

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

One&Only's first-ever urban resort leans into contrasts

August 1, 2023



Opening in Dubai on Dec. 1, 2023, the cityside retreat is now accepting reservations. Image courtesy of One&Only Resorts

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

U.A.E.-based hospitality brand One&Only Resorts is moving into new territory, led by owner, operator and developer Kerzner International.

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Opening in Dubai on Dec. 1, 2023, the cityside retreat is now accepting reservations. The One&Only One Za'abeel is a milestone marker for the company, as the luxury stay is its first-ever urban resort.

"One&Only One Za'abeel redefines what it means to provide ultra-luxury hospitality in the heart of a city," said Philippe Zuber, CEO of Kerzner International, in a statement.

"Our Urban Resorts have all the elements of One&Only's DNA life and energy, space and privacy, curated experiences and exceptional service translated to a dynamic urban setting," Mr. Zuber said. "Found in the most inspiring destinations on Earth, each One&Only resort is an exceptional one-off, celebrating the unique charisma of its location.

"Perpetually altering Dubai's skyline, One Za'abeel is a landmark architectural development not just for the U.A.E., but for the world and we're thrilled to introduce our first Urban Resort in such a spectacular setting."

Sand and city

Standing tall among the glistening giants of Dubai's ultra-modern skyline, One&Only One Za'abeel encapsulates the allure of contrasts.

Hosting the duality of nature and urban spaces, gardens and views of endless skies meet futuristic design and luxury amenities. All of these are housed in a reimagining of a traditional, horizontal resort of the past.



The desert sands and twinkling coast are incorporated into the Dubai-based resort, from the in-suite textiles to the entire building's color scheme. Image credit: One&Only Resorts

The new hotel towers above the exclusive neighborhood of Za'abeel, home to palaces, racecourses, stadiums, high-end shopping and residential areas.

Situated in the One Za'abeel building, an award-winning, mixed-use development project featuring the world's longest cantilever, The Link, the resort captures the future of hospitality, architecture and travel.

Suites, rooms and the Villa One penthouse boast expansive floor plans and thoughtful decor. The corner suites specifically are unique for One&Only, making up a one-of-a-kind collection in a first for the brand guests can expect 180-degree views of the city, massage tables, meditation zones, in-room spa treatments, acoustic paneling and technology-forward features, depending on which suite is selected.

Other options include suites with three living areas including a lounge and standalone bar, two-story stays and luxury private residences. Infinity pools, in-room theaters, gyms and access to a private chef are among the perks.

The interiors of every stay are inspired by the locale surrounding the dual-towered skyscraper.



Suites not only offersweeping views and exclusive features, but house luxury brand items such as Louis Vuitton publications. Image courtesy of One&Only Resorts

As the neighborhood's name of Za'abeel means "white sand" in Emirati, the color scheme throughout the resort is neutral, complementing the sand motifs found in the art, textiles and sculptural lighting on-site. The nods to the beach and desert are yet another way that nature finds its way into the distinctly urban resort.

Culinary discovery is also on the table, allowing travelers and residents alike to connect with not only the Emirati culture but the international inspirations that make up Dubai's well-connected identity.

The eateries lineup within the aforementioned technical marvel, The Link, brings together cuisines from around the globe. Michelin-starred chefs, including France's Anne-Sophie Pic, Finnish celebrity Mehmet Grs and Australia-based Masterchef judge Tetsuya Wakuda.

Built as a lifestyle concept, the culinary-focused area also hosts immersive experiences, an all-day dining restaurant, a tropical swimming pool, a beach club complete with the U.A.E.'s longest infinity pool and a nightlife venue called Sphere.



Chef Gis's Arazuna concept has eight interactive kitchens and gourmet produce, allowing food-curious guests to explore the cuisines of Turkey, the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East. Image credit: One&Only Resorts

Finally, One&Only One Za'abeel is also home to a kids-only club, luxury retail boutiques, a spa clinic, a hub for futuristic fitness, gala ballrooms, meeting rooms and a private club on the 53rd floor.

"It is exhilarating working alongside the team at One&Only One Za'abeel to bring this property to life," said Jan Tibaldi, general manager at One&Only One Za'abeel, in a statement.

"This new icon is a blueprint for the future, disrupting the concept of what it means to deliver ultra-luxury hospitality in a thriving cosmopolitan setting," Mr. Tibaldi said. "Guests will experience a world within a world a place to collaborate, celebrate and recalibrate in equal measure."

Bookings can now be made at oneandonlyresorts.com/one-zaabeel.

Doing Dubai

In recent years, the U.A.E.-based city has been faring well on the real estate and hospitality front as international high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) flock to its sparkling oasis in the desert.

Catching the eye of high-end brands ([see story](#)) and migrating HNWIs ([see story](#)), Dubai is well-positioned for multiple affluent trends taking place, namely, the boom in luxury travel.



Dubai is complementary to many travel and hospitality movements that are picking up. Image credit: One&Only Resorts

By 2024, spending in the category is expected to reach \$1.5 trillion on an international basis ([see story](#)). Cities and regions that are already set up for the spike in visitation are ahead of the game thanks to infrastructure that can support this wave of tourists and long-term travelers.

This soon-to-be-opened One&Only Resort is riding this rising demand, catering to both future and current visitors as affluent spenders and luxury regulars boost bookings in 2022 alone, five-star hotel stays increased by 19 percent as demand grew ([see story](#)).

The HNWI population specifically is prioritizing experiential spending and vacations over saving, material goods and traditional fund allocation ([see story](#)), and hotels and resorts such as this urban retreat are directly in their line of vision.

Time will tell which regions and properties fare best in this context, but as One Za'abeel is already in a much-buzzed-about building and is curated with the wealthy group in mind, chances are the One&Only location is set up for success.

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