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VOL. 7, NO. 5
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EDITORIAL

The heat is on...

Once again, an amazing outdoor season in the Middle East is over with the temperatures rising to unpleasant heights. Activities are limited to the early morning and late afternoon hours and the annual summer migrations to cooler climates will start soon. And the heat is on.

I have been in the UAE for almost a decade and every year people seem to expect the country to fall into a summer hibernation, which I never and still don't understand. 'Everyone is leaving', I hear people saying, which is simply not true. The majority of people remain in the UAE even though life does not continue as usual and those who dare to go out for pleasure do this during odd hours where you might not see them. I think this attitude provides a good excuse for being lazy and unproductive, blaming the summer or a non-existent migration. Most of the countries in this world have seasons with good weather conditions and bad weather conditions. For us here, bad weather does not mean rain, it simply means it is too hot. So we do what everyone does: we tend to stay inside and do those things we don't want to do when we can go out and enjoy the weather. Traveling is certainly one of the most popular escape plans for summer but most of us will travel a few weeks only and not 3-4 months. So what else can we do? We plan our next adventures, research new gear, clean and maintain our equipment and enjoy reading books or the lovely OutdoorUAE magazine. And if you think it's a coincidence that we are printing double issues in summer (May-June & July-August), I can tell you it is not! It's just simply business and the fact that our advertisers, don't want to advertise in summer even though people have more time to actually read.

So let's be honest, summer is not that bad. It's just different to the other eight months where we are spoiled with great weather and able to enjoy the outdoors. So don't bury your heads in the sand. Use the summer to prepare for the next season, enjoy traveling, read more and share your stories with us.

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EVENTS CALENDAR

STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH THE LATEST EVENTS

27th Al Gaffal Long Distance Race

The Al Gaffal Dhow Race commemorates the early history of Dubai's evolution into a trading port through the pearl divers. It is one of the most beautiful sailing races, as up to 100 traditional dhows with white sails glide through the water. Each dhow is 18.3 metres long, and from afar, the sight is magnificent. The race is unique in that the crew must be completely composed of Emirati nationals. You can get closer to the action by following the race in a water ferry, or watch as the dhows sail in to the finish at the iconic Burj Al Arab hotel.

When: 13th – 20th May
Where: Burj Al Arab
Contact: www.visitdubai.com

Yas Links Men's Open 2017

The Men's Open at the award-winning Yas Links golf course is a flagship event for members and guests to battle it out for bragging rights and prizes.

When: 12th – 13th May
Where: YAS Links, Abu Dhabi
Contact: abudhabievents.ae

The Wellman Walk for Health 3km

Let's Walk….. On the way to a healthy life. Come and join "Walk for Health" open for all age categories. Be part of this healthy initiative, 3k walk and make a healthy start of the day. "Wellman" is bringing this healthy initiative along with wonderful products of the brand and free BMI checkup facility.

When: 12th May
Where: Mamzar Beach Tracks, Dubai
Contact: www.premieronline.com

Pro Extreme Bikes

The competition will attract professional Freestyle Bmxers & Skaters from all over the Middle East.

When: 19th May
Where: Abu Dhabi Skatepark, Cornich Street, The Family Park
Contact: www.proxbikes.com

We Are All Police Cycle Race

The Iconic Abu Dhabi Corniche to Yas Island Cycle Race, starting and finishing at Nations Towers (68Km). Supported by Abu Dhabi Police with rolling road closures. Also features a Bike Parade of 16km non competitive. Fixed Cut off times.

When: 19th May
Where: Nations Tower, Abu Dhabi Corniche Public Beach Car Park
Contact: www.premieronline.com

Dubai Desert Road Run 10km & 3km May 2017

First held in February 2012, the Dubai Desert Road Run is held several times a year, appealing to all elements of the running community - from first time social runners, to some of the best UAE based athletes. Organised as a community event in which runners of all abilities are encouraged to participate, the Dubai Desert Road Run features two distances; 10km and 3km. Both distances are run on private roads over a safe, traffic free course.

When: 26th May
Where: Start location: Village area between Pitch 1 and Pitch 8
Contact: www.premieronline.com

Dubai Sports World

Dubai Sports World turns summer into the season of fitness. Over two months, pro athletes, clubs, active people who enjoy games and spectators are welcome to partake in sporting challenges with celebrity appearances thrown in for extra fun. Friendly matches and champion battles can all be played on this purpose-built pro standard sports venue. Games include tennis, basketball, badminton, table tennis, volleyball, mini-cricket, mini football, touch rugby, skateboarding, BMX, bicycle and motocross.

When: 1st June
Where: Sheikh Saeed Halls and Trade Centre Arena, DWTC
Contact: www.visitdubai.com

Ramadan Night Run - Abu Dhabi - 10km 5km 3km

The Ramadan Night Runs are being held at Yas Circuit in Abu Dhabi on Friday 2nd June and at Dubai Autodrome in Dubai on Friday 9th June. The races are individual (not a series) so you can choose to register for one or both. Both runs are suitable for all elements of the running community - from first time social runners, to the best UAE based athletes. Organised as a community event in which runners of all abilities are encouraged to participate, each Ramadan Night Run features three distances;

When: 2nd and 9th June
Where: Start location: Yas Circuit Start/FInish Area
Contact: www.premieronline.com

BEST SHOTS

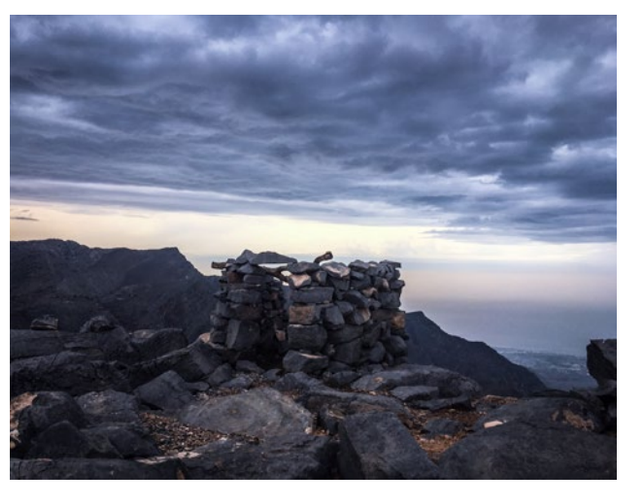
Buff® THE ORIGINAL MULTIFUNCTIONAL HEADWEAR

Here are the best shots sent in by you for our monthly photography competition! Thank you for all your entries, they were all great and it was hard selecting the best photos this month. Congratulations to the top three winners, who will each receive Buff headwear, five free copies of the magazine and the Advance Off-road Guidebook: **Tony Sam Noel, Jithesh Sundar** and **Abdul Salam.** Well done!

To submit your entries, simply email us at **competitions@outdooruae.com** with the subject "Best Shots."

Tony Sam Noel
Abu Dhabi Dark Sky Challenge 2017

Jithesh Sundar
A Group of seagulls gathered at the Corniche and I thought of the saying "If you love someone, set them free."



Abdul Salam
Wadi Galilah, Ras Al Khaimah

GET READY
to Rock all Summer Long

Bouldering and climbing scene is on the brink of revolution in the Middle East – and it is happening this May!

Rock Republic Dubai, the first and biggest indoor bouldering gym in the region, is scheduled to open bigger and better than ever this May –and it was about time.

Pete Aldwinckle, one of the partners at Global Climbing and the force behind this development, explains: "A few things have been happening recently that have indirectly enabled Rock Republic to operate and grow as a response to the market demand: first, for a number of years these activities have been offered as a part of GCSE and NICAS systems. Climbing is not new; however, the indoor element makes it possible to provide the same environment and teach the same skills anywhere in the world. Population of UAE comprises roughly of 14% students (1.1mil in 2015) and UAE has the highest number of international schools globally with predictions to double the number of educational facilities from 2014 to 2020. We want to be able to support this trend and offer world-class facilities to accommodate this growth. This is the academic angle.

Second, Sports Climbing and Bouldering have joined the Olympics 2020 as new disciplines. This has tremendous impact at how popular both branches are to become. UAE is home to 9.2million people and estimated 61% are working professionals. Those with disposable income allowing them to enjoy such activities as bouldering are following trends and active lifestyle is no exception; we know this because we have literally grown out of our 250sq meters facility and quadrupled our footfall over the last 3 years. Our expansion is merely the answer to current and projected market trend."

Rock Republic expansion includes doubling its space and brand new facilities such as private mezzanine area, shower, toilets and resting facilities, and dedicated training floor area for the beasts that come and train regularly. "We want to create a fantastic workout environment for everybody aged six years and up. This expansion finally allows us to offer dedicated classes for kids, after school activities for students and upgrades to the current climbing classes with the addition of Pilates and Yoga specially designed for climbers and much more. We see so much potential in this beautiful sport and are proud to be its pioneers here in Middle East," adds Guida Verschut, Partner and Business Development Director for Rock Republic and Global Climbing.

Rock Republic Dubai will be ready for you at the end of May with revamped timings and comprehensive schedule to keep you committed to get fit, get strong and get social. Summer also promises Boulder Bash competition and summer camps for kids. You can get in touch with Vanda, the Prime Minister of Rock Republic on Facebook (rock.republic.dubai), email rockrepublic@globalclimbing.com or give their super friendly staff a call on 050 1001370. ■

Long live the Rock!

Enjoy the summer on the water with the new affordable waverunners from Yamaha

The 2017 EX Series with a new fuel efficient and powerful engine guarantee fun and versatility

Riding a motorbike is giving you the freedom on the road, cruising through the country side or the city. If you love the feeling of freedom and want to enjoy it all year round also during the hot summer month you can get the same feeling on the water with a wave runner. Ride out into the horizon and endless blue ocean or like a cowboy rides into the sunset in a wild west movie or cruise along the beautiful shorelines of the UAE or exciting water channels in the modern metropolis.

Waverunner are as versatile as motorbikes, they can offer something for any taste, no matter if you look for a high speed adrenaline rush, family fun or off-shore fishing, a waverunner is the gateway to all these amazing water sports activities and it is much easier to store and launch than a boat and the best part they are also very affordable.

The EX Waverunner line from Yamaha is the entry level waverunners which are playful fun and affordable. The EX series is powered by this award-winning, lightweight 3-cylinder four stroke engine with 1049CC brings a fun ride with maximum fuel economy. The engine is smaller, lighter and uses less fuel than its predecessor but yet has more power output (100hp) with a top speed of approx 51mph.

- 13.9l (50l) fuel capacity much more than competing brands given the EX series with its fuel efficient engine a reach of up to 170km
- 123" length true 3 seater, touring and towing

The new 10.3" hull gives the EX precise, predictable and stable handling with a ride capacity of 1- 3 persons. The large swimming platform gives enough space to fish or just relax and dive in the water for a swim. The reboarding step which tucks away and the reboarding handle on the seat makes it easy to get back on the waverunner from the water. To enjoy family fun with towables, water ski or wakeboarding the EX series is equipped with a tow hook.

Other standard features are dual mirrors for a good overview at all times, an easy accessible bow storage compartment, an extra large glove box storage and even more storage under the seat. A multi function information centres give you all the riding information you need.

The EX Sport brings the extra feature of a manual reverse with a switch on the left side handle.

The EX Deluxe offers two tone deck mats and RiDE.

RiDE™ provides a level of control that enhances the entire experience and will be a welcomed addition for both novice and experienced rider. RiDE™ offers the world's first dual throttle handlebar controls on a personal watercraft. Pull the right handle lever and you accelerate, pull the left lever and you go in reverse. Pull the left lever at speed to decelerate. Pull them both, or in any combination, and the system recognizes your intentions and provides precise control at all speeds all the time. Release both levers and you shift to neutral. There's no manual shifting, no gears, no complicated process

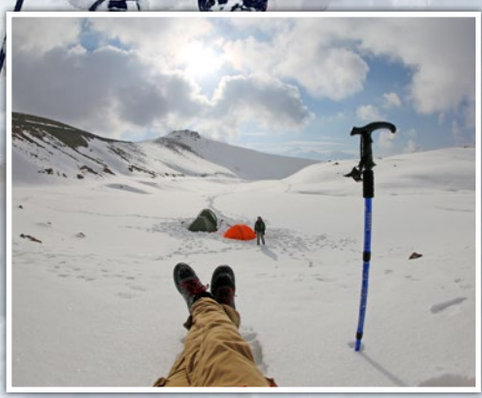
So if you look for a personal water craft (PWC) look no further since you have all the benefits in the EX series - price, features, quality, reliability, easy and low cost maintenance but most of all versatility on the water which ensures a lot of fun. ■

The product is available in all Yamaha Showrooms across the UAE. For more details, please contact **800 – AYM(296)** or visit **www.aym.ae**. Email: **customerservice@alyousuf.com** & **Salesteam@alyousuf.com**

Winter Flashback:
Climbing Halgurd Mountain in Iraq

Words + Photos by: Qasim Ribwar Hewa and David O'Hara

At just over 3,600 meters in elevation, Halgurd Mountain is one of the few snow-covered peaks in the Middle East that is worthy of summiting. In January, I took a group of eight colleagues on an overnight winter trek in the Zagros Mountains, 170 kilometres northeast of Erbil, Iraq.



My favourite time to climb Halgurd Mountain is during the wintertime when days are short and the ground is covered by fresh snow. Hiking with a group in the mountains can be treacherous, so we hired a local guide in Choman to lead us. Driving the last five kilometres from Choman to the base of Halgurd is slow on snowy, mountainous roads with no other traffic and takes us 35 minutes. The scenery is stunning, but because of the snow,the road is closed. We park the cars and lug all the gear to our camp.

I reflect now with a smile at the thought of our group of weekend adventurers carrying 20 kg backpacks and hiking through the snow in Kurdistan about 10 kilometres from the Iranian border. Part of the challenge was the lack of mountain-ready meals available, so we carried heavy canned food and cooking gear from home. It took us five hours to get from the cars to our campsite.

With the unpredictability of the weather, we awake at 04:00 to get an early start up the mountain. It usually takes four hours to reach the summit from the main camp. We have breakfast and leave the tents by 05:00. When we start the long hike up the mountain, some clouds started to roll in, worrying me that we would not get to see anything that day. During the night watching the snowfall had been amazing, but now we were struggling climbing through such deep snow. We were wondering if we would be able to make it to the summit under these conditions. However, when we took our first rest break, I began to feel warm and noticed that the weather was clearing. Soon we could see the beautiful scenery of the Zagros Mountain range.

With the winter sun now shining through the cloud cover, everyone seemed invigorated once again. Breathing the freezing air when climbing a mountain is refreshing and we climb to the summit by 10:30 in the morning. Everyone made it with time to spare, returning to the main camp before sunset, and we relaxed in the amazing views of the beautiful mountains. It was freezing on the top, literally – our drinking water and energy snacks had all frozen! But it didn't matter, as we had achieved our goal: we climbed to the summit and made it back to camp safely in the middle of winter. We were excited after a challenging and difficult adventure and it felt like we were standing on top of the world.

The fun of life is in the challenge, not the comfort. Climbing a 3,600-meter snow covered mountain in Iraq is a great challenge. While comfort is a necessary escape from the human struggle, it makes for good balance: Iraq, snow, and mountains. As I write these words three months after our snowy winter adventure, the heat of summer is already upon us and I dwell on how we endure such challenges with a smile. Seeing the photographs of the frozen Zagros Mountains, our hiking group mulls over tea for our next adventure! ■

Race Report

Red Bull Titan of the Hill

Words + Photos by: Tonya Colson

Imagine riding your mountain bike down a 1100-meter long staircase.

That's exactly what 52 riders did during the inaugural run of the Red Bull Titan of the Hill race. The narrow twists and turns carried riders down the mountainside steps through the *picturesque* Wakan Village in Wilayat Nakhal, Oman.

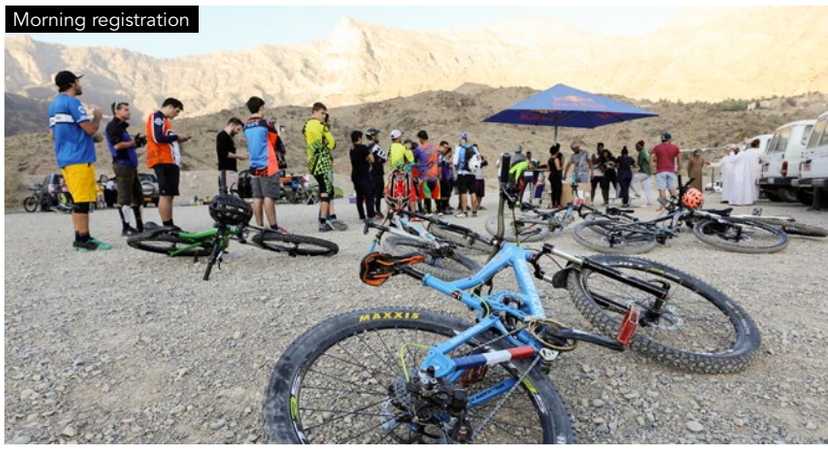
Only the folks at Red Bull could dream this up, but riders from all over the GCC turned up to try the course.

The race format started with a stamina challenge as riders carried their bikes up more than 700 steps to reach the starting line. The riders then proceeded down the staircase one by one, in a time trial format. The steps themselves varied in height and length, and it was hard to say whether it seemed steeper on the way up or on the way down.

The top of the course had a water-filled Falaj on one side and occasional sharp drops on the other. The middle section took riders twisting and turning through terraced gardens with some low tree branches for added effect. The bottom section flowed through the heart of the village itself, where colourful doors lined the narrow alleyway. Local villagers turned up to cheer on the riders, adding to the friendly atmosphere of the competition.

Red Bull Titan of the Hill Champion, Steve Ross, made short work of the course, with a winning time of 02:38

Ruth Hilton (Second Place Women's Division) carries her bike up 700 steps to the start



Morning registration

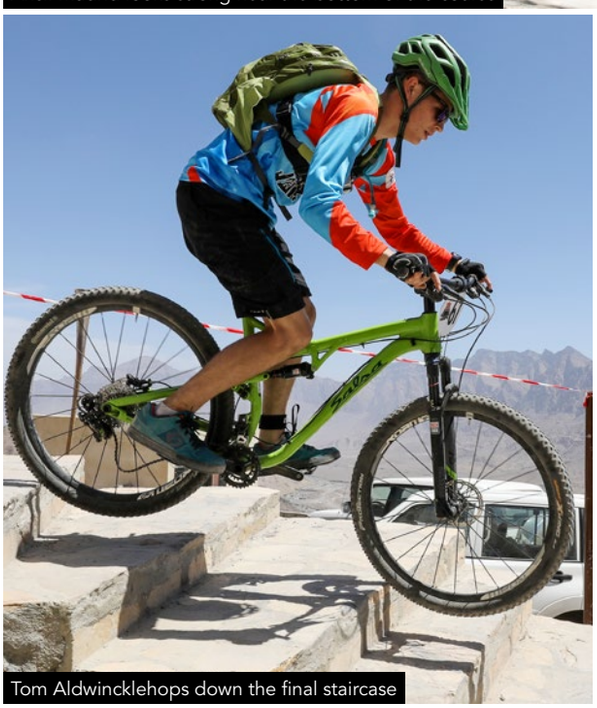
Andrew Murphy on his way to a Top 10 finish in the men's division

Greg Falski (Third Place Men's Division) enjoys the view from the top

JR Zerna tackles the 1,100 meter staircase

Ansli Madrid looks strong near the bottom of the course

Joe Bunn approaches the finish gate for a second place finish in the men's division


Tom Aldwincklehops down the final staircase

Professional and amateur riders alike found the course to be like nothing they had ever tried before. There were no practice runs, and there was no information from previous races. Tyre pressure, suspension settings and seat height were a guessing game. There were lots of dropped chains, and a few dropped bikes as riders worked things out on the fly. These added challenges were part of the experience.

At the end of the day, Steve Ross from Scotland was named 'Titan of the Hill' in the men's division, while Janine Tooze from England was 'Titan of the Hill' in the women's division.

The spectacular scenery, challenging course and capable organization had all riders asking when the next downhill race would take place. Red Bull: the riders are waiting for the next challenge. Build it and they will come. ■

Omar Alsaadi passes through the heart of the village

Women's podium L to R: Ruth Hilton (2nd), Janine Tooze (1st) and Guida Verschut (3rd)

Men's podium L to R: Joe Bunn (2nd), Steve Ross (1st), Alexander Munoz (4th)

EVENT REPORT

Marathon des Sables: Sam's Bucket List Challenge

Words + Photos by: David O'Hara

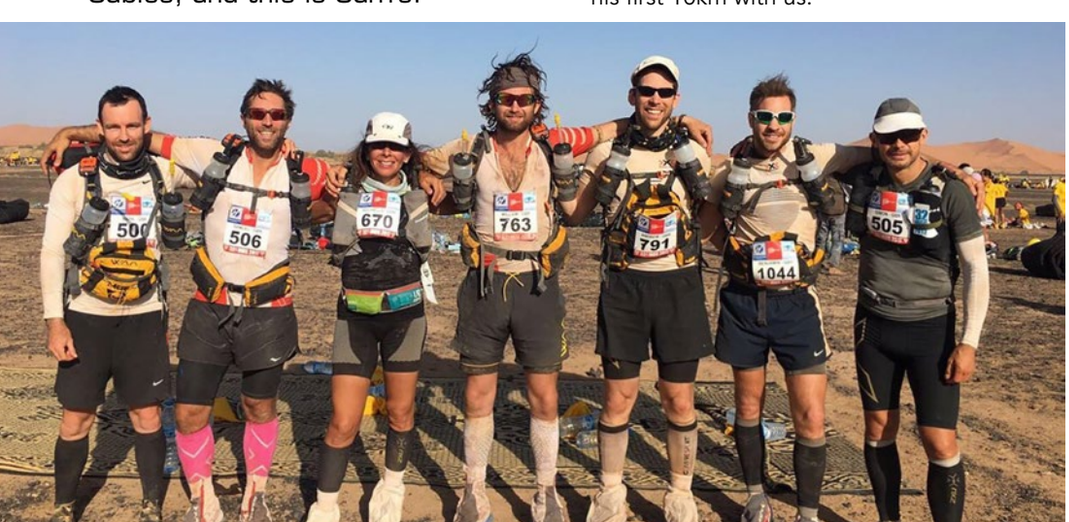
It's 02:00 in the moonlit desert and Sam has been running up and down the sand dunes in Morocco for 60 kilometres on the fourth day of the Marathon des Sables when things get ugly. There are 1,200 other runners in the race, but none are around him. He doesn't see any glow sticks bouncing on other runners' packs, and the torches at the Finish appear like a mirage on the horizon. Running down the dune hurts the toe he broke on yesterday's 39km run on Day 3, and walking up the next dune is a battle of his intestinal fortitude: why am I doing this? How did I get here? Everybody has a dark moment at Marathon des Sables, and this is Sam's.

Marathon des Sables ("MdS")

Marathon des Sables is a self-supported 230km race with five stages in the Sahara Desert. Other than an open-sided tent and water rations, if you want it, you carry it. You want a sleeping bag? Carry it in your pack. You want warm food? Carry the food, stove and fuel. You want clean clothes? Probably better to wait until you get home. During the course of five days, you run 31km, 39km, 32km, 86km, and 42km – a total of 230km – over terrain that is mostly deep sand and with high temperatures hovering around 45C, it is quite warm, even by Dubai standards.

How did Sam end up at MdS?

Before MdS, Sam is a thirty-something Brit living in Dubai for six years, enjoying his Friday brunches too much and missing his fav team sports. After watching a few too many YouTube videos on running ultramarathons in the desert, he decided to sign up for the Marathon des Sables - even though he only ran sporadically and no more than 10km. Six months before MdS, Sam started training with Coach Lee and the Desert Trail Runners, where I first met him and I can personally vouch how much he struggled running his first 10km with us.



Training for MdS

Sam started out training 6-8 hours a week, mostly running on the trails at Wadi Showka and in the sand at Fossil Rock, along with gym workouts for his core. I ran with Sam the day after he ran his first 50km in January and he suffered horribly, but I saw his determination when he was practically crawling up and over the sand at Devil's Plunge and I knew he had a chance. In February, Sam and I ran 72km together during the hurricane and snow at Wadi Bih, and I was proud to finish with him. He was physically ready for MdS.

Preparing for MdS

Running a marathon in the desert is difficult, but carrying a pack with all your food, clothes, supplies and personal hygiene items is really hard. The MdS organizers provide a spreadsheet to calculate how many grams (!!) you should carry, what isn't essential, and how to optimise the proper food ratio of weight to calories. You cut excess straps. You minimize everything possible. You test your gear under race-like conditions. You try different running shoes and gaiters. (At camp every night after running, the hot topic of discussion would be calories to weight ratio of food and weight of everybody's kit in their pack – boy, ultrarunners sure know how to have fun!)

Running

After a long journey, Marathon des Sables starts. Sam has a great strategy: you feel good, you run. If you're going up, you walk. The problem is Sam's strategy fails to account for the adrenaline and euphoria of starting the race he's been preparing for over the past six months. The first 10km are smooth and he flies - then reality hits and the sand gets deep and he reaches the mountains. Even after training on over 1.000km of hills and sand dunes in UAE, the Moroccan mountains are steeper than expected. Sam finishes the first stage in 499th place out of 1200 – dude, I'm impressed.

