

# stroll

## dream streets

### dubai

A spirited Arabian city, go-getting Dubai keeps reaching for the skies. Audacious and ambitious, the world's fastest-growing city is never satisfied. Sleek sky-scraping buildings rise overnight and palm-shaped islands spring up from the sea. At first sight, this desert metropolis appears to be one big construction site. It is. So take a taxi from the sumptuous seaside Ritz-Carlton, Dubai — once a beach getaway on the city's outskirts, now at the center of glam "New Dubai" — to the city's most fascinating neighborhoods. Avoid rush hour, when you'll spend more time in traffic than exploring the exotic streets.

Dubai's *old* centers of Deira and Bur Dubai are divided by Dubai Creek, bustling with a variety of vessels including wooden dhows loading goods bound for Iran, belly-dancing tourist boats, shiny white cruisers and open-sided *abras* (water taxis). Deira and Bur Dubai are home to atmospheric *souqs* (bazaars), crowded neon-lit streets and gleaming shopping malls. In late afternoon, cab it to Bur Dubai to hone your bargaining skills at the vibrant Textile Souq before taking an abra across the creek to haggle for frankincense at the aromatic Spice Souq and something that glistens at the glittering Gold Souq. Return by abra to avoid gridlocked traffic and stroll along the breezy waterfront to the historic Shindagha and Bastakiya quarters, best explored at night when they're beautifully lit, the weather's cooler and the streets are buzzing. The labyrinthine Bastakiya lanes are lined with traditional courtyard residences as well as art galleries and cafés such as XVA, Majlis and Basta Art Café.

A 15-minute taxi ride away, Sheikh Zayed Road is home to the world's tallest building, Burj Dubai; dazzling high-rise towers secreting exclusive shopping arcades; lavish hotels sporting stylish bars and restaurants; and, closer to New Dubai, the massive Mall of the Emirates, with its indoor snow park. Nearby, and in stark contrast, laid-back Jumeirah with its low-rise white villas and bougainvillea-filled gardens sprawls along the coast between Bur Dubai and New Dubai. Jumeirah Beach Road is sprinkled with chic malls, low-key cafés and sheikhs' palaces. ● BY LARA DUNSTON



## shop

**AJMAL** // With its pungent, spicy scent, the heady Arabian *attar* (perfume) isn't to everyone's taste, but a visit here, where the veiled local ladies shop, is an experience. Ask which extravagant jewel-encrusted bottle is currently the most coveted (Deira City Centre, Deira; 971-4-295-3580).

**BATEEL** // Savor delectable chocolates, truffles, nougat and marzipan made from delicious local dates using European chocolate-making techniques (BurJuman, corner of Khalid bin al-Waleed and Trade Centre roads, Bur Dubai; 971-4-355-2853).

**EMIRATES TOWERS BOULEVARD** // With exclusive stores Armani, Gucci, Pucci and Jimmy Choo as residents, the sleek Emirates Towers mall is one of Dubai's most seductive (Emirates Towers, Sheikh Zayed Road; 971-4-330-0000).

**MALL OF THE EMIRATES** // This massive mall with its swish Harvey Nichols, indoor ski slope, and chic eateries and bars is Dubai's best — until colossal Dubai Mall opens later this year, which will be the world's largest (Sheikh Zayed Road; 971-4-409-9000).

**SOUQ MADINAT JUMEIRAH** // Shop for carpets, handicrafts and gifts in air-conditioned style at this contemporary interpretation of an old Arabian souq. Refuel at canal-side eateries with enchanting Burj Al Arab views (Al-Sufouh Road, Jumeirah; 971-4-366-8888).

**KUNOOZ JEWELLERS** // Nothing glittery enough for you at the Gold Souq? Drool over the jaw-dropping range of Breitling watches and precious gems at this gorgeous jewelry store (The Ritz-Carlton, Dubai; 971-4-399-5741).

