

NEXT DUBAI

Edition 1 - MAY 2026

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid

THE MAN WHO **IMAGINED** DUBAI

Before the skyline, there was a vision.

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Dubai is a city that never stands still. It is constantly evolving — through innovation, ambition, culture, and the people who continue to shape its future every day. The Next Dubai was created to capture that energy through a more thoughtful and modern lens. More than a media platform, it is a space dedicated to the stories, ideas, experiences, and movements defining the city today.

This magazine is an extension of that vision — bringing together the people, places, industries, and conversations shaping modern Dubai.

Welcome to The Next Dubai.

Ahmed Hussain
co-founder



THE MAN WHO IMAGINED DUBAI

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and the vision that transformed Dubai into a global symbol of ambition.

Dubai was never built to remain ordinary. Long before the skyline became recognizable across the world, before the Burj Khalifa pierced the clouds, before the city became a global center for business, tourism, and innovation — there was a vision. A belief that a city in the desert could become one of the most ambitious urban transformations of the modern era.

At the center of that vision stands His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

For decades, Sheikh Mohammed has shaped Dubai not only through leadership but through a mindset rooted in possibility. While many cities grew around history, Dubai grew around ambition — driven by an understanding that the future belongs to those willing to build it before anyone else can imagine it.

Born in 1949, Sheikh Mohammed grew up during a period when Dubai was still developing its identity as a trading hub along the creek. The city's foundations were modest, built on commerce, pearl diving, and resilience.

But even in its early years, there was a larger philosophy taking shape — one centered on openness, movement, and global connection.

That philosophy would later define modern Dubai. As the city evolved, Sheikh Mohammed became one of the key architects behind its transformation into an international destination for investment, aviation, finance, tourism, and innovation. Projects once considered impossible became reality under a leadership model that consistently challenged scale and expectation. From the rise of Emirates Airlines and the expansion of Jebel Ali Port to the development of the Dubai Metro, Downtown Dubai, DIFC, Palm Jumeirah, and Dubai Internet City, every milestone reflected a larger ambition: positioning Dubai as a city connected to the future. But Dubai's transformation was never only about infrastructure.

It was about creating a place where people from around the world could come to build their lives. A city designed around opportunity, speed, safety, and belief in progress. Today, more than 200 nationalities call Dubai home — a reflection of the global identity Sheikh Mohammed envisioned decades ago.

In Dubai, we do not wait for things to happen. We make them happen.

What makes Sheikh Mohammed's leadership distinctive is not only the scale of development, but the culture of momentum he created around it. Dubai operates with a mentality that mirrors its own philosophy — fast-moving, forward-thinking, and constantly evolving. In a world where cities compete for relevance, Dubai positioned itself as a city that reinvents itself continuously.

That mindset can be seen everywhere across the emirate: in the architecture, the infrastructure, the entrepreneurship, the hospitality, the innovation, and the people who arrive here carrying ambition of their own.

For millions, Dubai represents possibility. And that possibility was built intentionally. Even during moments of global uncertainty, Dubai continued to focus on expansion, innovation, and long-term vision. Rather than slowing down, the city consistently moved forward — reinforcing its position as one of the world's most adaptive and future-focused urban economies.



SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN RASHID



Under Sheikh Mohammed's leadership, Dubai also became a center for emerging industries, including artificial intelligence, sustainability, digital infrastructure, logistics, and smart city development — aligning the emirate with the next era of global growth.

But perhaps the most powerful part of Dubai's story is not what has already been built. It is the belief that the city is still only beginning.

“The race for excellence has no finish line.”

Even today, Dubai continues to expand beyond expectations — pushing toward artificial intelligence, sustainability, smart infrastructure, and the next era of global innovation.

And behind that constant evolution remains the same belief that shaped the city from the beginning:

That progress is never final. The future is always being built.

02 THE CULTURAL CORE: A MONTH IN MOTION



Inside the landmark 20th anniversary of Art Dubai and the expanded evolution of Alserkal Art Month.

This spring, the industrial soul of Al Quoz and the luxury waterways of Madinat Jumeirah merge to create a singular, high-octane cultural ecosystem. Alserkal Art Month undergoes a radical expansion, evolving its traditional footprint into an ambitious five-weekend odyssey from 18 April to 18 May.

