

**FLIGHT CENTRE** *Unbeatable*

**Hawaii Island Hopper, Air + 7 Nights**

**\$1078**

From just \$1078 (taxes + \$128 crown & fees)  
 INCLUDES all airfare, 7 nights Maui accommodation and 4 nights Chilean wine.  
 Conditions apply, see us for details.

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**Las Vegas Air + 3 Nights**

**\$383**

From just \$383 (taxes + \$124 crown & fees)  
 INCLUDES 3 nights accommodation on the Strip, VIP access to 4-star resorts from \$7 per night.  
 Conditions apply, see us for details.

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 | 2012 | EDITOR CARALYN CAMPBELL 604.695.2784 | CACAMPBELL@SUNPRO.COM

# DUBAI DETOUR

A 36-hour stopover in the  
 Manhattan of the Middle East  
 reveals a city of superlatives  
 Pages I2-3



CHARLES CROWELL/GETTY IMAGES

The 200-storey Burj Khalifa stands in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Dubai's Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum opened the world's tallest tower in 2010.

## ONLINE

## INSIDE | 15

### Grounding

The crew of the doomed Italian cruise ship Costa Concordia has been awarded the 'Seafarer of the Year' award.

### Ports and Bows

The 'godfather' of cruise writing has plenty of money-saving tips for readers, and a list of the world's best vessels.



## INSIDE | 17

### Travel deals for you

The Sun welcomes our latest blogger – Chris Myden. He's a self-confessed addict for travel bargains, and made his mark with a \$100 outing to Spain.



### Our Kids Club Your royal treatment

Good riddance to the stress of looking after the kids from check-in to baggage claim. The Air Transat Kids Club gives you kids of little extras like priority check-in, early boarding and treats for the little ones so you can relax while you fly. It's just another thing we take care of, so no matter where you're going, you don't have a care in the world.



### FALL DEPARTURES

**LOS CABOS**  
**\$589**  
 NOVEMBER  
 MONTELEONE, BOLIVIA

**PUERTO VALLARTA**  
**\$719**  
 DECEMBER

### SOUTH & EUROPE ROUNDTrip FLIGHTS STARTING AT

**AMSTERDAM**  
**\$599**  
 OCTOBER  
 MONTELEONE, BOLIVIA

**LONDON, PARIS**  
**\$849**  
 DECEMBER

### GREAT CHRISTMAS DEALS FROM \$1199

**CANCUN**  
**\$699**  
 DECEMBER  
 MONTELEONE, BOLIVIA

**GLASGOW, MANCHESTER**  
**\$899**  
 DECEMBER

\*Prices are per person, based on a double occupancy room. Taxes and fees are extra. Availability is limited. Bookings are subject to change. See us for details.

# New city soars over old Dubai

**PacificGoldTours**  
w.pacificgoldtours.com



## CONTINUED | FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

**Dunes day afternoon**

On my final morning in Dubai, I swap speed for serenity and head for the vast, timeless Arabian Desert from which this city of superlatives sprang. My destination is Al Maha Resort and Spa, a luxurious and romantic hideaway nestled within the 225-square-kilometre Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve, Dubai's first national park.

Named after the Arabic word for the endangered Arabian Oryx that has been successfully bred within the Reserve, Al Maha is the antithesis of its neighbouring city. There are 42 secluded tented suites built in the style of an ancient Bedouin settlement, each one furnished with original and rare collections of regional artwork and antiques.

"Every day is like brand new scenery for us here," says Al Maha's senior field guide, Riann Tolmay.

"You can go out now, drive in the dunes, then come back in an hour and the landscape will have changed, especially in the area we call the shifting dunes."

I see what Tolmay means on a "dune bashing" 4x4 excursion around Al Maha in search of desert wildlife. Although he tells me that the reserve is home to 17 different species of mammals, including the Arabian Oryx, three types of gazelle, the Ethiopian hedgehog and the desert hare, it's still hard to believe that anything could survive in this parched patch of earth that occasionally feeds giant sandstorms called Shamals – northwesterly gales that blow over Iraq and the Persian Gulf states.

Then we reach the top of a massive dune, where a herd of Oryx stand like statues, their pure white coats and majestic horns dramatically set against the burning azure Arabian sky.

Late that afternoon I'll bash more dunes on a sunset desert safari that also includes a fascinating demonstration of the ancient Bedouin sport of falconry, a traditional barbecue dinner and shisha (the famous Arabic water pipe) at a traditional campsite, and a belly dancer performing around its campfire.

**More Dubai Diversions:****Go downhill**

Escape from the oppressive heat at Ski Dubai, an indoor ski resort enclosed within the massive Mall of the Emirates that features an 80-metre high artificial mountain with five slopes of varying steepness



PHOTOS: MARK SESSIONS/SPECIAL TO THE SUN

"You can go out now, drive in the dunes, then come back in an hour and the landscape will have changed," says field guide Riann Tolmay.

and difficulty. (skidubai.com)

**Shop till you drop**

Splurge on luxury goods in colossal cathedrals of consumerism like Dubai Mall, which boasts nearly 1,200 retail outlets, a 50-metre long aquarium that is home to over 33,000 marine creatures, and an Olympic sized ice rink.

**Theme it up**

Kickstart your inner child with a visit to one of Dubai's myriad theme parks with adult Disneyland names like Aquaventure, Dolphinarium, Magic Planet and Wild Wadi, the most popular water park in the Middle East.

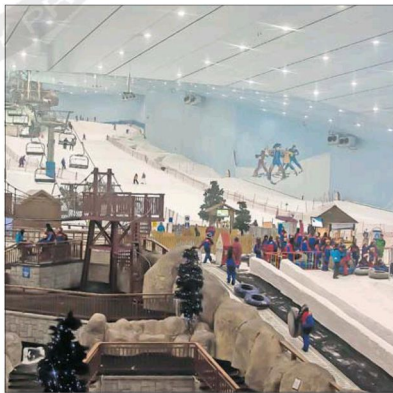
**Hit the track**

Head to the Dubai Camel Racecourse for a thrilling evening of dromedary drag racing as the ships of the desert compete in the traditional sport of the United Arab Emirates.

With the use of underage camel jockeys now banned, watch for their robotic replacements to steer their grumpy steeds to victory under the remote radio control of the camels' owners speeding frantically alongside in their 4x4s.

**Cruise the Creek:**

Combine sightseeing with fine dining aboard on a romantic dinner cruise along Dubai's historic artery aboard an all-glass floating gourmet restaurant. (bateauxdubai.com)



If it get too hot for you outside, cool down at Ski Dubai.

**If you go**

**Getting there:** Emirates Airlines (emirates.com) flies three times a week non-stop from Toronto and now daily non-stop from Seattle to its Dubai hub for connecting flights to Asia, Africa and other destinations.

**Getting around:** Emirates offers a 36-hour Dubai stopover package that includes a meet-and-greet service upon arrival, welcome package, airport transfers, 24-hour check-in at over 60 hotels, city and desert tours, and more. Emirates-owned Arabian Adventures (arabian-adventures.com) one of Dubai's largest tour companies, offers a huge variety of activities, including sightseeing and historical city tours, desert safaris, dinner cruises, sailing and diving excursions, and more.

**Where to stay:** Dubai's accommodation choices veer firmly toward five star. This writer stayed at the new Ritz-Carlton, Dubai International Financial Center and at the ultramodern Jumeirah Emirates Towers, one of the world's tallest hotels, set alongside swank Sheik Zayed Road.

**More info:** Visit dubaitourism.ae