

# DUBAI

as a good place to visit  
for Trade Shows, Expos





## Introduction

Increasingly trade shows around the world are sorting themselves out as local, regional, or international. We at FLAAR enjoy attending all three sizes of expos, but since our readership is international we do tend to focus on the larger printer and signage expos with a multi-national focus.

SIG, Sign & Graphics Imaging, aka Sign Middle East, Dubai, is both regional and international. German companies are exhibiting side by side with Chinese manufacturers. The audience is also multi-national: I saw distributors, printshop owners and managers from over a dozen countries: Middle East, Africa, India, Pakistan, and Europe.

Since the FLAAR Reports are read around the world, the purpose of this PDF on Dubai as a venue is to show printshop owners and managers, distributors, and manufacturers on all the continents, that the Dubai expo is a venue they should consider attending in 2014.

Plus, Dubai is probably one of the safest cities to visit for a printer expo. China, Korea, Taiwan, and Japan are also safe.

Rather obviously FLAAR is not a travel agency, and since there are already hundreds of web sites providing information for tourists, hotels, shopping, and restaurants in Dubai, the following pages are primarily a quick introduction to the architectural aspects of this remarkable city.

But Dubai is actually better known for shopping. Here I will admit this is out of my league, since I do not do shopping (except for digital camera equipment, and only at a camera equipment expo).

Whatever your interests you will find Dubai a pleasant place to visit. The temperature is pleasant in January and February. Obviously no snow or freezing rain! So if you are in North America, escape winter misery and bring your family to Dubai. You can learn from walking the aisles of the expo; your family can enjoy the family-oriented entertainment centers in the shopping malls.

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But from any and all countries around the world, we hope to see you at SIG 2014, Sign Middle East Dubai, 22-24 January, 2014, United Arab Emirates, capably organized by International Expo Consults.

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

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



*Dubai International Airport has become the world's third ranked airport for international passenger numbers.*

### **Dubai airport**

The Dubai airport is gigantic; reminds me of one of the terminals of Madrid Spain. So be prepared to hike for a kilometer.

The airport is relatively close to the city. In Beijing and Guangzhou, you have an hour drive. In Dubai it is a third that distance. There is a metro. The great advantage of Dubai is that the one main metro line goes to key places. In Shanghai, if you get on the metro at the airport you may need to change three times to other lines before you reach your hotel (tough if you can't read Mandarin!).

Also, Dubai has only one main airport: New York has three; Houston has at least two. Beijing has several as does Shanghai. So Dubai is easy to move around in. Plenty of people speak English and most signage is in two languages.

A true evaluation lists both pros and cons: be sure to get to the airport early for departure since this airport handles millions of people (mainly people coming to the shopping malls). If you have FF status you can get into the shorter lines; if you have no Frequent Flyer card to get you out of the normal check-in line, you really need to be 3 hours before. Just realize that not all airlines really open their counters that early.

The Delta alliance lounge in the airport is operated by Air France and is pathetic.

- No electrical plugs for your computer.
- No table for your computer.
- Not much more than one simple small room.

The Turkish airlines lounge in Istanbul is 1000x better (larger, better food, plenty of places to plug in your computer).

If you are member of the various international airline alliances, realize that not all major airlines which fly to Dubai are members. So if you like to accumulate FF miles, and you enjoy the perks, be sure to understand the difference between a non-member, a partial member, and a full member. Some partial members do not provide FF points on the alliance, or lack other perks you assume are automatic. I tend to fly Delta in and out of Dubai in order to have the backup of their airline alliance.

### **Dubai airport transfer**

Since by the time we arrive at Dubai we are relatively jet-lagged, we really appreciate having an airport transfer person waiting for us. Yes, you can get your own cab etc, or take the metro, but I must admit it is so much nicer to have a person with your name on a small white sign to take you directly to your hotel.

