

Pearl of the

East

The Dubai skyline is set to be transformed by the Dubai Pearl development. Jayne Alverca takes a closer look at the planned complex which creates an impression of awe and wonder


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y the end of 2013, the Dubai skyline will have been transformed. At the heart of the Dubai Technology and Free Media Zone, a new and iconic landmark will soon appear. Overlooking the Palm Jumeirah Island, Burj Al Arab and the clear waters of the Arabian Gulf, four 73-storey towers, connected at the summit to give the impression of a single dramatic structure, will create a breathtaking new skyline. The Dubai Pearl development will translate the culture and heritage of the city into a landmark that befits the city's growing importance and status in the Middle East of the 21st century.

It is envisaged as a world class, mixed-use, 20 million square foot integrated development under the ownership and management of Pearl Dubai FZ LLC, a consortium of investors led by the UAE's Al Fahim Group. The group's portfolio also includes oil field support, automotive and industrial development, hospitality, travel and tourism, and it is already recognised as one of the leading real estate developers in the region.

Pearl Dubai FZ LLC is headed by leading UAE businessman Abdul Majeed Ismail Al Fahim, who is chairman. Prior to Pearl Dubai, Al Fahim was executive director of the Private Office for a member of the Abu Dhabi ruling family. He has also held key positions at a number of leading financial institutions in the Middle East including the National Bank of Abu Dhabi, the Islamic Financial Consultancy (Bahrain) and the Abu Dhabi Investment Company.





Pearl Dubai's president and CEO is Santhosh Joseph, a highly experienced investor who has worked for many years in the real estate sector. Joseph sees the development as a ground-breaking project that will set a new international benchmark, bringing together luxury, sustainability and state-of-the-art technology in a way that has never been attempted before in the region.

He points out that the retail component of the development will be unique in offering a cluster of so many leading global brands in a single location. Baccarat, Bellagio, MGM and Quintessentially are among the array of glittering brands that have already pledged a presence within the 1.8 million square foot mixed-used destination.

When completed, the development will set a new quality standard for sustainable urban living in Dubai—a 24 hour community where people can work, visit, live and play in style.

“We have set out to create a unique destination and community. We conceived and planned Dubai Pearl as an international quality landmark that will reinforce Dubai as a global city of excellence. Arguably the best location in Dubai deserves nothing less,” Joseph stated at a recent press conference.

Schweger Associated Architects of Germany are the lead architects and master planners of Dubai Pearl. Their design has focused on column-free living and working space that will allow flexibility of use and capture unobstructed views of the beautiful surroundings. The column-free

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Al Habtoor Leighton LLC
P.O. Box 10869, Dubai - UAE
T: +971 4 285 75 51
F: +971 4 285 74 79
E: info@hlg.ae www.hlg.ae

design of the development is a pioneering approach that will create 20 per cent more usable space than is the norm within the region. At street level, the development will give the impression of a low rise city centre that will interact harmoniously with the symbolic tower and landscape to give a very special aesthetic character and sense of place to the development.

The development will feature a mix of premium office space, international retail outlets and the highest quality restaurant and leisure facilities alongside freehold bespoke residential units for up to 9,000 people in one of the only projects of its kind to provide individual customised apartments and lofts. It is anticipated that a further 12,000 people will come into the development each day in response to the new employment opportunities that will be generated.

People, and the desire to create a vibrant and thriving community, are at the core of the Dubai Pearl vision. The architects want to design an environment that enhances and promotes human health, happiness, prosperity and security while respecting privacy and encouraging access to nature and open spaces within the city.

The development has therefore been designed as an integrated pedestrian community. The architects have sought to establish a physical connectivity that does not depend on vehicles with their associated noise, danger and pollution, through the provision and promotion of non-vehicular links and convenient public transportation. Government recognition of the project has already seen the city's infrastructure adapted to accommodate new roads that take into account Dubai Pearl's presence.

Over half of the total area will be landscaped open space and a key environmental objective has been to nurture and protect valuable landscapes and ecosystems, enhancing existing flora and fauna to improve local biodiversity while increasing access to nature and open spaces.



Impressively, the development has already achieved LEED Gold pre-certification status. LEED is an internationally recognised green building certification system developed by the US Green Building Council, which provides a comprehensive framework for identifying and implementing practical and measurable green building design, construction, operations and maintenance solutions. The aim is to provide third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance across the most important environmental metrics, including energy saving, water efficiency, CO2 emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, efficient stewardship of resources and sensitivity to impacts.

Dubai Pearl features site-wide integrated water management approaches to

address surface water, water supply, consumption and wastewater treatment and will promote within the community the value and importance of water resources to maximise water conservation. Wherever possible, contractors are using locally sourced materials and providing added value to the material flow process by maximising re-use, recycling and resource recovery throughout the development lifecycle to minimise landfill.

Dubai's open economy and strategic location have already propelled it to a position as one of the fastest developing cities in the Middle East, renowned for an excellent quality of life that makes it a model to emulate for other cities in the region. The creators of Dubai Pearl now believe that they are about to elevate the pulse of the city to a new level. www.dubaipearl.com/ ■

