



Monumental design
Museum of the Future (left);
Mosque of the late Mohamed
Abdulkhaliq Gargash; the
Opus, designed by Zaha Hadid

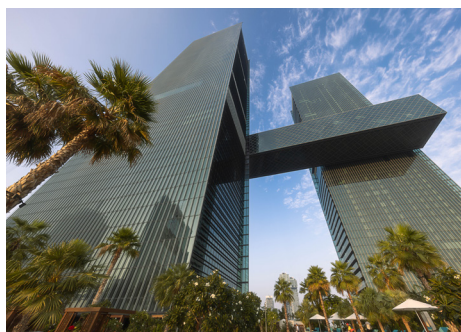


Super structures

From 19th-century air con to a robot-made museum, Dubai's buildings map its stylish rise. By **Natasha Amar**

In the Za'abeel 1 district of Dubai, sunseekers gaze at the skyline from an infinity pool 100m above the highway. The swimming pool is part of a 230m skybridge called The Link – the world's longest cantilevered building – launched this year. Featuring fine dining restaurants, The Link connects the two towers of One Za'abeel, an upscale development that's home to the luxurious One&Only resort, SIRO fitness hotel, sophisticated shopping, elegant residences and offices.

The Link is just one of many audacious architectural feats in Dubai's phenomenal transformation from a pearl diving and fishing village to a modern metropolis that embraces innovation unwaveringly. The skybridge and other architectural masterpieces are symbols of the emirate's evolution...



Storey time: The Link is part of a skyline that strikingly recounts the history of the emirate

Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood

Here, more than 50 restored mid-19th-century houses along Dubai Creek now accommodate a number of museums, cafés, hotels and galleries. Built from sandstone, gypsum and wood, their traditional *barajeel* wind towers channelled fresh breezes inside and kept residents cool long before the arrival of air conditioning.

Sheikh Rashid Tower

Inaugurated by Queen Elizabeth in 1979, Dubai's first skyscraper – then the tallest building in the Arab world – signalled the city's ambitions. Created by British architect John Harris, the 149m modernist tower is the striking centrepiece of the Trade Centre area.

Burj Al Arab

At 321m, the landmark Burj Al Arab, shaped like the sail of a Arabian *dhow*, is one of the world's tallest and most recognisable hotels. Completed in 1999, its astounding interiors host a 182m-high atrium, 1,790 sq m of 24-carat gold leaf, 30 kinds of statuario marble, and a bar mirror studded with 86,500 Swarovski crystals.

Burj Khalifa

Architect Adrian Smith was inspired by the spider lily, a desert flower, for the triple-lobed look of the Burj Khalifa tower in Downtown Dubai. Opened in 2010, it's the world's tallest building at 828m and has 200 storeys.

Dubai Opera

Designed by Janus Rostock of Atkins, the award-winning 2,000-seater Dubai Opera building opened in 2016. With a giant *dhow*-shaped construction modelled on traditional fishing boats, its light-filled, lattice-laced interior features a large rooftop garden with spectacular views.

The Opus

This 2019 building by Zaha Hadid, also known as the Queen of Curves, houses the ME Hotel and looks like an ice cube with an eight-storey central void. An optical puzzle created as two towers, it "melts" into a singular whole.

Mosque of the late Mohamed Abdulkhaliq Gargash

Completed in 2021, this is one of the first mosques in the UAE to be designed by a woman – Sumaya Dabbagh. Its impressive facade presents a verse from the Quran and triangular motifs.

Museum of the Future

Devoted to science, space and invention, the oval-shaped museum, which opened in 2022, is adorned with Arabic calligraphy. One line reads: "The future belongs to those who can imagine it." Fittingly, the steel facade was created using a robot-assisted process.



A vibrant year-round destination, Dubai is a cosmopolitan coastal city set between the desert and mountains, offering unique architecture and design as well as accommodation and activities for all budgets. Fly direct from Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, London, Manchester and Newcastle.

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