



# THE GALLIVANTER'S GUIDE<sup>®</sup>



Muscat & Dubai.  
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SETTING THE BENCHMARK FOR HIGH-END TRAVELLERS



Top: The Long Pool at The Chedi Muscat. Bottom: View of the edge-of-ocean pools at the just-opened Four Seasons Resort Dubai.

**A**s you know, The Gallivanter's Guide is more of a club than a mere publication, so we take careful note of all the hotels and resorts

that you ask us about and try very hard to check them out. This issue, therefore, reflects what you, our readers, asked for; the current status of The Chedi Muscat, a

first impression of the just-opened Four Seasons Resort Dubai, together with The Oberoi Dubai, and a view of the recently refurbished beach-set Ritz-Carlton Dubai;

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*Even in its infancy, the new Grande Dame of Dubai, Four Seasons Resort Dubai, takes everything else out of the water.*

Asia. David and I enjoyed a Balinese Massage, using local oils; the Couple's Suite

a good eye for detail, and staff, overall, is professional and thoughtful, once they get to know you. I would certainly return here. The resort provides an excellent winter option for Europeans.

[www.ghmhotels.com](http://www.ghmhotels.com)

**Gallivanter's Rating: ★★★★★**

**Four Seasons Resort Dubai at Jumeirah Beach.**



*Big airy bathrooms, at Four Seasons Resort Dubai.*

sensitively designed to enhance the treatments. Expect the usual GHM mix of spa products, including chemical-free.

Swiss General Manager, Markus Iseli, has

This 237-room beach resort, designed in the shape of a horseshoe, is a sort of 21st Century take on those turn of the 20th Century Grandes Dames of Biarritz and Cannes; a very grand, opulent statement

that, unashamedly, flies in the face of minimalism and asks us to remember the last time we had fun.

This should not have surprised me, because General Manager and Area VP, Simon Casson, is an Englishman who totally embraces the concept and, thanks to him, what could have been a nice, typically Four Seasons beach property is now one that knocks your socks off.

There are all sorts of lovely things to experience here, but the real twist is the sensational 6th floor rooftop Mercury Lounge, with its three private 1,001 nights style majlis; one in its own fairytale tower that takes in Dubai's iconic landmarks.



*A corner of the sitting and dining room in Imperial Suite, #402, at Four Seasons Resort Dubai, which opens onto a large covered terrace.*



*The stunningly designed Shai Salon, at Four Seasons Resort Dubai.*

Downstairs, meanwhile, whimsical cocktails, Champagnes and wines combine with caviar-centric snacks that set the tone. Even though I am well past my use-by-date when it comes to clubbing, I could not resist this



*Fine Four Seasons fare in Dubai.*

place as it is great fun.

All-day dining is in the Adam Tihany designed Suq, which is a riot of circular crystal ceiling lights, extravagant gold cutlery, Rosenthal porcelain in white and gold, gold espresso cups, red glassware and orange leather seats. A culinary market awaits in the form of a series of live cooking stations. At breakfast, they will freshly make whatever juice you crave, and then you have such a choice of International delicacies that you find breakfast going on for rather longer than normal. Lunch and dinner are equally inspired; one of those occasions when you really relish

the idea of a buffet, as the concept has been re-engineered so cleverly.

Most of the hotel was designed by BAMO and, to be honest, these were the bits we preferred, especially the elegant Shai Salon; a lobby lounge par excellence, which is perfect for tea or something stronger from the coffee bar.

For fine dining, the beachside Sea Fu is a delightful haunt, with very good Mediterranean and Asian-style dishes, served indoor and out.

Thanks to its perfect location, close to all the best restaurants and right on the beach, the resort enjoys the best of all worlds. It also has five independent restaurants to tempt you, including a rooftop nightclub, right across from its porte cochère.

Then there is the clubby Hendricks Bar, with serious cocktails, cigar lounge and sea views; certainly a resort that caters to long stays, given the huge variety of outlets.



*Simon Casson at Four Seasons.*

There are two full-sized outdoor pools; one reserved for adults and edged by serious air-conditioned cabanas, which are fully equipped with shower, loo, sitting room, TV and outdoor dining deck. We had a delightful lunch here, marvelling at the fact that this resort has a wholly natural private beach.

Simon Casson, as well as being in charge of the region for Four Seasons, also over-



*The Juice Bar, on the left, at Suq, Four Seasons Dubai's all-day dining restaurant.*



*Redefining the buffet at Suq; Four Seasons Dubai's all-day dining concept.*

sees their spa offerings worldwide, so I was not surprised to find a very good Spa

speciality oil of the region, called Oud, which is known as liquid gold and con-

The Spa is light and airy, with ten treatment rooms and suites, a nail salon, hairdresser, hammam, fitness facility and a third indoor pool, with a glass roof that bathes the water in light.

We stayed after just a week of opening, so some of the suites had yet to receive their residential-style touches; but even at this early stage, you knew that the finished thing would be immensely comfortable.

