

DUBAI RISING

Wake-up calls sound harsh in any language.

But, they ring hideous when you've gone to bed just a few hours earlier, following 24-hours in-flight. However groggy I was, dawn beckoned and I had little time to waste. I'd traveled thousands of miles and was scheduled for a full day of touring. I glanced out the floor-to-ceiling windows, and then stood, agog at the glistening new city rising from the sea. The vista of downtown Dubai from the 33rd floor of Jumeirah Emirates Hotel Towers presented itself like none I'd ever seen before.

The Jumeirah Towers, two sister structures, were constructed early in Dubai's rags to riches rally. Since April, 2000, one has served as an office building and the other, a hotel: actually the world's third-tallest all-hotel building. The shimmery steel and glass icons exude power and pride, and lucky me, I'd slept a few hours in one of their 40 fabulous suites.

Had I arrived earlier the previous evening as planned,

I could have lazed in the posh living room, worked at the free WiFi equipped office, dined at a table recessed in a round nook, and used a second bathroom. Instead, I slumped with jet-lag into a magnificent king-sized bed at two in the morning, almost unaware of the room's most gaga addition – a triangular glassed-in space. The staff explained that guest's children sometimes use the recessed bed for sleeping, but I would have reclined to daydream in the sexy glass point, surrounded by a starry sky — and preferably with a glass of wine.

Alas, I had no time to indulge high-tech buttons that operated black-out curtains and opened blinds. I dressed and descended to the lobby in a crystal clear elevator in time to be whisked off to the Dubai Mall. The mall makes a convenient entrance for visitors

to Burj Khalifa – the tallest building on the planet. (Dubai rightfully flaunts a slew of these superlatives.)

Ticketed guests enter the tower and stroll past a series of construction photos and art, and then pose for an obligatory souvenir photo taken en route to the elevator. About 10-12 folks fit (my group spanning many nationalities) and when the doors close, a multi-colored psychedelic light and sound show begins playing on the walls. Simultaneously a digital monitor displaying floor numbers whizzes by in

rapid succession. The

elevator jettisons

passengers

from the

lowest to

highest

stop at

a rate of

ten meters

or almost

33 feet per

second. We

reached the 124th

floor in one minute flat. Whew!

Strangely, I don't recall my ears popping.

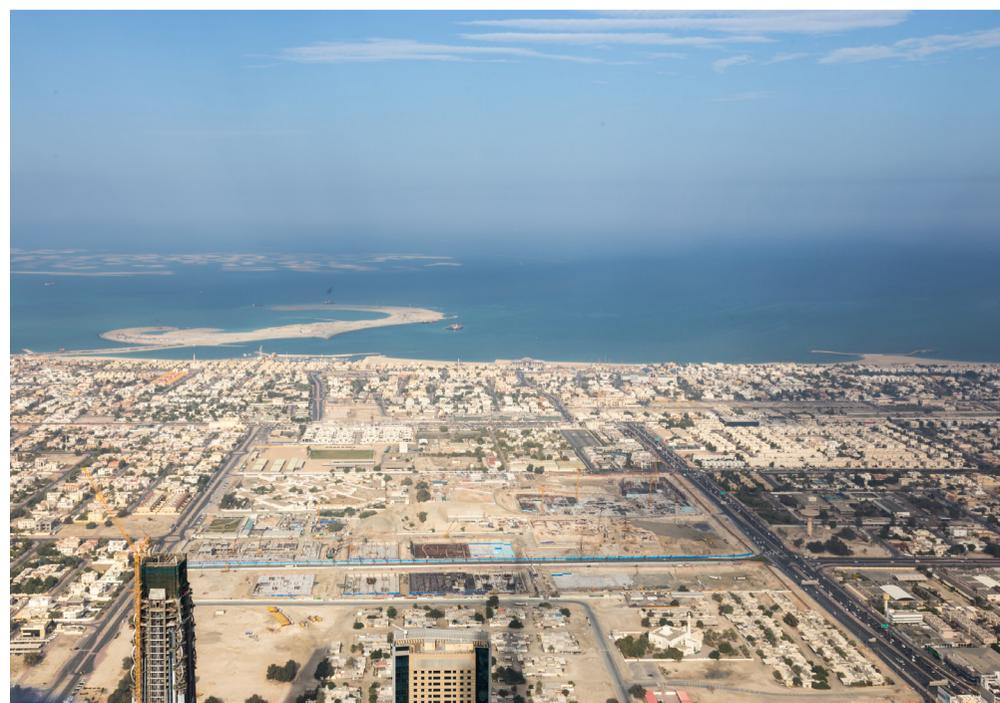
As I stepped onto the

observation deck, I couldn't help but gasp at the light reflecting from this site. Below, a pea-sized city looked as if I was viewing it from an airplane, but of course, I was not. Burj Khalifa stretches a massive 2,716.5 feet in the air, and even from the 124th floor platform, some 26 stories still teeter above.

Stabilizing myself against the glass enclosures, I regained my bearings and soaked in a panoramic party of epic proportions. Fortunately, the sky remained clear; no sand storms blew in, as are common.