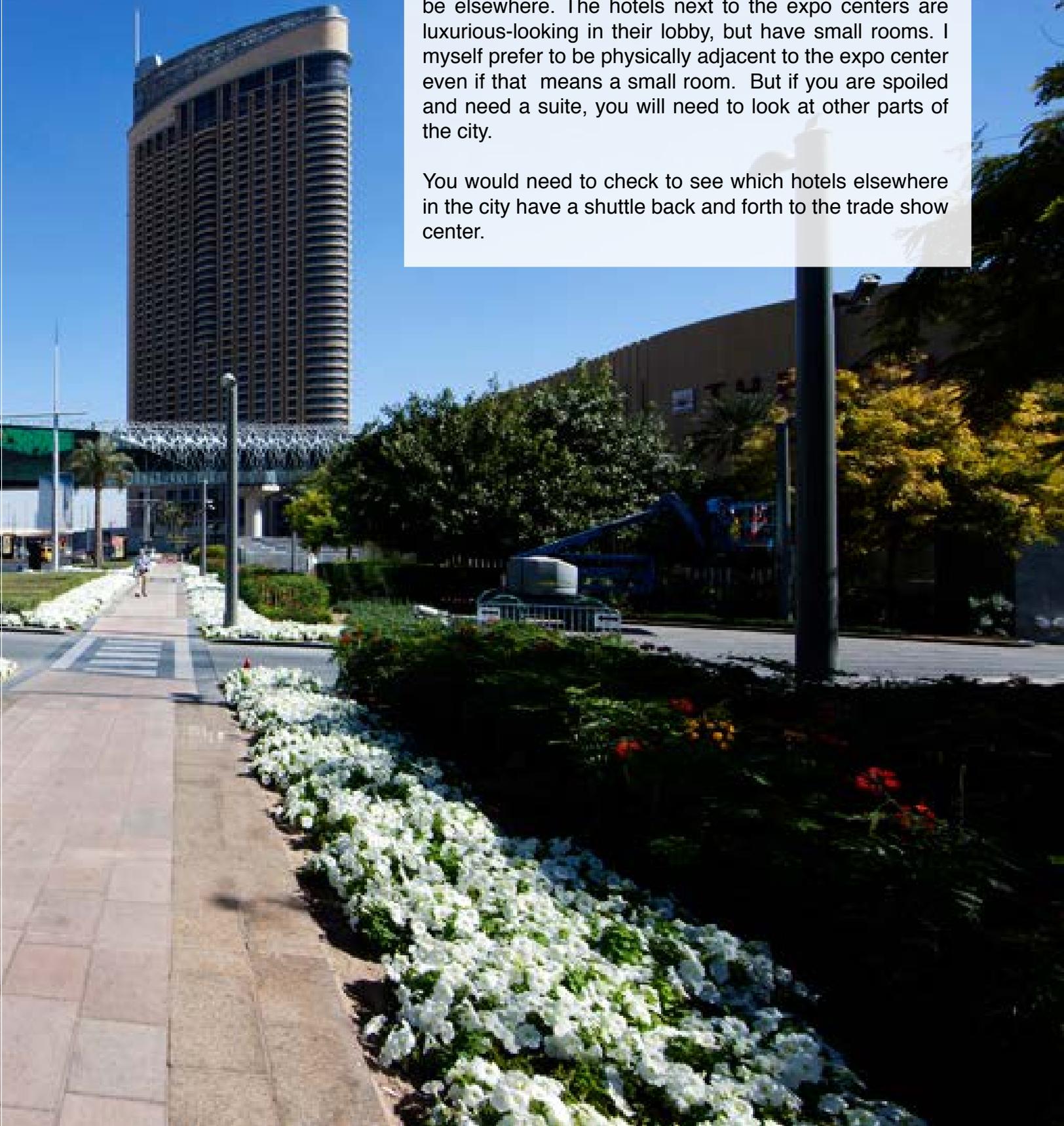


*Dubai city general view.*

### Dubai for Hotels

There are two hotels adjacent to the expo center. Just realize that if you wish a ★★★★★ hotel, you will need to be elsewhere. The hotels next to the expo centers are luxurious-looking in their lobby, but have small rooms. I myself prefer to be physically adjacent to the expo center even if that means a small room. But if you are spoiled and need a suite, you will need to look at other parts of the city.

You would need to check to see which hotels elsewhere in the city have a shuttle back and forth to the trade show center.





### Dubai for evening entertainment

Belly dancing is considered for everyone. The annual exhibitors' dinner has belly dancing as part of the entertainment. This is traditional also in restaurants in Istanbul and many other countries throughout this part of the world.

Many businessmen have told me that diverse other evening entertainment is readily available throughout the city. I am too cheap to pay for such entertainment plus in the evenings during the expo I have hours of homework to finish.

But if you don't have to write a trade show report, and if you can afford evening entertainment, Dubai is discretely known for this. Sorry I can't recommend any specific locations since I have not experienced any in-person (at least not in Dubai).