Stage Race

Most runners train for the running aspect of MdS, but the real challenges are managing the daily grind of running long distances in hot and tough conditions, followed by trying to sleep in an open tent with minimal comforts and conveniences. Sam's challenge was compounded on the second day when he faced his nemesis – going up mountains and getting passed by a hundred runners, which can be quite demoralizing. The third day included a climb so steep the organizers suspended ropes to help runners over the mountain. Unfortunately somewhere along the way, Sam breaks a toe. A broken toe needs a few weeks to heal, but the MdS goes on and so does Sam.

A Long Day

After running over 100km in three days, you may lose some perspective for the Day 4 run of 86km. There is palpable tension and apprehension in the air at camp before the Start. Physically, everybody has trained for this day but the tough part is the mental game. Sam – like most other runners – uses mantras: "Get it done, get it done!", "Never give up!" and one other with an F-bomb. Since the long run has seven checkpoints, he compartmentalizes the stage into seven sections. That helps to a certain extent, but on the way to checkpoint 3 the temperature hits 46C and Sam is dangerously low on water. After having difficulty opening his pack at the checkpoint, Sam takes his emergency recovery shake (yeah, I think this qualifies as an emergency, Sam). After getting his core temperature down, he sets off. At sunset, all the runners put compulsory glow sticks on their packs as they navigate through the desert at night. The trail of runners thins out and nobody is around when things get tough. Down the dune into darkness. Up the dune is a struggle but only the faint glow of the Finish is visible. Get to the next checkpoint. Where am I? Where am I going? Where is everybody else? Get it done, get it done. Never give up. Over seventeen hours later, Sam is the 355th finisher for the Long Day!

Just a Marathon Left

The last stage of MdS is 'just' a marathon, which isn't too tough under normal circumstances. Sam's nutritional intake has finally caught up with him and he has what ultramarathoners euphemistically refer to as "GI distress". Nonetheless, Sam cranks out another marathon in under six hours and he is 414th overall out of about 1,200 finishers! That is a highly impressive result and a resounding success, which justifies all that hard work over the past six months. I would feel remiss if I did not give a shout out to our fellow DTR hero, Simon Marshall, with his 30th place finish – that is simply unfathomable to me. Congratulations! ■

Sam's Ten Random Thoughts on MdS

1. Get used to running, recovering and sleeping in the same clothes for nine nights. You stink. Everybody stinks.
2. Your tent mates will get on your nerves (and you will get on theirs), but they will also be massive support.
3. You will lose toenails.
4. Rationing toilet paper is not fun
5. Pain is only temporary. Man up and deal with it.
6. You will have no social life for the six months of training.
7. Everybody experiences a very low moment at MdS. Bouncing back is key.
8. Getting to the Start will cost a lot more money than the spendy entry fee, once you factor in all the running shoes, gels, packs, lightweight gear that you must buy and try.
9. You will start the race only wanting to complete it. By the end, ranking is everything – even though you know nobody cares what place you finished.
10. Going from barely being able to run 10km last summer to being in the top third of finishers at MdS – that's a combination of serious training, determination and true grit.

LOCAL TALENT SUCCEEDS AT 2017 Abu Dhabi DESERT CHALLENGE

Martin Prokop lost in a cloud of sand

Words by: Stuart Murray
Photos by: Edoardo Bauer and Cristiano Barni

The 27th edition of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge, the region's first World Championship level motorsport event, took place at the start of April, and there was great cause for celebration amongst the UAE and GCC competitors taking part as they outclassed their international rivals.

Founded in 1991, the first and second years of the rally were won by Emirati Mohammed Mattar in a Landrover Defender, but since that opening victory, French drivers have won the event an astounding fifteen times, Russia and Qatar have three victories apiece, while Spain, Japan and even snowy Finland each have a win to be proud of. However, the Abu Dhabi Racing crew of Sheikh Khalid Al Qassimi and his co-driver Khalid Al Kendi have put an end to that 25 year streak by taking victory for the UAE in 2017 in their Peugeot 3008 DKR.

While the Emiratis put in a fast and careful performance, their victory came as a surprise as Qatari rally legend Nasser Al Attiyah held an almost 15 minute lead going into the final stage of the five day competition. However, a high speed crash with approximately 100km still to go saw the two-time Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge winner cartwheel his Toyota Hilux three times at speeds in excess of 150kph. Thankfully, both Al Attiyah and his co-driver Frenchman Mathieu Baumel were unhurt, but had to retire due to the damage sustained to the car.

Quads chase each other through the dunes following the mass start on Stage 2

Ulsterman David McBride, winner of the Veteran's Trophy

German driver Stephan Schott starts to roll at the bottem of a dune near Moreeb Dune

Quad riders negotiating with the local wildlife

Australian rider Lee Stephens

The jump at the prologue stage at Al Forsan Sports Resort

Completing the podium in the car category was Czech driver Martin Prokop, a regular in the World Rally Championship (WRC), and co-driver Jan Tomanek, who finished an excellent second in the Ford F150 in their debut of the event, while Qatari Mohammed Abu Issa, a two-time winner of the event on a quad, and his co-driver Frenchman Xavier Panseri completed the podium in third place, the same result he achieved in the previous round in Dubai.

There were further victories for regional cars in the supporting classes, as Saudi driver Yasir Saidan and his French co-driver Laurent Lichtleuchter won the T2 class in a Toyota Landcruiser, while the Emirati pairing of Ahmed Al Maqoodi and Obaid Al Kitbe won the T3 class in a Polaris RZR.

In the motorcycle event, the opening round of this year's FIM Cross Country Rally World Championship, Dubai-based Briton Sam Sunderland proved that his victory in the Dakar Rally was no fluke by dominating his 'home' event for the Red Bull KTM Factory Racing Team. Sunderland, who had previously finished runner up in the event three times in recent years, became the first UAE based rider to win the rally since motorcycles were introduced in 1995. He adds his name to a list of winners including legends like Heinz Kinigadner, Stéphane Peterhansel, Cyril Despres and Marc Coma. Completing the overall podium behind Sunderland were Husqvarna rider, and last year's FIM World Champion, Pablo Quintanilla of Chile in second, and Sunderland's KTM teammate Matthias Walkner of Austria in third.

Al Qassimi & Al Kendi, the first Emirati winners since 1992

The quad race was won by rising Kuwaiti star Fahad Al Musallam, following up his maiden international victory at the Dubai International Baja in March, while David McBride, the rider with the most motorcycle appearances at the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge was a dominant victor in the new FIM Veteran's Trophy, with the Dubai based Ulsterman riding for the local Vendetta Racing Team.

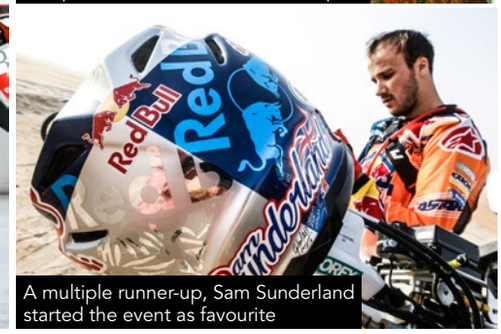
For many of the crews, there will be little rest after the event as they now head up the Gulf for round four of the FIA World Cup for Cross Country Rallies and round two of the FIM Cross Country Rally World Championship, taking place at the Qatar Cross Country Rally from the 17th to the 22nd April 2017. ■

Recent rains made for a wet and muddy prologue stage

Vehicles of all shapes and sizes took part

Competitors came from all over the world to tackle the Liwa dunes

Pablo Quintanilla sported the number one plate as the 2016 World Champion


A multiple runner-up, Sam Sunderland started the event as favourite

Kuwaiti rider Mohammed jaffar delighted with his top ten finish in his debut international rally

Sam Sunderland full of trophies after his win

Sam Sunderland, the first British biker to win the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge

Search and rescue helicopter ready for deployment

Leading Emirati rider Mohammed Al Balooshi, who finished in 7th place overall

FIA World Cup for Cross Country Rallies – ADDC Overall Results

Pos	Driver	Co-Driver	Team	Vehicle	Class	Time/Diff From 1st
1	Sh. K. Al Qassimi (ARE)	K. Al Kendi (ARE)	Abu Dhabi Racing	Peugeot 3008 DKR	T1	19:16:24
2	M. Prokop (CZE)	J. Tomanek (CZE)	MP Sports	Ford F150	T1	+00:41:26
3	M. Abu Issa (QAT)	X. Panseri (FRA)	X-raid	Mini ALL4 Racing	T1	+02:12:37
7	Y. Saidan (KSA)	L. Lichtleuchter (FRA)	Race World Team	Toyota Landcruiser	T2	+08:17:22
11	A. Al Maqoodi (ARE)	O. Al Kitbe (ARE)	Polaris Racing Team UAE	Polaris RZR	T3	+11:36:05

FIM Cross Country Rally World Championship – ADDC Overall Results

Pos	Rider	Team	Vehicle	Class	Time/Diff From 1st
1	S. Sunderland (GBR)	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing Team	KTM 450 FR	450	18:14:32
2	P. Quintanilla (CHI)	Rockstar Energy Husqvarna Factory Racing Team	Husqvarna 450 FR	450	+00:06:13
3	M. Walkner (AUT)	Red Bull KTM Factory Racing Team	KTM 450 FR	450	+00:08:16
9	A. Tomiczek (POL)	Orlen Team	KTM 450 RR	Junior	+02:59:10
10	D. McBride (GBR)	Vendetta Racing	KTM 450 RR	Veteran	+03:06:06
12	F. Al Musallam (KUW)		Yamaha Raptor 700	Quad	+04:18:29
16	C. Liparoti (ITA)		Yamaha Raptor 700	Ladies	+05:27:50

Summer Running in Dubai

Words + Photos by: David O'Hara

Summer is upon us.
Embrace it. Enjoy it. Summers in Dubai present many opportunities to improve your fitness and prepare for your next challenge.

Set Goals and Create a Plan

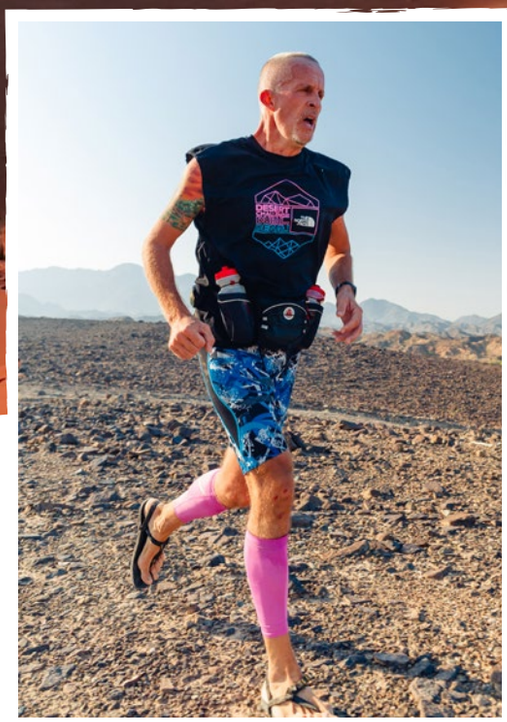
What is your next fitness goal? At the beginning of the training season, set a goal. For example, last year I wanted to develop my endurance and become an ultramarathoner. Last summer I trained with that specific goal in mind, getting fit enough to run as many marathons and ultramarathons as possible. Now that the marathon season ended with the Paris Marathon in April– giving me five marathons and four ultramarathons since January – I need a new goal. My new goal is to complete an epic ultramarathon event this fall, with the short-term goal of increasing my running fitness. My plan is to increase the intensity of my running and work on my core. Be strong and fit. For endurance, I will do long runs, but vary the speed, which increases the intensity over three hours. For core exercises, I must do basic exercises every day – sit-ups, push-ups, jump rope, squats, burpees, lunges, stretches and plank.

Read

Summer is the time to read. "Born to Run" is a classic that inspired me to start running. My current fav book is "The Tao of Running". There are many good running theory books which are a bit dry, but can be helpful for more experienced runners: Jason Koop's "Training Essentials for Ultrarunning",Jordan Metzl's"Running Strong", and anything written by Matt Fitzgerald or Hal Higdon. Trolling www.dcrainmaker.com is the best source for info on all technical gear like GPS and heart rate watches for runners.

Research

Find your next adventure! Do you dream of Marathon des Sables? Can you complete a Fun Run at Barkley? Do you want to run the uphill ultra at Comrades? What's your BQ and can you do it? When is the entry window for Tor des Geants? Is it time to learn how to do an open water swim so you can finish the Dubai Half Ironman with dignity? Nahhh – no swimming or cycling for me! Maybe expand your horizons to a bigger adventure, like testing your fitness at altitude with a trek or non-technical climb in Nepal. Most of these events require some serious training and preparation, so use the summer to get ready.



Logistics

You've set your goal. You've created a training plan. You've identified your target event. Make the commitment early and arrange the logistics. Most major events require registration months in advance and some even have lotteries because there are so many more wannabe entrants than slots. Get your plane tickets, book your lodging or buy a sleeping bag, and start testing your gear. For example,running in the salt flats in Liwa Desert requires must different equipment to running an ultra in the Everest region in Nepal. Making the commitment early should help you focus your training.

Summer Training in Dubai

Be sensible and patient. Build up your heat tolerance. Push yourself, but monitor how you feel. Get used to carrying water and drink it. Don't be stupid or overconfident when you run outside in the heat. Some people run at night and sleep more during the day. Hit the gym! Regular exercising is an essential component to getting your core in shape. Run with a group. Find a group that interests you and see if it works. Most runners in the running groups in Dubai are experienced in these conditions and take care of each other, especially people unaccustomed to the heat.

Change your Routine

My office in Dubai is in a 50-storey building. My running buddy Ramzi joins me at lunchtime and we climb and descend the stairs, sometimes twice on a good day. If that doesn't work, we can run up and down the ramp in the nine-storey parking garage. Ramzi and I have a rule: whenever the temperature is over 45C, we go for a 5km run at lunch. Even in humid Dubai, you may not sweat much when you run in that heat – although when you get back to the office, the waterworks begin to flow.

Run!

If you want to run in Dubai, you'll find a way. Desert Trail Runners (DTRs) inspired me last year to achieve my goal of becoming an ultramarathoner. Most Fridays last summer we met under the blue water tower in Showka and ran. The Saturday runs at Fossil Rock were completely different for fitness and provided excellent back-to-back training sessions. The North Face sponsored some weekly training sessions where we bumped up the running to include some core training – plus I got a cool TNF t-shirt! Some people were faster than me. Some were slower. Some ran farther. Some struggled early. The only thing that mattered was effort: as long

as you're trying, all is good. I learned from others how to push myself and endure the distance, regardless of the heat or that hill in front of me.

Take Camel Selfies!

Camels are weird. They walk funny. They smell. They look goofy. I smile whenever I run past a camel, because I know when the camel must be thinking: "Wow, that sweaty runner really stinks!" Camels are great to take selfies with. You can never have too many camel selfies. Take your selfie and keep running. Camels don't use the summer heat as an excuse. Find a way to make it happen and do it. You may need to build your summer running up gradually, but at least try. When you go on summer holiday, bring your running kit and take advantage of the milder weather – you may be pleasantly surprised with how much easier it is, comparatively speaking.

Experimenting

On the weekly runs last summer I tested equipment and nutrition. I thrive on the challenge of being told I can't do something, like the first time I wore my Luna sandals on the rocks! Now running in sandals is (almost) normal. Some DTRs may recall the wildly unsuccessful (and bloody!) experiment with the Camelbak vest – but somebody needed to see if it worked. The long training runs are perfect for testing your running nutrition plans: when you run you expend energy and need to monitor your caloric intake. Most new runners enjoy the multitude of Gu flavours, until they take 20 gels at Hajar 100. Two of my personal favourite foods for ultrarunning are boiled potatoes and pickles - don't knock them until you try them!

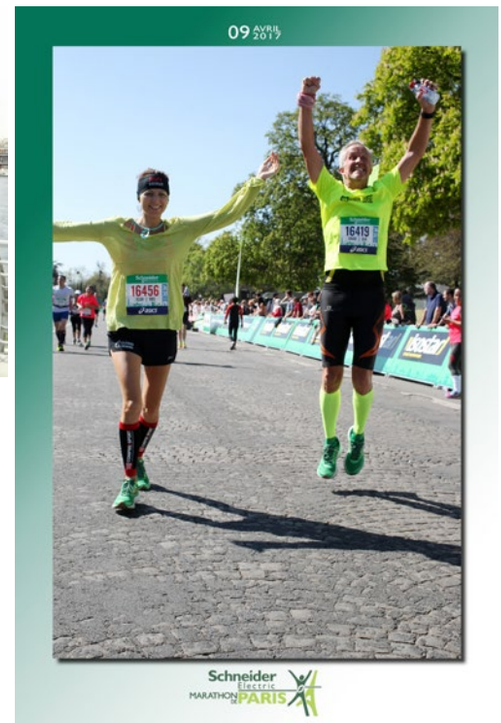
Core Exercises

Go to the gym and work your ass off. Simple. Don't waste your time by half-heartedly hitting the gym. I love faffing about – but only at the Urban Ultra checkpoints, and not at the gym! You don't even need to go to the gym: sit-ups, leg lifts, crunches, squats, lunges, burpees, and the best exercise of all, the plank can all be done at home or in a hotel room. No equipment needed, only desire.

No Excuse, Sir!

Everybody can make up an excuse to not run. Although I'm embarrassed to admit, here are my top ten excuses from a few years ago, before I started running:

1. I've never run before.
2. I don't know how to start running.
3. I don't have the time.
4. I'm too slow.
5. I'm fat.



6. I'm old.
7. I had seven knee operations.
8. Isn't running boring?
9. It's too hot/cold, rainy/sunny/snowy, dark/bright, early/late outside.
10. I'd rather do something else, like watch TV or have impacted wisdom teeth removed without painkillers.

Running is not easy…

Almost everybody can run, if they want to. The thrill of knocking out a solid run at a comfortably hard pace is indescribable. The camaraderie among my fellow ultrarunners harks back to college days. The sense of accomplishment always brings a smile to my face. The adrenaline rush of facing the unknown and uncertainty – can I do this? – is something most people don't get to experience. Set your goals. Make your plan. Figure out how you can train in the Dubai summer. Do some research and read. Commit to your goal event. Go run! Work hard on your core. Enjoy and have fun: I love running. I'm not saying running is easy, but it can be so much fun. ■

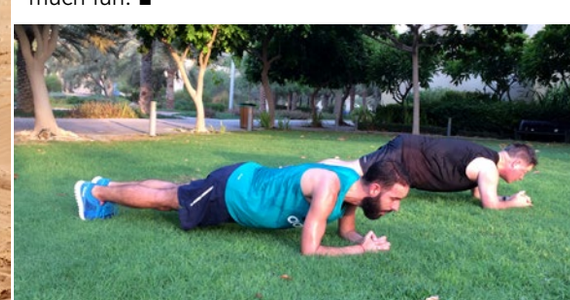


PHOTO OF THE MONTH

Wind foiling on Palm Jumeirah
Rider: Arnaud
Photographer: Adrien Bre
Camera: Samsung SM-G925F
F: 1.9 (F-Stop/aperture)
S: 1/2144 sec. (exposure time)

Diving in the Musandam of Oman offers the dive enthusiast a chance to challenge themselves by experiencing some of the most adventurous diving in the region if not further abroad as well. Currents, big pelagics, small critters, abundant coral life and Whale Sharks make this region a biodiverse haven of marine life.

There are areas for beginners and current enthusiasts, technical divers and those that just want to experience breathing underwater for the first time. Our live aboard diving takes divers to previously untouched areas offering on-board air and nitrox fills and delicious meals prepared by our on-board chef. Do some rock climbing or kayaking in between dives or just relax on the sun loungers and majlis seating.

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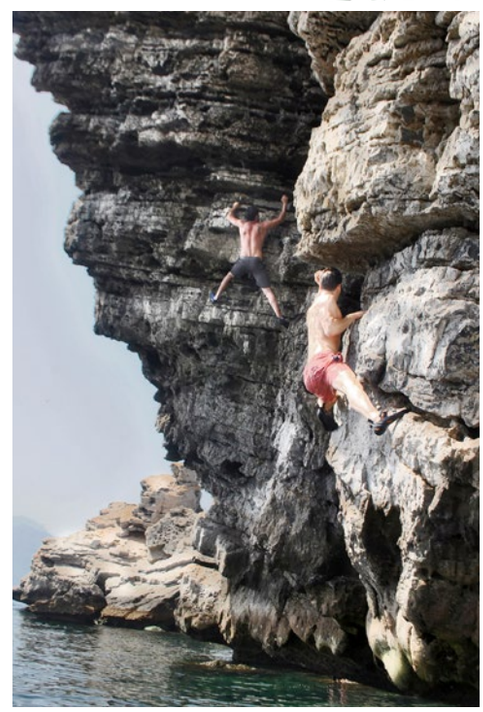
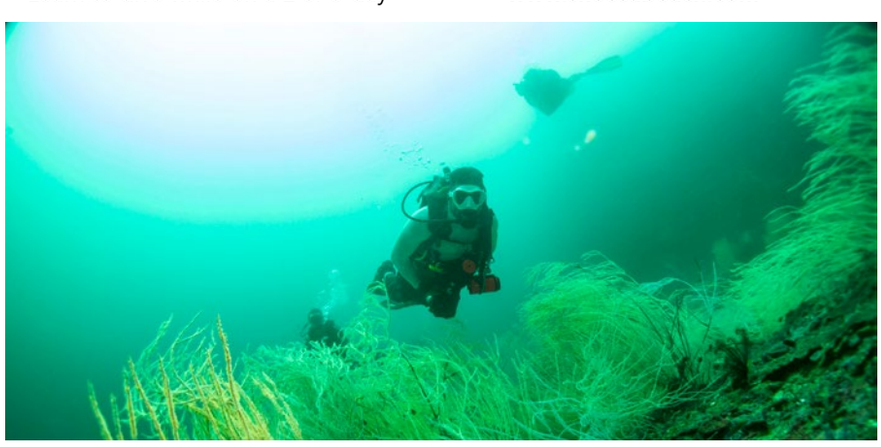
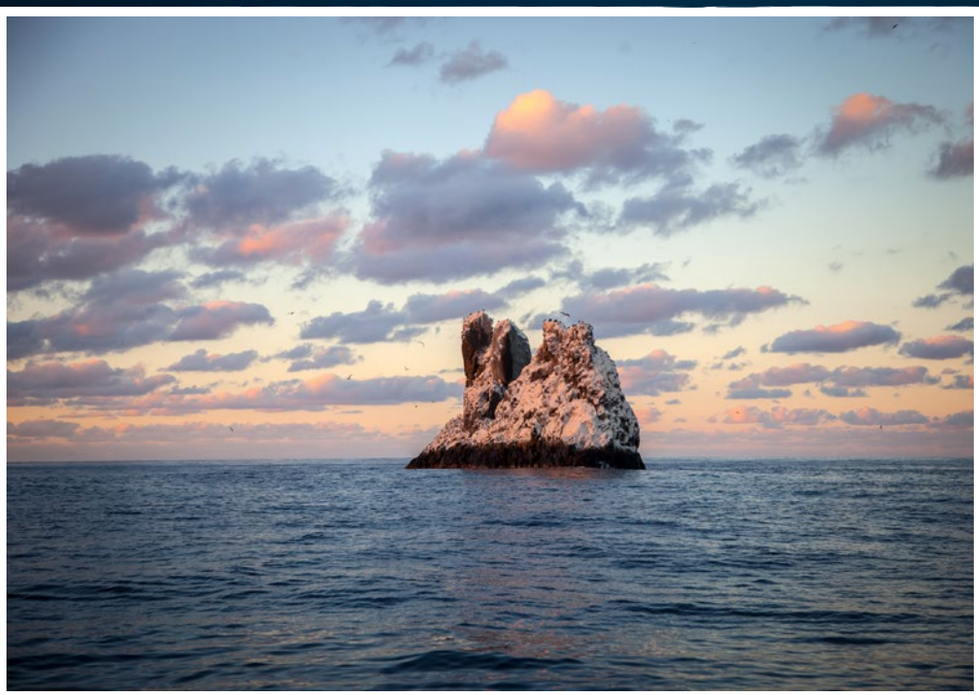




Diving with Giants

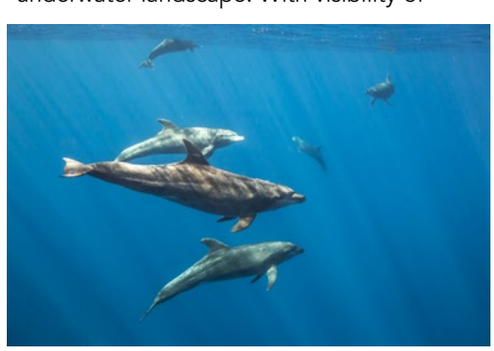
Words + Photos by: Darryl MacDonald

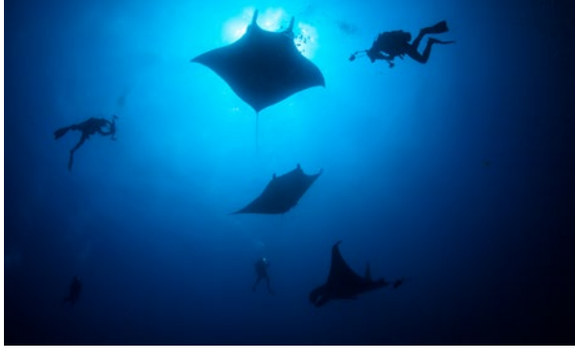
Three hundred miles off the coast of Baja, California exists the remnants of an ancient volcano known as Roca Partida. Discovered by Spanish explorers in the early 1600s, this tiny uninhabited island is just a speck in a vast and empty seascape. Its only topside inhabitants are the birds that flock to the area, but beneath the surface it boasts one of the most impressive spectacles of pelagic marine life on the planet.



