

Perspective

A Timeshare & Shared Ownership Magazine

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ROYAL CLUB
AT DOWNTOWN DUBAI

THIS ISSUE Exclusive Interview With David A Siegel - Founder Of Westgate Resorts, Fractional Supercars, 14th Century Tuscany, Cruising For The Cure...

Arabian Falcon Holidays

– The Pioneer's Of Timeshare In Dubai

With year-round sunshine and exceptional infrastructure, Dubai is the fastest growing city in the world. Here is a city where breathtaking architecture, high-tech business parks, championship golf courses, modern exhibition centres, indoor ski slopes and fabulous shopping malls co-exist with some of the world's most glamorous hotels and beach resorts. Dubai has quickly become one of the world's most desirable vacation destinations.

In less than fifty years, Dubai's staggering impetus, scope and vision has created a city for the future. Cutting edge technology and warm hospitality make this the perfect place to work and play. You'll find world class restaurants and a vibrant nightlife, old world markets, designer fashions, exquisite jewellery, and covetable artefacts in fascinating back streets. The thoroughly contemporary sits comfortably alongside a traditional trading culture. And on the glistening waters of the Arabian Gulf, you'll enjoy pristine beaches and exciting water sports.

Vacation Ownership has been flourishing in the Middle East for many years, predominately in Egypt, North Africa, Lebanon and Makkah but has not been available in Dubai until very recently.

The last decade has seen Dubai become a global ICON across the entire spectrum for its unrivaled economic growth. The Dubai government, in particular the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, and Emirates Airlines have established Dubai as the new favorite and desired holiday destination.

Many of the world's largest, tallest, and most unique real estate projects are

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underway with some already delivered, such as the Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah. Vacation Ownership has been the fastest growing sector of the world-wide travel and tourism industry for a decade and with the recent spectacular tourism growth in Dubai it has been a natural progression for vacation ownership to follow.

Vacation Ownership has unlimited potential in this market. The current estimated penetration rate for timeshare in the Middle East is only around 1%. Several major international developers are well under way with plans for their Dubai Vacation Ownership Developments and since the timeshare legislation was approved in March this year many major global hospitality brands currently developing Vacation Ownership resorts around the world have expressed very high levels of interest in Dubai having recognized the huge untapped potential of the area. The projected tourism figures are 15 million visitors by 2015.

The Company

Initially selling vacation ownership products for resorts in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia, Arabian Falcon Holidays today is the largest independent timeshare sales and marketing company in the United Arab Emirates, with a wide client base in countries throughout the region, Europe and Africa.

In June 2003, as a result of exceptional sales performance, Arabian Falcon Holidays was appointed the exclusive marketing agent for Dubai's first vacation ownership resort - Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah. On gaining this contract, a 10,000 sq ft purpose-built sales office in Oud Metha Building (Citibank Tower) was established, and operations commenced in late November 2003.

Master developer, Nakheel, handed over the completed apartments to Caryatid Properties, in the first quarter of 2007. The luxury fit of Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah followed and by the end of the year, more than 250 members had taken their first timeshare vacations. The resort is now entirely sold out.

In March 2006 Arabian Falcon Holidays was pleased to be appointed as the exclusive UAE, Middle East marketing agent for Residence Richer in Paris, an elegant boutique hotel in the heart of the French capital, which is part of Charm & More Vacation Club. Following the performance of Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah, the Developer acquired 100 apartments at Downtown Tower from leading developer, Hydra Properties. Arabian Falcon Holidays have signed an exclusive marketing contract for Royal Club at Downtown Dubai.

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Arabian Falcon Holidays have recognized that a mixed use tourism development incorporating hotel and Vacation Ownership is an established mainstream hospitality product for both consumer and developers and is the model that they will follow for their upcoming projects.

A positive response from the GCC market, Europe and Africa, has prompted Arabian Falcon Holidays to open an office in Jeddah and sales are scheduled to start in May 2008. At the Vacation Ownership Investment Conference (VOIC 2007), Arabian Falcon Holidays was honoured by

Interval International and received the Pioneer's Excellence Award, which was presented to Chairman, Al Mohannad Sharafuddin by Interval International Chairman and CEO, Mr. Craig M. Nash. The award was given "for visionary foresight and recognition of the timeshare potential of Dubai and for pioneering the marketing of the city's first timeshare resort.

The Staff

The Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah employs over 85 personnel that can speak 7 different languages. Arabian Falcon Holidays believes that this is their most valuable asset going forward. Comprehensive training is conducted on an ongoing basis and staff performance is continuously monitored to ensure Arabian Falcon Holidays provides the finest standards of service excellence to its member's at all departmental levels.