The journey commences within the Avenue's contemporary spaces, launching sixteen new exhibitions. Serving as the conceptual spine of the program is *Still A Sky We Hold*, a newly commissioned public artwork by Shilpa Gupta. The program reaches its zenith on 25 April with the opening of *Déjà vu* within the stark, versatile walls of Concrete, bringing together eighteen of the UAE's most influential galleries.

As the calendar turns toward the final week, the focus shifts to the global stage for the 20th-anniversary edition of Art Dubai from 12 to 17 May.

Celebrating two decades as the Middle East's pre-eminent art forum, the fair at Madinat Jumeirah becomes the ultimate anchor for the season.

The dialogue between the grassroots energy of the Avenue and the global prestige of the fair culminates in the Moving program—a four-day cinematic collaboration across dual stages. It is a week defined by a "no-sleep" itinerary, cementing May 2026 as the month the world looks to Dubai.



03 LIVING DUBAI

Escapes, Dining & Experiences



**ISLAND SOUL:
BALI-INSPIRED
ESCAPES**

THE LUSH HIDEAWAYS



BOHOX (DOWNTOWN)

An airy, two-story sanctuary where leafy greens perch on every surface and breakfast is an all-day affair.



THE FARM (AL BARARI)

A botanical wonderland of lily ponds and emerald lawns serving organic European and Thai fusion.



HARVEST & CO (AL QUOZ)

A sun-drenched conservatory tucked inside the Dubai Garden Centre, perfect for those seeking a nature-filled retreat.

THE WELLNESS SANCTUARIES



SEVA TABLE (JUMEIRAH 1)

A secret garden hidden behind a quiet villa, offering a 100% plant-based menu where every bite feels like self-care.



COMPTOIR 102 (JUMEIRAH 1)

A 70s-Californian-meets-Bali haven that functions as a part-concept store, part-organic wellness café.

THE COASTAL ESCAPES



KOKO BAY (PEARL JUMEIRAH)

A bamboo-clad sanctuary of crochet hammocks and private cabanas offering Far East-inspired flavors.



ANDALIMAN (ONE ZA'ABEEL)

Bold Indonesian flavors meet soulful teakwood interiors, capturing the spirit of a traditional eatery elevated for the modern gourmand.

STAYCATION *of* THE MONTH



ADDRESS HOTELS + RESORTS
A Refined City Escape in the Heart of Downtown Dubai



A NEW WAY TO EXPERIENCE THE CITY

In a city that rarely slows down, the modern staycation is no longer just a break — it's a curated experience.

Address Hotels + Resorts introduces its "Unlock Downtown Dubai" offer, combining luxury stays with access to some of the city's most iconic attractions.

STAY, EXPLORE, UNWIND

Located in Downtown Dubai, Address properties place you at the center of the city's most dynamic district — where skyline views, waterfront living, and world-class experiences come together.

From Address Downtown to Address Sky View and Palace Downtown, each stay blends comfort with connection.

THE EXPERIENCE

- Daily buffet breakfast
- 30% savings on dining and spa
- Complimentary access to one attraction, including Dubai Aquarium and Underwater Zoo, Sky Views Observatory, or Dubai Ice Rink

Early check-in and late check-out are available, subject to availability.

DESIGNED FOR EVERY ESCAPE

Whether it's a quick reset or a weekend retreat, the experience is designed to offer both relaxation and exploration all within one destination.



SOMETIMES, THE BEST WAY TO EXPERIENCE DUBAI... IS TO STAY IN IT.

OFFER DETAILS

Location: Downtown Dubai **Stay Period:**
Until October 2026

Booking: Direct via Address
Hotels + Resort

HERITAGE ICON



ABRA CREEK CROSSING
The AED 1 Journey That Connects Old and New Dubai

LONG BEFORE THE SKYLINE, THERE WAS THE CREEK.



WHERE DUBAI BEGAN

Dubai Creek has been the historic lifeline of the city — a hub of trade, fishing, and pearling that attracted early settlers and shaped Dubai's first economy. Today, it remains one of the most authentic ways to experience the city's origins.

A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

For just AED 1, the traditional abra offers a simple yet meaningful crossing between Deira and Bur Dubai.

Operating daily from early morning until late evening, these wooden boats run every few minutes, carrying passengers across the same waters that once powered Dubai's early trade routes.

The journey takes approximately five minutes — but reflects decades of history.

MORE THAN A RIDE

Passengers sit on a central wooden bench, surrounded by a striking contrast of old and new.

On one side: traditional wind towers, historic buildings, and bustling souks.

On the other: modern structures, commercial hubs, and the evolving skyline.

