

# Tourist Attractions & Parks

World's Leading Publication for Management of Leisure Facilities, Attractions, Entertainment and Amusement Centers



Frank Seninsky

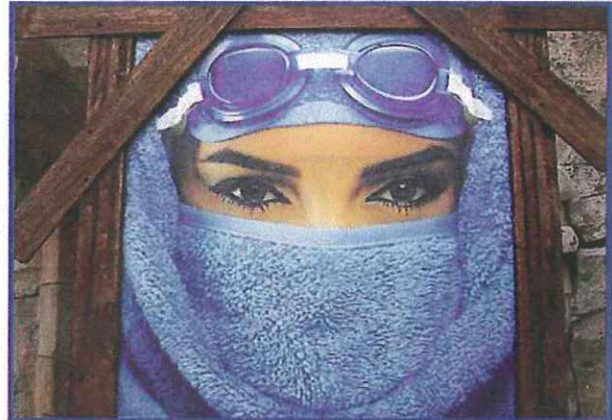
## Wild Wadi Is 10 Years Old and Still a 10



Welcome to Dubai's number one family attraction, which will be celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October 2009. Dubai is one

of seven sheikdoms that comprise the United Arab Emirates (population 2.5 million), located on the Persian Gulf across from Iran and bordering SE Saudi Arabia and northern Oman. Wild Wadi Waterpark covers 12 acres with a spectacular mix of 30 themed water rides and attractions (14 of them interconnected), five retail outlets, six food offerings, and six VIP Cabanas.

Located adjacent to the Burj Al Arab, the icon of Dubai, one of the most photographed structures in the world, designed to resemble a billowing sail with 202 duplex suites and a helicopter pad, and in between the Madinat Jumeirah (Jumeirah City with three hotels) and the Jumeirah Beach Hotel, Wild Wadi is managed by the Jumeirah Group, a member of Dubai Holding, which is owned by the Dubai government. The Jumeirah Group has developed

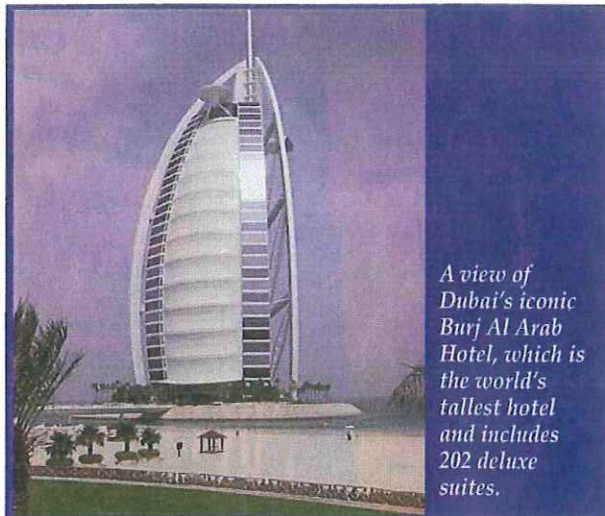


The symbol for "Ladies' Only Night," where Wild Wadi is only open to women. This special night has been popular since the park's opening in 1999.

into a world-class hotel and hospitality management company, operating 12 hotel properties (including Jumeirah Emirates Tower, the third highest hotel in the world and Jumeirah Essex House in New York City) and has 19 hotel/resorts under construction throughout the world.

### The Legend

The story of Wild Wadi centers on the mythical travels of Juha and his friend Sinbad. They were returning home in their dhow (boat) crossing the Arabian Sea when a violent storm took them by surprise. The group was able to swim to a beautiful tropical lagoon, where freshwater streams cascaded down from the tall three-sided rock formations above the beach into a lagoon. There was a very narrow wadi (path) leading through the mountains to the lagoon. The crewmembers built tunnels and slides among the streams and the children were soon body sliding and riding rafts of woven date palm leaves. A fortune-teller was one of the many drawn to this magical wadi who told Juha: "I heard the laughter of children coming from far into the future, and saw the delight of thousands, from lands as yet undiscovered. It is clear that you have



A view of Dubai's iconic Burj Al Arab Hotel, which is the world's tallest hotel and includes 202 deluxe suites.

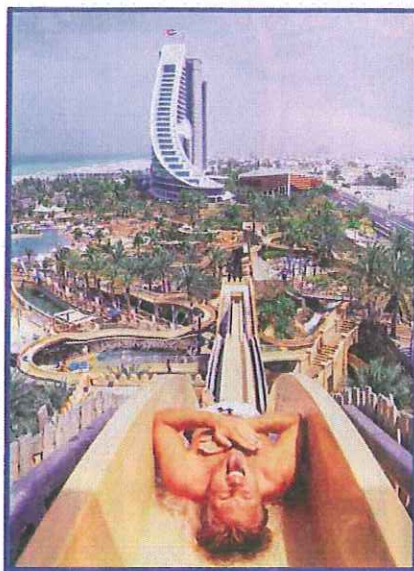
built here in this Wild Wadi a garden of pleasure quite unique in the world."

