arab world, Nikken is probably best known for its design of buildings such the Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry, the Islamic Development Bank in Jeddah and Cairo Opera House.

After two years of market research, Nikken has now refocused on the burgeoning property markets of the Middle East, eyeing the US\$ 270 billion Abu Dhabi market.

"Cityscape Abu Dhabi will provide Nikken with a great opportunity to demonstrate its iconic architecture and establish long term relationships with developers throughout the region," added Dr. Fadi Jabri, general manager and Nikken's representative in the UAE.

Mark Goodchild, Project Manager, Cityscape Abu Dhabi, said, "This is the first time any Japanese architect has exhibited in the region, let alone the world's largest. Indeed, including the likes of P&T Architects and Engineers, Burt Hill, RMJM Limited, Atkins, Kling and Leigh & Orange, we have many of the top 40 global architects on show. This clearly positions Cityscape as the brand of choice."



Nikken's Eco Tower which could provide the most green architecture in the UAE with a possible 50 per cent saving in energy consumption.

Alharmi appointed Chief Executive for Amlak

Amlak Finance, the largest publicly listed Islamic finance company and pioneer in home finance in the UAE, has appointed Arif Alharmi as Chief Executive of the company.

The appointment is designed as part of a major restructuring step aimed at further consolidating Amlak's expanding business, said the firm on the eve of Cityscape Abu Dhabi.

Amlak's recent Annual General Meeting saw a new board in a move designed to chart

the way ahead. Prior to that, the board had not elected any new members since it was formed in 2004.

Faced by a maturing and changing real estate market, it was felt that a renewed focus on core business of retail and home finance would support the company in delivering the best service to customers and shareholders for the financial year of 2007 and beyond, said the company in a statement.

"The Board of Directors would like to thank Mohammed al Hashimi for his contribution to the company as we are indebted to him for instilling a sound organisational culture within a fledgling organisation. Moving forward, we are very confident that Alharmi has the drive and vision required to take the company to the next level," said Nasser Al Shaikh, Chairman, Amlak.

Arif Alharmi joins from HSBC Amanah,

where he was the Head of Commercial Banking and instrumental in the launch of Islamic Corporate Banking.

The Board meeting also finalised the appointment of Hisham Qassimi to the Board of Directors. Qassimi is currently General Manager, Commercial Banking at National Bank of Dubai, and serves on a number of Boards including the Dubai Mercantile Exchange and the Financial Markets Tribunal of the DFSA.

\$3Bn Eco-islands reveals Abu Dhabi strategy

The momentum of Abu Dhabi's real estate development continues to grow, as witnessed by the unveiling of the \$3 billion Desert Islands eco-tourism project on the eve of Cityscape Abu Dhabi.

Unveiling the project also sheds more light on the long-term strategy for tourism in the federal capital.

The Desert Islands project comes after the rounding out of the Saadiyat "Culture Island" project by the same developer, Abu Dhabi's Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC).

But the increasingly-defined tourism strategy by Abu Dhabi – majoring on high end culture and now eco-tourism – is not designed to put the UAE's federal capital in competition with Dubai, said TDIC chief executive Lee Tabler.

"Abu Dhabi is not in competition with Dubai but really seeking to complement the commercial developments taking place in Dubai," Tabler said.

"Abu Dhabi has mountains, a vast area of desert, marine reserves and existing conservation areas and so it only made sense to develop these for tourism. His Highness Sheikh Zayed (the late Ruler of Abu Dhabi and President of the UAE) created a lot of conservation reserves. They are incredibly rich

in biodiversity and the world did not know about them. This is an opportunity for people to visit them."

Tabler added: "Dubai was very early in developing tourism and now has 22 offices around the world. Abu Dhabi has three offices (London, Frankfurt and – soon – Paris). We encourage tourism to Abu Dhabi but also to the UAE as a whole. I believe Dubai does the same.

"Many tourism organisations are packaging tours to the UAE rather than to one city or another. I think that will be a growing trend."

The Desert Islands project – off the western coast of Abu Dhabi – is the culmination of the vision of the late President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. An environmentalist long before it became fashionable, the late Ruler planted millions of trees across the Abu Dhabi desert.