My journey took me from the marina in Cabo San Lucas, on a 30-hour boat ride with a sea that was anything but calm. The excitement of the journey ahead was temporarily dulled by a lack of sleep and a constantly churning stomach. After our first night's dinner, Eric, our dive guide and in-house marine biologist, briefed us on what to expect in the coming days and discussed some of his ongoing research in the area. This buoyed our spirits, and we headed off to sleep with a renewed excitement for what was to come.

The following morning,we boarded the small zodiacs and sped off towards the rock for our first dive. What struck my attention initially was the uniqueness of the underwater landscape. With visibility of several hundred feet, the tiny pinnacle that hardly breached the surface of the ocean continued downward into the blue beyond visibility. There was less coral than I had imagined, with the wall looking like barren rock covered with deep gouges forged along its flanks from millions of years of current and surge.





As we approached, we could see fifty or more white tip reef sharks casually patrolling back and forth along the edge of the wall above us. While passing underneath, one of the sharks latched onto an afternoon snack, making crunching noises as it quickly devoured a reef fish causing a brief frenzy of reef sharks all around us. Continuing further down the wall, we passed several large pockets where there were so many reef sharks settled in to rest that they were literally piled on top of one another. It was almost comical and certainly unlike anything I had seen anywhere else. Small shoals of colourful fish enveloped the top portion of the pinnacle interspersed with the occasional school of jacks. In the depths, we caught glimpses of large Galapagos and silky sharks cruising slowly along the wall and off into the blue. The diving was amazing.

We didn't encounter our first Manta until the end of our second dive. It appeared in the distance as we waited and watched with bated breath. I have seen the smaller reef mantas before in the Maldives and in Indonesia but somehow I wasn't entirely prepared for what came next. The Revillagigedo Archipelago is one of the few places in the world where it is possible to see the Giant Manta Rays which are listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List and are the largest of the Manta family. These creatures can reach a wingspan of an unbelievable seven meters. I could hear people yelling excitedly through their regulators pointing in the direction of the Manta. It was like watching an aircraft underwater. This massive dark shape in the distance passed all the divers, then slowly turned and headed directly towards our dive guide. As the Manta approached, our guide leaned back and slowly started to swim backwards releasing a stream of bubbles from his regulator. The Manta gently glided into the bubbles and kept pace as we all watched in awe.

Working as an underwater photographer, I have spent entire dives attempting to approach near enough to an animal for a quality image. I generally don't anticipate them approaching me. As we watched this mammoth creature weave in and out of the group, another appeared in the distance joining our safety stop. Before we were done, a third decided to join the party. That was Day One.

Over the next few days we saw silver tip sharks, dusky sharks, more mantas than I can count and the occasional hammerhead shark in the distance. On Day Three we took out the small diving zodiacs to look for bait balls. Occasionally, in the right season, it is possible to find large schools of bait fish in the area. The schools attract larger fish such as sharks, dolphins, sailfish and even whales that were all present in the area. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in our hunt for a bait ball but a curious pod of bottlenose dolphins

surrounded our boat. We quickly slipped into the water with snorkelling gear on and were greeted by the high-pitched squeals and clicks of the dolphins. They seemed playful and inquisitive but only stuck around for a few brief but exciting minutes before disappearing as quickly as they had appeared. As I made my way back to the boat, I noticed a small speck moving along in the distance far below me in the blue. It was a silky shark. I watched as it very slowly made its way up towards the surface and eventually towards me. It seemed curious and suddenly, I realized I was alone in the water; everyone else had already hopped back into the zodiacs. When I turned around to see how far away the boat was, I noticed another silky shark had snuck up behind me and was closing in quickly to investigate. I then made the hasty decision to end my snorkelling excursion, finning like mad to escape into the zodiac and avoid confrontation.

The islands of the Revillagigedo Archipelago represent an example of what is a dwindling number of truly wild and seemingly healthy ecosystems left in the world. Many species found in the area are unfortunately listed on the IUCN Red List as endangered or threatened. It is difficult and expensive to monitor such a remote area, but having responsible tourism assists in public education and conservation efforts to help protect these amazing creatures. In 25 years of diving, these islands are among my favourite destination especially for large and sometimes unbelievably curious creatures. ■

Kayaking 2,800km through 10 Countries

Part 1 of the journey from the Black Forest to the Black Sea on the mighty Danube River

Words + Photos by: Sam Brenkel

In normal circumstances, kayaking into Donji Milanovac in Serbia would probably be quite pleasant. However, swimming to shore, dragging a kayak that is full of water, in the dark and rain are not 'normal' conditions. This is how I arrived, but before we get there, let me take you back to a much happier time, to the source of the Danube River.

The mighty Danube River, 2,800km of water flowing through 10 countries, directly into the heart of Europe can be an intimidating prospect for a novice kayaker. This was the proposition I faced as I stood, kayaked packed, paddle in hand, ready to take on the final stage of my JOG to the Black Sea, completely unprepared for the challenges ahead.

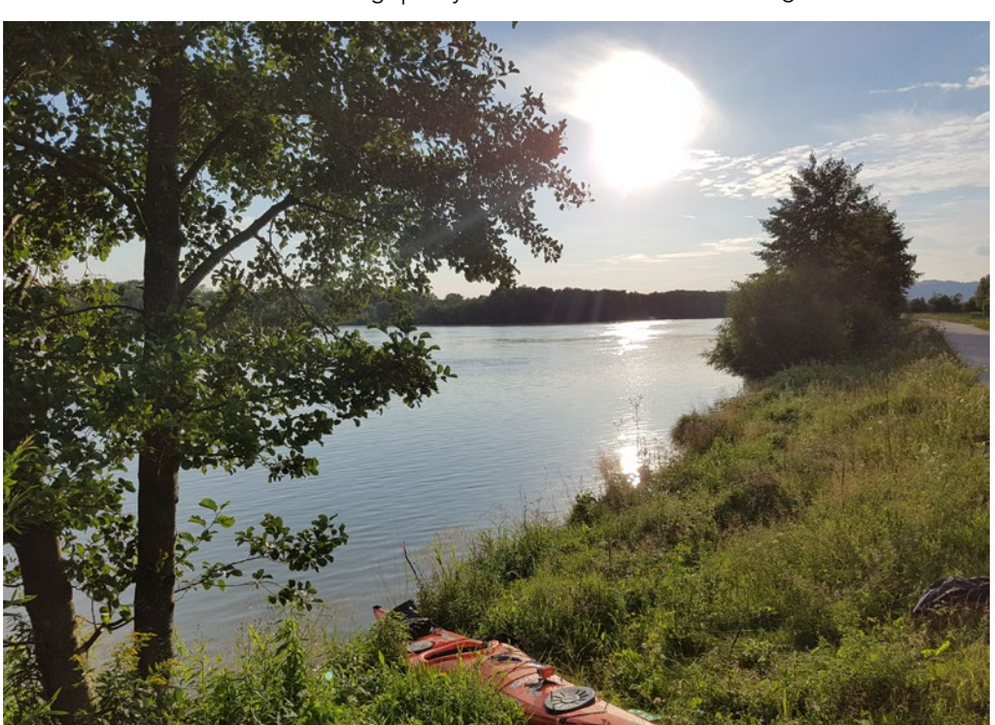
I'm not sure how many people have kayaked the entire length of the Danube, starting at its source in Donaueschingenin, Germany and emptying into the Black Sea in Romania, but I struggle to believe that anyone has attempted it with as little kayaking experience as I. Three practise runs in Scotland the week before starting this journey, one of which was incredibly unsuccessful,were the total of my lifetime kayaking experience. Mostly for my own peace of mind, I concluded, perhaps incorrectly, that all the swimming training that I'd done for my channel attempt would be beneficial for the kayak section as well.

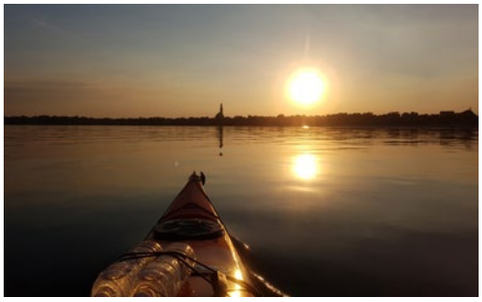
Still, despite my lack of previous experience, I was comforted by the fact that the Danube is by most accounts, a pretty tame

river, allowing plenty of time to acclimatize to the rigours of kayaking. It was with this thought in my mind that I set off from Donaueschingen, excited for the adventures ahead. Two falls, one capsize (destroying my passport and lunch in the process), a period of tricky rapids and a 12km stretch of dry riverbed all within the first morning quickly dampened (literally) my excitement.

After 20 minutes of kayaking, I had already surpassed my previous lifetime's best. At this stage the Danube is little more than a meandering stream, no more than 10 metres across and knee deep in depth. It's incredible to think that this stream could make it all the way to the Black Sea. My slow progress was abruptly halted when the river began to shallow and eventually disappeared completely, venturing underground for the subsequent 12km. Was this the Black Sea already? Maybe I was going faster than I thought? Initially I laughed at the thought that a river that was meant to power through Europe for 2,800km could peter out for 30km. When I realised how long the dry spell went on for, I was no longer laughing.

The next few days proved to be equally eventful. The Danube began to swell and





with it, came the first glimpses of the current that would be pushing me all the way to the Black Sea. The main obstacles on the upper section of the river are the numerous locks and dams. I had to navigate passed 29 of them in the first two weeks on the river. I had naively assumed that the locks would be manned and that there would be someone waiting for me at each one with a warm smile and maybe some chocolate. I was wrong. Everyone was unmanned and despite most of them being identical, my experience at each differed greatly. This included; having to jump into the water to save the kayak after it got lodged on a concrete block, concocting a fool proof plan that ultimately resulted in a bleeding finger and slipping and falling into the river in front of a group of curious onlookers. Eventually, I began to navigate the locks more successfully and continued to make good progress across Germany.

About a week into the trip, I pulled into the German town of Neustadt on a particularly fast flowing section of the river. I planned a night of luxury in a hotel in the centre of town about 2km from the river. I pulled the kayak onto the bank, removed any valuables and headed off into town for the night, blissfully unaware of the chaos that was ensuing back at the river. I returned in the morning to find my kayak significantly further up the bank than I had left it. A couple, who were kayaking and camping by the river were also now far higher up than where they'd started, their tent now located on a road. It transpired that the river had risen more than 3m overnight, flooding the tent of Andreas and Nici, who had selflessly saved my kayak before quickly packing up their now sodden tent and moving to higher ground. Had they not been there, my kayak would've certainly continued onto the Black Sea without me. As it was, the presence of my angels with paddles meant that I was able to continue unimpeded, the current of the now bursting river powering me across the rest of Germany and into Austria.

Meandering down the river, through the beautiful Austrian valleys, I came across three Austrian guys who were on a weekend trip down their favourite part of the river. I continued with them for three days, through the famous Wachau region, the river piercing through mountains covered in vineyards, learning about the area and valuable kayaking tips from three seasoned paddlers.

With ever increasing comfort, I continued down the river,winding through Vienna, Bratislava and the spectacular Hungarian capital of Budapest. Shortly after Budapest, I met two English guys, Hugo and Toby, on an identical trip to mine,They had started in Germany on the same day I had and somehow we hadn't yet met. It was great having company on the river. We exchanged stories as we continued to make good progress through Hungary, passed the half way point and into Croatia/Serbia. At this stage, the river acts as the border between the countries and our experiences of each couldn't have been different. In Croatia, we were approached by the police and told to leave the country or face a heavy penalty. In Serbia, we were treated to fabulous local hospitality in a country poor of wealth but rich in beauty and human kindness.

We quickly settled into a routine, wake early, quick breakfast and on the river shortly after sunrise to take advantage of the cooler morning temperatures. Paddle for 30km, find a shady spot for lunch, paddle for a further 30km, before finding a picturesque landing place to set up camp for the night. It was a winning formula and despite the multiple capsizes, being rendered passportless, a river without water, almost losing the kayak in a flood and multiple police issues, I had passed through several gorgeous countries and met some amazing people. The section of the trip that I was most apprehensive about was progressing well, two thirds of the river down and I was well on my way to the Black Sea.

Which brings us to Day 30, destination Donji Milanovac and in true Hollywood style, you must wait until next time to find how a day that started with the Serbian police on my tail, ended with me swimming to shore, dragging my waterlogged kayak behind me. The adventure continues in... read the next issue of OutdoorUAE. ■

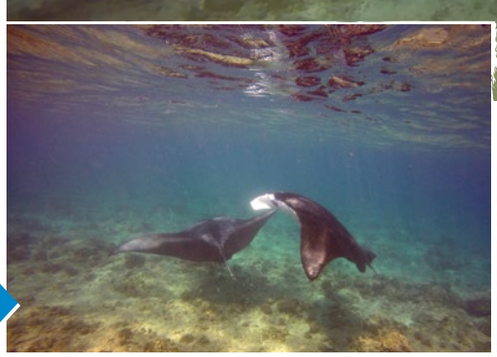
A FAMILY ADVENTURE in Paradise

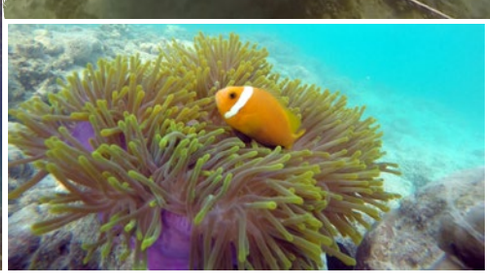
Words + Photos by: Haydon Kerr

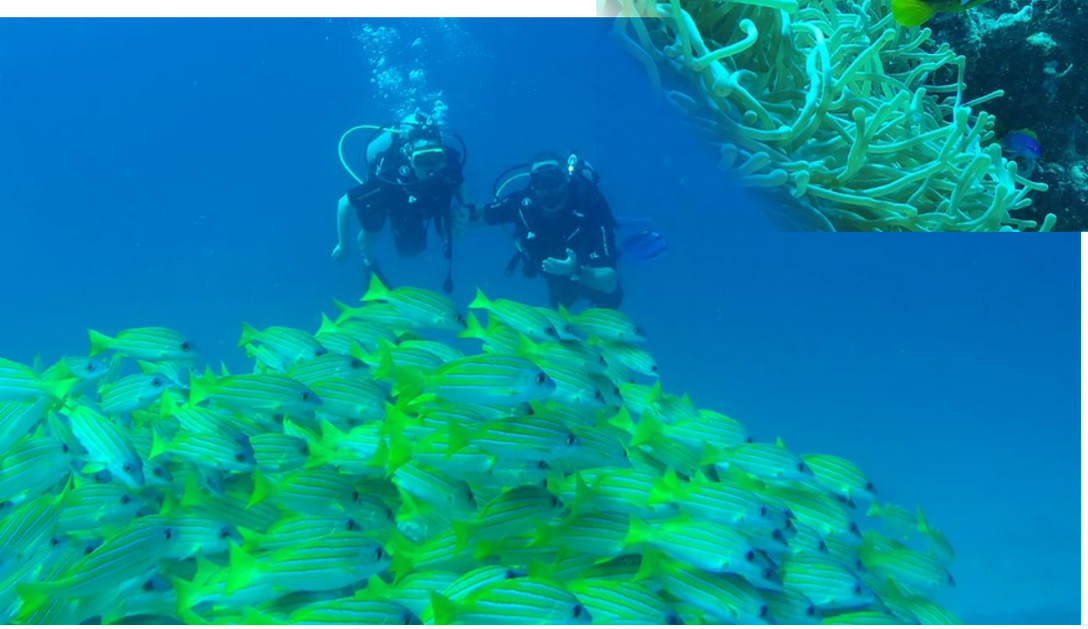
A friend of mine teaching at a different school told me he takes students to the Maldives each year for a diving trip. So, as the Outdoor Education Coordinator at my school, I thought it was only prudent to go and personally check out the island and what it has to offer…..for work, of course!

After a little bit of research into various other islands and what they have to offer, the bookings were made for the second week of the spring break holidays to Bandos Island. I had previously been to a different island about seven years ago and was excited to get back to the clear waters and abundant aquatic life. However, this time I would be travelling with my wife Lauren and our 3-month-old baby boy, Tobias (Tobi).

A load of questions raced through my head first, like 'how will Tobi handle his first international flight, and will it be too hot for a baby over there?' A while ago, I wrote an article titled 'Travelling… with Children?' But this was from the perspective of somebody without a child of his own and with no previous experience of travelling with an infant! In any case, we made it to Dubai Interna-







tional Airport ready to board our overnight flight for Malé.

I was quietly pleased with how Tobi handled the flight when he drifted off to sleep shortly after takeoff and a feed from his favourite milk supply (Lauren). My biggest fear was being that guy with the screaming kid that just can't be consoled. But it turns out, it probably should have been how bumpy the short speedboat ride was going to be across the choppy water. But once again, Tobi took it well and even had a few giggles as the boat bounced its way to the Bandos Island Marina.

After checking in to our bungalow, it was time to explore our surroundings and get a feel for what we could do while on our family holiday. It was quickly made clear to us that we would be limited with the number of hours we could stay outdoors due to the midday heat and intense sunshine. But having an extended siesta indoors each day after lunch actually made for a very relaxing time (as long as Tobi slept long enough!).

Bandos Island was ideal for us for a number of reasons. Not only was there an established link between the dive shop because of my friend, but there was also a medical facility with a hyperbaric chamber should it be needed for any dive accidents. Having the clinic based on Bandos Island never more than 5 minutes' walk away,also gave us peace of mind should Tobi require any kind of treatment. This could be for any number of potential baby ailments that new parents often worry about.

Also on hand was the Kokko Kids' Club that had wonderful babysitters to look after little ones while mums and dads were out exploring the reefs. We arranged a babysitter that came to our bungalow to look after Tobi while Lauren and I got suited up for a dive on the house reef. This happened to be a pre-requisite regardless of what level of diver you are. The shallow reef extends out from shore for approximately 50 metres before dropping off vertically to around 25 deep.

Almost immediately, we were greeted by several black tip reef sharks which were patrolling the length of the reef, gracefully swimming in and out of our range of visibility. Healthy amounts of aquatic life littered the reef including various species of sweetlips, clownfish, triggerfish, schooling surgeonfish and the ever-curious batfish. For a house reef, it was quite impressive and led me to investigate what other dives were on offer.

However, to get more diving in we would also need to leave Tobi behind with a babysitter for long periods, which would make both Lauren and I feel like bad parents. So, rather than spend a full day out diving again, we decided to book another short morning trip snorkeling on a nearby cleaning station for Manta. Upon pulling up, there was just one Manta having the parasites cleaned off by the obliging wrasse. But by the end we found ourselves surrounded by no less than five huge Reef Manta elegantly circling – an unforgettable experience.

Towards the final days of our stay, we were taking turns to have the lunchtime siesta sleep while one of us trotted off around the island to snorkel the reefs, relax by the pool or just casually walk around the whole island, which only took around 20 minutes. This was also how we usually started each day with Tobi before the sun was up high enough to be hot. As new parents we had found a way to enjoy the mornings together walking the circumference of Bandos before breakfast. He was also introduced to his first pool swims and absolutely loved dipping his feet in the warm Maldives waters.

Evenings were also a treat with live entertainment every night and lovely drinks under the coconut trees. It was during the evenings when I had some time to reflect on how a school trip might work out here after speaking with the staff. They all genuinely seemed to enjoy working on Bandos and had some great ideas on how to create the best itinerary for a visiting school group.

So armed with all of the research and information required to bring back to Dubai, it was time to say goodbye to this little slice of island paradise and board the speed boat for yet another bumpy trip. But once again, Tobi was a star and all of my paternal apprehension for braving another trip like this disappeared. Bandos Island delivers a destination worthy of the young family looking to get away with peace of mind that medical care and quality babysitting services are on your doorstep if required. There is also no doubt left in my mind about the viability of another diving adventure trip to Bandos with a school group….for work, of course! ■

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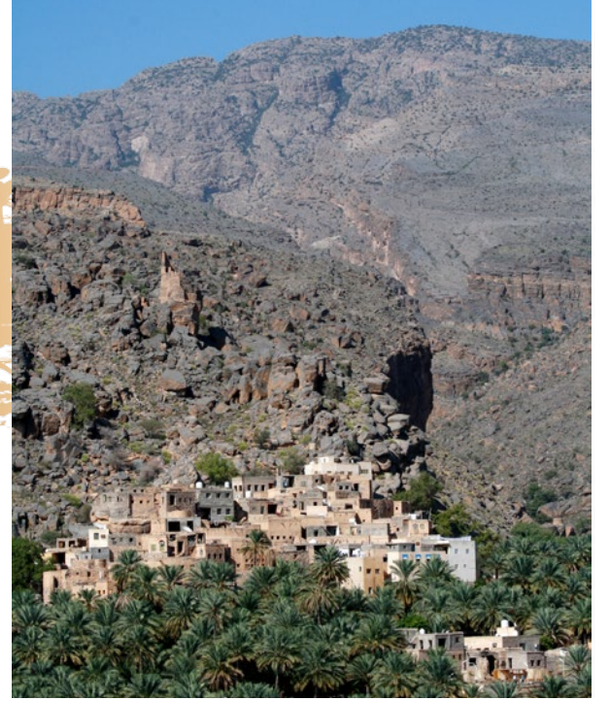
TRAVEL & ADVENTURE

Stay at the View Hail Al Shas

Words by: Nabin and Nicola Maharajn
Photos by: Nabin, Soul Photography



Billed to "Take you breath away" we would concur it sure does. A 5 hour drive from Dubai we were relieved to arrive at this isolated retreat. Situated at 1,400m and 8km on winding roads up from the village of Al Hamras with stunning views over Jebel Shams.

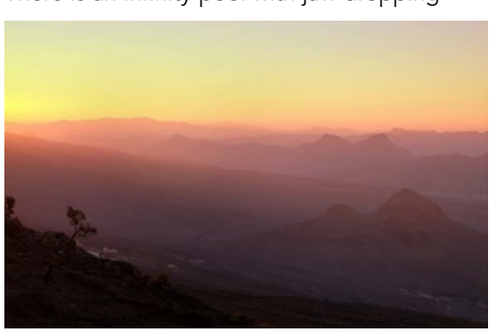
The 30 private "pods" on 3 levels of the hillside are accurately described as eco luxe and provide stylish accommodation whilst blending into the surrounding environment. There are two categories but the view is the only difference with those at the front holding the best full view of the valley. They are equipped with free standing baths and rain showers and all the necessary facilities. There is a small restaurant within the resort that offers up good quality international cuisine with buffet and a la carte options for breakfast, lunch and dinner. There is an infinity pool with jaw dropping views and bike and hike tours available.

Along with Jabal Shams "Oman's Grand Canyon", in close proximity are some of our favourite sites that we visited including the stunning old villages of Misfat Al Abreen, Balad Sayeet Village and Al Hamra with their date palm plantations, the Fort of Bahla and Jabreen Castle built in 1670, the market town of Nizwa with it's beautifully restored Souq&Fort , the vast Wadis of Tanuf and Ghul and the neighbouring mountain area Jabal Akdhar "The Green Mountain" and one of Oman's highest points.

We made the most of our time and enjoyed two days driving in the area to visit the above sites and on gentle walks stopping often for refreshments, to take in the views and of course for Maya's naps! In the evenings we simply relaxed at The View and after dinner we enjoyed looking at a clear sky full of stars by the campfire and slept soundly with pure silence interrupted occasionally by the sound of local wildlife or neighbours retiring a little later than those with small children. We set our alarm to catch the sunrise from our balcony which was well worth it with a stunning 180 view of the valley.

For those more adventurous there is now a Via Ferrata in Jabal Shams and plenty of challenging hikes with overnight camping including the balcony walk overlooking Wadi Nakhar to the abandoned village, the descent walk to the canyon towards the historic village of Wadi Ghul and the descent walk from Sharfat Al Aiman to Balad Sayeet.

We can't wait to go back to The View and on the agenda for our next visit are a visit to Al Hoota Caves one of the world's largest cave systems and finally now re-opened!, the old village of Birkat Al Mouz, Wadi Al Moaddin and Bait Al Safa. ■



TRAVEL & ADVENTURE

Treading Lightly - Hiking Without a Trace

Words by: Rebecca Large
Edited by: Adam Mian
Photos by: Supplied

Whether it's to stay fit and active, to escape the noise and distractions of your daily life or even just for the fresh air, it's clear that hiking is a sport that offers benefits to everyone with little need for expensive equipment or technical know-how. When we venture off the beaten track, it's incredible how quickly we forget our stresses and worries and bathe in nature's beauty and serenity. But while we are busy benefiting so much from nature, we rarely stop to consider the impact our outdoor sports have on our surroundings.

In a 2006 report carried out by the WWF (World Wildlife Fund), the UAE was ranked the country with the highest Ecological Footprint per capita in the world. While this statistic has improved a lot in the last few years, there is still much work to be done to improve our own ecological footprints, and there are many small-yet-surprisingly-effective steps we can all take when hiking that will go a long way to keeping our hiking trails pristine and friendly - not just for our own use, but for our plant and animal friends too.

