

مينالاک MENALAC VENDOR TALK

NOV 2020

SURFING - THE NEXT BIG THING IN THE MIDDLE EAST LEISURE INDUSTRY?



24 million people identify themselves as surfers. That number is set to grow when surfing makes its debut as an official Olympic sport at the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2021 and millions more people will appreciate the spectacle of man Vs nature. While it is already a mainstream consumer aspiration, and a multibillion-dollar business, few have regular access to ocean waves. Enter inland surfing, which frees surfers from the whims of Mother Nature and proximity to the coast by providing man-made surf.

However, as the demand to surf continues to surge, consistently reliable inland surf remains in short supply which is driving a development boom, with approx. 50 Surf Parks globally in planning. Why are so many investors and developers looking at this newest form of aquatic entertainment venue and how long until we can surf here in the desert?

Why Surf works as an Anchor Attraction.

Part of the appeal to developers is that a surf pool offers great flexibility as an anchor attraction across many different development types.



As long standing members of (MENALAC) Middle East and North Africa Leisure & Attractions Council, the team at WhiteWater have agreed to share with our readers a quick case study of four recent projects using their Endless Surf product, which launched this year, and showcases the versatility and development potential of inland surf.

La Vague Grand, Paris – Supports URBAN REGENERATION

The mixed-use development La Vague Grand Paris uses Surf as the heart of a sports complex to help regeneration a less prosperous suburb of Paris. The development incorporates a skatepark, family focused aquatic amenities and surf pool alongside an urban boardwalk comprising of restaurants, bars, and retail facilities. This €250 million development will additionally give back to the community, providing free surfing access for local schools and some social housing as part of the residential development.



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VENDOR TALK

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Surf the Wave, Ho Chi Minh City - Increases Lifestyle Appeal of RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS



In an emerging area being named Vietnam's Silicon Valley, \$12 billion of investments are aimed at building new infrastructure and commercial developments to support a new financial district that the country anticipates will contribute a massive amount of economic growth to the entire nation. As a tactic to attract and retain talent, a large mixed-use development acting as a residential, leisure, and lifestyle hub is coming to life from one of Asia's most significant land developers.

The Surf Lagoon will act as an anchor for this arena of watersports, accompanied by kayak and SUP lagoons and even a triple FlowRider sheet wave with the goal of creating an appealing place to live for the required highly skilled workforce.

"This development is a great example of how surf as an anchor attraction in larger mixed-use real estate investments creates a focus on lifestyle and wellness for the entire development. This added benefit comes in addition to the surf lagoon being a healthy business venue in its own right because of the high capacity and flexibility of the programmable waves that a product such as Endless Surf offers," said Paul Chutter, joint founder of Endless Surf.

Los Vientos, Punta Cana - Surf Lagoon as Centre Piece for LUXURY RESORT

For almost a decade, Pegasus Lodges, the global leader in adventure surf travel, has been tapping into a desire to explore the remote corners of the world for the very best surf, while enjoying sunsets in style and luxury. But Pegasus founder Ryder Thomas knows that a far larger audience wants to experience incredible surf in amazingly beautiful, but more accessible, locations. His new 1800 key development at Los Vientos in the Dominican Republic provides easy access for the huge US travel market.



This large resort development uses two Surf pools to create iconic 'shareable' views from the accommodation and world class surf for guests. With 1800 keys split across three iconic hotel brands ranging from aspirational luxury to five-star pampering, as well as outstanding local Caribbean cuisine and world class nightlife

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VENDOR TALK

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Surf 'N' Play Aqua Park, Melbourne - Offers Expanded LEISURE FACILITIES



Plans have recently been announced for the largest indoor-outdoor aquapark in the southern hemisphere. The \$100m SurfNPlay project from Pellicano Developers in Melbourne Australia retrofits the existing Wild Water Park and adds an *organic, heart-shaped pool design that is 300-meters wide and can provide up to a 26 second end-to-end ride on waves up to 1.8m every 10 seconds.*

Combining the Surf Pool, an Iconic artificial Surf Beach and a large indoor and outdoor Water Park, this development becomes a fully family destination.

In the word's of Mr. Pellicano of Pellicano Developers, *"Who would of thought keen surfers in the southeast of Melbourne could contemplate going for a surf before and after work. And we will work with local schools to teach kids to surf with no sharks or undercurrents."*

The Benefits of a Surf Park

All these examples are using Surf differently, proving how flexible and valuable a surf experience can be as the 'special sauce' which elevates a number of other elements, a hotel stay, community lifestyle, family time, other activities, to offer a comprehensive leisure experience.

These developers appreciate that the addition of an authentic surf experience provides a desirable lifestyle vibe which differentiates their venue. The influence of surfing is undeniable, you see associations with the surf culture in movies, music and fashion. The sport itself is seen as exciting, thrilling and challenging, with a huge element of fun for all the family.

Aside from the pure entertainment value, adding a surf park to a community development or Leisure amenity offers many benefits. Surf parks tend to create a hub around which food and beverage outlets can be situated, increasing opportunity for secondary revenue. Dwell time is likely to be increased when families and groups have an activity on which they can spend a considerable amount of time, with repeatability a natural side effect as participants stay longer. All of these benefits lead to increased revenue, attract residents as an anchor amenity and appeal to surfers of all levels.

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VENDOR TALK

NOV 2020

Reliable man-made waves will revolutionize surfing, bringing it to all corners of the world. While early examples consumed too much energy or produced too few waves per hour to be economically sustainable, advances in technology and design now make the surf pool an attractive business option.

Surfing in the Middle East region

Evidence suggests a large number of surf enthusiasts live and work in the Middle East; beachside communities boast many surf cafes and surf clubs. The demographic in the region is young, with active lifestyles the norm and an insatiable demand for high-octane, exciting sports and activities.

Despite beautiful weather much of the year, though, beaches in the region are not necessarily known for their surfing potential and waves rarely reach surfable heights. Enter the surf park, offering the ideal surf environment without the need to travel; with demand for surfing and the surf culture at an all-time high, now might well be the ideal time to consider a surf park.

Article contributed by Mr. Mike Rigby, Executive Vice President Middle East and India, WhiteWater.