There are many unique aspects to this tropical paradise waterpark. It was my good fortune to be able to visit Wild Wadi and speak with **Chris Perry**, general manager and **Gary Reuter**, director of operations.

Reuter took me on an early morning tour an hour before the park opened. We watched Perry preside



*Juha's Dhow (boat) and Lagoon, a children's play structure by Whitewater, was Wild Wadi's first addition in 2005. Perfect for small children and their families, the attraction includes over 100 water games, five slides and a huge dumping bucket.*



*The Jumeirah Sceirah speed slide is the tallest and fastest speed slide outside of North America, hitting a top speed of 36 mph as riders plunge 100 feet. Pictured in the background is the Jumeirah Beach Hotel.*

## What Is the Number One Thing that Makes Wild Wadi Special?

Reuter quickly replied, "Guest service is where Wild Wadi is outstanding. Our guest surveys are very important. From the top down we follow the same guest service approach."

Reuter continued with the tour. "We have two single and double tube Master Blasters known as 'Whitewater Wadi' and 'Flood River Flyer.' The Whitewater Wadi connects to 11 differently themed slides and Flood River Flyer is connected to six

over the Colleague Recognition Awards Presentation (Jumeirah calls all of their employees "colleagues"). This takes place each month. Perry was the master of ceremonies and there were colleagues' representatives from all of the different departments. Awards were given (with special prizes) for categories such as "Idea of the Month," "10-Year Anniversary," "Guest Service Awards" and "Scanner of the Month." Wild Wadi employs more than 700 people from 41 countries. In addition, the management oversees the lifeguards and aquatic service colleagues at the Jumeirah Beach Hotel, Burj Al Arab and Madinat Jumeirah.

## Life Guard Morning Briefing

Reuter attends this pre-opening meeting as an observer every morning to get a feel for the mood of his team. Reuter explained, "There is a lot of stress involved in being a lifeguard running a 365-day operation. I find that sometimes the stress level increases when there is a change in seasons. I get to survey the likes and dislikes of each individual. We have colleagues from 41 different countries. Some love to interact with the guests and others prefer the quiet such as being a lifeguard at one of the hotel pools." I watched a group of boys and a group of girls play a game of passing a water balloon back to back up the line and each time the girls' team won. "These types of fun games," reported Reuter, "help to start the day off right and gives the colleagues an opportunity to get to know each other better. It also reduces stress and starts the day off on a positive note."



*Wild Wadi Director of Operations Gary Reuter and General Manager Chris Perry with the world map centered on Dubai behind them.*

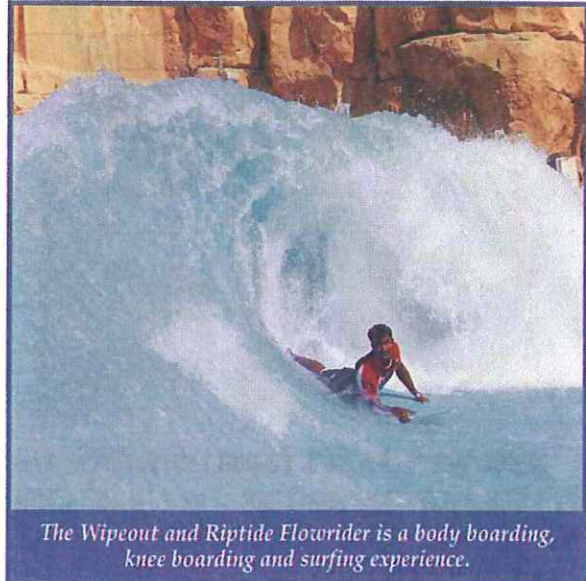
slides [you can choose a different slide each time]. Wild Wadi also has 14 interconnected water rides of the 30. This means that from a single or double tube, riders can spend an average of 20-30 minutes and experience a good portion of the excitement without ever leaving their tube. There are different options so one could experience four-five trips and experience something different each time."

Reuter and I spoke about "Ladies' Only Night," which happens every Thursday evening from April-August. "Only women are permitted in the waterpark and that includes all management, lifeguards, and other colleagues. I actually get an evening off, but of course am still responsible to make sure that I check in to make sure that all operations are running smoothly." Gary explained that this program has been very popular and one night per week is working out very well. I also noticed that the Souk Al Wadi Gift Shop is selling a new stylish woman's full-length swimsuit as an option for the ladies.

Reuter then turned me over to **Chris Perry** for whom I had some specific questions:

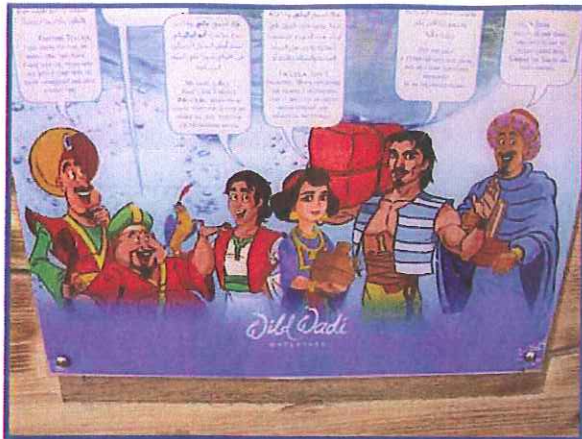
## What Are Some of the 'Firsts' for Wild Wadi?