The Leave No Trace philosophy originates from the USA and Canada in the 1960s and 1970s in response to the increased effects of human activity on the natural resources available in public wildlands. It consists of a set of seven simple principles that you can adopt when out hiking a trail minimize your environmental impact and make sure that others can enjoy it time and time again long after you've hung up your hiking boots for good.

So, what are the seven pillars of hiking without a trace? Well, it's pretty simple:

1) Prepare and plan ahead- the more prepared you are, the less likely you are to cause damage to your surroundings. If you know your trail and are able to stick to it, there'll be no need to trample through a load of plants to try and get your bearings.

2) Hike on durable surfaces - favour existing trails and paths where possible - you don't need to carve out a new one.
3) Dispose of your waste - take everything you brought with you back with you and dispose of it properly - even biodegradable waste such as leftover food. This one's a no-brainer.
4) Leave things as you find them- this includes rocks and plants. Found a pretty flower? Leave it there!
5) Minimize the impact of fires - avoiding lighting fires whenever possible. If you absolutely have to then use a designated spot.
6) Keep wildlife wild - take care not to disturb or feed animals - The UAE is home to a number of vulnerable or critically endangered species of wildlife, including the sublime Arabian sand cat and the houbara bustard.
7) Be considerate of others - so that other hikers can enjoy the experience too!

These seven fundamental points of the Leave No Trace philosophy are easy to integrate into your own walking, and when adopted on a wider scale, form an extremely powerful set of preventative measures against erosion, pollution and other damaging factors to biodiversity and the landscape that arise from human activity. Together, we can all work to make sure that our hiking trails are kept in good condition, and the surrounding wildlife respected.

To find out more about the Leave No Trace philosophy, or for an easy way to spread its message, you can check out this helpful video, which aims to inform and advise budding hikers on good practices for sustainable trekking. Filmed as part of a free educational video program on hiking by the French NGO Sikana, the video is just one of over 50 all about hiking: teaching you all the essentials of basic navigation, staying safe, looking after your equipment and much more. ■

SIKANA is a not-for-profit educational movement seeking to democratize practical skills via a unique digital platform which brings together a community of experts, volunteers and organizations. This platform is available to all those who wish to improve their lives, and the lives of others. For more information on this program and many more like it: www.sikana.tv

THE OFF-ROADERS CORNER

Ziad's Over Landy

Name: Zaid Siwady
Nationality: Jordanian
Occupation: Owner of @Project Over Landy Instagram Visual Blog, Overland Enthusiast, Aerial Videographer
Vehicle: Land Rover Defender 110 2012 Station Wagon

Tell us the background story of the car?

I have been an overlanding/off-roading enthusiast my entire life. Raised in a family that owned off-roading SUVs, my outdoor and overland craze began at a very young age. My father, who shares my interest in outdoor exploration and choice of cars currently owns a Land Rover Series 1, Series 2, Defender 110 1997 and a Defender 90 2016.

What modifications have been made, performance and cosmetic wise?

Not as much as I'd like to do… So far, I've replaced the tires with Cooper ST Maxx 265s and added Wheel Spacers. I added the Front Steel Nudge Bar as well as the Rear Bumperettes. For night exploration, I've added an LED Bar, and for water crossings, I've installed a snorkel.

I've also added a Roof Rack and Ladder, which I use for carrying wood, sleeping in the open air, and most importantly for setting my camera for the aerial footage of my experiences.

Do you have something that you consider to be a 'special feature' of the car?

The Anti-Stall system which prevents the engine from stalling while going uphill or downhill without having to step on the clutch. Basically, you put the car in first gear, remove your foot from the clutch and let the car do its magic. It also works very well when the car is stuck in sand or mud.

What were your other options before you bought this car?

Before I owned my Defender, I had an FJ Cruiser, a Nissan Xterra, Toyota Prado and my first Off-Roader was a Kia Retona (an SUV manufactured specially for the Korean Army back in 2000).

How often do you use your car, and what activities do you take part in?

I use my car almost every weekend, mainly on exploration trips in the mountains, wadis and deserts around the UAE and Oman. We go camping, dune bashing, rock crawling and we go to the beaches in Fujairah and Ras Al Khaimah where there is access for cars to go park next to the beach.

Are you planning any future modifications?

I'd like to add a winch for safety reasons. I also plan to get the engine remapped so I can increase the vehicle's horsepower, as well as installing a bigger intercooler. And of course, I'll slowly be adding some other cosmetics and accessories along the way.

What 4x4 do you dream of owning?

It'd have to be the Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG 6x6. That thing is a beast. ■

Want your 4X4 to be the next feature? Just send us an email at **editor@outdooruae.com** with the subject "Off-Roaders Corner" and you and your car might just be the next one on this page!

$100 Cash REWARD

Share your routes with OutdoorUAE and receive a reward of USD100 if we will publish your route.

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Habitually Healthy

The Advantage of Capsaicin

Words + Photos by: Robert Jahn

"We, at The Cycle Bistro, are located in the heart of Motor city. Surrounded by high octane racing machines at all times; but aren't we forgetting that we as humans are actually a highly complex machine ourselves? Should we not be fueling ourselves with some high octane "ingredients" as well? The chili, specifically the Capsaicin in the chili, the chemical which makes our brows sweat and our mouths burn is a real super food."

Capsaicin is used to treat a large variety of things, from aches and pain in the form of those hot burning creams and gels we all know, to experimental treatments of certain cancers.

For such a common ingredient, it has a giant range of possibilities t to be discovered. Oh, and did I mention…spicy food is my favorite application of capsaicin.

To make sure all goes well when you dive into your spicy culinary adventure here are some tips and tricks:

1.Color isn't always everything

Just because some are red and some are green or even orange, does not mean that red is the hottest. Green chili's can pack a serious punch depending on which ones you buy. And don't get me started on orange habaneros…ouch

2. Add a little

It's always easier to add heat then to remove it. While cooking add a little at a time, taste, if you need a bigger kick then feel free to add more. Don't make it unbearable before you have even tasted the dish.

3. Use gloves, seriously, gloves are your friend!

There are few things worse in the world then cutting habaneros for your awesome chili, than having an itch on your face and then scratching it.

Using gloves and taking them off after you are done is a lot easier then scrubbing the capsaicin off your hands.

4.Know how to extinguish

So you've gone overboard? Your mouth is burning, your sweating and need relief… and you need it ASAP. Since dairy products such as milk just don't cut it in our paleo ideology, try coconut crème. The fats in the coconut crème will bind to the capsaicin on our tongue and swiftly drag them away. Just don't use water, as water will reposition the capsaicin molecules on "fresh" taste buds and make it worse.

Following these few tips and sticking to common sense will help you while you add spice to your kitchen adventures. Try it the next time you have a cold, or a headache. Spicy food can help with a variety of things.

RECIPE

Paleo Chili Con Carne

Ingredients
- 750 gm Grass fed Lean mince beef
- 1 onion diced
- 2 cloves of garlic crushed
- 1 red pepper
- 1 yellow pepper
- 1 stick of celery
- 2 large tomatoes chopped
- 500 g tomato passata
- 250 ml water
- 6 pcs red Thaichili chopped (can be adjusted to taste)
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- Salt and Pepper to taste

Method
- Heat some olive oil over a medium heat and add onion and garlic. Soften for 3 minutes then add the mince.
- Break mince up using wooden spoon and cook until sealed.
- Prep veggies while mince is browning. Once mince is browned add spices and salt and pepper. Combine.
- Add veggies to the pan and stir up.
- Pour in tomato passata and water and stir until mixture is consistent.
- Allow to simmer for 10-15 minutes.

Garnish with some avocado slices, a sprinkle of fresh coriander or a lime wedge on the side.

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PRODUCTS

A ROUND-UP OF QUALITY PRODUCTS AVAILABLE RIGHT HERE IN THE UAE

Spitfire Cube G Black/Pink

729 AED/QAR | 79.20 OMR

Available at GO Sport stores in UAE, Qatar and Oman

The Rollerblade Spitfire features push-button adjustability, comfort and great control to ensure the right performing components are fully utilized and enjoyed. Helmet, wristguards, knee pads and elbow pads are all included. All Rollerblade kids skates feature a 4 sizes expandable shell, meaning they grow with your kids.

Spitfire Cube Black/Red

729 AED/QAR | 79.20 OMR

Available at GO Sport stores in UAE, Qatar and Oman

The Rollerblade Spitfire features push-button adjustability, comfort and great control to ensure the right performing components are fully utilized and enjoyed. Helmet, wristguards, knee pads and elbow pads are all included. All Rollerblade kids skates feature a 4 sizes expandable shell, meaning they grow with your kids.

KOS Complete Series 4 Heist

1,199 AED/QAR | 130.30 OMR

Available at GO Sport stores in UAE, Qatar and Oman

The Envy KOS Heist S4 is Envy's flagship scooter. Featuring all new 120mm hollow-core wheels, a new KOS neochrome deck, and reaper bars. Designed for use by intermediate to pro level riders, the Envy KOS Heist S4 is surely one of the best ever out-of-the-box scooters.

Prodigy Complete Series 5 Rd Bandana

859 AED/QAR | 93.40 OMR

Available at GO Sport stores in UAE, Qatar and Oman

The new Envy Prodigy S5 scooter is the ultimate all-round scooter. Perfect for beginner right through to semi-pro level riders. The new Envy Prodigy S5 scooter features a new improved deck and all new 120mm wheels.

PRODUCTS

2017 Fly Kite

Lightwind Freeride

AED 5,103

Available at GO Sport, Adventure HQ, www.kitesurfsupuae.myshopify.com

Log more days on the water with the fast-turning, lightwind Fly. Lightweight and tremendously fast for a kite of its size, the Fly delivers a smooth, yet powerful ride in light-to-marginal wind conditions. The swept-back wing tip and anti-stiction window improve water relaunch, while the two-strut design offers exceptional low-end power. Riders will find themselves in super light wind, yet the speed of the kite will make it feel like a normal, windy day. A modified leading edge diameter allows the kite to fly farther forward for improved upwind ability and easy handling.

Size: 17

Nalu Inflatable 11'0" LT

Inflatable Classic All-around

AED 4,399

Available at GO Sport, Adventure HQ, www.kitesurfsupuae.myshopify.com and www.supdubai.ae

The Nalu Inflatable 11'0" features a world-renowned Nalu design for any rider wanting a single board that offers directional gliding, touring and longboard wave riding capabilities. It has a long, narrow outline and added thickness for paddling comfort and directional stability while its proven rocker line provides longboard maneuverability for the surf.

Durable and lightweight, the LT construction builds strength from the inside out. Polyester space yarn is strategically positioned in a reinforced V-connection for maximum strength and load distribution. Maintaining precision control over rocker and twist, we adhere a .52 mm 1,000 Denier PVC Hybrid Stringer once the drop-stitch is formed, to reinforce shape without weighing down the structure. A double rail construction adds further strength and stiff.

Length	**Thickness**	**Volume**
11'0" / 335.3cm	6" / 15.2cm	210 L
Width	**Weight**	**Max Rider Wt.**
30" / 76.2cm	24.2lbs / 11kg	210lbs / 95kg

M Apex Flex GTX Jacket

AED 899

Available at The North Face stores
Dubai: The Dubai Mall and Mirdiff City Centre
Qatar: Ezdan Mall Doha

Apex Flex: This durable, stretch-woven shell with a waterproof Gore-Tex® membrane and a soft, knit face interior is breathable and fully weatherproof, ultra soft, soft, stretchy face fabric and a warm-to-the-touch inner layer, seamlessly fused for superior comfort.

Impossibly dry, with a waterproof Gore-Tex® Shell that's fully seam-taped for ultimate protection, you'll never hide from rain.

- Gore-Tex Waterproof Fabric

Homestead Roadsoda Pack

AED 349

Available at The North Face stores
Dubai: The Dubai Mall and Mirdiff City Centre
Qatar: Ezdan Mall Doha

This spacious backpack is fully insulated and waterproof, taking you effortlessly from your soggy morning commute to fun weekend adventures. Packed with practical features including daisy chains on the shoulders and a handy bike-light loop, this versatile pack comes in a choice of striking prints to match your personal style. Clever origami construction means you can even fill it with ice to keep your drinks cool down at the beach, where you'll find the buckles double up as bottle openers.

PRODUCTS

Kingii (Floatation Aid) - Made in USA

AED 295 | Was: AED 495

Available only at Al Yousuf Motors across UAE

Specification:
Kingii is the new wristband for all those who love water! If you need help to stay afloat, pull the lever and an inflation bag will pull you to the surface.

Includes: Two CO2 cylinders free

** Offer is valid till end of May 2017*

Jobe Inflatable SUP package (Aero SUP)

AED 3,195 | Was: AED 4,295

Available only at Al Yousuf Motors across UAE

Specification:
The Yarra 10.6 is super accessible and has a new design. This cares for manoeuvrability making it one of the most playful boards in our range. It is also super stable due to its wide shape. Use its bungee cord to carry stuff around on your discoveries and easily carry the SUP around by using the supremely comfortable neoprene grab handle.

Package includes:
package comes with a waterproof bag with a front pocket, aluminum paddle and pump in matching colours plus a 8'' single fin.

** Offer is valid till end of May 2017*

Jobe Logo Series Wakeboard Package

AED 1,445 | Was: AED 1,895

Available only at Al Yousuf Motors across UAE

Specification:
Angled with a "flat spot" in the centre. A wakeboard with a 3-stage rocker features three distinct planes on the bottom of the board. A 3-stage rocker causes your wakeboard to respond with more pop (height) when you hit the wake. Boards with a 3-stage rocker have a flat spot that makes the pop off the wake intense and gives slightly longer hang time before landing. One thing is for sure, if you love massive air tricks, the 3-stage is for you!

Jobe OMNIA board (4 sports in 1)

2,245 AED | Was: 2,995 AED

Available only at Al Yousuf Motors across UAE

Specification:
Not enough storage in your boat to fit all your gear or tired to drag those hefty skis in and out every single day? The Omnia is your all-in-one solution! Ready to be used as a kneeboard, ski, wakeskate/board and wakesurfer, this lightweight board adds a whole new dimension to multifunctionality. Compression molded out of PU foam and fiberglass, this family focused board can be used with great variety. Suited for all skill levels.

4 sports in 1 board:
- Kneeboard
- Ski/Wakebo
- Wakeskate
- Wakesurf

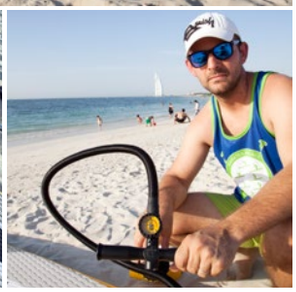
TRIED & TESTED
THIS PRODUCT IS APPROVED BY OUTDOORUAE

The iSUP for the UAE

Naish One Air 12.6 inflatable racing and touring Stand Up Paddle board

Tested by: Daniel Birkhofer
Photos by: Jung Francisco

A lot of people want to be active and enjoy the outdoors in the UAE but the extreme summer heat prevents a lot of people from taking up an activity all year round. Stand Up Paddling (SUP) is the perfect outdoor sport for the region. We have great sea conditions all year round and interesting and diverse areas to paddle - on the beach, in mangroves and through water channels with exciting skylines. You can even find surfing conditions on some days.



The hardest thing is where to start and which paddle board to buy as a beginner. Most people get hooked after their first try but then are lost with the right selection of their first SUP. iSUPs (inflatable SUP) are the best solution since they are easy to transport and to store but some especially cheaper models lack in performance. Naish is one of the pioneering companies for SUPs and also one of the top brands available. You can see a lot of Naish boards on the beach standing out with their bright yellow colour. Their great design is only one reason for their popularity; the more important one is their quality and performance, which makes it worth paying a premium for a Naish board rather than a cheaper competitor.

The same applies for the Naish One Air 12.6, which is one of the more expensive iSUPs but especially with iSUPs you should not compromise on the quality. The Naish one is build with durable double layer hull and reinforced seams, which can be a weak point in the very hot conditions here. The double rail construction adds to the stiffness and protects the board from aberrations and cuts on the sides. It also has an integrated number guide on the deck pad for referencing proper stance position, which is great for beginners. The foam coating provides solid stand even in waves and the board has a front tie-down area, which is handy for all sorts of things e.g. a water bottle. The Naish One falls in the category of racing and touring but since we have here mainly flat water conditions, I think it is a great choice for beginners since you will enjoy the iSUP even if you progress to advanced levels and the learning curve with SUP is quite steep at the beginning. Stiffness is the most important thing for iSUPs and the biggest difference to rigid boards but the One Air is handling as good as a rigid board if pump up the recommended pressure of 14PSI which will take you approx five minutes and which is a good warm up before the paddle. The iSup comes with almost all the accessories you need - pump with pressure gauge, very comfortable rucksack for transport. For only AED 5,300 including the paddle and leash.

So no matter if you are a first timer or on an advanced level the Naish One Air 12.6 is one if not the best iSUP for the UAE for various water and paddling conditions.

The **Naish iSUP** is available at all **GO Sport Stores** across the region.

Details:
Length 12'6" / 381cm
Width 30" / 76.2cm
Thickness 6" / 15.2cm
Weight 23.8lbs / 10.8kg
Volume 265L
Max Rider Wt. 230lbs / 104kg

PRODUCTS

XDEEP NX Series GHOST
2,320 AED

For full XDEEP products range please visit **wwww.xdeep.eu.** For more details on products please contact your local distributor for GCC region: **www.eg-gulf.com - info@eg-gulf.com**

The GHOST has been engineered to be an integral part of you, the diver in all aspects of your diving. Inspired by the simplicity and function of technical diving systems, the GHOST was created to be very comfortable, extremely light (2.3Kg) and incredibly stable, both at the surface and underwater.

The GHOST naturally supports a flat, streamlined position in the water with an ample 17Kg of lift, making the dive relaxed and enjoyable. Travelling with the GHOST is equally relaxing as its weight and size mean no more excess baggage charges.

XDEEP STEALTH 2.0 TEC Setup
2,250 AED

For full XDEEP products range please visit **wwww.xdeep.eu.** For more details on products please contact your local distributor for GCC region: **www.eg-gulf.com - info@eg-gulf.com**

Inspired by the rigorous demands of cave diving, the XDEEP STEALTH 2.0 has become the standard setter for sidemount systems worldwide. The STEALTH 2.0 TEC wing can now be seen in almost every country and its versatility, combined with a very streamlined profile, mean you will see it everywhere from caves and mines to wrecks and reefs.

Founded on the XDEEP harness innovations and advanced weight system, achieving the ideal fit and configuration is quick and easy.

Scubapro Hydros Pro BCD – SRP
3,600 AED

Available at Scuba Marine Equipment

The ability to change anything, changes everything. The Hydros Pro is a true breakthrough in dive comfort and convenience. The moldable Monprene®, adjustable fit and multi-attachment points combine to make this the most customizable and comfortable BC ever. Winner of the 2016 Red Dot award for product design, the HYDROS PRO is an incredible feat of SCUBAPRO engineering, built for anyone who loves to dive.

Scubapro MK25 EVO S620Ti Regulator – SRP
3,225 AED

Available at Scuba Marine Equipment

SCUBAPRO teams its high performance first stage with a brand new air-balanced second stage. The MK25 EVO offers excellent resistance to freezing, superb inhalation sensitivity and instant delivery of air on demand. The new S620 Ti embraces the best features of SCUBAPRO's renowned S600 in an upgraded, state-of-the-art design. Smaller and lighter than the S600 but using the same-sized diaphragm, the S620 Ti delivers excellent performance; work of breathing has been reduced by 37% over the S600, providing effortless airflow under all dive conditions. The full titanium inlet tube is ultra-light, the large purge button improves water circulation, and the new exhaust tee increases performance while directing bubbles out of the field of view. In all water temperatures, in all dive conditions, this new reg system is a winner.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Words + Photos by: Haydon Kerr

Spring and summer camps can be an exciting time for students, and a relief for many parents. With options for outdoor play and activities becoming increasingly limited as temperatures rise, choosing a camp with the right kind of activities becomes essential for a good balance of fun, safety and value for money.

During the last school holiday break at the end of March and start of April, there was a big shift in the weather. Rain had poured down only days before and threatened to ruin plans for some outdoor activities planned for the Deira International School Adventure Holiday Programme.

Lucky for the students, there were also some excellent 'Plan B' activities to complement what was already in place for visiting some of Dubai's latest attractions and adventures, as well as some more well-known ones. For one full week of the holidays, there were indoor and outdoor activities to keep students entertained and involved.

One of the first stops was to the Dubai Mall where students had a fun session on the ice skating rink. Getting there early in the morning was an experience where getting to watch some local teams practice was almost as exciting as getting out there ourselves! After waiting for the teams to finish and strapping on the boots, it was time to go over some of the basics before letting the group loose on the ice.

Many of the students had never tried ice-skating before and some took to it quicker than others. Fortunately for those finding it tricky to stay upon both blades, there were the penguins, which are like training wheels for ice skaters. But with a boldness that often comes with youth, everybody managed to get the hang of it and got involved with the obligatory line-to-line races and other competition games.

After an immersive meal experience at the famous Rain Forest Café, the next stop on our visit to the mall was to the Aquarium's new VR Zoo. An interactive attraction with some mind blowing virtual reality software designed to give users a fantastic insight into the natural world. Teams were deployed to all corners of the globe for gathering footage to bring learning about various animal species to the VR platform.

The well-informed education specialists at the Aquarium then guided students through the entertaining exhibits at the Underwater Zoo. Behind the scenes, students can watch handlers feed the huge fish that come splashing up to catch their mouthful of food. And of course, no visit to the Aquarium would be complete without coming to see the impressive bulk of King Croc. Even cooler for us was having Paul Hamilton, who brought King Croc from Australia to the UAE, tell us the stories himself!

For some more energetic activities, we had sessions booked at one of Dubai's trampoline parks which are fast becoming a favourite pastime for many people, gaining popularity across a range of age groups. With spaces to jump or flip into foam pits and areas for team games like dodge ball, trampoline parks are awesome places to spend a few hours. For teachers supervising the groups, it's a great way to show students what they can or can't do anymore on a

trampoline. The tight muscles and sore ribs the following day are sure signs that more practice (or stretching) is the way forward!

After pumping this much adrenaline for so long, it's easy to work up a hunger and having students make their own lunch at California Pizza Kitchen was just what we needed! With all kinds of toppings being thrown on to the pizza base, and some fantastical names being given to their creations, the result was happy students and full bellies.

Also included on our holiday programme were visits to Sega Republic to get our fix of the gaming machines and thrill rides. This popular attraction for kids of all ages is a space that can be utilized for a full day of entertainment. With an unlimited pass for challenges and competitions, there were plenty of laughs at staff struggling to keep up with the proficient gamers of the group.

While all of this was going on at Sega Republic, a younger group was busy engaged in building block tasks, making soap and creating avatars at Cloud 7. This is located in a handy location for us in City Walk, with plenty of other nearby attractions for student groups, including the amazing Hub Zero.

But what holiday programme for schools is complete without bouncy castles! We are quite fortunate to have the facilities to create a lineup of activities indoors where groups can rotate around bouncy castles, indoor archery, arts and crafts, swimming, and even a ninja course. But of course none of this can be possible without enlisting the proper help and supervision to make sure every activity is safely supervised by qualified staff.

For this holiday programme at Deira International School, along with our own teachers and assistants, we recruited the support of some highly qualified staff from the Umm Al Quwain Marine Club for the week. These instructors have become familiar with many of our students from past school camps and trips to the club. Our final day was also spent at the UAQ Marine Club with loads of fun activities and a wonderful buffet lunch at the shoreline majlis. Activities included the ever-popular zip-line experience, banana boat rides, maze competitions, human foosball and other games.

Students left after a week filled with engaging activities and a lot of enjoyable experiences. Now, with summer just around the corner, parents will no doubt be looking for camps that have a few vital elements. These include safety, fun, affordability and variety. Hopefully wherever students go for their holidays, whether in the UAE or abroad, it is filled with fun, adventure and new experiences! ■

INTRODUCING THE MOST ADVANCED KITE CANOPY MATERIAL EVER MADE

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2017 KITE RANGE

SLASH
PURE WAVE/STRAPLESS
SIZES
4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10

PIVOT
FREERIDE/WAVE
SIZES
5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 14

TORCH
PRO PERFORMANCE/FREESTYLE
SIZES
5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 14

NAISH

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A closer look at the rocket launchers in front of the kayak

Getting the "Frosting" Done

Words + Photos by: Kit Belen

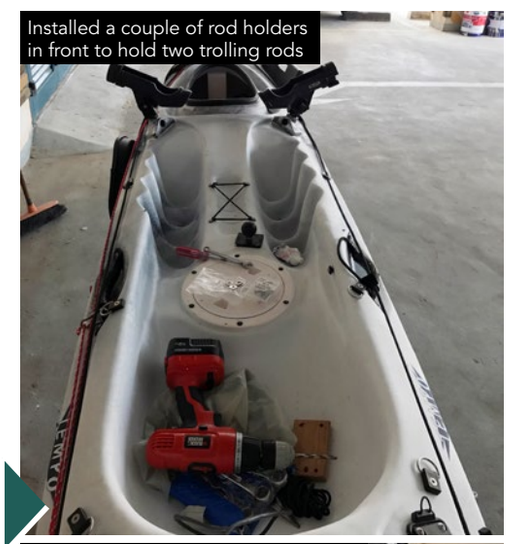
The past month was a bit of a squeeze with an overseas trip coming up as well as trying to finish the RTM Tempo's rigging. "Frosting", as Kaylee fondly calls it, has been in and out of my building's parking lot over the last few weeks, and while I finally figured out most of what I wanted to do with it, there was still the two biggest headaches I had to deal with – installing a rudder and what to do with the tank well.