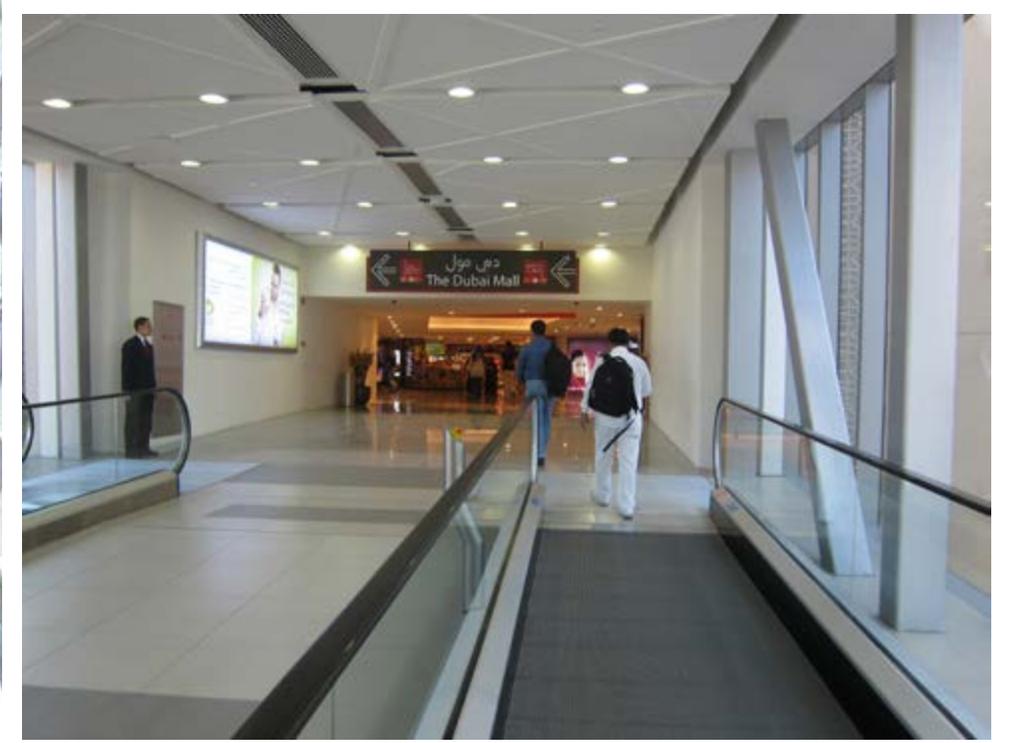
*Dubai is the largest city in the United Arab Emirates, and it is known for having around 911 really high buildings. most of them stand taller than 591 ft.*

## Dubai Metro

The Dubai metro is more efficient than the metro of Las Vegas. The Dubai metro is easier to figure out than the complex system of Paris. The Dubai metro is definitely cleaner than the metro of New York City.