Desert Islands will consist of eight islands and an onshore gateway to a range of conservation-based attractions, including the Arabian National Park.

The project comprises Sir Bani Yas Island, Dalma Island and the Discovery Islands – six offshore outcrops and the group will be connected by ferry and hydrofoil services, water taxis and private "resort" boat.



Sheikh Sultan Bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, Chairman of Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA), said: "Masterplanning of the Desert Islands has been subject to intense sustainability governance including

landscape, water, coastal, energy and cultural heritage management, as well as land and marine ecology."

Another Abu Dhabi new initiative – the Masdar initiative – has been brought into the

Project amazes HH Sheikh Ahmed

His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, President, Department of Civil Aviation, Government of Dubai and Chairman of the Emirates Group, has praised Abu Dhabi's unique multi-experience tourism destination - Desert Islands, dubbing it "an amazing project".

Visiting the Desert Islands model during a recent exhibition in Dubai, Sheikh Ahmed said: "This is a very important project for the tourism industry of the whole country."

Sheikh Ahmed was briefed on the project by Mubarak Al Muhairi, Director General of Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA) and Managing Director of Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC), which manages and develops ADTA's tourism assets.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Ahmed also hailed plans for the Cultural District of Saadiyat Island, which lies just offshore the UAE capital, as "an incredible project."



HH Sheikh Ahmed is briefed by Al Muhairi on the Desert Islands project at the opening of ATM.



project. Masdar is an energy programme design to put Abu Dhabi at the forefront of environmentally-friendly energy technologies and will be responsible for designing energy provision on Desert Islands.

Sir Bani Yas – the heartland of the project – is home to 68 species of wildlife, including emu, giraffe, Arabian Oryx, black buck and a wild goat that was formerly one of

the region's most endangered species.

The first hotel – a 64-room property – will open in early 2008. In fact the project was already underway when the Desert Islands masterplan was announced. It is being absorbed into the broader project.

Tabler said that beyond the eco-tourism initiative was cultural tourism, in the shape of Saadiyat Island.

"We believe we can attract a relatively diverse range of tourists for environmental tourism and a different set of tourists which is complementary to eco-tourism for the cultural tourism environment," he said.

Sir Bani Yas will have a beachfront resort, complete with spas, walking trails, the Arabian National Park, a bird sanctuary and safari park.

Overall, the islands will have a variety of accommodation – from five-star hotels to small family resorts, with a total of 4,000 rooms.

ADTA projects that the Desert Islands will attract 250,000 visitors a year when the first phase of the project is complete in 2010, rising to a million a year – a mix of day trippers and overnights – by 2017.

Dubai Sports City set to be major market player

Dubai Sports City, the world's first integrated sports city and cornerstone project of Dubailand, arrives at Cityscape Abu Dhabi after awarding contracts for the design and build of two major sporting venues.

Arabtec-Max Bögl, a joint venture partnership, has been contracted to design and build a 60,000-seater multi-purpose outdoor stadium and a 10,000-seater multi-purpose indoor stadium. The contract, worth Dhs830 million, would see the indoor stadium completed in April 2009 and the outdoor stadium by the end of that year.

Designed by gmp, the architectural practice made famous for its work on the Olympic Stadium in Berlin and the Commerz Bank Stadium in Frankfurt, both stadia are set to be recognised internationally for the elegance and ambition of their design.

Taken together, they will become key venues at Dubai Sports City, capable of hosting the most prestigious sporting and entertainment events and firmly positioning Dubai Sports City, and Dubai, as a leading sports and entertainment destination.

The 60,000 multi-purpose stadium will fully comply to specifications for international football, rugby, American football and athletics events, while the 10,000 seat indoor multi-purpose stadium will allow for a wide range of sporting events including ice hockey, basketball, tennis, and volleyball. In entertainment mode, the venue will be capable of hosting concerts and other major public gatherings.



"Dubai Sports City aims to partner with the world's most advanced designers and developers in the construction of this pioneering project, to ensure that we create a dedicated environment capable of playing host to spectacular sporting events," said Khalid Al Zarooni, President of Dubai Sports City.

"Arabtec-Max Bögl brings together a wealth of experience and vision that will ensure that our new stadia are recognised as representing the pinnacle of sporting architecture," he added.

