

Dubai's Mohammad Bin Rashid City - Bringing water to the desert

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Looking at the huge expanse of crystal clear blue waters, you could be forgiven for thinking you are on a Caribbean island when you enter Mohammad Bin Rashid City — District One. But the surrounding landscape comprising the imposing Burj Khalifa, and the sight of buildings under construction make you realise that you are still in Dubai.

It may have previously been a desert expanse, but this stunning blanket of water is the beginning of what will become the largest manmade lagoon in the world.

It might well seem like an ambitious idea to bring this much water to what is basically arid land, but nothing is impossible for Dubai. And, with the necessary advances in technology, possessing such a large area of lagoon in the desert is now a reality.

Big picture

The record-breaking lagoon is being brought to the UAE by Crystal Lagoons, a revolutionary international company that has succeeded in developing patented technology to help create seemingly unlimited-sized lagoons all over the world. Pioneered by Fernando Fischmann, Founder and Chairman of Crystal Lagoons Corporation and a biochemist the company has been involved in at least 250 projects in more than 60 countries.

The upcoming mammoth lagoon in the UAE is an exciting addition for the city, and will, without doubt, add much value to the eagerly anticipated Mohammad Bin Rashid City project.

Kevin Morgan, CEO, Crystal Lagoons, says, "Mohammad Bin Rashid City — District One is the first landmark project to be announced within the development, which is poised to become one of the most sought-after residential communities in the region.

"Meydan and Sobha aim to develop this community into one of the world's prime residential locations, delivering a new, vibrant and green heart for Dubai. Crystal Lagoons' eco-friendly and sustainable technology complements this vision."

According to Morgan, few countries in the world are propelled by the kind of ambition the UAE government possesses. "There are a huge number of developments that are changing the property and leisure sector here. These present massive opportunities to be a part of something special and we are honoured to be in partnership with Meydan/Sobha in realizing their dream."

Development begins

As with any big project, the lagoon at Mohammed Bin Rashid City — District One is being developed over several stages. Morgan says the various elements of the project include everything from architectural and concept design, engineering consultancy and lagoon start-up supervision, to the training of maintenance staff and remote telemetric monitoring.

For Dubai's lagoon, work is already successfully under way and its first phase is complete — as per schedule.

"The initial 1.4-hectare site within the residential community has already been filled and is in operating condition," says Morgan. "All the interconnecting lagoons will be completed by 2018, giving birth to the world's largest man-made lagoon."

The depth of the initial lagoon is 2.45 metres, with a perimeter of 578 metres. Once complete, the series of interconnecting lagoons will cover 40 hectares — three to four times the size of the world's largest existing lagoon in Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt — the 12-hectare Radamis Lagoon — also built by Crystal Lagoons.

As expected with any record-breaking venture, the Mohammad Bin Rashid City lagoon is bound to attract attention, thus envisaged to become another attraction for the city.

"I'm confident that the development will be a success," says Morgan. "Dubai's towering ambitions go hand in-hand with Crystal Lagoons'. A great vision and the belief that something of this magnitude can be achieved has always been prevalent.

"We look at this development as a benchmark for the rest of the world. Crystal Lagoons also believes the timing of the project's launch is quite unique as it will be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike during the Dubai Expo in 2020."

Great ambitions

While Crystal Lagoons' projects never lack ferocity of ambition, it offers excellent investment returns on any project through increased sales, unit size and densities, and the ability to transform non-viable land into viable projects. However, what is incredible is the cost of such projects.

"We can build a 40-squaremetre crystal lagoon — the size of 35 Olympic-size swimming pools — for the same price as building one Olympic-size pool," says Morgan.

Concerns about its environmental impact also abound. Morgan, however, is quick to defend the venture. He says, "Our designs are exceptionally sustainable. They use up to 100 times less chemicals than conventional swimming pools and consume only up to 2 per cent of the energy needed by standard filtration systems.

"In addition, Crystal Lagoons uses ten times less water than what is needed to irrigate an 18-hole golf course and it can set up projects with any type of water — salt, fresh or brackish.

"We comply with the most stringent international water quality standards, while our permanent telemetric monitoring, operation and control system ensures optimum water quality and an eco-friendly environment."

While Mohammad Bin Rashid City — District One, is a pivotal project for Crystal Lagoons, other properties have also recognised the benefits of adding such features to developments.

Other projects by the company include the Mayasem Lagoon in Saudi Arabia — the first of its kind in the country — which also allows activities such as sailing and swimming. In Muscat, the Barka Resort boasts a four-hectare lagoon and in Amman, the Dead Sea Lagoon spreads across 11.3 hectares.

With so many ventures happening around the region, it comes as no surprise that Crystal Lagoons is shortly opening an office in Dubai, possibly in Tecom. It will be exhibiting at Cityscape next week as well.

"We are looking forward to it," says Morgan. "The products we have on offer ensure that we receive a lot of interest; developers are highly impressed with transformations that Crystal Lagoons can conjure on any piece of land.

"We have developed the technological know-how to introduce water bodies to destination properties, which increase their value."

Crystal Lagoons can be found at stand 2G30 at Cityscape Global from September 21-23. And as it assists Dubai in breaking yet another record, it is sure to be much sought after.

Crystal Lagoons at a glance

Founded in Chile in 2007, Crystal Lagoons Corporation is an innovative company that has developed and patented technology (in 160 countries), which allows low-cost construction and eco-friendly maintenance of unlimited-size lagoons.

Fernando Fischmann, a famous scientist and Founder and Chairman of Crystal Lagoons Corporation, pioneered the company's cutting-edge technology. Since its inauguration, the company has enjoyed exponential growth. It has been involved in more than 250 projects in 60 countries and counting, including the US, Egypt, Jordan, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brazil and Chile.

The Crystal Lagoons project at San Alfonso del Mar in Algarrobo, Chile, was its first creation to hold the Guinness World Record of the world's largest swimming pool by area, before being taken over by its Radamis lagoon in Egypt.

Crystal Lagoons' technology can bring an idyllic beach environment to practically anywhere, and its technologies include industrial variations in closed circuit cooling, water desalination and applications for the mining industry.

Company highlights

- The Crystal Lagoons' project at Mohammad Bin Rashid City - District One in Dubai will be the largest man-made lagoon in the world upon completion.
- The company has developed an eco-friendly and sustainable technology that uses up to 100 times less chemicals than conventional swimming pools and only up to 2 per cent of the energy required for traditional filtration systems.
- Crystal Lagoons can use any type of water — salt, fresh or brackish.
- Permanent telemetric monitoring, operation and control online and round-the-clock ensure optimum water quality and an eco-friendly environment for the lagoons.
- A wide range of water sports such as swimming, kayaking and sailing can be practised on these lagoons in safety.

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