*Dubai metro station.*



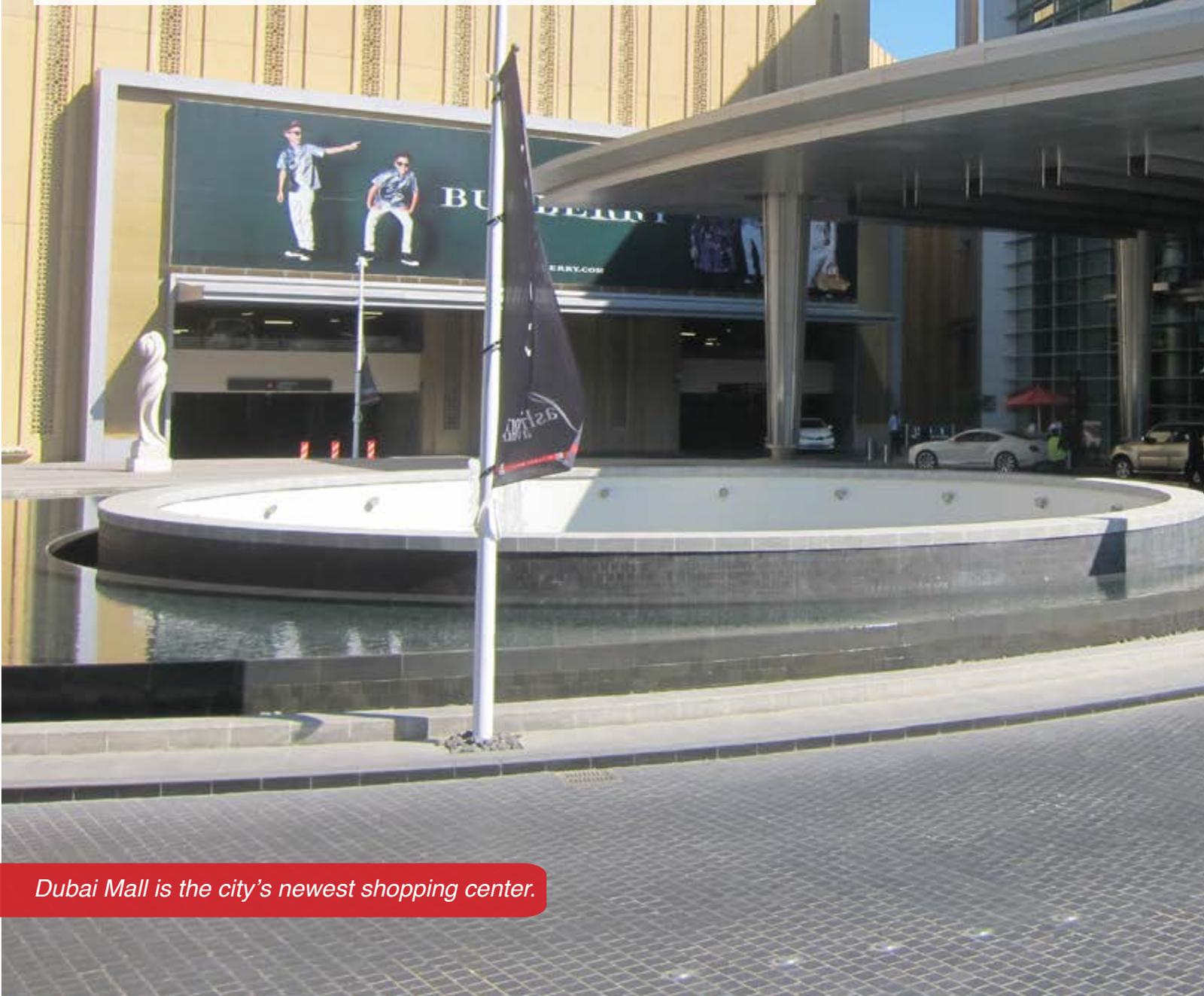
## Shopping in Dubai

Millions of people come to Dubai primarily to shop. Indeed there are so many shopping centers I can't list even a fraction. Plus they constantly build another "largest in the world shopping center."

So if your wife or girl friend likes to shop, this is a great place to spend money!

If you want to totally spoil your kids, bring them to Dubai.

Every year there is a special shopping festival in Dubai. Sometimes the dates are within the dates of the Sign Middle East expo.



*Dubai Mall is the city's newest shopping center.*







*The Waterfall, an amazing water feature that runs through the entire height of the Dubai Mall, is decorated with art sculptures of human divers made of fiberglass that complements the beautiful waterfall that covers all four levels of the mall.*



*Arabian horse sculptures, painted by local and international artists, will be displayed on Dubai streets until May 2013. This life size sculptures are part of the Dubai's Celebration of the Arabian Horse and will be auctioned to raise money for regional children's charities and to support the development of the arts in Dubai.*



*Today, Dubai city is well known for their ambitious architectural projects and their thriving economy.*