The Royal Suite, #560, which can stretch from one to three bedrooms, has a huge open kitchen, study, entertainment room and its own spa and gym; all reached via a private elevator from the basement.

The Presidential Suite, #502, also with one to three bedrooms (and the opportunity to connect with more) is a beautiful, coolly elegant space, with polished plaster



*The sumptuous porte cochère at Four Seasons Resort Dubai, with one of its cream Bentleys.*

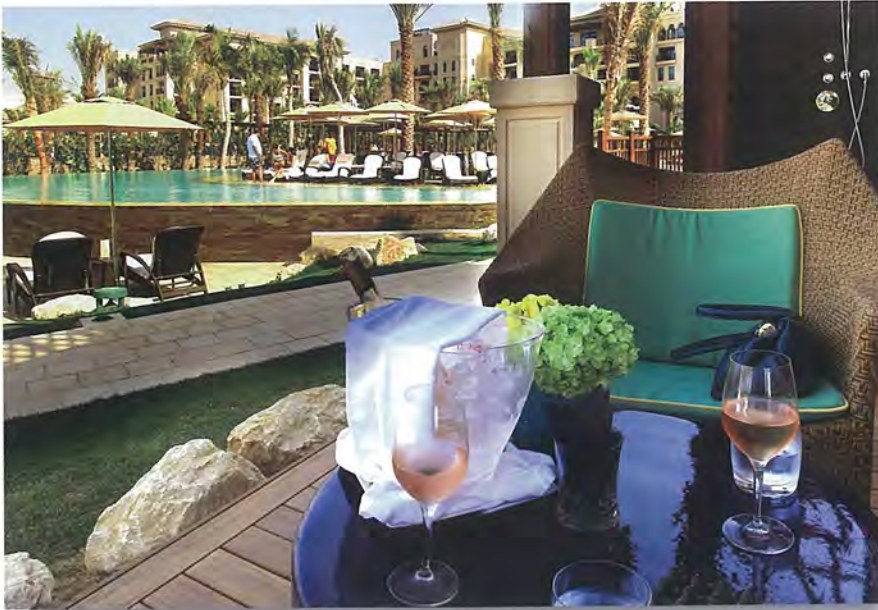
here in Dubai, under Director, Hayley Bluett. Simon commissioned Sodashi to create a

tains frankincense and rose. Not surprisingly, we had an excellent massage.



*At Four Seasons Resort Dubai, the sensational Mercury Lounge and one of the private tower-set majlis.*





Lunch outside our spacious airconditioned Cabana, at Four Seasons Resort Dubai.

walls and pale, understated furnishings.

We were in one of the 11 very large Imperial Suites, #402, with its big covered terrace off the sitting room, and corner views of the sea, plus a lounging balcony off the bedroom. A mix of pale embossed leather, marble and textured walls and the latest, super-comfy Four Seasons bed, made this a real haven. I loved the bathroom, with its hammam-style mosaic shower, and there was also a good kitchen, guest loo, office and expansive foyer with priceless Persian rug. However, entry-level rooms here are incredibly impressive, too; the best being Premier Sea View, such as #460, with a

great view-laden balcony dressed with day-bed, table and chairs.

Every room has an off-corridor lobby, with two rooms on either side. This not only cuts down corridor noise, but it also



The indoor pool is bathed in light, at Four Seasons Resort Dubai.

allows families to take both rooms to create more of a private space.

Even before you arrive at this resort, the transfer experience is outstanding, thanks to the hotel's two extraordinary cream Bentleys, with their cherry red leather interiors.

Four Seasons Dubai has the potential to achieve six ticks, but even in these early days, it is somewhat more than extraordinary. Do go.

[www.fourseasons.com](http://www.fourseasons.com)

**Gallivanter's Rating: ✓✓✓✓✓+**

### The Oberoi Dubai.

Just 20 minutes from the airport, The Oberoi is part of the emerging Burj Khalifa

development that radiates out from Dubai's tallest building and is set to encompass canals, waterside cafés and restaurants.

The problem with opening an hotel on a building site is that access can change by the week and when we stayed, our driver had to cross the bridge, do a u-turn, then return on the opposite side to reach the hotel. Currently, there are endless building sites surrounding The Oberoi, but given how fast things can happen in this part of the world, I suspect that the view will be relatively crane-free next time we visit.

Although The Oberoi is very much a business hotel, it does offer a leafy outdoor infinity pool, which helps you ignore the towering glass and steel that surrounds it. There is also a lovely internal courtyard off Nine7One; the hotel's International all-day dining venue, which is an unfortunate hodge-podge of design elements. Personally, I prefer the modern Asian restaurant, Umai, which is smaller, more intimate and better designed; the dim sum excellent. I



Entrance to Sea Fu restaurant, at Four Seasons.



A Spa Suite at Four Seasons Resort Dubai.

restarted in 2010, the original designers were gone, so corners were cut and, yes, this really shows. The Bar, for instance,