"Dubai Sports City is one of the most exciting construction projects in the world today, which will further propel Dubai onto the world stage as a global leisure

destination," said Riad Kamal, Chairman of Arabtec-Max Bögl.

"The stadia we are building will be landmarks in their own right, not only in Dubai but in the region as a whole. Visitors and residents alike will be able to enjoy some of the most exciting live sports and entertainment events. It is very rewarding to play such an integral role in this unique project," added Johann Bögl, Company Owner, Max Bögl.

Once complete, both venues will add to the advanced sports infrastructure of Dubai Sports City. A 25,000 capacity cricket stadium and a 5,000-seater hockey stadium, both of which are due for completion in early 2008, complete the quartet of major stadia.

Union brings winning formula to capital

Union Properties (UP) plans to bring its winning development formula pioneered in Dubai to the UAE capital and is using the inaugural Cityscape Abu Dhabi event to launch its plans.

With the property market on the rise in Abu Dhabi, Union (UP), is exploring strategic options to recreate its development brands in the capital city.

Celebrating 20 years in property development, UP believes that its original development concepts in Dubai – including The Green Community, the F1 Theme Park and MotorCity – give it the ideal platform for tackling the Abu Dhabi market.

"UP has created a solid foundation in the property development market of Dubai over the past 20 years and we are now ready to take on our expertise into other local and international markets," said Simon E. Azzam, Chief Executive Officer, UP.

"Abu Dhabi's property market is growing steadily and has received tremendous local and international attention which has stirred interest from property developers and investors. Our participation in Cityscape Abu Dhabi is part of our strategy to create local awareness for our development brands as it creates a suitable platform."

UP was launched as Union Property Private Limited in 1987 and floated as a



public limited company in 1993. In 1987 the company's net assets were worth Dhs1 million while in 2006 the company's turnover was Dhs2.5 billion and had net assets of more than Dhs4.5 billion.

With more than 20 projects, the company has created a portfolio of landmarks in commercial, residential and leisure developments, from high-rise towers to multi-use complexes, hotels and theme parks.

"Our achievements at UP are measured by our experience, knowledge and expertise in the market, in addition to our passion to exceed our goals and focus on the future," added Azzam.

"It's this focus and our attention to detail that has earned us our solid presence in the industry today, and will continue to do so for our future. We have focused on applying our industry expertise to all our ventures and our success is the result of our dedication to quality and commitment to uncompromising excellence in every project undertaken."

He added that UP has attracted interest from investors in Europe and Asia over the past several months.

"Currently, we are researching various opportunities in the worldwide market to best suit the investors demands and needs before we take our projects abroad. We strategically branded our developments in Dubai to generate local and international recognition and awareness for our projects. With the worldwide exposure we have become recognised for our quality projects and we look forward to re-creating our brands overseas," added Azzam.



Union Properties will be showcasing its F1 theme park at Cityscape Abu Dhabi.
ABOVE: Simon E. Azzam, Chief Executive Officer, UP

With a strategy to develop worldwide brands, UP was granted rights in November 2006 to develop F1 Theme Parks around the world, starting with the USD360million F1 Theme Park in Dubai, an edutainment destination that targets the entire family.

"The future looks bright for UP, we want to continue to develop creative projects and fulfil the market needs by introducing residential and commercial units that will cater to all income categories. In addition we also aim to adopt new measures of energy conservation such as district cooling facilities, solar energy and other energy management tools to help preserve the environment and make our projects environment friendly," said Azzam.

UP is showcasing three projects at Cityscape Abu Dhabi. Limestone House features style and traditional luxury; Index is an 80 storey multi-purpose tower with state-of-the-art offices and minimalist designed luxury apartments; and MotorCity is a development based on a unique automobile and motor sport theme that includes residential, business and leisure opportunities.

Welcome to the \$400B show

Continued from page one

The Real Estate Finance and Investment Conference will explore conventional and Shariah-compliant real estate investment strategies for the Middle East region and other emerging markets.

Another highlight of the three-day programme is the Cityscape Real Estate Awards – Excellence in Real Estate Investment and Development – scheduled to be held at a gala dinner tonight at the Emirates Palace Hotel.