First, the tank well of the Tempo is not really crate friendly, so I had to find a way to put something that would function like a crate - even better if I can install rod holders, a big bonus would be if I am able to keep water splashing into it.

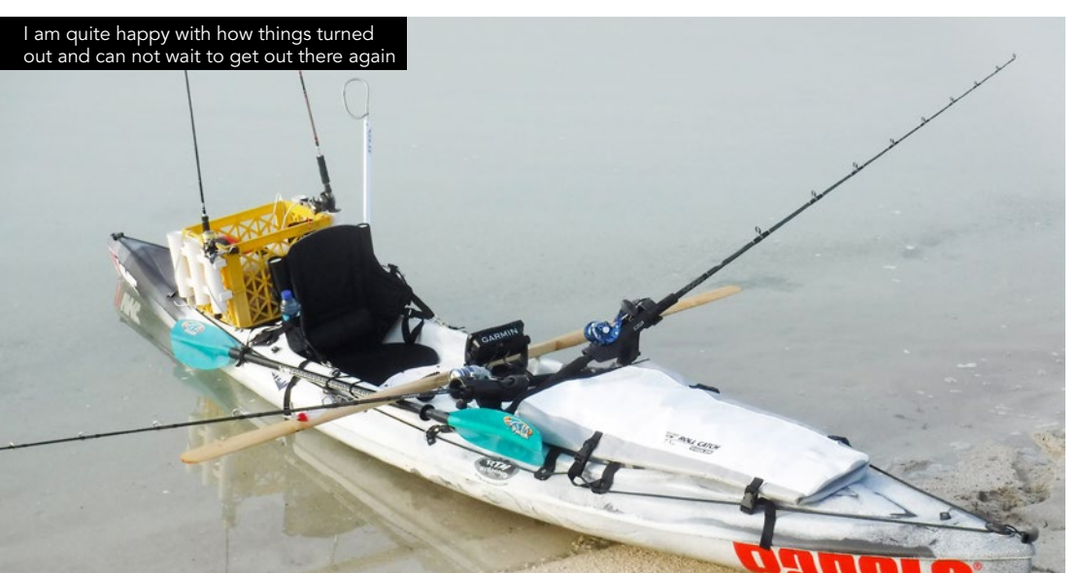
The rudder was another thing: this kayak is not designed to have a rudder – which means I'm going to have to do things the hard way and figure out how to put one on this.

After all the stress and hoops I had to go through, I was able to finally install the rudder, I had to have a rudder bracket fabricated and the hardest part was to align everything so that the rudder would be exactly dead center. The other problem with the rudder installation was the position of the rudder controls. The foot braces are molded in on the Tempo, which makes it impossible to install the adjustable rails that came with the foot brace/rudder control. After detaching the rudder controls from the rails, I was able to figure out the best position for it and bolted it in to position, again, since this kayak is not rudder ready, the most challenging part of mounting the foot brace was aligning both of them. Once everything was in place, it was just a matter of driling the holes and installing a length of gardening sprinkler tubes as cable runners (can buy them in ACE). For the rudder cables, I used coated wire, which I had to replace with assist hook cord later on to make them fully rust and salt proof.

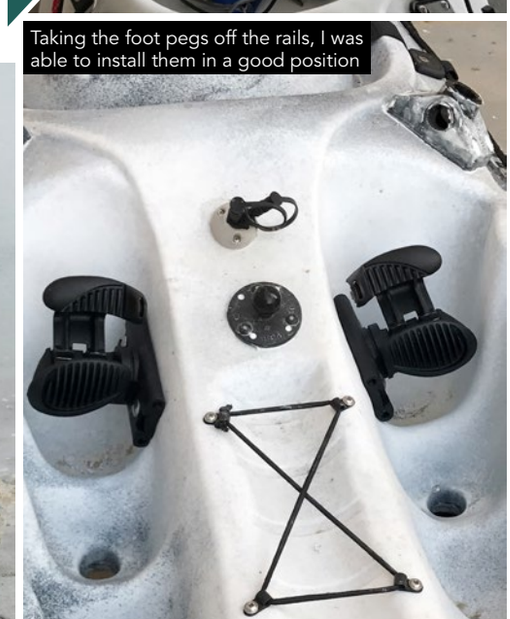
Once that was done, the next biggest issue was the tank well. The tank well of the Tempo is teardrop shaped with rounded sides and bottom. The shape makes it impossible to drop a standard milk crate in.



Installed a couple of rod holders in front to hold two trolling rods



I am quite happy with how things turned out and can not wait to get out there again



Taking the foot pegs off the rails, I was able to install them in a good position

Solved the issue with the crate and also installed some padding to keep me comfortable for long paddles

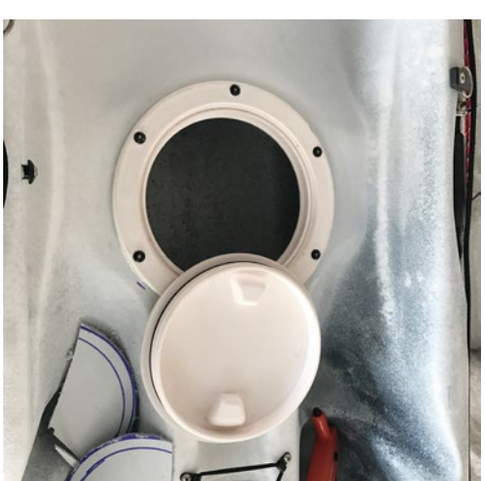
I later changed these lockable rod holders to rocket launchers to give me more distance for my trolling spread

The footwells posed a big problem because I could not install the rails for the rudder control

Because of the odd shape of the tankwell, it was impossible to drop a standard milkcrate inside

Installing the rudder was probably the most difficult part of the modification

I was able to figure out how to put a crate on there, but I wasn't too happy with the placement since it was just too high up. After several tries, I finally managed to find a cooler box that fits, a few holes later, I was able to install two 3 rod capacity holders on the long sides of the cooler and it fits perfectly inside the tank well.


I installed a hatch just in front of my seat to put small boxes for lures and terminal tackle I use the most

The only other problem, witch was kind of minor for me since I mostly release my fish, was where to put the catch, which I managed to solve with an insulated fish bag that fits nicely on the bow of the kayak.

I also installed two rod holders in front, so I would be able to use long rods and keep them as far apart as possible and if I wanted to, I could troll up to four rods with this set up (not that I would, but if I need it, the option is there.)

As a bonus, the icebox is waterproof, so I can keep all my things dry.

I have to say, now that everything is done, I am quite pleased with how things turned out for Frosting, and I am always very excited for the weekends (despite the heat) and I am looking forward to the next time I take her out.

The pictures attached are very self-explanatory, so I will keep the words down this time and let the pictures talk. ■

Till next tide change,

Kit

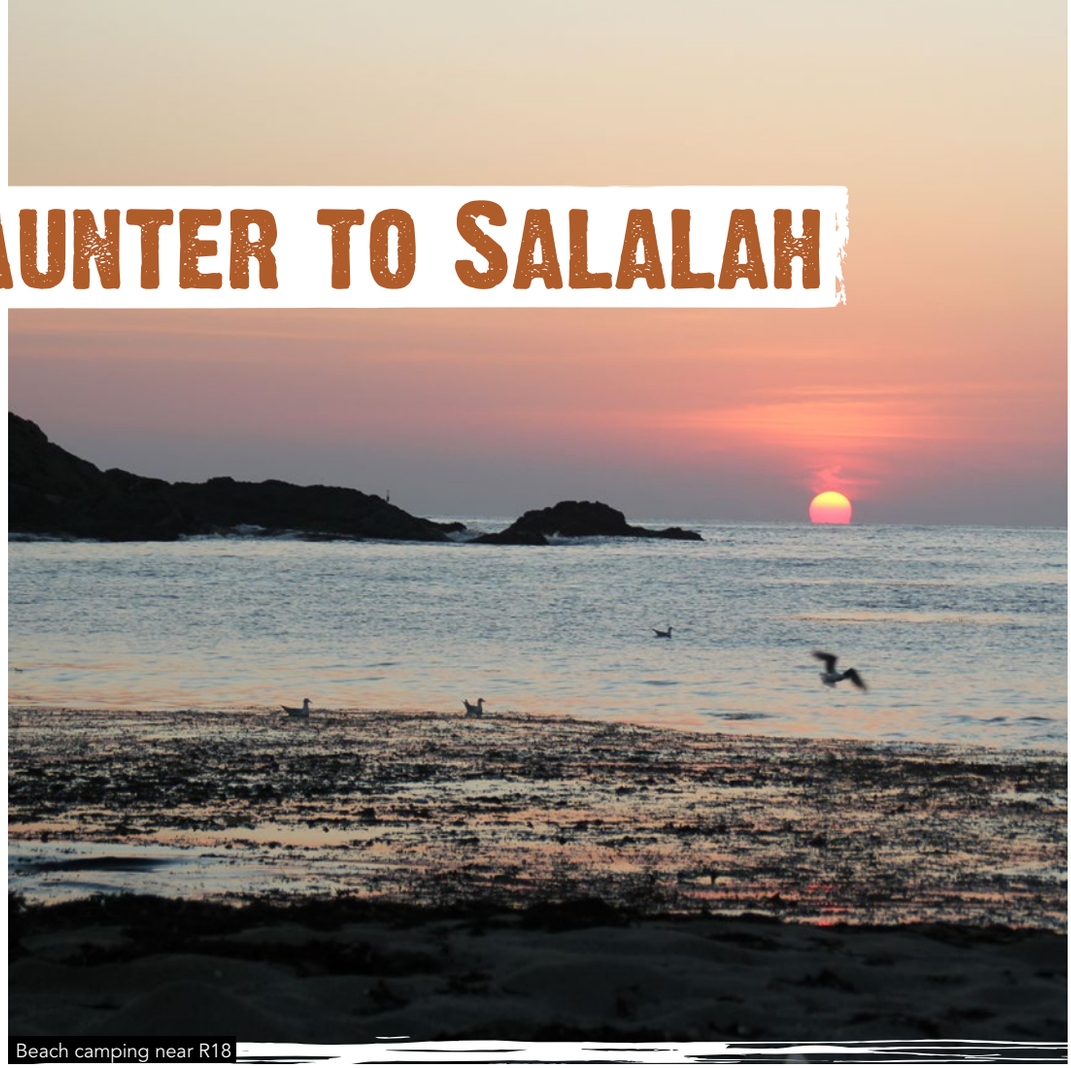
Our fishing pro who shares his experiences and expertise with OutdoorUAE through his regular column.
thefishingkit@gmail.com

the fishing kit

OUR EXPERTS

Seaside Saunter to Salalah

Words by: Marina Bruce
Photos by: Marina Bruce, Neil Bruce and Cameron Bruce


Beach camping near R18

The Muscat to Salalah Coastal Highway (MSCH) is THE way to head south to catch the Khareef rains between June and September; the alternative inland route, Road 31, is for long-stretches, mind-numbingly boring with nowhere to stop other than petrol stations and rest houses!

In 1973, Oman had but 3kms of paved road, which I am told was the Corniche in Muscat. Over the last 45 years there has been a progressive program of road building which is both a good and a bad thing. Oman seems very large to this Scot; the country of my birth is a third of the size of the Sultanate; like any country, good roads and communications are key to successful development. However, many lovely wadi tracks, previously enjoyed by expats flexing their 4x4s have now become roads, making life easier for the Omani locals but less fun for us tourists!

Sometimes travel is about the journey, rather than the destination; there is a lot to be said for spending a few days or even longer tackling this 1,500km long route to explore the coastline of Oman.

Heading south from Muscat, you will cross two high bridges that soar above two of the best-known wadis in the area – Wadi Shab and Wadi Tiwi. The northernmost of these offers a chance to swim in a cave, although you will have to hike 3kms or so up the riverbed to reach it. There is a road/track along the length of Wadi Tiwi, although it is possible to hike through it if you wish to leave your car at the foot. Much less popular than Wadi Shab, you might even have Wadi Tiwi to yourself. (Read more about these in Weekend Family Adventure by Jen Hardie, OutdoorUAE December 2016)

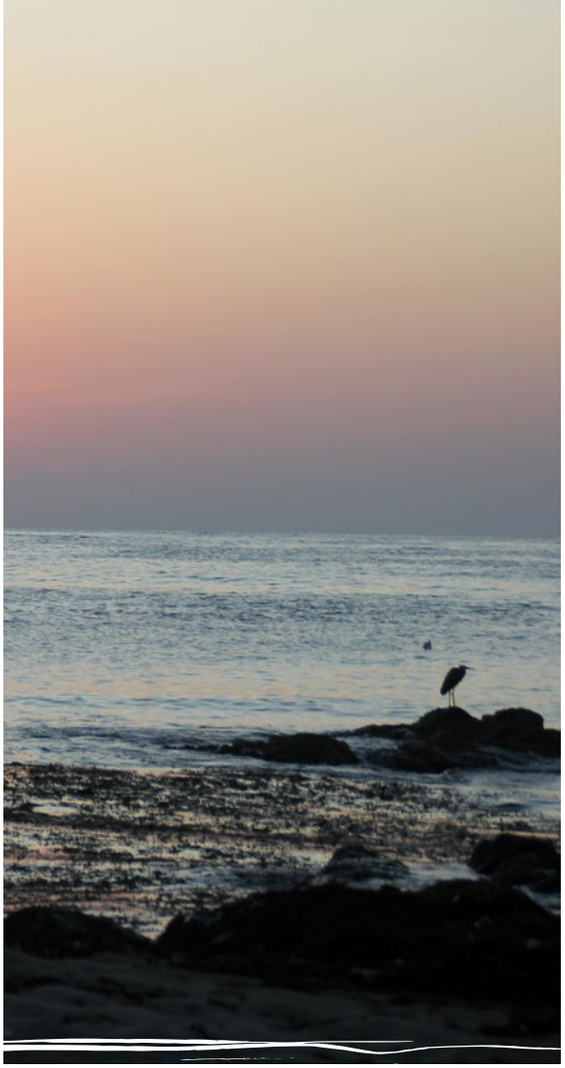
Hasik waterfall

Moving further south/east, you might be tempted to detour into the beautiful city of Sur to visit one of the last dhow building yards in the Gulf, before heading round to Ras Al Hadd, the most easterly point of the Gulf Peninsula and nesting ground to the endangered Greenback turtle. Travellers wishing to stay the night have a choice of a hotel room or wild camping. Please ensure that you camp away from the beaches so as not to disturb the turtles.

Wadi Bani Khalid and Muqal Pools and Caves are also worth a diversion from the Coastal Highway. The area has been developed by the Omani Government and offers a café and toilets and during the week it is unlikely to be busy. The pools, some over 10 metres deep, are filled with cool springwater all year round and if swimming is not your thing then beyond them you will find the Muqal Caves. Take a torch with you and scramble through a small slit in the rock; after a little more scrambling you will be inside a large underground chamber.

Returning to the Coastal Highway, you might be tempted to complete some of your journey offroad by traversing the Wahiba Sands mainly ontrack but with some

Beach driving near Khaluf



Sign warning of the dangers of barr al hickmann

Hasik to Shuwaymia Road

that you camp away from the beaches so as not to disturb the turtles.

Wadi Bani Khalid and Muqal Pools and Caves are also worth a diversion from the Coastal Highway. The area has been developed by the Omani Government and offers a café and toilets, and during the week it is unlikely to be busy. The pools, some over 10 metres deep, are filled with cool spring-water all year round and if swimming is not your thing then beyond them you will find the Muqal Caves. Take a torch with you and scramble through a small slit in the rock; after a little more scrambling you will be inside a large underground chamber.

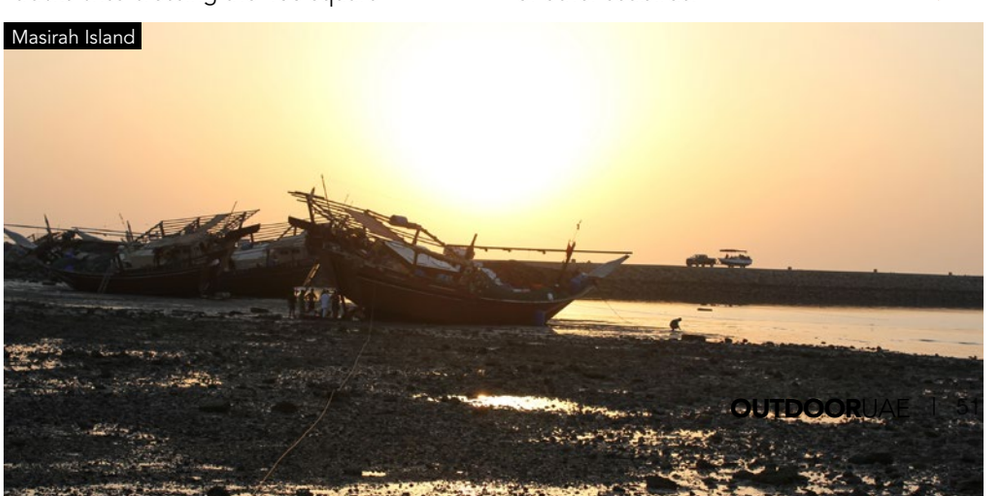
Returning to the Coastal Highway, you might be tempted to complete some of your journey offroad by traversing the Wahiba Sands mainly ontrack but with some dune driving too. You will find a good route through the sands in Mike Nott's Advanced Off-Road Adventure Routes UAE & Oman (Route 13); follow the route to the end then travel eastwards to return to the coastal highway, or you could do part of the route, returning to the sea after WX9, drive along the beach as far as you can before regaining the blacktop a few kilometres to the south.

Masirah Island is surprisingly, an all-year-round destination and it is just a short drive and ferry ride away from the MSCH. Modern Catamarans operated by National Ferries Company take you on a one-hour crossing, landing at Hilf, the only settlement on the island. A blacktop road loops round the island for over 100kms and campspots abound; if you dream of falling asleep with the breakers crashing on to the beach then opt for one of the many beaches on the east side but if you prefer a quieter sea and the possibility of some snorkelling before breakfast then choose the sheltered western side of the island.

Although 600kms from Salalah, Masirah benefits from the Khareef too, which brings not rain, but cooling winds, making this a summer haven for kitesurfers. (See OutdoorUAE January 2013: Outdoor Escapes by Darryl MacDonald). Make sure you have plenty of long pegs to anchor your tents!

Returning to the mainland, you do not need to travel far to find another possible detour; this time the huge salt flats of the Barr Al Hickmann area. There are many tracks criss-crossing the 400 square kilometres of coastal sabkah, but do take care when crossing waterlogged areas. You will find fishermens' huts all around the perimeter but also many great beaches for camping.

Set your GPS for Mahoot, which will see you in Al Wusta (Central Region), then drive westwards to rejoin the MSCH, turn left and travel southwards until you see signs for the tiny fishing village of Khaluf. Here you will find an awesome beach drive as well as the beautiful sugar dunes (see OutdoorUAE April 2017, Oman Sand Dune Areas) and of course, somewhere great to camp. Just south of the Sugar Dunes there is an abandoned shrimp farm, which is home to flamingo and a whole host of other seabirds.


Masirah Island

Wadi Shab Walk

Baobab Forest

Since your entry into Oman you will no doubt have noticed signposts pointing in the direction of the Special Economic Zone of Duqm, (some from over 600kms away) and now, just a short drive of 90kms will take you there. This old fishing village has morphed into a 21st century seaport with an extensive dry dock; great plans are in the pipeline for tourism and commercial enterprises. There is not much for the adventurer to explore here but should they want a 4* pillow to lay their head on for the night they should check out the lovely Crowne Plaza, situated in the Tourism Area and well out of sight of the docks!

Travelling southwards on MSCH, which, having left all the trucks behind at Duqm, will seem somewhat quieter than of late, there is a rocky area which should afford some fine hiking and, of course, a lovely area for camping. The road from hereon is almost deserted and could be a good route for long distance cycling, though extensive pre-planning is recommended, as shops and services are many kilometres apart.

Take a left off the MSCH and head towards the headland of Ras Al Madrakah. This too benefits from the cool winds of the Khareef, being 15-20C cooler than Muscat, and is a popular place to camp in July and August. There are outdoor showers near the car park, small shops and local restaurants

Wadi Tiwi

in the town but be aware however that the sand is extremely soft on the beach and you may have to deflate your tyres.

Returning to MSCH, drive south for around 100kms then take a left towards the Pink Lagoons; a series of 6 or so lagoons, coloured pink by the surrounding soil, host herons and other seabirds. When we visited in March only one was truly pink although we are told that the colour intensity changes throughout the year.

Some 50kms further south and the road snakes inland, up over some fine rocky plateaus before veering eastwards towards the sea just before Ash Shuwaymiah. The scenery is sublime here and hikers/campers will be spoiled for choice, especially in the last two kms before the sea.

There was a time, not so long ago, when a journey from Shuwaymiah to Hasik, some 70kms along the coast, would involve a road drive of over 400kms. However with the opening of a new section of road to link the two towns, this distance has been quartered to around 100kms – and what a spectacular road it is.

The relatively wide two lanes carry traffic high into the mountains through a series of cuttings and hairpin bends; some 5 million cubic metres of rock were excavated during the construction. Having driven this road in both directions, I think the views afforded by the north-south drive are slightly better than those in the other direction, but whichever way you travel, be prepared to be amazed.

Once you are clear of the new section of road you will find an unusual waterfall on your right; in the khareef season water cascades over the top and even in the winter and spring a fine mist of droplets falls to earth. The travertine rocks also look like they are cascading making this worthy of a photo stop!

The next town is Sadah, although you will have to divert slightly should you wish to visit it. Another great route in Mike Nott's Book, this time Route 18 concludes near Sadah; if your vehicle is equipped with all-terrain tyres you could stay close to the sea and tackle the route in reverse, returning to the road at Mirbat, some 40kms or so to the south. Route 18 takes you past some wonderful beaches for swimming and fishing, but be aware that the sea will be too rough for such activities in the khareef season between June and September.

The final 80kms to Salalah will seem very busy compared to most of the last 1200kms; cars and trucks thunder by; camels and goats, sometimes with khamikazetendancies, graze by the road; rush hour traffic can be held up by huge herds of cattle crossing the road. There are still some sights to see before arriving in Oman's second city; there is a baobab forest just a few kms from the road; Mike's route R17 Dhofar Traverse concludes near here too and should be able to be driven in reverse; the famous anti-gravity spot is also just a few minutes away.

So, there you have it, my favourite road route to Salalah with plenty of opportunities to do a little offroading here and there. Don't forget your compressor, your tent, kitesurfing kit, hiking boots, snorkelling gear, birdwatching guide, binoculars, camera and of course, your sense of adventure!

Should you drive this route in the winter, why not return via the Rub Al Khali (Empty Quarter)? Requires 3 or 4 days, see Route 14 in Advanced Off-Road Adventure Routes UAE and Oman. ■

Pink Lagoons

Muqal Pools - Wadi Bani Khalid

Camping with a view south of Shuwaymiah

MSCH waypoint

Ras Madrakah	18.973765, 57.790594
Pink Lagoons	18.620002, 56.672770
Ash Shuwaymiah	17.888248, 55.629614
Hasik Waterfall	17.475369, 55.229569
Sadah	17.052489, 55.070972
Mirbat	16.987140, 54.693089
Baobab Forest	17.053634, 54.610030
Anti-gravity spot	17.034697, 54.612716
Salalah	17.021362, 54.092127

WOMEN ON WHEELS

Ride Ajman - A First Class Cycling Event

Words + Photos by: Helle Bachofen von Echt

After a successful debut last year, Ride Ajman returned to the UAE sporting calendar again on April 7, 2017; offering two choices of distances and an attractive pot of prize money, to attract, not double, but triple the participants from last year. This 2nd edition of Ride Ajman presented a brand new, shorter course; the 52km UAE National Development Race, inviting more Emiratis to take part.

Visions of Ajman

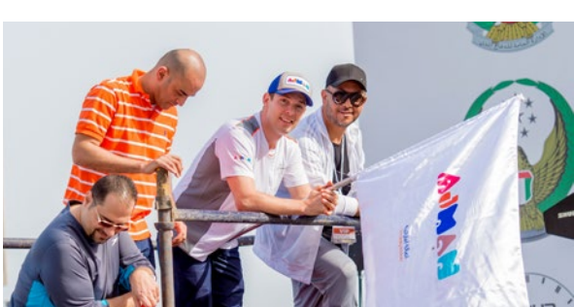
"Ajman has a target to define itself as a unique tourism destination and a charming Emirate. Among various types of tourism, Ajman has recently started to focus on 'sports tourism'. We have found the response from visitors, sponsors, community and industry is very high when it comes to supporting or participating in sports events, and from a government point of view, the rate of investment is high", H.E. Faisal Al Nuaimi, General Manager of Ajman Tourism Development Department (ATDD) explains. "For visitors and participants of the Ride Ajman cycle challenge, we strategically planned the route to highlight some of Ajman's sights, including the Ajman Corniche, where the start and finish area was located, with its beautiful luxurious hotels and restaurants. We also highlighted our latest development project Al Zorah, which contains a golf course and the newly added Oberoi, the first 5 star beach resort. The cyclists also rode onto Al Tallah camel track and cycling track", His Excellency continued.