Few experiences in Dubai capture this transition so clearly.

ALIVING PART OF THE CITY

The abra is not a tourist attraction alone — it is part of everyday life.

A large fleet operates across key routes, including Deira Old Souk to Bur Dubai and Al Sabkha to Dubai Old Souk, serving residents, merchants, and visitors alike.

BEYOND THE CROSSING

Step off the abra and into the heart of Old Dubai.

Explore the narrow alleys of Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood, walk along the Al Seef waterfront, or wander through Deira's Gold and Spice Souks — where the city's trading spirit continues to thrive.

THE ESSENCE OF DUBAI

In a city defined by speed and scale, the abra remains a quiet constant.

A reminder that while Dubai continues to move forward, its story still flows through the creek.



PARTNER WITH THE NEXT DUBAI

Where Brands Meet Dubai's Future

thenextdubai.com

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WHY US

Our platform blends editorial storytelling with digital reach, creating visibility that is both immediate and lasting. Every feature is designed to position your brand within Dubai's evolving narrative.

WHAT WE OFFER

Premium magazine placements
Strategic brand storytelling
High-impact social media amplification
Tailored collaborations for targeted reach.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Dubai is evolving in real time. So are the brands that lead it. Be part of the story.



05 THE NEXT ECONOMY

Real Estate, Investment & Government



MARKET INTELLIGENCE Q1 REAL ESTATE EVOLUTION

Beyond the Volume: Why Dubai's property sector is shifting from a rally to a regime of high-value maturity.

The headline figures from the first quarter of 2026 tell a story of a market that is no longer just growing—it is maturing. While transaction volumes saw a calculated 17.1% dip compared to the final quarter of 2025, the total sales value remained immovable, holding firm at AED 137.3 billion. This divergence is the most significant signal of the year: as volume normalizes, value per transaction is climbing. Dubai is no longer a market of speculative quantity; it is a market of quality.

THE PRICING ARCHITECTURE

Price momentum remained positive throughout the quarter, with residential values continuing their upward trajectory. Average apartment values rose to AED 1,871 per sq ft by March 2026, marking a staggering 25% gain over the last two years. Meanwhile, the villa segment outperformed, reaching AED 2,376 per sq ft. The price gap between villas and apartments continues to widen, reflecting a persistent global premium on privacy and space within the emirate's most coveted postcodes.

THE LUXURY BIFURCATION

The ultra-prime segment remains the engine of the city's global prestige. In Q1 alone, luxury transactions exceeding AED 10 million reached AED 43.7 billion.

The crown jewel of the quarter was the record-breaking AED 422 million off-plan sale at Aman Residences, Jumeirah 2, which averaged over AED 13,500 per sq ft. This confirms that Dubai has firmly joined the ranks of London, New York, and Monaco as a primary destination for global "conviction capital."

“When volumes fall but values hold, pricing power remains firmly intact. The market isn't slowing; it is becoming more selective.”



OFF-PLAN DOMINANCE

Structural shifts in the market show that off-plan sales now account for 75.3% of total market value. Projects such as The Oasis by Emaar, which generated AED 9.71 billion in Q1, and Damac Island City at AED 9.40 billion, are driving the majority of activity.

This sustained interest in future supply highlights a deep-seated confidence in Dubai's long-term infrastructure and the overarching national "Dubai 2040" vision.



THE DISTRICT WATCH

Geographically, the capital is moving with clear intent. Business Bay led apartment price growth at 1.90%, signaling its rapid evolution into a top-tier residential hub. In the villa sector, Emirates Hills witnessed an extraordinary 11.33% quarterly surge in prices, reinforcing its status as the city's most exclusive gated community. Despite new competition, Palm Jumeirah retains the throne as the highest-priced market, with villas averaging AED 6,428 per sq ft.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE



AED 1 BILLION SUPPORT PACKAGE
How Dubai Is Protecting Jobs and Strengthening Its Economy

A PROACTIVE MOVE IN A CRITICAL MOMENT

In a decisive move to safeguard its economy, the Government of Dubai has approved a AED 1 billion support package aimed at protecting jobs, easing business pressures, and reinforcing market stability.

Approved by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the initiative reflects Dubai's ability to respond swiftly to evolving regional conditions — with measures designed for immediate impact and long-term confidence.

IMMEDIATE RELIEF ACROSS KEY SECTORS

Set to be implemented over a period of three to six months starting April 1, 2026, the package focuses on reducing operational costs and improving cash flow across multiple industries.