And don't forget the Cityscape Abu Dhabi cocktail party at which conference delegates, exhibitors and speakers have the chance to network with key international and regional professionals.

Marwaha said: "Abu Dhabi not only has the long-term financial stability to attract conventional and Shariah-compliant private and institutional investors, it also has immense potential for highly profitable and much sought after waterfront development.

"The natural beauty of Abu Dhabi's 400-kilometre coastline, studded with 200 islands, is something of a blank canvass for developers and, to its credit, Abu Dhabi's planning agencies have so far only approved projects that provide synergy with their own enviable environmental standards.

"This provides industry specialists with outstanding opportunities based on sustainability and quality rather than quantity and price."

Golf winners putt in a good show

The Cityscape Abu Dhabi Golf Classic sponsored by Sorouh proved a big hit for all who took part and now after its resounding success, the tournament is set to become a key feature of next years Cityscape Abu Dhabi.

In addition to the main team competition, numerous fun and challenging individual competitions took place during the day. Winners of these were: Chipping Champion: Ralf Stahl; Putting Champion: Trevor Arnold; Hole 4 - Nearest the Pin: Eric Milne; Hole 6 - Straightest Drive: Ray Sprouats; Hole 9 - Longest Drive: Matt Shaw; Hole 12 - Longest Putt: Dave Ellerton; Hole 15 - Nearest the Pin: Tom Westbrook; Prizes were also given to the 2's club: Ian Walton.

In the main team competition, the afternoon provided some outstanding golf with the tight fairways and numerous water hazards causing the downfall of many team's aspirations. When all the scores had been counted the winning teams were: Winners: Phillip Verzun and Andy McLean; Runner Up: Jim Wheat and Tony Stroud; Third Place: Michael Cairns and Guy Simpson

Prizes and trophies for all the winners were presented by Kevin Storey, Sorouh, the exclusive sponsors of the golf day.



All the fun in the air



Those magnificent men in their flying machines: The Red Bull Air Race series takes place every year in Abu Dhabi and is well worth a visit.

Abu Dhabi is fast becoming a venue for top sporting occasions for all manner of sports. Top class golf is already here, football's prestigious Gulf Cup was staged here, and of course Formula 1 is coming.

But one sport has already made Abu Dhabi its very own home, that of the Red Bull Air Race World Series. For the third year running Abu Dhabi hosted the opening leg of this spectacular competition last month, and after yet another successful appearance the competition is set to keep returning.

The competition features a dynamic new discipline of flying, called 'air racing' where the objective is to navigate a challenging race course in the sky, in the fastest possible time. Flying individually against the clock, the pilots have to execute tight turns through a slalom course consisting of specially designed pylons, known as 'Air Gates'.

For the leg held in Abu Dhabi, the city's famous 'Corniche' stretch is transformed into a unique race track with its own specially built airport situated in the harbour,

complete with hangars to accommodate all the planes. Spectators can view the action from the shore as the pilots race through the air just metres above the water.

The pilots must complete two rounds of the race track. The main difference to the track this year in Abu Dhabi was the introduction of slalom gates, made up of three single air gates. The pilots have to weave through these gates as in a slalom race. They can fly as wide or as close to the gates as they like. The closer they fly to the gates, the quicker they will complete the course but the risk of hitting a gate is also higher.

The track was also much tighter than in 2006 and the turns from gate 7 to gate 1 presented a real challenge for the pilots as they manoeuvred their planes without losing too much power which could result in a slower entry air speed in the second round.

The Air Race is not just about speed - precision is crucial to success because any mistakes incur penalty points which are then added to the pilot's time.

Flying low to the ground at speeds that can reach over 400kph, while attempting difficult turning manoeuvres, requires immense skill that only a certain number of pilots in the world possess. That is why the pilots are hand selected based upon their expertise and experience. These pilots are at the top of their game. They have to be – the Air Race exerts huge demands on their flying abilities and they have to withstand forces of up to 10G. There is no room for error.

Abu Dhabi BITES

■ Situated on the north east of the Arabian Peninsula, the emirate of Abu Dhabi has an area of some 67,000 square kilometres.