Ride Ajman – Inviting locals, expats and professionals

In addition to highlighting Ajman as a sports and tourism destination, another major driver behind the event is also to attract more Emiratis and locals into the sport of cycling. Based on feedback from the first edition taking place last year, the Emiratis requested a shorter distance to match their level and make it more attractive for locals newer to the sport to participate. The organizers responded with a new improved route of 52km, where local cyclists competed in their own category, while expats, visitors and professionals completed the 52km loop twice and competed on double the distance of 104km total.

With the assistance of 130 police members and 140 extra volunteers, Ride Ajman took place with full road closures for the safety of all riders.

41 Emirati male riders and one Emirati female rider took part in the Locals Challenge; a significant increase from the previous year. Following the challenge,the Emiratis responded positively to the changes and the event, with some showing interest in taking the sport more seriously and making enquiries on how to get started with getting their own bike and training programs; a promising stepping stone for building and developing the local cycling community. The Emirati 52km male challenge was won by Rashed Ali, while the only female rider,



Suhaila Bin Belaila, brought home a secure first place.

For the Elite's 104km challenge, Ride Ajman tripled the participation numbers from the previous year, totalling 615 entries total between men and women in the 2017 edition. With a prize money pool totalling AED 183,000 (shared between all categories), the organisers aimed to attract a higher number of cyclists to the event, especially experienced riders and professionals.

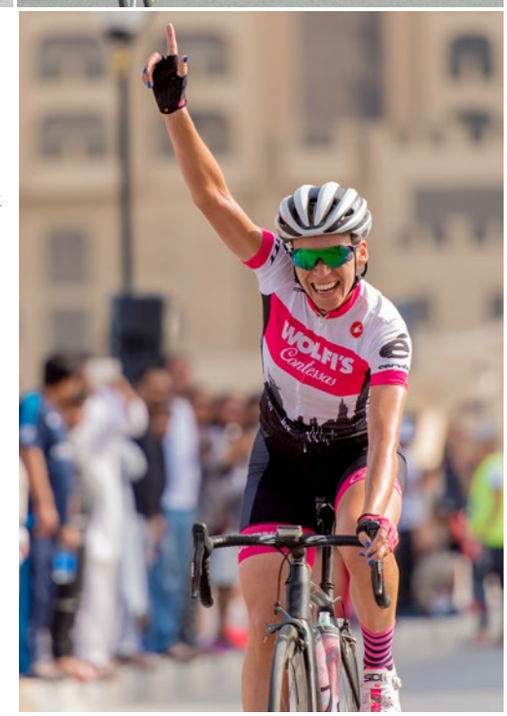
In the male elite long course competition, the UAE national team riders proved they belong in the professional ranks and that participation in world class tours such as Dubai Tour and Abu Dhabi Tour have propelled them to a new level. When they, as a team, took full control of the race taking home the all the top spots with Mohammed Al Murawwi as the winner, followed by UAE Champion and Olympian Yusif Mirza on his tail and Saif Al Kaabi in 3rd place. While they were rewarded in their own Emirati long course category, we witnessed Saudi national rider, Abdul Aziz Al-Khwaytem, being crowned as the winner of the general Elite male category. The Saudi national and his Saudi teammate, Hassan Al Jumah, who took podium 3rd place, travelled specifically to UAE and Ajman to be challenged in this first-class cycling event. "We have come to Ride Ajman as UAE is one of the best supporters of cycling racing in the Gulf. The organisation and environment for racing is really good. It's a great challenge for us to come and race with the UAE national riders, they have a big team. We were hoping for some good results and really pleased to place 1st and 3rd in the open long course race and 8th and 10th overall", Saudi National road and track rider, Abdul Aziz Al-Khwaytem, shared.

In the women's long course division, more than 60 female riders took to the start line and it was Yvonne van Hattum, Netherlands, who took solo victory in a strong 60km break away. Yvonne van Hattum comments: "I was so happy to see such a wonderful and large group of ladies participating in the challenge. Some new faces and lots of strong women on the line made the race very interesting and challenging. The teamwork during the race truly made the difference and I was just very lucky to get the chance to get (and stay) away from the bunch. The prize money was unbelievably generous and the support of the crowd, the solid organization and different race categories made it all a fantastic event. Looking forward to next year's already!"

While all the podium winners shared a piece of the prize money, all other finishers were rewarded with a participation medal and finishers' certificate. In addition, the nearby luxury hotels Fairmont Ajman and Ajman Saray offered breakfast buffets for the hungry participants.

The 7km Charity Ride

Later in the afternoon of the same day, families, kids and beginners took to the roads for the 7km Charity Ride, where all proceeds from the entry fees would be donated to the Al Jalila Foundation. Again, Faisal Al Nuaimi shares: "Our expectations was to collect AED 10,000 total for the foundation, however we were pleased to attract 200 participants, in comparison to last year's 120, and we raised AED 20,000 total. The Al Jalila Foundation has lots of projects that can be related to the concept of the cycling event and as they cover the whole world, not just Dubai and UAE, the exposure of the event will be more far reaching". Equally, a dinner BBQ was prepared for all charity ride participants.



Ride Ajman 2018

The Ride Ajman community cycling challenge, held under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Abdulaziz Bin Humaid Al Nuaimi, Chairman of ATDD & Department of Lands and Properties, and sponsored by Ajman Bank, is now firmly planted on the UAE sporting calendar and will be regarded as a major event due to happen the same time every year going forward. Sponsors and organizers believe the event will grow from strength to strength and they forecast the 3rd edition in 2018 will attract more than 1,000 entries. Watch out as next year's challenge could include qualification events and longer distances. ■

Helle Bachofen von Echt is a Dubai based amateur road cyclist competing in both local and International events. She is team leader of a UAE based female amateur cycling team and she is also an Indoor Cycling Instructor at Flywheel Sports Dubai. Helle loves traveling with her bike and you can follow her adventures and racing in pictures on instagram **@thegirlwhocyclesinthedesert** and her blog page **www.hellebve.com**

Hiking in Kazbegi, Georgia
A Spiritual Experience

Words + Photos by: Baxter Jackson

Between the Black and Caspian Sea, high up in the Greater Caucasus Mountains stands the Georgian Military Highway. There, on the side of the road with my thumb stuck out, I'm hoping to hitch a ride to the hiker's paradise of Kazbegi, about 15 kilometres south of the Russian border. From the ski-resort town of Guduari (where I've been snowboarding for the past two days) to this hiking utopia, it's just 32 kilometres to the north, over the 2,400 meters of Jvari Pass, the traditional boundary between Europe and Asia.

Trucks bound for Vladikavkaz, (the closest town north of the Georgian border) roar past, crunching gravel and ice under their heavy loads, leaving a whirlwind of frigid air in their wake. At an elevation of 2,196 meters, Guduari is bitterly cold for a desert dweller such as myself but with snowcapped mountains all around, I'm still in awe that a frozen world like this is less than a 3 hour flight from my home in the desert oasis of Al Ain in the United Arab Emirates.

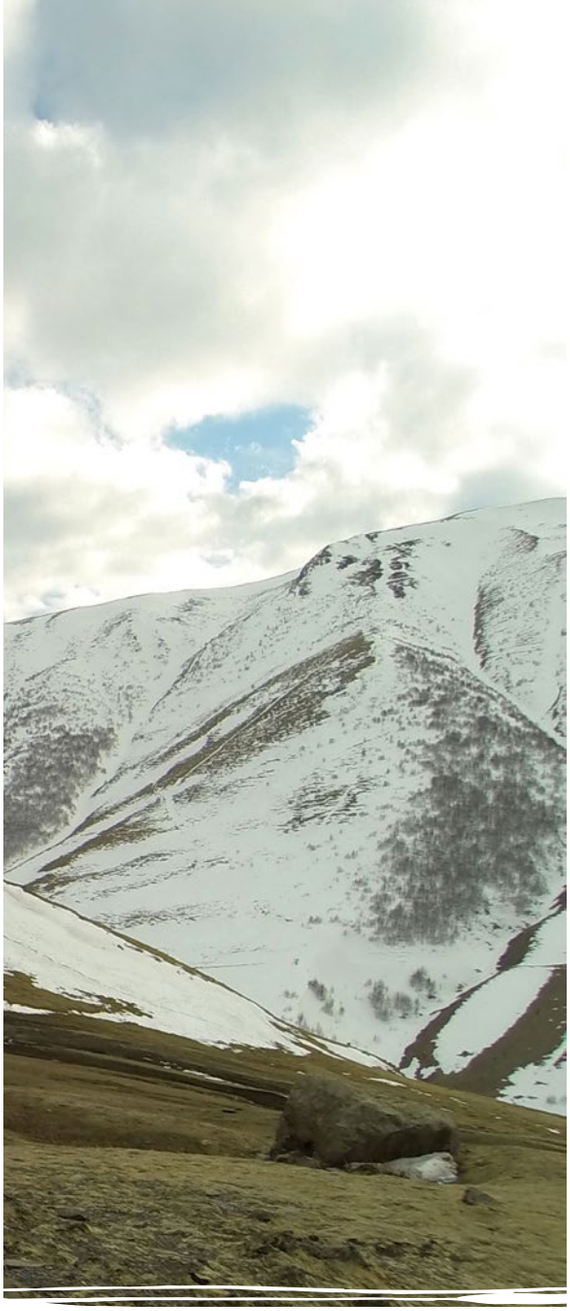
Like another desert dweller, three times already I've been denied but not by my followers - by marshutki (mini-bus) drivers. While my Cyrillic is rusty (it's been 15 years since I lived in Ukraine), I'm pretty sure the cardboard signs in the dashboard windows read 'Kazbegi.' Only one logical conclusion to be drawn on this cold April Fool's morning in the mountains of Georgia - the joke's on me, the Amerikanski with a skateboard strapped to his backpack.

With a smile and a shrug of the shoulders, I hit the road, reckoning if I came here for hiking, there's no time like the present. Besides, I figure if no one stops and I end up walking the whole way, I'll truthfully be able to say I walked from Asia to Europe - bragging rights of Forest Gump proportions, no doubt. But just five minutes into hitchhiking, past the shawarma stand and chain smoking 'taxi' driver who offered to take me to Kazbegi for 65 Lari (27 USD), a black delivery van rolls to a stop just for me, thankfully dispelling my delusions of grandeur of walking the Earth like Cain from Kung-Fu.

Whether it was the lopsided grin on my face or the skateboard on my back, questioning the kindness of strangers is a luxury in which I cannot currently indulge, so I hop in quickly before the delivery driver changes his mind. From my rudimentary recollection of Russian (at this point probably worse than my dad's limited Spanish), I work it out from my ride that he's only going as far as the edge of Guduari but that once I summit Jvari Pass, it'll be all downhill from there to Kazbegi, on my skateboard, of course.

The excitement of the first ride, of the open road raises my spirits as the sun's rays light up the highest elevations with the promise of spring - snow and ice sparkling; a faint aroma of earth in the air, hinting at winter's demise. Trudging the road upward and onward and feeling like a character from a Jack Kerouac novel, I soon hear the steady whir of a fast approaching vehicle before I actually see it coming around a hairpin turn. I turn, smile and extend my arm, palm open, intimating geniality, hoping to make eye contact with the driver. I do. It works. I'm in. Second ride scored - this time in a warm Mercedes with Giorgi from Tbilisi on his way to Moscow.

As the treeless alpine zone whirls by at 160 kilometres per hour outside, I entertain Giorgi with my broken Russian, trying to explain what the hell a 45-year-old American is doing in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia for Spring Break. What I want to say is that the call of the wild, of hiking from mountain hamlets through lush, green valleys framed by snowy peaks to rustic stone villages with medieval



tower houses, of experiencing unspoiled, raw nature first hand before this rural way of life is wiped out forever is a call that cannot go unanswered. What actually comes out of my mouth in Russian is more like: Me here, I like because it beautiful.

Beautiful is what I expected to see crossing into Europe from Asia over Jvari Pass but the Dariali Gorge is enshrouded in clouds, blurring the winter-scape into a white void of near zero visibility. The coconut scented car freshener, dangling from the rear view mirror is my only point of reference as Giorgi guns his Mercedes around hulking 18 wheelers and through Soviet Era tunnels, dark as night and full of potholes. While it would have been a good story, I'm beyond grateful I don't have to skate though this totalitarian landscape all alone; it would have been the longest 32 kilometres of my life.

Like the valley itself, Kazbegi is enveloped in dense fog. The moedani, the main square, along the Georgian Military Highway seems surreal, like a scene from a horror movie. Dark figures move towards me muttering place names as I say my goodbyes to Giorgi - taxi drivers scalping fares to destinations far and near; neon signs blinking in red Cyrillic for a bar, a casino, a money exchange; the doughy aroma of khinkhali (Georgian dumplings) infused with the acrid smell of cheap cigarettes hangs thickly in the moist air; the giant looming Caucuses peeking through the clouds and the silhouette of a church steeple on a nearby mountain top. Where's the howl of the werewolf? I wonder as I make my way up the cobblestone hill towards Anano Guesthouse on Vaja-Pshavela Street.

Knocking on the glass-paned door of the Anano Guesthouse, a three-story stone abode with a pitched roof and a spiral staircase out front, I hold my breath, not knowing what to expect. Through the paned glass, I spy a large, round woman in brightly coloured pajamas waddling her way to the door, her head covered modestly. My first thought is, 'Is her name going to be Tinky-Winky, Dipsy, Laa-Laa or Po?' Despite her resemblance to one of the Teletubbies, I'm wrong on all accounts. Within the first five minutes of my arrival, I get straightened out and their life stories.

Turns out, her name is neither Tinky-Winky, Dipsy, Laa-Laa or Po but Rahma (translated from Arabic it means Mercy, she explains pedantically) and she, like me, is but a guest. From Morocco, she lives and works in Sharjah as an events coordinator and is here with her daughter and her best friend Hanan, a large Egyptian doctora who also brought her daughter along. As they were both married to the same man at different times (but never knew each other until they were both divorced) their girls are actually half sisters. They glance up from their iPhones at me, briefly acknowledging my presence as the satellite TV blares a morning recitation of the Quran direct from Saudi.

Directly after a lunch of locally foraged mushrooms in a creamy tarragon sauce at the Rooms Hotel, a contemporarily reloaded former Soviet turbaza (group holiday residence), the fog begins to lift and spectacular Mt. Kazbek, a 5,047 metre extinct volcano, shimmers into view. According to legend, this is the same sacred peak to which Prometheus was chained for stealing fire from the gods, where Amirani, a Georgian contemporary of the former, suffered a similar punishment for challenging God's omnipotence. A place where you'll find the Betlemi cave, 4,000 meters up the hallowed mount, which has supposedly been the refuge for several religious artifacts from Christianity - everything from the manger of Jesus Christ himself to Abraham's tent and even a golden cradle rocked by doves that would blind anyone who laid eyes upon it like the lost Ark of the Covenant reportedly could. Given local taboos surrounding it with such legend and mystique, it's no wonder that no one dared summit the mountain until 1868 and that they were foreigners - Freshfield, Tucker and Moore from the London Alpine Club - who did it first.

First on my hiking list is not this holy mountain (although it is now), but Tsminda Sameba Church, the most iconic, most recognizable symbol of Georgia, if not the very soul of the nation. Built in the 14th century at an elevation of 2,200 meters above Kazbegi, this Holy Trinity Church, with its isolated setting high on a mountain top and its stunning backdrop of Mt. Kazbek, has come to symbolize the indomitable spirit of a people who have been invaded for millennia and yet have retained their culture, language and customs, letting each successive wave of interlopers - Persians, Arabs, Mongols, Turks and Russians - enrich rather than dilute their proud sense of identity.

Identifying my future needs for the 1.5 - 2 hour hike up to the Holy Trinity Church (7.2km round trip), I stuff my jacket pockets with the warm, homemade bread from lunch - adding it to the khachapuri (potato bread) already stuffed in there from my breakfast at the guest house in Guduari. While man cannot survive on bread alone, I wouldn't mind trying here. To wash it down, I fill up my water bottle directly from the tap in a copper lined bathroom of the Rooms Hotel. Full of glaciers and natural springs, the water on tap in Georgia is remarkably clean and safe for drinking straight from the spigot.

Though cobblestone streets, lined with stone houses and framed by the spindly trees of winter, past brown cows grazing quiet side streets, I descend the hill towards the Tergi River. Kazbegi, (also known as Stepantsminda) was named after local boy Alexander Kazbegi who, having studied in Tbilisi, St. Petersburg and Moscow, renounced the outside world of the bourgeoisie and his expensive education to pursue the much more proletarian life of herding sheep in his hometown. It was here, many years later, in this bucolic setting (his Walden Pond) that he wrote the plays and novels that made him famous and a hometown hero (there's a museum dedicated to this life near the moedani, the town square). This is the effect this quaint, mountain hamlet has on me too – it makes me want to get back to nature, herd sheep and write poetry.

The poem, 'The Road Not Taken' by Robert Frost springs to mind as I take one myself across the rusted suspension bridge into Gergeti Village. Here at its muddy entrance (but a burg of Kazbegi), the elevation starts out at 1,735m and by the time Tsminda Sameba Church (also known as Gergeti Trinity Church), rises into view the altitude is 2,170m - a 435 metre differential.

Indifferent to the differential, I wander upwards, through the winding alleyways of the quiet township - keeping the silhouette of the church in sight, breathing in deeply the fresh mountain air; the starchy aroma of baking bread drifting from stone cottages, chimneys puffing out grey smoke. Lost in the reverie of romanticism, a large, mud-splattered Caucasian dog, suddenly rubs up against my leg, nearly knocking me over just to say hello. In the spirit of Georgian hospitality, he joins me on my hike through the village, past brown pastures that soon give way to forests of pine.

Pining for some company of my own, I sheepishly confide in my newfound canine companion (this is what happens when you travel alone, you end up talking to dogs). Past quivering aspens and fertile farmland, I confess to him that because I've traveled to 55 countries and lived abroad for the past 15 years or so, I consider myself, somewhat unabashedly, to be a pretty worldly guy. Without a glimmer of recognition nor even a break in his stride, he hardly seems impressed. That my goal in life is to visit every country on Earth before I die, he's decidedly nonplussed - which actually makes it a bit easier for me to come clean that only since landing in Georgia, have I learned there are 5 countries in Eurasia I had never even heard of before and as such, weren't on my list of places to visit before I meet my demise: namely, the breakaway republics of Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Ingushetia, South Ossetia and the Dagestan Republic.

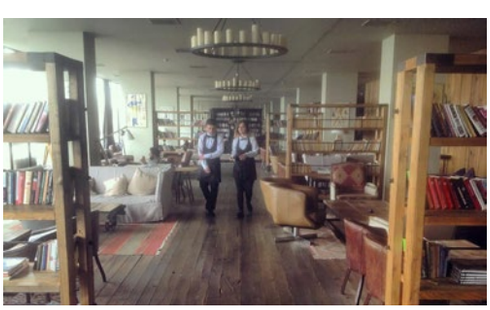
A group of Georgian teenagers, brimming with life, laughter and youthful enthusiasm appears around a bend on the muddy road. Their vitality, their sheer numbers proves irresistible for my canine companion and he breaks away from me - my confession entirely forgotten, if ever even registered. Alone again soon enough, the wind nips at my nose, my cheeks, reddening them to the point where it looks like I just took a couple of shots of chacha super (Georgian moonshine). Trying to keep the draught to a minimum, I cover my face with my pashmina scarf, pulling my hoodie tight.

The steady drone of a tightly cranking engine, a small cylinder 4x4 as far as I can tell, distracts my attention from my

numbing extremities, from the slippery mud on the road - nearly planting me face first in a freezing puddle of snow, ice and mud. The droning engine grows louder now, gaining altitude. I regain my balance and step up to the high ground by the side of the road next to the quivering aspens but not quite high nor soon enough. As the Lada Niva(a Russian off-road vehicle, diminutive in size but not in power) charges by it splatters me and my tan corduroy pants with cold black slush.

Christened by the cold, black slush of the sacred mountain, I trot it out till the road finally opens up and spreads out before me. Perched just above the tree line in the alpine zone, I catch my first glimpse of Tsminda Sameba, the Holy Trinity Church. It stands alone, divinely framed by snow-covered mountains, billowy clouds and fractured blue skies - a humble David among the proud Goliaths of the Greater Caucasus.

Immediately, I understand why the Georgians considered the cable car line from Kazbegi and the station built right next to the church by the Russians in 1988 to be so offensive. Just strictly from an ascetic point of view, to add anything to such a scene, but one brushstroke more, would have defiled this masterpiece. Spiritually speaking, the union of God, nature and man, the holy trinity would have been desecrated as well. Faced with such blasphemy, the Georgians took matters into their own hands and de-



stroyed the communist attempt to convert the church into an amusement park ride for Russian tourists.

While Russian tourists are still among the majority here, there are other travelers such as myself. Travelers and tourists but pilgrims of sorts nevertheless hike up here as I have to pay homage to this rather unorthodox, orthodox church. I could be wrong, but maybe all the orthodox churches from the 14th century built of stone on high and lonesome mountaintops such as this have dinosaurs (or are they dragons?) carved on their bell towers but somehow, I doubt it.

My doubt meets faith inside the dark but surprisingly warm chapel. Near the heavy wooden door, a cast iron furnace can barely contain the fire inside, roaring with fury against the long, cold winter. Votive candles flicker under icons of saints martyred by means most foul - crucified, beheaded, broken on the wheel and burned alive. Incense sticks, the sweet myrrh of Bethlehem, glow red under these death masks, pungent tributes in smoke, spiraling into the darkness overhead.

Peering upwards, following the flow of the spiraling smoke up towards the ancient dome, I start to feel faint - the heady atmosphere of death and divinity makes the church feel like it's spinning around me. From behind me, a voice whispers I should sit before I fall. Heeding this advice, I take a seat on a wooden stool next to the roaring furnace. My head begins to clear, maybe it's the altitude I think, before turning my attention to the voice, the guardian of the church on the mount who insisted I sit.

His name is Lazare. In Hebrew it means 'assistance of God' and although he looks the part with his spindly beard, his hair pulled into a short ponytail and black cassock, he confesses that he's not yet taken his tonsure, his monastic vows. He's waiting for a sign to know he's ready to pledge chastity, poverty and obedience for a lifetime of servitude. As a novice, he's been assigned the thankless (but sometimes entertaining) task of making sure tourists like me respect the traditions of the church, women covering and men baring their heads upon entering.

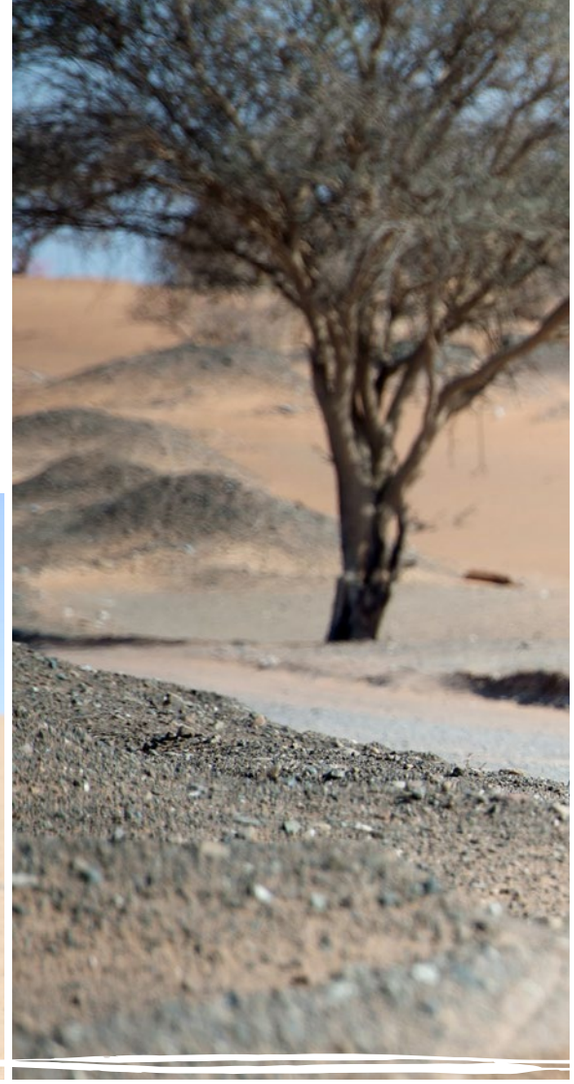
Entering into a conversation with an orthodox monk, albeit one in training is not an everyday occurrence in the Persian Gulf where I live. Even though this is rare where I reside, living in the desert of Arabia has afforded me this chance to travel, to hike, to explore the world before my time comes to leave it. Whether it was the altitude, the glory of nature I just experienced or the faith of those who built this sacred church, I feel an overwhelming sense of wonder, of gratitude for the opportunity to stand on such hallowed ground and chat with a man of the cloth about the nature of the holy trinity, the duality of man and the divine plan written all around us. ■

PEOPLE

I don't run without a reason

Name: Yuri Delumbria Cipriano
Age: 40
Nationality: Filipino
Profession: QHSE Manager, Arabian Gulf Switchgear LLC, Member of Filipino Runners United (FRU)

Words by: Bandana Jain
Photos by: Supplied



Yuri D. Cipriano doesn't run without a reason, because for him, running without a reason is the same as laughing or crying without any reason. He prepares for a race for a particular purpose and the purpose is never self-service. The pain and suffering that one feels during each run connects him to the pains wrestled by people around him and to the labyrinth of sufferings in our society.

What does running mean to you? Tell us about your love for running. What excites you about running?