Key measures include the temporary deferral of government fees, most notably within the hospitality sector, where hotels are allowed to postpone 100% of sales-related fees and Tourism Dirham charges.

Additional fee deferrals extend across business services, while customs payment timelines have been expanded from 30 to 90 days — providing companies with critical financial flexibility during a period of pressure.

At the same time, processes for issuing and renewing residency permits are being streamlined, ensuring continued access to talent and workforce stability. Gross rental yields range between 5% to 8%, with strong upside potential as the destination matures.

STRENGTHENING BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

Beyond immediate relief, the initiative plays a larger role in maintaining confidence across Dubai's economic landscape.

By focusing on liquidity, cost reduction, and operational continuity, the package enables businesses to stabilize, adapt, and maintain employment levels — particularly in sectors such as tourism and hospitality, where demand cycles are more sensitive.

The scale and speed of the response further reinforce Dubai's reputation as a market defined not only by growth, but by resilience and strategic governance.

BEYOND RELIEF: A BROADER ECONOMIC VISION

Alongside the financial package, Dubai has also introduced a series of long-term initiatives aimed at strengthening its economic and social framework.

These include the Dubai Empowerment Strategy, designed to create job opportunities, raise living standards, and promote sustainable employment, as well as a Health and Safety

Strategy for Workers' Accommodation, targeting full compliance and improved living conditions by 2033.



Together, these measures signal a dual approach — addressing immediate challenges while continuing to build a stronger, more inclusive future economy.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Dubai's AED 1 billion support package is not just a response — it is a reflection of how the city operates. A system built on speed, adaptability, and forward-thinking policy.

At a time when global markets are navigating uncertainty, Dubai is once again reinforcing a clear message:

Stability is not maintained by chance — it is built through action.

MARKET SPOTLIGHT



DUBAI ISLANDS
Where the Next Phase of Waterfront Living Begins

A NEW COASTAL VISION

As Dubai expands its global footprint, attention is shifting toward the northern coastline — where Dubai Islands is redefining waterfront living.

Developed by Nakheel, this five-island masterplan introduces a new balance between urban energy and island calm, shaping what is set to become one of the city's most significant coastal destinations.

MASTERPLAN & LOCATION

Positioned just minutes from Dubai International Airport and within easy reach of Downtown Dubai, Dubai Islands offers a rare combination of accessibility and retreat.

The development integrates beachfront residences, marinas, hospitality destinations, and expansive open spaces — forming a fully connected coastal ecosystem designed for both living and leisure.

INVESTMENT PERSPECTIVE

Dubai Islands represents a strategic entry point in Dubai's shift toward high-value, lifestyle-driven real estate. With most inventory still off-plan, current pricing reflects early-stage positioning — while long-term growth is supported by limited beachfront supply and rising global demand.

Projected gross rental yields range between 5% to 8%, with strong upside potential as the destination matures.



LIFESTYLE BY DESIGN

From open coastlines and marina promenades to resort-style living, Dubai Islands is built around everyday experiences.

It offers a lifestyle where the pace of the city meets the calm of the sea — blending residential comfort with hospitality-driven environments.

THE STRATEGIC MOMENT

As infrastructure progresses and new launches continue, Dubai Islands is entering a defining growth phase. For investors and end-users, this marks an opportunity to position early within one of Dubai's next major waterfront destinations.



THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY



EDUFAIR DUBAI 2026

The 10th edition of Edfair returns, shifting the spotlight to specialized engineering, AI integration, and the rise of impact-driven careers.

The evolution of Dubai's economy is mirrored in its classrooms. From May 8 to 10, the 10th edition of Gulf News Edfair Dubai at The H Dubai acts as a barometer for the region's intellectual capital. With 1,000+ programs on display, the event signals a critical shift in student demand toward highly specialized, technology-integrated degrees built to solve real-world global challenges.

THE RISE OF THE SPECIALIST

General degrees are making way for "Impact-Driven" pathways. Major institutions like BITS Pilani Dubai report a surge in niche sectors—including Robotics, Industrial Automation, and Chemical Engineering focused on Energy and Sustainability. This is a strategic alignment of the workforce with the UAE's national goals in renewable energy and advanced manufacturing. As the market matures, students are prioritizing long-term relevance in a competitive global landscape.



