

The Hookers And Douche-Bag Mobsters Of Dubai

For many tourists right now, there isn't a destination in the world that can rival **Dubai**, if a glossy, 21st-century take on 'fun in the sun' is top of your holiday wish-list.

The Gulf's sparkling man-made paradise serves up year-round sunshine, luxurious hotels, dozens of gleaming malls, big-name dining opportunities and some of the world's newest theme parks.

And, in the last decade, plenty of British expats have made it the location for their day job too.

Wooed east to the United Arab Emirates' shiniest city by the promise of tax-free earnings, cerulean skies and a life that feels infinitely more glamorous than the UK's 9-5, Brits from every walk of life - from teachers to lawyers and estate agents - have followed the Middle East's hazy sun.

A global city it may be, but according to those with experience of living and working in Dubai, the city is awash with stereotypes - with genuine character and community found wanting.

The idea of such cliches may make Dubai devotees wince...but these are the types of people you're most likely to bump into in the UAE's playground for the wealthy.



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Skyscrapers and stereotypes: Dubai has become one of the world's most lusted-after holiday destinations...but there are certain types of people you're likely to encounter, say those in the know

'DUBAI MAN'



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Linen, check, loafers, check...70 per cent of the population in Dubai is male, and says one expat who lived in the city for two years, many of them aspire to look the same - like a 'high wealth man' (Stock photo)

According to one British entrepreneur, Charlie Morgan, who runs Imperium Acquisitions, and spent two years living in the city, Dubai Man is everywhere.

In one episode of his [Imperium Podcast](#), the businessman describes a 'tendency for people in Dubai to merge into this one human', and saying he was shocked when he

attended a networking event to find that many of the entrepreneurs gathered had exactly the same sartorial style.

He explains: 'Everyone morphs into this "high-value man" and it's strange.

'Everyone wears the same stuff. It's the no logo "old-money" linen shirt. You're going to see everyone wearing Loro Piana loafers, linen shirts, linen trousers, Van Cleef.'

THE BOUGIE TOURIST



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Has Dubai - with its swish hotels, year-round sunshine and mega malls - become a 21st-century destination dupe for tourists who used to love Spain's Costas?

Thirty years ago, the Bougie Tourist might have been found slurping a pina colada on the Spanish Costas.

However, since Dubai's unstoppable tourism juggernaut fired up, many of those who might once have made for Marbella for their annual dose of fun in the sun are now touching down in the Emirati city instead.

How does the Bougie Tourist spend their winter sun break under the Arab sun?

A typical day will be split into four equal parts: 1). Lying horizontal by the pool/Gulf waters. 2). Shopping at one of the city's temples to consumerism, most likely Dubai Mall.

- 3). Dining at City Walk, one of Dubai's most popular evening entertainment complexes.
- 4). Uploading photos and videos in real-time on social media.

'THE INFLUENCER'

Dubai has become a magnet for those who live their lives on social media, from Love Island stars at the more salubrious end of the spectrum to those who run Only Fans businesses at the other.

Why? The skyline, the souped-up supercars, the five-star hotels all make the perfect backdrop for anyone keen to portray a glamorous life.

British reality TV star and businesswoman Caroline Stanbury, who has lived in Dubai for more than a decade and who starred in The Real Housewives of Dubai for two years, says on her [podcast](#) about life in the city that 'young girls come here expecting the dream'.



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Former Love Island star Arabella Chi, who relocated to Dubai this month; the city has attracted thousands of influencers - and Only Fans stars - to the Gulf in recent years

She explained: 'A lot of young girls come here wanting the glamorous life and thinking it's easy and thinking it's very rich men who will provide for them.'

'I know women that have three or four credit cards with different men - it's nuts - who just pay all their bills. I guess that's seductive for them.'

British businessman Charlie Morgan adds in his podcast episode on the 'brutal reality' of life in the UAE that many young women who live or visit Dubai aren't looking for marriage or even a long-term relationship.

'Dubai attracts a certain type of woman. You're less likely to find a wholesome, maternal figure in Dubai. Think about the kind of girl who's attracted to Dubai - it's the same thing with Miami and all these other party cities.'

'THE DIVA DIVORCEE'



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British entrepreneur Caroline Stanbury, who starred in the *Real Housewives of Dubai*, told fans in a recent podcast episode 'Dubai is a very, very, very difficult place to stay married'. The former reality star is happily married to second husband Sergio Carrallo

Divorce rates in Dubai have been steadily rising, with expat marriages among the most at risk, and infidelity often behind separations.

Stanbury, who was married to Turkish banker Cem Habib and is now happily wed to her second husband Sergio Carrallo, told her followers recently: 'Dubai is a very, very, very difficult place to stay married.'

However, once that *decree nisi* comes through, expat women in their forties and fifties are a force to be reckoned with, she says, prospering in business and proving fearless networkers.

With Dubai's adoration of 'tweakments', there are aesthetic clinics at almost every turn offering to plump lips, tapered brows and contoured jawlines, the Diva Divorcee looks as glamorous as she ever did too.

Stanbury says of older female expats living in Dubai: 'They've got their s*** going on. They know what they want and their kids are moving out. They're at that stage where they've got disposable income and they actually can have a nice life.'

'And actually more and more and more women that I know are going with younger men because, you know, the younger man respects them.'

'THE FAKE WEALTHY'

Never has the term 'fake it til you make it' seemed more appropriate for a destination.

As one of the world's most Instagrammable cities - the hashtag #Dubai has 147 million images - the modernistic Gulf holiday destination looks good on camera.

And if you're striking a pose with the shimmering skyline in the background, wearing the right shades and with the hot-right-now bag slung over your shoulder - you've made it in life, at least on the 'Gram.

Commenting on the pressure to buy couture brands, reality star Stanbury added: 'You can go out and see incredible handbags and incredible jewellery but don't be fooled, not all of it is real.'

'There's a lot of fake bags, a lot of fake watches...there's a lot of people trying to keep up with the Joneses.'



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Private jet photo studios - which influencers hire by the hour to shoot content in - have sprung up across Dubai

So, where might you find the Fake Wealth? Pouting up a storm in one of the many private jet 'studios' that exists in the city.

Aspiring influencers hire them by the hour to shoot 'luxe' content that gives the illusion of the kind of jet-set lifestyle most of us can only dream about.

Stanbury tells her podcast followers: 'You have that window of people who make themselves look like they have this ideal, perfect life and they really don't - they're just chasing it.'

'THE ACTIVE INSTA-FAM'



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Make like Rio: Ex Manchester United star Rio and his wife Kate moved to Dubai in 2025, after years of holidaying in the Emirati city



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The couple have regularly shared photos of their family enjoying the sunshine lifestyle the city offers

Inspired by star footballers who regularly jet to Dubai for some pre-season r+r - and Rio and Kate Ferdinand, who swapped out Bromley for life full-time in the UAE last year, the Active Insta-Fam aren't afraid to get stuck into the city's man-made fun.

During their Middle Eastern trip - February half-term is the time to go, they'll share wholesome snaps of mum, dad and kids - no same-sex families, please - enjoying Dubai's high energy theme parks and water-based attractions.

They'll also document the in-flight service en route, impromptu dances on the beach, hurtling down water chutes at Aquaventure World and the faux slopes snow at Dubai Ski - with evening snaps capturing them looking spruced up and dining in style at Dubai's fanciest restaurants.