Its landscape ranges from sandy beaches and 200 islands along the coastline to 'sabkha' (salt flats), stretches of gravel plain and vast areas of desert dunes. The latter cover much of the inland region. The majestic Hajar Mountains form a backbone that runs down the east of the country.

■ Abu Dhabi has a sub-tropical, arid climate and sunny blue skies with temperatures that vary but never disappoint. Rainfall is infrequent and irregular, falling mainly in winter - November to March (12 cm per year). Temperatures range from a low of around 10° C (50° F), to a high of around 48° C (118° F) in the summer. The most pleasant time to visit is in the cooler winter months when temperatures are around 24° C (75° F) during the day and 13° C (56° F) at night.

■ All types of cuisine can be found in Abu Dhabi. As well as the international fare on offer in many top class restaurants and hotels, visitors are encouraged to sample the delicious local and regional dishes such as hummus, salads, fresh pastries, rice dishes and grilled meats. Pork however does not feature on Arabic menus, as its consumption is forbidden in Islam. Restaurants catering to non-Muslims may serve pork.

Alcohol is permitted in Abu Dhabi and is served in hotel restaurants and bars but, with a few exceptions, is not for sale elsewhere.

■ The monetary unit of the UAE is the dirham (abbreviated to Dhs or AED) divided into 100 fils. The dirham is linked to the US dollar at a rate of around US\$1 to Dhs3.67. There are no foreign exchange restrictions and the currency is freely convertible.

■ Tipping practices are similar to the rest of the world. Taxi drivers do not expect a tip, but will appreciate a little extra. In restaurants 10 per cent is considered adequate if service is excluded.

Cruise your way through Abu Dhabi

Visitors to Abu Dhabi are not limited to enjoying themselves on dry land. The area has a rich seafaring tradition, and there are many opportunities for visitors to take to the water.

Traditional dhow cruises are popular. The traditional wooden sailing boats used for centuries by merchants and traders sailing the waters of the Arabian Gulf can be seen all over the waters around Abu Dhabi. Those intended for tourist use come equipped with modern amenities such as satellite navigation and bathrooms. Sailing days can be arranged through hotels and tour operators.

There are a number of companies such as Al Dhafra (www.aldhafra.net) offering dhow cruises and charters, and often the trip can be tailored to the wishes of the passengers. Popular options include a cruise along the Abu Dhabi Corniche, or a visit to one or more of the many islands situated off the coast. A buffet or full meal can be arranged.

As an alternative to a dhow, the Royal Meridien Hotel operates a double decker motor cruiser called The Shuja that takes evening cruises along the Corniche, or can be chartered by individuals or parties. Enjoying a meal and friendly atmosphere before watching the sun set over the shimmering water really is well worth doing.

Sorouh aims to steal the show

Leading property developer Sorouh Real Estate is using its Platinum sponsor status at Cityscape Abu Dhabi to create a high profile for itself and its projects

Mounir Haidar, Sorouh chief executive, said: "Cityscape Abu Dhabi provides an excellent platform to attract key investors and decision makers within the real estate industry. We are very proud to be supporting this important exhibition.

"Abu Dhabi is Sorouh's key market, and one of the most sought-after and fastest-growing investment sectors in the world. Participating in this prestigious event will allow us to network with powerful regional and international property investors and developers. We are looking forward to building new relationships as well as cementing our existing partnerships."

Sorouh will be showcasing its premium luxury lifestyle projects including Shams Abu Dhabi, Sorouh's Dh\$25 billion landmark development located on Reem Island.

Shams Abu Dhabi is a self-sustaining city of canals and parks which integrates world-

class master planning practices offering a balanced life to its residents.

Visitors to Cityscape Abu Dhabi will be able to see a model of Central Park, a major attraction project in Shams Abu Dhabi, offering one million square feet of open space and recreational amenities which will position it as a daily destination for residents and visitors.

Also being displayed will be the Gate District: a complex of eight high rise towers which will be a visual entry point or 'Gateway' to Shams Abu Dhabi.