From on high, I could see the flat desert, the simple land mass that was the entire city until recently. Over the past ten years, Dubai has risen at an unprecedented pace, as if Sheikh Mohammed, the emirate's ruler, doused the sands with Miracle Grow. His dream metropolis now includes state-of-the-art infrastructure, eight-lane highways, computerized mass transit, and mega-malls with indoor aquariums and ski resorts. Dubai has been described as a city of excess, Vegas without

Burj Khalifa stretches a massive 2,716.5ft in the air



Burj Khalifa- Tallest Building in the World

gambling. And so it seemed, yet prettier.

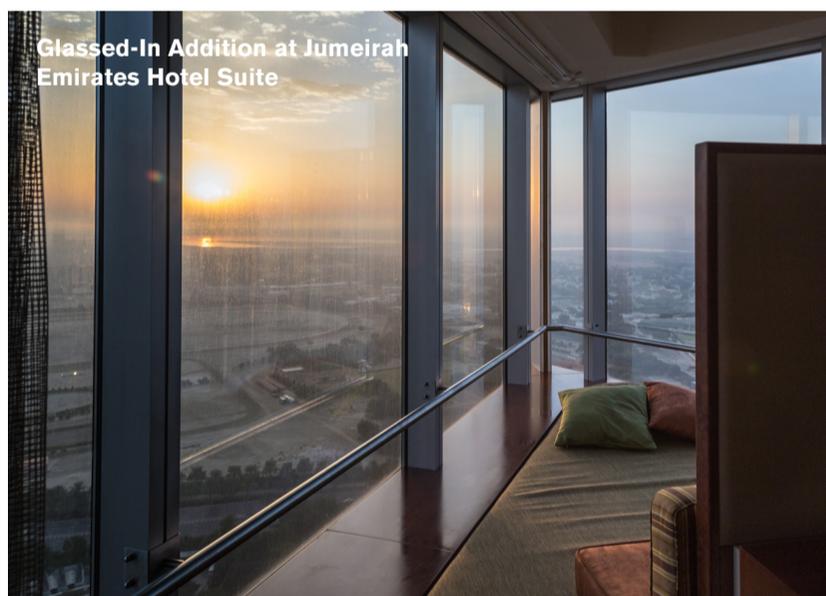
I looked out, overwhelmed by the artistic details in the designs, so many exquisite architectural wonders in one place. I wasn't familiar with the skyline yet, but would soon come to recognize the squared arch or Financial Center, Al Yaqoub Tower, the Big Ben facsimile, and other swooping edifices. In the distance I caught a hint of the World archipelago, a series of islands sand-dredged from the sea like Michelangelo sculpted his David from marble.

The word "burj" means tower in Arabic, and Khalifa, refers to Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Khalifa, who came to the rescue when construction funds ran low. Although Dubai flaunts its wealth, the emirate does not contain nearly the oil (aka fortune) as neighboring Abu Dhabi.

Burj Khalifa's construction began in 2004 and was completed in 2010, after 22 million man-hours. At the peak of production over 12,000 workers and contractors were on site everyday, representing more than 100 nationalities. Guides claim that 31,400 tons of rebar were used in the skyscraper, enough to extend over a quarter of the way around the world. Another statistic says, "26,000 glass panels, each individually hand-cut, were placed in the exterior cladding. Over 300 cladding specialists from China were brought in for this part of the project."

Architect Adrian Smith incorporated patterns from traditional Islamic architecture, in this case using a regional desert flower, the Hymenocallis, or spider lily. Its harmonious structure is one of the organizing principles of the tower's design. After reading

Glassed-In Addition at Jumeirah Emirates Hotel Suite



View from the Jumeriah Hotel





**Dubai
has been
described
as a city of
excess**

this, I could visualize the building as petals from a stem, the tower's wings extending from its central core.

The website states: The crowning touch of Burj Khalifa is its telescopic spire comprised of more than 4,000 tons of structural steel. The spire was constructed from

inside the building and jacked to its full height of 700 feet using a hydraulic pump. In addition to securing Burj Khalifa's place as the world's

tallest structure, the spire is integral to the overall design, creating a sense of completion for the landmark.

Since Dubai suffers with heat and humidity much of the year, the need for water remains vitally important. The incorporated system supplies an average of 250,000 gallons of water daily. However, the structure also requires approximately 10,000 tons of cooling daily. Air-conditioners create a significant amount of condensation and drainage is collected in a basement holding tank – one the size of about 20 Olympic-sized swimming pools. The skyscraper's peak electrical demand runs equivalent to 360,000 100-watt bulbs operating simultaneously.





Jumeirah Hotel Suite Living Room



Jumeirah Hotel In-Room Dining Area

Completing the majestic exterior, a grand water terrace surrounds several levels and steps down toward a man-made lake. Residents and visitors line up here to ogle at (what else) the world's largest dancing fountain:

900 feet long with water jets that shoot 500 feet in the air, as high as a 45-story building. The visual spectacle uses 6,600 lights, 25 colored projectors and 22,000 gallons of airborne water.

The people of Dubai are

naturally proud of this tall, elegant sliver of glass, steel and concrete jabbing the sky. If you visit the U.A.E., be sure to make online reservations to ride to the top. Tickets often sell out and you don't want to miss Burj

Khalifa's astonishing view.

Photos by Debi Lander

Disclosure: Thanks to the Jumeirah Emirates Towers for hosting me for one night and Dubai Tourism for my ticket to the Top of Burj Khalifa.



Observation Platform