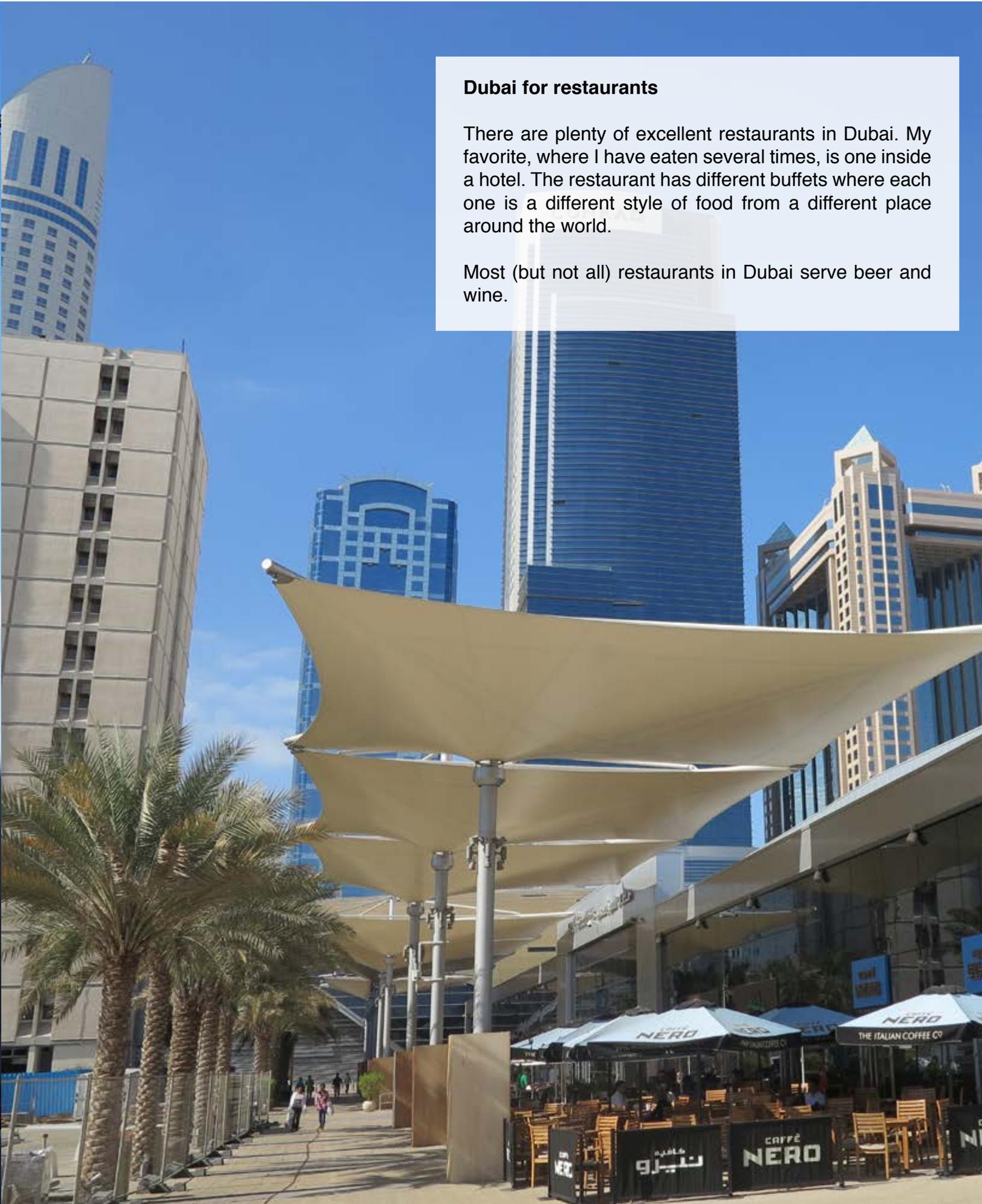


General view at Dubai city

### **Dubai for restaurants**

There are plenty of excellent restaurants in Dubai. My favorite, where I have eaten several times, is one inside a hotel. The restaurant has different buffets where each one is a different style of food from a different place around the world.

Most (but not all) restaurants in Dubai serve beer and wine.





*Dubai World Trade Center inside general view.*



The Dubai World Trade Center has over a million square ft. of exhibition space where they have managed international events exhibitions and conferences in world-class venues for over 30 years.