The fact that running offers a host of physical benefits and increases life expectancy is good enough for me to pursue it. To start with, all you need is a pair of good running shoes, put one foot in front of the other and you are ready to hit the road. But it also a fact that running is a lonely sport: you have to run alone (most of the time especially if you are a slow runner), suffer from the usual running injuries and sacrifice your night life. I have learnt to love running, not just from the health perspective but also because of its potential relevance in addressing societal needs. Personally speaking, I consider running as a transformative venue for creative expression and a means of outsourcing support for the needy.

How did you get into running and stay in it?

I was not into running until 2010, when my athlete friends organized a project dubbed 'Takbo para kay Kabayan' (Run for our Countrymen) –a charity project aimed to raise funds to assist the repatriation of Filipina household workers and for medical support of selected Filipino cancer patients in the UAE. From then on, I have become a regular participant in almost all local races in the UAE.

What does your training involve?

As a weekly routine, I run 5 to 10km every other day and do a long run on weekends. Aside from regular running, I also do strengthening exercises and cross train other sports.

You have used your love for running for the betterment of the community. Please tell us more about this?

Long distance running humbles me. It is an open door that invites me to enter, then listen and understand the agonies of life. It is like weeping with the persons afflicted with physical illness, with those who are victims of man's selfishness. I do believe that weeping with them will somewhat alleviate the pain and suffering that they feel.

My first 10km run was dedicated to raise funds for the repatriation of Filipina household workers and support for cancer patients; my first full marathon was aimed to raise awareness on Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and raise funds to support the medical treatment of a former classmate; my first race outside the country – a multi-stage ultra-desert run – was in support of the Running With Cancer initiatives in raising fund for the Friends of Cancer Patients (FoCP).

What challenges have you come up against?

Scheduling for a regular run is not that easy for an expat like me since I am bound to an 8 hour work day and have to travel Dubai to Sharjah on a daily basis. Running and training after work requires a lot of self-discipline, focus and determination.

Please tell us about your latest running stint in the Sahara desert?

Just a couple of weeks ago, I participated in the Marathon des Sables, a six-day self-sufficiency in food, multi-stage desert ultramarathon covering 250km of the Sahara Desert in Southern Morocco. It is known as the toughest footrace on Earth. Though I was unable to finish the race due to the worsening blisters and Iliotibial Band syndrome,

I succeeded in raising a good amount of money for Friends of Cancer Patients, made new friends and realized some of the frailties that I have to work on. I promised myself that, if given a good reason, I would be back in the race after a year much stronger and more determined.

How has running changed you as a person?

Aside from maintaining my fitness and practicing a disciplined living, I can say that I am more connected with my feelings and compassionate to those who are in pain and agony. It gives me time to reflect on the good and not-so-good things about life, discern and plan for something for the good of others. ■

Get strong on land, before taking to the water

Words by: Nicky Holland
Photos by: Jung Francisco

To perform sports on land is one thing. To perform them well is another. To perform sports on the water is a while different level. Due to the buoyancy and instability, there is a greater risk of imbalance, which requires a good level of core strength, balance and agility – to be able to shift your weight from one side to the other. To be able to move effortlessly across the waves takes a lot of technique and practice.

This article will not teach you how to wakeboard, waterski, paddle-board or wind surf, but it will help to strengthen and condition your body for waterspouts. The exercises I have chosen will improve balance, co-ordination, strength and core stability.

Bosu squats with plate

This challenges your balance. Option 1:Stand on the ground. This is for beginners who can practice the squat. Option 2:Stand on the BOSU and perform the squat. Option 3:Stand on the BOSU but use a weighted plate as extra resistance. Make sure you push through your heels and keep your chest up, back straight and bring your bum down to knee level. That is the best depth to avoid injury. You will find your legs will start to shake, but that's ok, that's the proprioceptors working which will strength your ligaments, tendons and joints. With the plate, you can hold it close for the easy option or further away, arms extended for the harder option, which adds more emphasis on the core. Try for 10 reps x3-5 sets.

Stepper side steps

Place the stepper on the lowest setting on the ground. Start with one leg in the middle and the other outside. The idea here is to shift your body weight from side to side over the stepper. Speed is important. Option 1: This can just be a small tap, narrow to the step. Option 2: Try for a wider step, away from the step. When you do this exercise, intensity is key so go fast to increase the heart rate. This will help your metabolic rate and help you burn more calories. Try for 30 seconds x3-5 sets.

Push up into mountain climber on medicine ball

This is a two in one combo move. First, balance your hands on the medicine ball, feet on the ground. Holding the plank position, back straight and core engaged. Then perform a push up, so lower your chest to the medicine ball. When you come back up, perform a mountain climber, by bringing one leg across your body to opposite elbow. One push up, left and right mountain climber is one rep. Option 1:Perform this move without the medicine ball and on the floor. Option 2: Use the medicine ball. Try for 10 reps x3-5 sets.

Single leg deadlift to OH press with plate

Choose which leg you want to work first and balance on that leg. Then bend the front leg and elevate the back leg. This is the single leg deadlift. Option 1 is without the weighted plate. Option 2 is to hold the weighted plate in both hands. After the deadlift, reach the plate above your head into the Over Head press: another compound move that works lots of muscles whilst focusing on balance and core strength. Try for 10 reps each leg x3-5 sets.

Each exercise should be performed with control and precision. For example, slow the movement down and feel the muscular contraction. Switching on the Central Nervous System will activate more muscle fibres, meaning the more fibres recruited will generate better stability and strength for the muscle.

Try these exercises for a set period of time and look to advance to more reps, more sets and heavier weight. Then take to the waves to see how strong you have become! ■

Nicky Holland
Fitness Manager, Fitness First Motor City

UAE DIRECTORY

General Sports Equipment Megastores

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Decathlon, Dubai, Mirdif City Centre, +971 42839392, www.decathlon.com
Go Sport, The Dubai Mall: +971 43253595; Abu Dhabi Mall**:** +971 26454595; Bawabat Al Sharq Mall, Abu Dhabi: +971 25868240; Yas Mall: +971 25650812; MOE: +971 4395 8951, www.go-sport.com
Peiniger BMT Est., CBD, Khalifa Street, Yateem Optician Bldg., Abu Dhabi, UAE, +971 26262332, www.peiniger.org
Sun and Sand Sports, most shopping centres, +971 43599905; Online store: +971 43149001; Retail store: +971 43504400, http://en-ae.sssports.com

Adventure tours and desert safaris

Alpha Tours, P.O. Box 25718, 27th Floor, Burlington Tower, Business Bay, Dubai, +971 47019111, www.alphatoursdubai.com
Dadabhai Travel, SR 1&2, GF, Gulf Towers, Oud Metha Rd. Dubai, +971 43885566, www.dadabhaitravel.ae
Desert Rangers, P.O. Box 33501, Dubai UAE, +971 44569944 or 507035111 www.desertrangers.com
Desert Road Tourism, Office 503, 5th Flr., Al Khor Plaza, Dubai, +971 42959429, www.desertroadtours.com
Dreamdays, First Floor Rm. 107 Ibn Battuta Gate (Offices) Sheikh Zayed Rd., Dubai +971 44329392 or 44329393, www.dreamdays.ae
Dream Explorer LLC, JLT, Dubai, P.O. Box 214576, +971 44563390 www.dreamexplorerdubai.com
Dubai Relax Travel, P.O. Box 37459, National Towers: Churchill Tower Suite #614, Business Bay, Dubai, +971 528996307, www.dubairelaxtours.com
Explorer Tours, Umm Ramool, Dubai, +971 42861991, www.explorertours.ae
Gulf for Good, P.O. Box 506006, 1/F, Building 4, Dubai International Humanitarian City, Dubai**,** +971 43680222, www.gulf4good.org
Gulf Ventures, Dnata Travel Centre, +971 44045880, www.gulfventures.com
MMI Travel LLC, Mezzanine Floor, Dnata Travel Centre, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 4 4045999, www.theemiratesgroup.com
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Oasis Palm Dubai, P.O. Box 181258 Dubai, Office 404, Royal Plaza Building Al Rigga Street, +971 42628889 or 42686826, www.opdubai.com
Rahhalah, Shata Tower – 27th Floor, Office No. 2711, Media City, Dubai, +971 44472166, www.rahhalah.com

Clubs

Abu Dhabi Fishing, Camping, Kayaking, & Adventure Club, +971 5 04920860, mohammed.almahrouky@gmail.com

Air

Balloon Adventures Emirates, Office 123 Oasis Centre, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43884044, www.ballooning.ae
Dubai Paragliders, +971 552120155 or 552250193, www.microaviation.org
Jazirah Aviation Club, Ras Al Khaimah, +971 72446416 or 555531318, www.jac-uae.net
Seawings, Dubai,+971 48070708, www.seawings.ae
Skydive Dubai, The Palm: Al Seyahi St, Dubai Marina, +971 43778888, www.skydivedubai.ae

Boating & Sailing

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Al Jeer Marina, RAK border Musandam, +971 72682333 or 504873185, www.aljeerport.ae
Al Shaali Marine, Ajman, +971 67436443, www.alshaalimarine.com
Al Yousuf Industrial, LLC, +971 4 3474111, www.aym.ae, yamboats@alyousuf.com
Elite Pearl Charter, P.O. Box 214173, Saeed Tower 1, office #3102, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43889666, www.elitepearlcharter.com
Gulf Craft, P.O. Box 666, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Street, Ajman, +971 67406060, www.gulfcraftinc.com

Distributors and Dealers

Art Marine LLC, Al Quoz Industrial Area, Sheikh Zayed Road, 3rd Interchange +971 43388955, www.artmarine.ae or www.artmarinechandlery.com
Azure Marine Dubai, +971 4 3706886, www.azuremarine.net
Luxury Sea Boats, Showroom #8, The Curve Building, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 4 3284629, www.luxuryseaboats.com
Macky Marine LLC, Box 37594, Ground Floor, Marina Yatch Club, Office # 5, Dubai Marina, Jebel Ali, Dubai, +971 505518317, www.mackymarine.com
Nautilus Yachts, Sharjah, +971 553419494 or 503419494, www.nautilusyachts.com
The Boat House, P.O. Box 71628, Al Quoz, Dubai, +971 43405152, www.theboathouse.ae
UAEBoats4Sale, Dubai Marina, +971 42932465, 567001801, www.uaeboats4sale.com
Western Marine, P.O. Box 52938, Sheikh Zayed Road, Knotika Marine Mall, Dubai, +971 44327870

Equipment

Ali Khalifah Moh Al Fuqaei, Ground Floor, Tara Hotel Building, Abdul Nasser Square Street, Dubai, +971 42263220
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Blue Waters Marine, Shop 11, The Curve Bldg., Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43808616 or 553899995, www.bluewatersmarine.com
Extreme Marine, Dubai Marina Branch, +971 43992995, www.extrememarine-me.com
Japan Marine / D1 Marine, WS # 110, Dubai Maritime City, +971 4 4426395 or 55 1666035, www.japanmarine.co
Rineh Emirates Trading LLC, Al Quoz, Dubai, www.rinehemiratesme.com, +971 43391512

Repairs and Maintenance

Extreme Marine, Jebel Ali Branch, Jebel Ali, Industrial Area, P.O. Box 97705, Dubai, +971 48830777, www.extrememarine-me.com
Rineh Emirates, Sheikha Sana Warehouse 1, Al Quoz, +971 43391512,
SNS Marine, Dubai Creek & Yacht Club, Dubai, +971 501405058, www.snsmarine.ae
The Boat House, P.O. Box 71628, Al Quoz, Dubai, +971 43405152, www.theboathouse.ae

Cruise Operators

Al Bateen Marina, Abu Dhabi, +971 26665491
Al Marsa Travel & Tourism, P.O. Box 32261, Sharjah, UAE, +971 65441232; Dibba, Musandam, Oman, +968 26836550
Bateaux Dubai, Dubai Creek opposite the British Embassy, +971 48145553
Bristol Middle East, Marina Heights Tower, Dubai Marina – Marina Walk,Dubai, +971 4368 2480, www.bristol-middleeast.com
Captain Tony's, Yas Marina, Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, +971 26507175, www.captaintonys.ae
Delma Industrial Supply and Marine Services, Al Bateen Jetty, Abu Dhabi, +971 26668153, www.delmamarine.net
Eden Yachting, Dubai Marina, +971 43282930, 50 3716377, www.edenyachting.com
Emirates Yatching, P.O. Box 8380, Dubai, +971 42826683
El Mundo, Dubai, +971 505517406, www.elmundodubai.com
Four Star Travels and Tourism, Dubai, +971 561012599, www.4startravels.com
4 Yatch Chartering LLC, Toll Free: 800 YACHT (92248), Office #4, Dubai Marina Yatch Club, Dubai, www.4yachtchartering.ae
Fujairah Rotana Resort & Spa, Al Aqah Beach, Fujairah, +971 92449888, www.rotana.com
Ghantoot Marina & Resort, Abu Dhabi, +971 529933153, www.ghantootmarina.com
Happy Days Sea Cruising LLC, Dubai, +971 48706668, www.happydaysdubai.com
LY Catamaran, Bur Dubai, +971 566506683, www.lycatamaran.com
Marine Concept, P.O. Box 282586, Office 611, Al Barsha Business Centre, Dubai, +971 43958022, 559603030 www.marine-charter-concept.com
Nautica1992, Habtoor Grand Beach Resort & Spa, Autograph Collection, Dubai Marina, +971 504262415, www.nautica1992.ae
Noukhada Adventure Company - P.O. Box 73373, C/O Ali & Sons Real Estate LLC, Plot No. 29, Abu Dhabi – Al Ain Rd, Um Al Nar, Abu Dhabi, UAE - +971 25581889 www.noukhada.ae
RAK Marine LLC, Ras Al Khaimah City Hilton Marina, +971 72066410, 504912696, 507682345
Sea Hunters Passenger Yachts & Boats Rental, Dubai Marina, +971 42951011
Smoke Dragon of London Yacht, Abu Dhabi International Marine & Sports Club, +971 507011958 or 504546617
Summertime Marine Sports, Dubai, +971 42573084
The Club, Abu Dhabi, +971 26731111, www.the-club.com
The Yellow Boats LLC, Dubai Marina Walk – opposite Spinneys, Intercontinental Hotel Marina, 800892, www.theyellowboats.com

Marinas

Abu Dhabi International Marine Sports Club, Abu Dhabi, Breakwater, +971 26815566, www.adimsc.com
Abu Dhabi Marina, Abu Dhabi, Tourist Club Area, +971 26440300
Al Jeer Marina, RAK Border, Musandam +971 72682333 or 504873185, www.aljeerport.ae
Al Wasl Charter & Fishing, Airport Road, Al Qwais Bldg., Off. 207, Dubai, UAE, +971 42394760 or 42959477, www.cruiseindubai.com
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Fujairah International Marine Club, Fujairah, +971 92221166, www.fimc.ae
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Jebel Ali Golf Resort and Spa Marina, Jebel Ali, Dubai, +971 48145555 www.jebelali-international.com
Pavilion Marina, Dubai, Jumeirah Beach Hotel, +971 44068800
Umm Al Quwaim Marine Sports Club, Umm Al Quwaim, +971 67666644, www.uaqmarineclub.com

Dragon Boat Groups

Dubai Dawn Patrol Dragon Boating, Dubai, +971 508795645, www.facebook.com/DubaiDawnPatrol
Dubai Diggers, Jumeirah Beach Hotel, pier next to 360, Dubai, +971 501547175, www.dubai-diggers.com
UAE Dragon Boat Association, +971 507634008, www.dubaidragonboat.com

Camping & Hiking

Equipment

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Tresspass, 2nd floor above ice rink, The Dubai Mall, +971 43398801
Urban Peak, PO Box 9587, Office 502E, Ibn Battuta Gate Offices, Dubai, +971 44548805, www.urbanpeak.com

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Arabia Outdoors, Dubai, +971 559556209, www.arabiaoutdoors.com
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Desert Road Tourism, Al Khor Plaza – 503, Dubai, +971 42959428, www.arabiatours.com
Libra Travel & Tourism LLC, +971 43397700, www.facebook.com/LibraTravelDubai
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Sheesa Beach, Musandam, Dibba, +971 50336046, www.sheesabeach.com

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Jack Wolfskin, Al Wahda Mall, Abu Dhabi +971 24437802, www.jack-wolfskin.com

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Adventure HQ, Dubai Times Square Center, Sheikh Zayed Rd, toll free: 800-ADVENTURE, www.adventurehq.ae

Al Shaheen Adventure, Abu Dhabi, +971 28137444, www.alshaheenme.com
Arabia Outdoors, Dubai, +971 559556209, www.arabiaoutdoors.com
Dorell Sports Management, Dubai World Trade Centre, +971 43065061, www.climbingdubai.com
E-Sports UAE, Dubai, +971 43697817, www.esportsuae.com
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UAE Climbing, +971 506456491, www.uaeclimbing.com

Mountain Biking & Cycling

Equipment/Dealers

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Fun Ride Sports, 301, 3rd floor, Mushrif Mall, Abu Dhabi, Rm. 4, Mezzanine floor, C-13 Bldg., Khalifa City A, Abu Dhabi, +971 24455838, www.funridesports.com
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Probike, Dubai, Al Barsha 1, +971 43255705, www.probike.ae
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Tamreen Sports LLC, Khalifa Street, Abu Dhabi, +971 26222525, www.tamreensports.com
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Wolfi's Bike Shop, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43394453, www.wbs.ae

Operator

Absolute Adventure, Dubai, +971 43926463, www.adventure.ae, info@adventure.ae

Clubs

Abu Dhabi Tri Club, www.abudhabitriclub.com
Cycle Safe Dubai, Dubai Autodrome www.cyclechallenge.ae
Dubai Roadsters, +971 43394453, www.dubairoadsters.com

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Al Masaood Marine, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43468000, www.masaoodmarine.com
Al Yousuf Motors, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43390621, www.aym.ae/yamaha
Blue Waters Marine, +971 43808616, Dubai, www.bluewatersmarine.com
Gulf Marine Sports, Abu Dhabi, +971 26710017, www.gulfmarinesports.com
Premiers for Equipment, Sheikh Zayed 1st. Road, Abu Dhabi, +971 26665226, www.premiers-uae.com
Dive Shop.ae, Building #123, Street 26, Area 369, Al Quoz Industrial Area 4, Dubai, +971 43414940, www.diveshop.ae
Scuba 2000, Al Bidiya Beach, Fujairah, +971 92388477, www.scuba-2000.com

Diving Centres

Al Boom Diving (equipment), Dubai, Al Wasl Rd, +971 43422993, www.alboomdiving.com
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Arabian Diver, Hilton Marine, Ras Al Khaimah, +971 72226628 or 502428128 www.arabiandiver.com
Arabian Divers and Sportfishing Charters, Al Bateen Marina Resort, Abu Dhabi, +971 506146931, www.fishabudhabi.com
Coastal Technical Divers, glenn@coastaltechnicaldivers.com, www.coastaltechnicaldivers.com
Deep Blue Sea Diving, International City, Dubai, +971 44308246, www.diveindubai.com
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Emirates Divers Centre, Abu Dhabi, near Meena Fish Market, +97126432444, www.edc-ad.ae
Freediving UAE, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Fujairah, +971 506130486 contactus@freedivinguae.com, www.freedivinguae.com
Freestyle Divers, Al Corniche Street, Dibba, Fujairah, +971 504514259, www.freestyledivers.me
Fujairah Rotana Resort & Spa - Al Aqah Beach, **Al Aqah Beach, Fujairah**, +971 92449888, www.rotana.com
Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort, Dibba Road, Fujairah, +971 92449000, www.lemeridien-alaqah.com
Neptune Diving, +971 504347902, www.neptunedivingcentre.com
Pavilion Dive Centre (equipment), Dubai, +971 44068828
Scuba 2000, Al Bidiya Beach, Fujairah, +971 92388477, www.scuba-2000.com
Scuba UAE.com, +971 502053922, www.scubauae.com
7 Seas Diving Center, Khorfakkan, +971 92387400, www.7seasdivers.com
Sharjah Wanderers Dive Club, Sharjah, +971 506683430, www.bsac406.com
Sheesa Beach, Dibba, Musandam, +971 503336046, www.sheesabeach.com
Sky & Sea Adventures, Dubai, Hilton, Jumeirah Beach Road, +971 43999005, www.watersportsdubai.com

Clubs

Atlantis Underwater Photography Club, Dubai, +971 44263000
Desert Sports Diving Club, Dubai, www.desertsportsdivingclub.net
Emirates Diving Association, Diving Village, Al Shindagha, Dubai, +971 43939390, www.emiratesdiving.com
Filipino SCUBA Divers Club (FSDC), Dubai, UAE, +971 566952421, www.facebook.com/FSDCuae
Freediving UAE, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Fujairah, contactus@freedivinguae.com, www.freedivinguae.com
Sharjah Wanderers Dive Club, Sharjah, +971 507840830, www.bsac406.com

Fishing & Kayaking

Equipment

Al Boom Marine, Abu Dhabi & Dubai, +971 42894858, www.alboommarine.com
Al Hamur Marine and Sports Equipment, Jumeirah Beach Road, Dubai, +971 43444468
Al Masaood Marine, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43468000, www.masaoodmarine.com
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Arabian Divers and Sportfishing Charters, Al Bateen Marina Resort, Abu Dhabi, +971 506146931, www.fishabudhabi.com
Barracuda Fishing and Outdoor, Dubai, Street 13A 1, Al Safa 1, +971 43466558, www.barracudadubai.com
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Challenging Adventure, Wadi Al Bih - Ras Al Khaimah, +971 561060798 or 44538386, contactus@challengingadventure.com
Global Climbing Trading LLC, Dubai Investment Park 1, Dubai, +971 48829361, www.globalclimbing.com
Ocean Active, Dubai, Garden Centre, +971 502898713, www.oceanactive.com

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Al Hamra Marina and Yacht Club, Al Hamra, Ras Al Khaimah, +971 72432274, www.alhamramarina.com
Al Mahara Dive Center, Downtown Abu Dhabi, +971 501118125, www.divemahara.com
Al Wasl Charter & Fishing, Airport Road, Al Qwais Bldg., Off. 207, Dubai, UAE, +971 42394760 or 42959477, www.cruiseindubai.com
Al Shaheen Adventure, Abu Dhabi, +971 26429995, www.alshaheenme.com
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Ocean Active, +971 504592259, www.oceanactive.com
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Soolyman Sport Fishing, Umm Suquiem, Fishing Port No. 2, Jumeirah Beach, +971 508866227, 508866228 or 503402379, www.soolymansportfishing.com
Summertime Marine Sports, Dubai, +971 42573084, www.summertimemarine.com
Xclusive Yachts, Dubai, Dubai Marina, +971 44327233, www.xclusiveyachts.com

Clubs

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Dubai Surfski & Kayak Club, Kitesurfers' Beach, Umm Suqeim 1, Dubai, +971 554986280, www.dskc.hu

General Sports Equipment Distributors

Adventure HQ, Dubai Times Square Center, Sheikh Zayed Rd, Toll free: 800-ADVENTURE, www.adventurehq.ae
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800 Sport, Al Quoz, Dubai +971 43467751, www.800sport.ae
Flip Flop Arabia, +971 556881793, 501084010, www.flipfloparabia.com
Global Climbing Trading LLC, Dubai Investment Park 1, Dubai +971 48829361, www.globalclimbing.com
Highbury Trading FZE LLC, P.O. Box 16111, RAK Free Trade Zone Authority, Ras Al Khaima, +971 526799506, www.highburytrade.com
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Ocean Sports FZE, +971 559352735, www.kitesurfsup.com
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Sport in Life Distribution, Nad Al Hammar Rd., Ras Al Khor, Dubai, UAE, +971 42896001 or 42896002, info@sportinlife.ae, www.sportinlife.ae
Tresspass, The Dubai Mall 2nd floor above ice rink, +971 43398801

Horse Riding

Equipment

Al Asifa Horse Equestrian Equipment & Requisites Trading P.O. Box 77282, AL Khawanij 1st , Dubai, +971 554733110, www.asifa.ae
Black Horse LLC, Baniyas West, Near Empost Abu Dhabhi, +971 25866205, www.blackhorseuae.com
Bonjour Equestrian Supplies, Nad Al Hammar Rd., Ras Al Kho, Dubai, UAE, +971 42896001, +971 42896002, info@bonjourequestrian.com, www.bonjourequestrian.com
Cavalos Equine Care and Supplies, 16th Street, Al Khalidiyah, Abu Dhabi, +917 22222433, www.cavalosuae.com
Emirta Horse Requirement Centre, Sheik Zayed Rd., Dubai, +971 43437475, www.emirtahorse.com