Abu Dhabi based Sorouh was established on June 26, 2005 with a capital of Dh\$2.5 billion. Today it is one of the largest real estate developers listed on the Abu Dhabi Securities Market with a market cap close to Dh\$6.9 billion. It is one of the most widely held issues with approximately 55,000 shareholders.

Sorouh's approach to development is based on a corporate vision of "bring communities to life in perfect balance." Its real estate projects are master-planned and

designed to meet the four core needs of human wellbeing: physical, intellectual, social and spiritual.

Sorouh employs in excess of 120 highly qualified professionals operating in the field of master-planning and master-development.

The company has around Dh\$50 billion of projects under development, including:

- Shams Abu Dhabi on Reem island which will be a complete new city of 75,000 people.
- The Gate District on Shams Abu Dhabi is a cluster of eight towers located at the entrance to Shams, Abu Dhabi. The Dh\$11 billion residential, office and retail development is designed as a gateway to the peninsula from Reem Island.
- The Gate District also includes the Dh\$2.2 billion 83-storey Sky Tower which will be a pinnacle of luxury for its residential and commercial occupants as well as Abu Dhabi's tallest building when completed.
- Lulu Island opposite the Abu Dhabi Corniche will offer housing for up to 50,000



Mounir Haidar, Sorouh chief executive, is looking forward to Sorouh making a big impression at Cityscape Abu Dhabi.

residents 85 per cent of whom will have sea views. The project is valued at Dh\$14.5 billion.

Sorouh has also the Golf Gardens overlooking the Abu Dhabi Championship Course, the Abu Dhabi Aviation Authority residential project, Al-Shamkha national housing project, the Tala Tower and Saraya on the Abu Dhabi Corniche.

In its first venture outside the UAE, Sorouh will be involved in developing the 7,000,000 m² Sq Ft Bab Al-Bahr project in Morocco.

Crystal brings the art of water to show

Crystal Fountains is at Cityscape Abu Dhabi showing off recent developments in high performance LED technology that enable the firm to introduce a submersible LED lighting range that is "transforming lighting" for water features.

The technology uses the latest RGB digital colour mixing technology which allows Crystal Fountains to create more than 12 million colour variations, with a collection of colour fading and scrolling techniques providing endless combinations and a truly versatile animation tool for feature lighting.

Dramatic and striking water features created by Toronto-based Crystal Fountains are central attractions at many of the major new developments across the Middle East. With many water features in the region, Crystal Fountains is exhibiting at Cityscape Abu Dhabi to raise awareness of what it has to offer.

The company, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, has recently opened offices in Kuwait City and Singapore in order to meet with increasing demand for consultancy and fountain components from the Middle East and South East Asia.

According to Michael Denman, Crystal Fountain's Director of Overseas Operations, the demand for water features in the Middle East is growing rapidly.

The company has been working in the region since the mid

Spectacular water features from Crystal Fountains.



1990s, when it started working on water features in Abu Dhabi. Now Dubai's huge growth spurt accounts for 10 percent of the company's total business.

Current projects for the company include:

- Messilah Beach Hotel in Kuwait, a five-star resort designed by SOM architects and due to open this year.
- Kuwait 360°, an indoor/outdoor shopping and entertainment centre in Kuwait, designed by RTKL architects with Mesa

Landscape Architects. Water features will be a central attraction here, with lakes, cascades, geysers and animated displays spread over several acres.

■ Burj Dubai, (designed by SOM architects) will be the world's tallest building when it is completed. Landscaping will surround it and Crystal Fountains is providing components and design consultancy on more than 20 water features in the Tower Park and Island Park areas.

■ King Abdullah Economic City in Saudi Arabia, a \$53 billion project to develop a new city, now underway north of Jeddah, envisioned as an economic epicentre for the young and a landmark for the Middle East. Crystal Fountains is working on a large-scale animated water display for the new City.

■ Smart Village, in Cairo, Egypt, a state-of-the-art business park for high-tech IT and communications companies such as Microsoft and Vodafone. The landscaping is designed to create an 'oasis' for tech companies to work in, and Crystal Fountains has created the lake fountain at the heart of the village.

■ Uptown Cairo, in Cairo, Egypt, is a four million sq m mixed-use development that 'integrates residential, commercial, and leisure components in a stylish environment,' say the developers, Emaar.