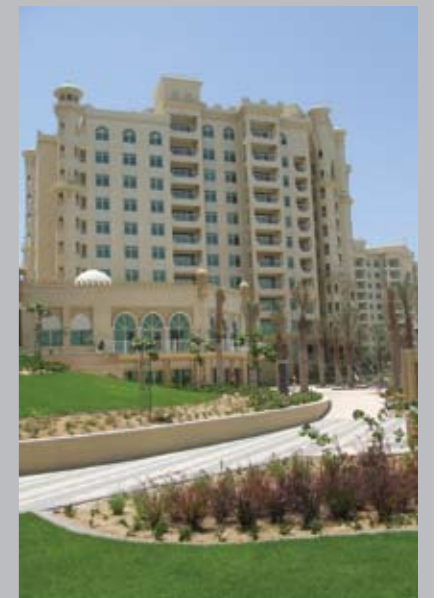
They provide a stimulating, competitive work environment, remunerating employees well with annual bonuses and regular incentives for achieving and exceeding targets. Employees enjoy packages which are the best in the industry within the region.



The Founder

Starting in the vacation ownership industry in 1994 as a sales consultant in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Al Mohannad Sharafuddin excelled rapidly and achieved the position of top producer across eight sales offices. In little more than a year, he had advanced to sales supervisor, then sales manager, and had become training manager for Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Region. >>

The Palm, Jumeirah, the first of three palm shaped islands to be reclaimed from the sea, is tapped to become one of the region's leading tourism destinations. Built on the shoreline on the 'trunk' of Palm Island, The Royal Club is a special place, consisting of fifty luxurious apartments, a superb diving centre and excellent amenities.



The Palm's two and a half kilometer radius offers an abundance of restaurants and air-conditioned shopping malls for which Dubai is renowned as well as cinemas, entertainment centers and sports facilities. More than thirty hotels – international, themed and boutique – provide the very best in hospitality. What's more, three world class golf courses and a magnificent water park are all within ten kilometers' drive.

The Royal Club owners can enjoy the lifestyle of the rich and famous, with a variety of attractions located nearby. The Palm's Golden Mile, on which the property is located, includes a marina capable of berthing 400 yachts, more than 200 boutique shops, and a variety of restaurants to suit all tastes.

The Royal Club at The Palm-Jumeirah, is open for business with B&G Hotels & Resorts, the Egyptian hotel management company, taking

the operations reins. Already, Al Mohannad Sharafuddin, chairman of Arabian Falcon, is predicting that exchanges into and out of this unique property are ready for take-off. "Royal Club owners will request travel to the popular destinations that are generally demanded by most Middle East travellers," he says "On the other side of the coin, and using the Interval International exchange system, different nationalities from all over the world will be requesting to exchange their weeks for Royal Club at The Palm. Dubai is a 'hot' destination."



ROYAL CLUB AT DOWNTOWN DUBAI

Following the performance of Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah, Caryatid Properties acquired a further 100 apartments at Downtown Tower from leading developer, Hydra Properties. Delivering the latest concepts in state-of-the-art living, Hydra Properties is behind some of the most prestigious residential and business developments in the UAE.

Royal Club at Downtown Dubai offers a wide array of vacation ownership benefits and promises the height of city chic in an unbeatable urban location. It will exemplify the ideal city lifestyle, enhanced by its proximity to the city's commercial district and to its premier location within the heart of the Downtown Dubai area. It comprises of 100 apartments set out on 20 floors within a 44 story high quality tower with a great range of facilities for vacation ownership purchasers.

The building is virtually all glass walled so that all rooms in any apartment will have spectacular views and will be an exceptional and great Vacation Ownership location for well into the future.



Within 400 metres of The Dubai Mall and with views of the world's tallest building, Burj Dubai, it will also feature a five-star hotel and stunning residences. Twenty storeys make up Royal Club at Downtown Dubai, and spacious 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments will offer streamlined design, elegant appointments and an ultra modern living experience to members.



Mohannad was posted to Dubai in 1996. He quickly recognized that the UAE and Dubai in particular was a tremendously promising market for vacation ownership investment and so in 1999 as the principal shareholder and managing director, Al Mohannad Sharafuddin, along with his wife Kholoud Taha founded Arabian Falcon Holidays.

We recently asked Al Mohannad Sharafuddin a few questions about his early successes and what the future may hold for Middle Eastern Vacation Ownership.

What are the challenges of marketing timeshare to the Middle Eastern consumer?