Equestrian Clubs/Centres

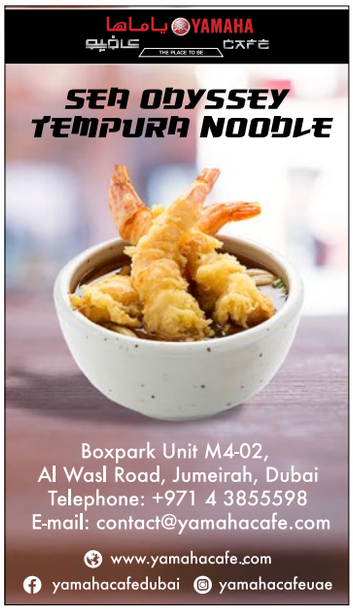
Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club, Al Mushrif, Abu Dhabi, +971 24455500, www.adec-web.com
Al Ahli Riding School, Al Amman Street, Dubai-Sharjah Rd., +971 42988408, www.alahliclub.info
Al Forsan International Sports Resort, Abu Dhabi, +971 25568555, www.alforsan.com
Al Jiyad Stables, Behind Dubai International Endurance City, Dubai, +971 505995866, info@aljiyad.com, www.aljiyad.com
Al Sahra Desert Resort Equestrian Centre, Dubai, +971 44274055, equestrian.centre@alsahra.com
Desert Equestrian Club, Mirdif, Dubai, +971 503099770 or 501978888
Desert Palm Riding School, Near Al Awir Road (going to Hatta-Oman), Dubai, +971 43238010, www.dubaipoloclub.com
Dubai Polo Academy, Dubai, +971 508879847, www.dubaipoloacademy.com
Dubai Polo & Equestrian Club, Dubai, Arabian Ranches, +971 43618111, www.poloclubdubai.com
Emirates Equestrian Centre, Dubai, +971 505587656, www.emiratesequestriancentre.com
Ghantoot Polo & Racing Club, Exit 399, Abu Dhabi/ Dubai Highway, Abu Dhabi, +971 25629050, www.grpc.ae
Golden Stables Equestrian Club, Al Khawaneej, Dubai, (Nouri) +971 555528182
Hoofbeatz, located just inside the Dubai Polo & Equestrian Club, Dubai, +971 569424551, www.hoofbeatz.com
Mushrif Equestrian and Polo Club, Mushrif Park, Al Khawaneej Road, Dubai, +971 42571256, www.mushrifec.com
Rahal Ranch, Al Wathba Racing Area, Abu Dhabi, +971 565066741, www.rahalranch.com
Riding for the Disabled, Dubai, lessons@rdad.ae, www.rdad.ae,
Sharjah Equestrian & Racing Club, Sharjah, Al Dhaid Road, +971 65311188, www.serc.ae

Racecourses
Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club, Al Mushrif, Abu Dhabi, +971 24455500, www.adec-web.com
Ghantoot Racing & Polo Club, Exit 399, Abu Dhabi/ Dubai Highway, Abu Dhabi, +971 25629050, www.grpc.ae
Jebel Ali Racecourse, off the main Abu Dhabi - Dubai Highway (Sheikh Zayed road) beside the Emirates Golf Club, Dubai, +971 43474914
Meydan Grandstand and Racecourse, Al Meydan Road, Nad Al Sheba, Dubai, +971 43270000, www.meydan.ae
Sharjah Racecourse, Al Dhaid Road, Sharjah, +971 65311155, www.serc.ae

Jet Ski
Dealers
Al Masaood Marine, Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Road, +971 43468000, www.masaoodmarine.com
Al Yousuf Motors, Sheikh Zayed Rd., Dubai, +971 43390621, www.aym.ae/yamaha
Japan Marine General Trading, Al Garhoud Road, Liberty Building, Dubai, +971 44426395, uday@japanmarine.jp, www.japanmarine.co
Liberty Kawasaki, Interchange 4, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, Direct: +971 45019442, 45019412 or 43419341, www.libertykawasaki.com

Motocross & ATV's
Dealers
Al Badayer Rental (Rental), Dubai-Hatta Road, +971 68861161 or 507842020, www.albadayerrental.com
Al Shaali Moto, Ras Al Khor, +971 43200009, www.alshaalimoto.com
Al Yousuf Motors, Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Rd, +971 43390621, www.aym.ae/yamaha
Golden Desert Motorcycles, P.O. Box 47912, E-44 Hatta road, Al Badayer Madam, Sharjah, +971 529484616 or 505 033 800
Just Gas It, Hatta Rd., Al Aweer, Dubai, UAE, +971 559031664, www.JustGasIt.net
KTM, Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Road, exit 42, +971 43468999, www.ktm.com
Liberty Kawasaki, Interchange 4, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, Direct: +971 45019442, 45019412 or 43419341, www.libertykawasaki.com
Motoventure, Hobbies Club, Al Awir, Hatta Road, Dubai, +971 555437392, www.motoventure.net
mxDubai, Al Ain Road Dubai, +971 55 2090832, www.mxdubai.com
Polaris UAE (atv's), Ras Al Khor, Nad al Hamar Road, Al Ghandi Complex, Dubai, +971 42896100, M4, Sector 13, 10th Street, Mussafah Industrial, Abu Dhabi, +971 26441478, www.polarisuae.com
Sebsports, Al Quoz Industrial Area 1 Dubai, +971 43393399, www.sebsports.com
Equipment
Sandstorm Motorcycles (Rental), Al Quoz, Dubai, +971 43395608,
Sebsports, Dubai, Al Quoz Industrial Area 3, +971 43393399, www.sebsports.com
2XWheeler, Motorcity Dubai, +971 44548388, www.2xwheeler.com

Motorcycling
Distributors and Dealers
Al Yousuf Motors, Sheikh Zayed Rd., Dubai, +971 43390621, www.aym.ae/yamaha
Ducati, Al Salam Street, Abu Dhabi, +971 24918593, www.ducati.ae
Duseja General Trading Co. LLC, Warehouse No: B3, Alquoz Ind Area #3, Umm Suqeim Road next to Max Garage Diagonally opposite Lulu Hypermarket Al Barsha, +971 43476712, www.dusejamoto.com
Harley-Davidson, Mussafah 4, Street 10, Abu Dhabi, +971 25540667, hd.auh@harley-davidson.ae, www.harley-davidson-abu-dhabi.com
Liberty Kawasaki, Interchange4, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, Direct: +971 45019442, 45019412 or 43419341, www.libertykawasaki.com
Polaris UAE, Al Ghandi Complex, Nad al Hamar Road, Ras Al Khor, +971 42896100, www.polarisuae.com
Tristar Motorcycles, Al Awir Road, Nr Oman Transport, +971 43330659, www.tristaruae.com
Workshops and Services
Al Forsan International Sports Resort, Abu Dhabi, +971 25568555, www.alforsan.com



Dubai Autodrome, Dubai, +971 43678700,www.dubaiautodrome.com
Emirates Motorplex, Umm Al Quwain, +971 67681166
2xWheeler Adventures, Dubai, +971 44548388, www.alainraceway.com
Yas Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi, 800 YAS (927) or +971 26599800, www.yasmarinacircuit.com

Off-Road
Dealers
Bling My Truck, +971 503634839 or 505548255, info@blingmytruck.com, www.blingmytruck.com
4x4 Motors LLC, Shk. Zayed Rd, Dubai, +971 43384866, www.4x4motors.com
Liberty Automobiles, Dubai, 800 5423789, www.libertyautos.com
Repairs and Services
AAA Service Centre, Al Quoz, Dubai, UAE, +971 4 2858989, www.aaadubai.com
Icon Auto Garage, Dubai, +971 43382744, www.icon-auto.com
Mebar Auto, Al Quoz, Industrial Area 2, Dubai, UAE, +971 43469600, www.mebarauto.com
Off Road Zone, Dubai, Al Quoz, +971 43392449, www.offroad-zone.com
Saluki Motorsport, Dubai, +971 43476939 www.salukimotorsport.com
Equipment
Advanced Expedition Vehicles, Dubai & Abu Dhabi, +971 43307152, www.aev.ae
Al Yousuf Motors, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43390621, www.aym.ae/yamaha
Bling My Truck, +971 503634839 or 505548255, www.blingmytruck.com
Heartland UAE, Al Mafraq Industrial, Abu Dhabi, +971 569796524 or 506472447, www.heartlanduae.com
Icon Auto Garage, Dubai, +971 43382744, www.icon-auto.com
Mebar Auto, Al Quoz, Industrial Area 2, Dubai, UAE, +971 4 3469600, www.mebarauto.com
Wild X Adventure Shop, Dubai-Hatta Road, Dubai, +971 48321050,
Yellow Hat, Nad Al Hamar, and Times Square Center, Dubai, +971 42898060, www.yellowhat.ae
Tour Operators
Arabian Adventures, Dubai & Abu Dhabi, +971 43034888, www.arabian-adventures.com
Desert Road Tourism, Al Khor Plaza – 503, Dubai, +971 42959429, www.desertroadtours.com
Oasis Palm Dubai, Dubai, +971 4 2628832 or 4 2686826, www.opdubai.com
Clubs
Abu Dhabi Off- Road Club, www.ad4x4.com
ALMOST 4x4 Off-Road Club, +971 507665522, www.almost4x4.com
Dubai Offroaders, www.dubaioffroaders.com
JEEP Wrangler JK Fun Club, suffian.omar@yahoo.com, www.jk-funclub.com
ME 4X4, www.me4x4.com

Running
Clubs
ABRasAC, Dubai, www.abrasac.org
Abu Dhabi Tri Club, Abu Dhabi, www.abudhabitriclub.org
Abu Dhabi Striders, admin@abudhabistriders.com, www.abudhabistriders.com
Al Ain Road Runners, Abu Dhabi, +971 504188978, alainroadrunners@yahoo.co.uk
Mirdif Milers, Dubai, www.mirdifmilers.info
Dubai Creek Striders www.dubaicreekstriders.org
Desert Road Runners www.desertroadrunners.club

Stand up Paddling, Kite & Surfing, Wakeboarding
Equipment
Al Boom Marine, Abu Dhabi & Dubai, +971 42894858, www.alboommarine.com
Al Masaood Marine, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43468000, www.masaoodmarine.com
Kitesurf Dubai, Kitesurf Beach, Umm Suqueim and Jumeirah 3 +971 505586190, www.kitesurfdubai.ae
Picnico, Al Fairdooni Building, Sheikh Zayed Road, Near Sharaf DG Metro Station and Mall of Emirates, +971 43951113
Surf Dubai, Umm Suqeim, Dubai, +971 505043020, www.surfingdubai.com
Surf Shop Arabia, Building 1, Al Manara Road (East), Interchange 3, Dubai, +971 564716180, www.surfshoparabia.com
Surf School Arabia, +971 556010997, www.surfschoolarabia.com
UAE Kite Surfing, +971 505626383, www.ad-kitesurfing.net
Distributors
Kitepeople Kite & Surf Store, International City, Dubai, +971 504559098, www.kitepeople.ae
Ocean Sports FZE, +971 559352735, www.kitesurfsup.com
Operators
Al Forsan International Sports Resort, Abu Dhabi, +971 25568555, www.alforsan.com
Dubai Kite Surf School, Umm Suqeim Beach, Dubai, +971 504965107, www.dubaikitesurfschool.com
Duco Maritime, Dubai, Ras Al Khaimah and Abu Dhabi, +971 508703427, www.ducomaritime.com
Dukite, Kitesurf Beach, Umm Suqeim, Dubai,+971 507586992, www.dukite.com
Kite Fly, Dubai, +971 502547440, www.kitesurf.ae
Kitepro Abu Dhabi, Yas Island and Al Dabbayyah, Abu Dhabi, +971 505441494, www.kitepro.ae
Nautica1992, Dubai, +971 504262415, www.nautica1992.ae
Shamal Kite Surfing, Umm Suqueim Dubai, +971 507689226, www.shamalkitesurfing.com
Sky & Sea Adventures, Dubai, Hilton, Jumeirah Beach Road, +971 43999005, www.watersportsdubai.com
Surf School UAE, Umm Suqeim Beach and Building 1, Al Manara Road (East), Interchange 3, Dubai, +971 43791998, www.surfschooluae.com
Watercooled, Jebel Ali Golf Resort and Spa, Dubai, +971 48876771, www.watercooleddubai.com
Water Cooled, Watercooled Sports Services LLC, Hilton Beach Club, Abu Dhabi, +971 26395997, www.watercooleduae.com
Clubs
Abu Dhabi Stand Up Paddle, www.abudhabisup.com
UAE SUP and Surf Association, +971 26665588, www.ridersuae.com

Water Parks
Aquaventure Atlantis, Dubai, Palm Jumeirah, +971 44260000, www.atlantisthepalm.com
Dreamland Aqua Park, Umm Al Quwain, Emirates Road, +971 67681888, www.dreamlanduae.com
Wadi Adventure, Jebel Hafeet, Al Ain, +971 37818422, www.wadiadventure.ae
Wild Wadi Water Park, Dubai, +971 43484444, www.wildwadi.com

Other leisure activities
Abu Dhabi Golf Club, P.O. Box 51234, Sas Al Nakhl, Abu Dhabi, +971 28853555, www.adgolfclub.com
Al Tamimi Stables, Sharjah, +971 67431122 or 44370505, www.tamimistables.com
Blokart Sailing, Nad Al Sheba, Dubai, +971 556101841, www.blokartme.com
Children's City, Creek Park Gate No.1, Dubai, +971 43340808, www.childrencity.ae
Dolphin Bay Atlantis, Dubai, +971 44262000, www.atlantisthepalm.com
Dubai Dolphinarium Dubai, Creek Park Gate No. 1, +971 43369773, www.dubaidolphinarium.ae
iFly Dubai, Dubai, Mirdif City Centre, +971 42316292, www.iflyme.com
Saadiyat Beach Golf Club, Abu Dhabi, Saadiyat Island, +971 25578000, www.sbgolfclub.ae
Sharjah Golf and Shooting Club, Sharjah, +971 65487777, www.golfandshootingshj.com
SkiDubai, Dubai, Mall of the Emirates, +971 44094000, www.skidxb.com
Spacewalk Indoor Skydiving, Abu Dhabi, +971 26577601, adcountryclub.com/spacewalk/about-spacewalk/

Health, Safety & Training
Safety Lessons
Marine Concept Yacht Charter & Sea School, Rania Business Centre, Dubai, +971 559603030, www.marine-charter-concept.com
Sport and Health Centres
Bespoke Wellness, Dubai, +971 553724670, www.bespoke-wellness.com

Original Fitness Co., C6 Tower Al Bateen Bainunah St, Abu Dhabi, +971 2406 9404; P.O. Box 126469, Office 508 The Fairmont Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai, +971 43116571 www.originalfitnessco.com
Orthosports Medical Centre, 5B Street, Jumeira Beach road, Dubai, 800 ORTHO (67846), www.orthosp.com
The Physio Center, Suite 405, Building 49, Dubai Healthcare City, Dubai, +971 44370570, www.physiocentre.ae

OMAN DIRECTORY

Adventure tours and desert safaris

Bike and Hike Oman, P.O. Box 833, Ruwi, Postal Code 112, Oman, +968 24400873, www.bikeandhikeoman.com
Dolphin Qasab Tours, P.O. Box 123, P.C. 811, Khasab City, Musandam, Oman, +968 26730813, www.dolphinkhasabtours.com
Go Dive Oman, Marina Bander Al Rowdha Dive Center, +968 9548 3813 or 98194444, www.godiveoman.com
Khour Shem Tourism, Oman, +968 91713449, www.khourshemtours.com
Nomad Tours, PO Box 583, Postal Code 100, Muscat, Oman, +968 95495240, www.nomadtours.com
Oman Trekking Guides, PO Box 917, NIZWA, Oman, +968 95741441, http://omantrekkingguides.tumblr.com
Cruise Operators
Sheesa Beach, Dibba, Musandam, +968 26836551, www.sheesabeach.com

Diving

Equipment
Al Marsa Musandam, PO Box 44, Dibba, Sultanate of Oman, +968 26836550; UAE: +971 502124100, www.almarsamusandam.com
Al Sawadi Beach Resort, P.O. Box 747, Barka - Al Sawadi, Oman, +968 26795545, www.alsawadibeach.info
Diving UAE & Oman, www.dive-uae-oman.com
Euro Divers CAYC Oman, Marina Bandar Al Rhowda, P.O. Box 940, Muscat, Oman, +968 97899094, www.euro-divers.com
Extra Divers Musandam, PO Box 498, PC 811 Khasab, Musandam, Oman, +968 99877957, www.musandam-diving.com
Global Scuba LLC, +968 24692346, www.global-scuba.com
Khasab Musandam Travel & Tours, P.O. Box 786, PC No. 811, Khasab, Musandam, Sultanate of Oman, +968 91713449, info@tourkhasab.com
Al Mouj Marina, Muscat, Oman, +968 24534554, www.almoujmarina.com
Moon Light Dive Center, P.O. Box 65, Madinat Qaboos, Muscat Oman, +968 99317700, www.moonlightdive.com
Nomad Ocean Adventures, +968 26836069, Dibba, Oman; Fujairah, +971 508918207, www.discovernomad.com
Diving Centres
Euro-divers Marina Bandar Al Rowdha, P.O. Box 940, Postal Code 100 Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, +968 98194444, www.euro-divers.com
Extra Divers Zighy Bay, Oman, Musandam, +968 26735555, www.extradivers.info
Moonlight Dive Center, Near Grand Hyatt Muscat, Shati Al Qurum, Oman, +968 99317700, www.moonlightdive.com
Oman Dive Center, Muscat, Oman, +968 24284240, www.omandivecenter.com
Oman Dive Center Resort, P.O. Box 199, Medinat Sultan Qaboos, Oman, +968 24824240, www.omandivecenter.info
Omanta Scuba Diving Academy, Al Kharjiya Street, Al Shati Area, Muscat, Oman, +968 99777045, www.omantascuba.com
Oxygen Diving and Adventures, P.O. Box 1363 PC130 Alazaiba, Muscat, Oman, +968 92537494 or 9723 2661, www.o2diveoman.com
Scuba Oman, Oman, +968 99558488, www.scubaoman.com
Seaoman, P.O. Box 2394, RUWI PC 112, Oman, +968 24181400, www.seaoman.com

Stand Up Paddeling, Kite & Surfing, Wakeboarding

Equipment, Operators
Kiteboarding Oman, Sawadi Beach, P.O. Box: 133, PC 118, Muscat, Oman, +968 96323524, www.kiteboarding-oman.com
Oman's Kite Center, +968 94006007, www.kitesurfing-lessons.com

Camping & Hiking

Tour Operators
Safari Desert Camp, P.O. Box 117, Postal Code 421, Bediyah, Ghabbi, Oman, +968 99310108, www.safaridesert.com

Caving

Muscat Diving & Adventure Centre, Oman, +968 24543002, www.holiday-in-oman.com
Oman World Tourism, Oman, +968 24565288, www.omanworldtourism.com

Fishing & Kayaking

Equipment
Az'Zaha Tours, +968 99425461, www.azzahatours.com
Water World Marine Oman, P.O. Box 76, Muscat, 113, Sultanate of Oman, +968 24737438, www.waterworldoman.com

Boating & Sailing

Manufacturer
Saphire Marine, PO Box: 11, Post Code 118, Muscat, Oman, +968 24568887, 24566566, 24561619 or 24568881, www.sapphire-marine.com
Marinas
Marina Bandar Al Rowdha, Muscat, Oman, +968 24737286 (ext 215), www.marinaoman.net

QATAR DIRECTORY

Adventure tours and desert safaris

Al Mulla Travels, P.O. Box 4147, Doha, Qatar, +974 44413488, almullatrvls@qatar.net.qa
Alpha Tours, P.O. Box 13530, Doha, Qatar, +974 4344499, info@alphatoursqatar.com
Al QAYED Travel & Tours, PO Box: 158, Doha, Qatar, +974 44072244, www.alqayedtravel.com
Arabian Adventures, PO Box 4476, Doha, Qatar, +974 44361461, www.arabianadventureqatar.net
Black Pearls Tourism Services, P.O. Box: 45677, Doha, Qatar, +974 44357333
E2E Qatar Travel and Tours, PO Box 23563, Doha, Qatar, +974 44516688 or 444515995, www.e2eqatar.com
Falcon Travels, PO Box 22031, Doha, Qatar, +974 44354777, www.falcontravelqatar.com
Gulf Adventures Tourism LLC, P.O. Box 18180, 29 Aspire Zone Street, Aspire Zone Al Ryyan City, State of Qatar Switchboard: +974 44221888, www.gulf-adventures.com
Net Tours Qatar, P.O. Box 23080, Doha, Qatar, +974 4310902, www.nettours.com.qa
Regency Travel & Tours, +974 44344444, www.regencyholidays.com
Qatar Adventure, P.O. Box 13915, Doha, Qatar, +974 55694561, www.qataradventure.com
Qatar Inbound Tours, P.O. Box 21153, +974 77451196, www.inboundtoursqatar.com
Qatar International Tours, P.O. Box 55733 Doha, Qatar, +974 44551141, www.qittour.com
Qatar Ventures, Barwa Village Bulding #12 Shop #33, Doha, Qatar, +974 55776679, www.qatar-ventures.com

Clubs

Cycling, Running & Triathlon
Qatar Chain Reaction, www.qatarchainreaction.weebly.com
Qatar Sandstromers, +974 77775207 or 77776634, www.facebook.com/QatarSandstormers
Velostar Doha, https://www.facebook.com/groups/587539064642288/
Doha Bay Running Club, www.dohabayrunningclub.com
TriClub Doha, www.triclubdoha.com

General Sports Equipment Megastores

Galaxy Sport, City Centre Mall, 3rd Floor, Qatar: +974 44822194; Villagio Mall, Qatar: +974 44569143; Ezdan Mall, Qatar: +974 44922827, The Pearl(Parcel 9) +974 40027513, Souq Jabor +974 44430322. Office: +974 44417935, www.galaxysportqatar.com
GO Sport Qatar, City Centre Mall, 3rd Floor, +974 44631644; Villaggio Mall, +974 44157463, www.facebook.com/gosport.qatar
Sun & Sand Sports Qatar, City Centre Mall, +974 44837007; Dar Al Salam Mall, +974 44510179; Mustafawi Exhibition, +974 44935183, en-ae.sssports.com

Boating & Sailing

Equipment
Regatta Sailing Academy, Katara Beach +974 55503484 www.regattasailingacademy.com
Distributors and Dealers
Speed Marine, Speed Marine, Museum Road, P.O. Box 9145 Doha, Qatar, +974 44410109, www.speedmarinegroup.com
Marinas
Four Seasons Marina, Doha, Qatar, +974 44948899, www.mourjanmarinas.com
Lusail Marina, Lusail City, Qatar, +974 55843282, www.mourjan-lusailmarina.com
The Pearl–Qatar Marinas, Doha, Qatar, +974 44953894, www.ronauticame.com

Horse Riding

Equestrian Clubs/Centres
Al Shaqab, P.O. Box 90055, Doha, Qatar, +974 44546320, www.alshaqab.com
Qatar Racing & Equestrian Club, Racing and Equestrian Club, P.O. Box 7559, Doha, Qatar, +974 44197704, www.qrec.gov.qa

Diving

Equipment/Centres
Al Fardan Marine Services, Najma Street (near Al Fardan Exchange), Doha, Qatar, +974 44435626
Doha Sub Aqua Club, Doha Sub-Aqua Club, PO Box: 5048, Doha, Qatar, +974 50483794, www.dohasubaquaclub.com
Extreme Adventure, P.O. Box 33002, Shop 3, 4 Ahmed Bin Ali Street (Bin Omran), Doha, Qatar, +974 44877884, www.extreme.qa
GoSport, City Centre Mall, 3rd Floor, Qatar: +974 44631644; Villagio Mall, Qatar: +974 44517574, www.facebook.com/gosport.qatar
Pearl Divers, P.O. Box 2489, Doha, Qatar, +974 44449553, www.pearl-divers.org
Poseidon Dive Center, P.O. Box: 11538, Ras Abu Abboud Street, Al Emadi Suites, Showroom #2, Doha, Qatar +974 66084040, www.pdcqatar.com
Qatar Scuba Center, 187 Al Mansoura Street, Al Mansoura Area, Doha, Qatar, +974 66662277, www.qatarscubacenter.com
Q-Dive Marine Centre, Souq Al Najada cnr of Grand Hamad and Ali bin Abdulla Street; +974 55319507 or 4375065, www.qdive.net
World Marine Centre, PO Box 6944, Doha, Qatar, +974 44360989, www.worldmarinecenter.webs.com
Qatar Divers, Marriott Hotel Marina Near Old Airport, Ras Abu Aboud Area, Doha, Qatar, +974 55246651, 40405156, www.qatardivers.com
Qatar Marine, Go Sport City Center West Bay, P.O. Box 16657, Doha, +974 55319507, www.qatarmarine.net
Qatar Scuba Centre, 187 Al Mansoura Street, Al Mansoura Area, Doha, Qatar, +974 66662277 or 44422234, www.qatarscubacenter.com

Fishing & Kayaking

Equipment
Al Kashat, Fishing and Hunting Equipment, Souq Waqif, next to the Falcon Souq, +974 70057489
Al Mamzoore Marine Equipment, P.O. Box 6449, Old Salata, Doha, Qatar, +974 44444238, almamzoore@qatar.net.qa
Extreme Adventure, Shop 3,4 Ahmed Bin Ali Steet, Doha, +974 44877884, www.extreme.qa
Fish World, P.O. Box 1975, Doha, Qatar, +974 44340754
State of Qatar (QatarSub), Souq Waqif, next to the Falcon Souq, +974 4431234, www.stateofqatar.com
Operators
Paddle Qatar, +974 55490895, www.paddleqatar.com

Stand Up Paddeling, Kite & Surfing, Wakeboarding

Equipment, Operators
Fly-N-Ride, Ras abu Aboud, Doha, +974 33117089,
Flo Kite School, Westbay, Doha, +974 33155628, www.flokiteschool.com
Kitesurfing Qatar, +97430179108, www.kitesurfingqatar.com
QSUP, Qanat Quartier, Costa Malaz, The Pearl-Qc, Doha, Qatar, +974 66602830, www.qsup.me

Cycling (Road & Off Road)

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Galaxy Sport, City Centre Mall, 3rd Floor, +974 44822194; Villaggio Mall, +974 4456 9143; Ezdan Mall, +974 4492 2827, www.galaxysportqatar.com
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