"We were the first waterpark to be completely cashless. The RFID system was developed by Ski Data out of Austria and integrated with Gateway Ticketing Systems (Boyertown, Pa.). Also Wild Wadi



## Wild Wadi Main Rides and Attractions

- Whitewater Wadi (Master Blaster by NBGS). The high powered water jets connect to 11 other slides. .
- Flood River Flyer (Master Blaster). Connects to six slides.
- Jumeirah Sceirah (Speed Slide). The tallest speed slide outside of North America, hitting a top speed of 36 mph and plunging 100 feet.
- Summit Surge and Rushdown Ravine. Family rides.
- Wipeout and Riptide Flowrider's. Body boarding, knee boarding and surfing.
- Flood River. Includes Pulse Wave.
- Juha's Journey (Lazy River). Guests drift along a relaxing, temperature controlled river course.
- Breaker's Bay (Wave Pool). The region's largest wave pool.
- Juha's Dhow (boat) and Lagoon (children's play structure by Whitewater). Over 100 water games including five slides and a dumping bucket.
- Fossil Rock and Wadi Wash. A choreographed show every hour at Fossil Rock includes thunder, lightning, rain and a flash flood.



The storyline for Wild Wadi has characters Juha and Sinbad returning home in their dhow (boat) crossing the Arabian Sea when a violent storm takes them by surprise. As luck would have it, they end up on a deserted beach where they discover a tropical lagoon.

is the first waterpark in the world to have ISO (International Standards Organization) accreditation."

## Who Were the Major Companies Responsible for Wild Wadi?

"I started working at Wild Wadi on June 26, 1999 as operations manager, about five weeks before the Grand Opening. WS Atkins (Epsom, United Kingdom) did the design and theme. NBGS designed the Master Blasters and Jeff Henry was in charge of that. BiWater Group (Dorking, United Kingdom) handled all of the water components. The first major renovation took place in 2005 with the addition of Whitewater West's family interactive play structure named 'Juha's Dhow & Lagoon.' "

## What Are the Future Expansion Plans for Wild Wadi and for the Jumeirah Group?

"I am honored to be running Wild Wadi and overseeing the further expansion of the park. We are also in the process of working on the next Wild Wadi, which will be located in Aqaba, Jordan. At Wild Wadi - Dubai we are planning on removing

both of the family rides, 'Summit Surge' and Rush-down Ravine.' These family rides, even though they are very popular, have a combined throughput of 400 people/hour. They are going to be replaced with ProSlide's Tantrum Alley and Bowling Alley, which will have a throughput capacity of 1,400 riders/hour. That is all I can tell you at this time."

## Summary

Wild Wadi still rates a 10 out of 10 after 10 years. It is still the number one family attraction in Dubai, and with the new family rides planned, my prediction is that Wild Wadi will remain number one. I learned much about how people of different cultures can work and play together and is it not amazing that "water" is the single molecule that makes it possible. And let's not forget that it is the cohesiveness of the staff that provides the guest service to make the Wild Wadi operations formula work so well!

I want to thank Chris Perry and Gary Reuter for the time they provided me and for their diligence in getting approval for me to get a back-of-house tour and take my own pictures at Wild Wadi. Special thanks to Jihane El Fadl, Marketing and Communications Manager and Kathrine Reyes, Marketing Coordinator, for providing the proper logo, some of the great pictures, and Park Map. Also, thanks to the World Waterpark Association (WWA) for showing me the 'wadi' that lead me to Dubai. 🏠

**Amusement Entertainment Management, LLC**



*"In The End, The Best Consultant Always Saves You More And Costs You Less"*

- ▣ Feasibility Studies
- ▣ Layout, Design and Theming
- ▣ Game and Attraction Sourcing, Purchasing, and Resale Services
- ▣ Business & Marketing Plan Creation
- ▣ Facility Upgrading and Revitalization
- ▣ Operating and Performance Audits

12 Elkins Road, East Brunswick, NJ 08816  
Contact Frank Seninsky or Jerry Merola at (732) 254-3773, e-mail us at fseninsky@aol.com, Profitwizz@aol.com, or visit our website at AEMLLC.com

(Frank Seninsky is president of the East Brunswick, N.J.-based Alpha-Omega Group of companies, which includes a consulting agency, Amusement Entertainment Management, LLC (AEM) and a nationwide revenue sharing equipment provider, Alpha-BET Entertainment. During his 38 years in the leisure entertainment industry, Seninsky has presented nearly 300 seminars and penned more than 1,200 articles. He has served as president of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) and is currently the Immediate Past President of the International Association for the Leisure & Entertainment Industry (IALED). Contact information: Phone (732) 254-3773, Fax (732) 254-6223, e-mail: fseninsky@aol.com Website: www.AEMLLC.com. For more information, circle 256 on card.)



Frank Seninsky