Middle East consumers have a very special nature, we face a lot of challenges but we are capable of overcoming those challenges: The main issues are:-

- 1) Timeshare is still relatively new to the Middle East thus customer knowledge about Vacation Ownership is minimal so we have to keep educating our clients and general public about this dynamic industry.
- 2) Middle East consumers still consider the timeshare as a financial investment and we always try to educate them that Vacation Ownership is a lifestyle investment and not a financial one.
- 3) Generally they have a shorter travel window compared to Western travelers. I would say that 90% of Middle Eastern travelers prefer to have a long vacation in July compared to the Western travelers who tend to have multiple shorter vacations (Summer Vacation, Christmas & New Year break etc...)
- 4) They are also last minute decision makers when it comes to planning their holidays. They decide on their travel plans 30-60 days before their preferred travel dates. Such a short period in high season is not enough to fulfill their requests. Again we keep educating our customers and we explain that the earlier they request the better their chances are of having their requests fulfilled.

What would you say are the main factors that you attribute to huge success of Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah and how it was sold out so quickly?

Whilst we at Arabian Falcon Holidays (AFH) believe that as a sales organization we have put together an effective combination of an outstanding sales venue, housing a management leadership which has



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developed and maintained well motivated, high performing sales and marketing teams, which together have produced the sell out of the Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah, we do however acknowledge that a major part of the sales success is attributable to the alignment of several major factors that are driving the success of the Vacation Ownership industry worldwide. Firstly "Brands sell", the Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah was able to ride in on the coat tails of two exceptional brands "Dubai" and "The Palm". Individually they are both exceptionally powerful but together they were a magical product enhancement for the Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah. Secondly is "Quality"; the remarkable worldwide growth of the Vacation Ownership is that it consistently fulfills the expectations of purchasers regarding quality, apartment size and location. The Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah certainly fulfilled this criteria which is well documented by the "Guest Surveys" of occupants in spite of the fact that the Palm is still a "work in progress"

How easy or difficult has it been to switch from selling the Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah to the new Downtown Resort?

Like all organizations that have experienced phenomenal success with a particular product over a period of time there is always a certain reluctance and trepidation in taking up a new product that doesn't have all the factors of the product that it is replacing. So with a little apprehension in changing sales "Hotpoint" features from the sun, sea and sand of the Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah to the features and benefits of the central city location of our new Resort - 'Royal Club at Downtown Dubai' the Arabian Falcon Holidays Sales team set about its work. Surprise surprise they soon found that their presentation of the

new features and benefits of the Royal Club at Downtown Dubai created excitement with their prospective clients and the sales are now rolling.

Again, as with the Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah it was discovered the "Brands" were working their magic but this time it was the location brand the "Burg Dubai" the tallest building in the world which is the "headline" attraction upon which the Dubai Downtown complex is centered upon. The second attraction is the biggest Mall in the world "Dubai Mall" again the two brands are automatically combined and create an amazing product enhancement for the Royal Club at Downtown Dubai.

Whilst Dubai has some of the world's largest and attractive shopping malls it appears that Downtown Dubai is going to take on the mantle as the long term center of Dubai, just as the West end does for London and Manhattan for New York and other special locations in all of the great cities of the world. This mantle will be in spite of other great attractions that are underway or proposed for Dubai.

Also what is exciting is that Dubai is only a fraction of the way through establishing world quality attractions on the scale of Orlando and other top world holiday locations. There is much more to come, creating world quality sports, recreational, entertainment and cultural facilities that will attract the worlds top sports championships and cultural and entertainment events which will create a constant all year round demand for Dubai accommodation.

What do you see as your main challenges in the near future?

There is probably no other industry in the world that has such a high

acceptance and product performance rating with its purchasers and yet has such a poor public opinion rating from non users or non owners. This is a hangover from a small minority of operators and marketers who received much bad publicity for their nefarious actions decades ago and deservedly so, which reflected disproportionately upon the majority of the Vacation Ownership operators who were producing high quality and performance products over decades of operations with millions of exceptionally satisfied Owners worldwide.

The performance of the sell out of the Royal Club at Palm-Jumeirah has given Arabian Falcon Holidays great confidence for the immediate future in achieving the same success with the Royal Club Downtown Dubai and while nothing is easy there is a distinct positive movement in the public's perception of the Vacation Ownership industry which bodes well for the future of Arabian Falcon Holidays as a marketer and possibly as a developer of Vacation Ownership products.

Many have compared Dubai with Florida with Florida in terms of tourism and the growth of the vacation ownership industry. Do you think Dubai can live up to the expectation or exceed it?

Dubai can definitely live up to this comparison - as we all know Universal Studios in Dubai and Sea World on Palm Jebel Ali will open their doors in the next few years. With the construction of over 60, 000 new hotel rooms & the opening of the largest airport at the Jebel Ali in 2015, Dubai is definitely geared up for the challenge.

For more information on Arabian Falcon Holidays visit www.arabianfalcon.com or call 009714 32 44 736 ■