VOCATIONAL AGILITY

The modern job market now rewards "Job-Ready" skills over purely theoretical knowledge. This trend is driven by vocational qualifications, such as those from the DeMont Institute of Management and Technology. By emphasizing industry-aligned learning in fields like Cybersecurity, Psychology, and Digital Transformation, these programs create agile professionals ready to transition directly into high-stakes global careers.

THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Dubai remains the primary hub for international study. For 2026, the focus sharpens on AI as a fundamental learning tool and the strategic necessity of networking and internships. For the readers of The Next Dubai, this isn't just a university fair—it is the recruitment ground for the visionaries who will build the city's future. The path to the "Next" Dubai begins with the right curriculum today.

06 SMART DUBAI

Innovation, Apps & Education

دبي الآن
dubainow



DUBAINOW
One App. Every Essential Service in Dubai

THE CITY, SIMPLIFIED

In a city built on speed and efficiency, everyday life is designed to move seamlessly.

DubaiNow, the official smart services app by the Dubai government, brings together a wide range of public and private services into one unified platform — transforming how residents interact with the city.

WHAT IT DOES

DubaiNow allows users to access and manage essential services without visiting multiple offices or platforms.

From paying bills to handling official documents, the app connects services across multiple government entities — all within a single interface.

KEY SERVICES

- Pay utility bills, including electricity, water, and telecom
- Settle traffic fines and manage vehicle-related services
- Access residency and visa-related information
- Store and view official documents digitally



BUILT FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

Whether it's managing monthly expenses, tracking official records, or handling essential services on the go, DubaiNow ensures that everything is accessible — anytime, anywhere.

It is not just a convenience tool, but a system designed to support modern urban living.

THE ADVANTAGE

In Dubai, efficiency is not an upgrade — it is the standard.



DubaiNow brings that standard to your fingertips.

THE DISTRICT WATCH

Geographically, the capital is moving with clear intent. Business Bay led apartment price growth at 1.90%, signalling its rapid evolution into a top-tier residential hub. In the villa sector, Emirates Hills witnessed an extraordinary 11.33% quarterly surge in prices, reinforcing its status as the city's most exclusive gated community. Despite new competition, Palm Jumeirah retains the throne as the highest-priced market, with villas averaging AED 6,428 per sq ft.

07 MODERN LIVING

Beauty, Wellness & Performance



FLASH FACIAL
The 15-Minute Treatment Redefining Skincare in Dubai

In a city that moves fast, beauty routines are evolving to keep up.

Flash Facial introduces a new approach to skincare — specialized express facials tailored to your skin, delivered in just 15 minutes. Designed for modern, time-conscious lifestyles, it challenges the traditional idea that effective treatments require time-consuming rituals.

Using advanced techniques such as high-flow serum infusion and vacuum-assisted extraction, each session is built around precision and performance. The focus is simple: cleanse, hydrate, and restore the skin efficiently — without unnecessary steps or downtime.

Every treatment is customized in real time, adapting to the skin's condition rather than following a fixed protocol. The result is immediate — a visible improvement in brightness, texture, and overall clarity.



EFFICIENCY MEETS RESULTS

This is not a traditional spa experience — and it isn't meant to be.

Flash Facial removes the excess and focuses entirely on outcome. With walk-in accessibility and a streamlined process, it fits seamlessly into daily routines — whether between meetings, errands, or moments of pause.

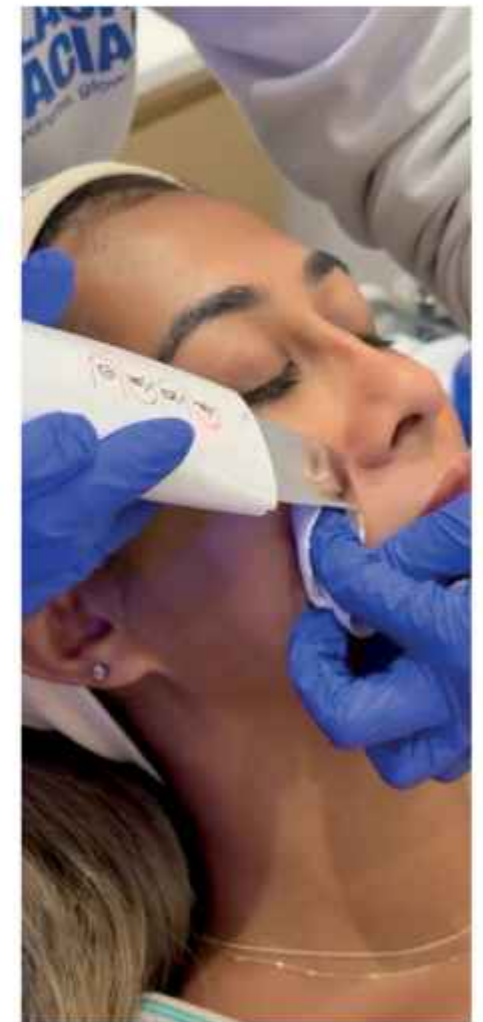
At AED 149 per session, the concept makes professional skincare more accessible, encouraging consistency over occasional treatments.

"15 minutes. Real results."

Designed as a women-only space, Flash Facial creates a focused and comfortable environment for its clientele — built around simplicity, efficiency, and routine care. In today's beauty landscape, effectiveness is no longer defined by time spent, but by how well it fits into everyday life.

EFFICIENCY MEETS RESULTS

Skincare is no longer occasional. It's consistent. It's intentional. And increasingly — it's fast.



THE NEXT GEAR



WHOOP
The Performance Wearable Quietly Changing How Dubai Lives

In a city driven by movement, ambition, and performance, wellness is becoming increasingly data-driven. WHOOP — the screenless performance wearable used by athletes, founders, and high-performers globally — is redefining how people understand recovery, sleep, and daily performance. Unlike traditional smartwatches built around notifications, **WHOOP** focuses entirely on optimization.



PERFORMANCE BEYOND FITNESS

The wearable continuously tracks:

- Sleep and recovery
- Heart rate and strain
- Stress and wellness patterns
- Daily performance readiness

The goal is simple: helping users better understand how lifestyle, work, travel, and recovery affect the body over time. **concept** makes professional skincare more accessible, encouraging consistency over occasional treatments.



“Performance begins with recovery.”

Rather than focusing on luxury aesthetics alone, WHOOP positions itself as a tool for consistency, balance, and long-term performance.

For many users, the shift is no longer about doing more — but recovering smarter.



TODAY'S LUXURY IS NOT ONLY ABOUT SPEED OR STATUS. INCREASINGLY, **IT IS ABOUT ENERGY, FOCUS, AND SUSTAINABILITY.**

08 SOCIETY & STYLE

Fashion, Culture & Influence



NIGHT OF THE NARCISSUS

From the heart of the city to the shores of the Palm, a new standard for high-society fashion emerges this May.



On May 16, 2026, Dubai's fashion calendar introduces a landmark event defined by exclusivity and the unfiltered brilliance of high-society living. The FAME Fashion Show is more than a runway; it is a curated episode of Middle Eastern grandeur designed for an elite international audience of designers, industry leaders, and tastemakers.

THE DUAL-ACT EXPERIENCE

The evening begins at 7:00 PM in an exclusive, atmospheric venue in the heart of the city. Guests will witness high-caliber presentations where established global houses share the spotlight with the region's most promising talent. With an open-access casting philosophy, the runway challenges traditional industry boundaries, bringing a diverse and avant-garde energy to the Dubai stage.

THE TRANSITION TO DEL MAR

As the sun sets over the skyline, the energy shifts. At 9:00 PM, the event moves to the Del Mar Club at Palm Jumeirah for a grand AfterParty that famously continues **"until the last guest leaves."**

Here, the formal runway atmosphere evolves into a sophisticated social scene centered on the curated presence of the city's fashion elite.

THE UNCOMPROMISING AESTHETIC

At FAME, the guest list is part of the visual spectacle. The dress code is rigorous: business suits, evening gowns, and extravagant statement looks. From the meticulous lighting to the refined styling, every element follows the city's highest standards for luxury gatherings.

In a city anchored by the Dubai Design District, the FAME Fashion Show carves out a unique niche centered on private, high-profile access.

For the industry, May 16 is the date that defines who holds court in the room—and who remains on the outside looking in.



Our philosophy is simple: To keep our audience informed without being overwhelmed, and inspired without exaggeration.

Through sophisticated storytelling and high-quality production, we simplify complex ideas into relatable, authentic content that adds genuine value to our community. We don't just report news; we define the stories that matter.



GET FEATURED
on The Next Dubai

From visibility to viral reach – we help brands get seen, shared and remembered across Dubai.

SCAN QR CODE

[Download our media kit](#)

Our Purpose, Our Mission
Defining the Digital Pulse of Dubai



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COLLABORATING WITH

**the
next
dubai**

is more than an advertisement;
it is an alignment with authority.

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