*Convention Gate at Dubai World Trade Center.*





*Burj Khalifa, known as the tallest man-made structure in the world.*



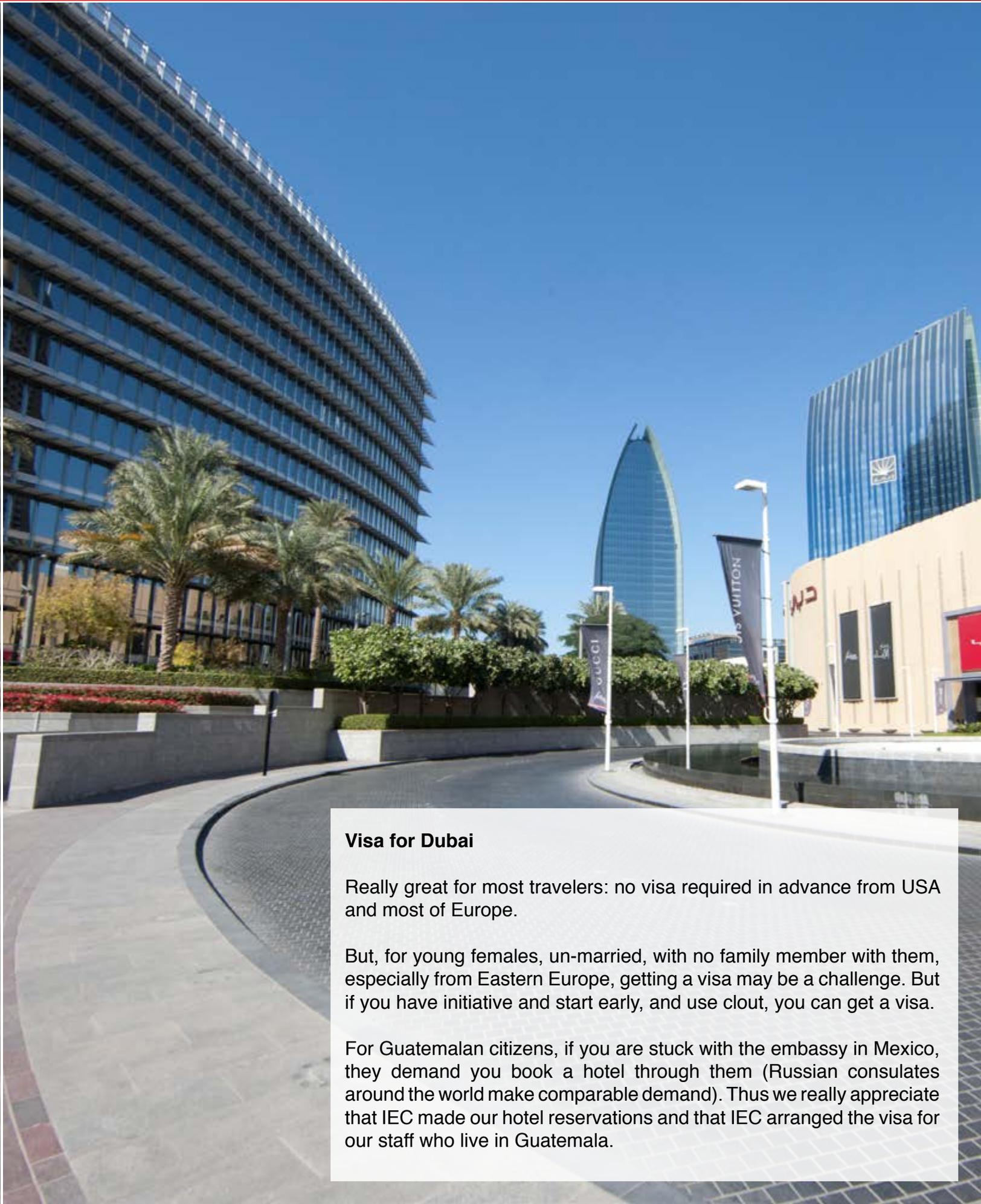


### **Family entertainment in Dubai**

You can snow ski inside; you can do about anything and everything for your family (though I am not familiar with any significant roller-coaster system in Dubai. The most remarkable roller-coaster I have experienced was in Orlando, at Sea World).

But if you and your family can survive without a scary roller coaster, Dubai has pretty much everything else. Best look at any of the typical Dubai tourist web sites for lists of what to do.





### **Visa for Dubai**

Really great for most travelers: no visa required in advance from USA and most of Europe.

But, for young females, un-married, with no family member with them, especially from Eastern Europe, getting a visa may be a challenge. But if you have initiative and start early, and use clout, you can get a visa.

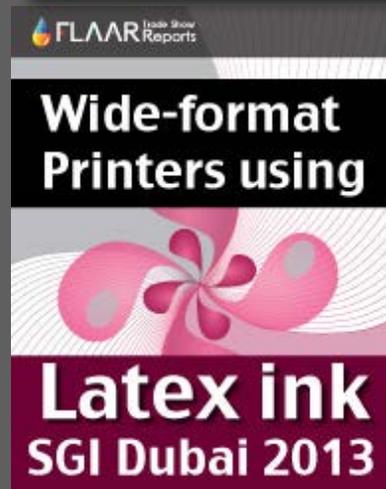
For Guatemalan citizens, if you are stuck with the embassy in Mexico, they demand you book a hotel through them (Russian consulates around the world make comparable demand). Thus we really appreciate that IEC made our hotel reservations and that IEC arranged the visa for our staff who live in Guatemala.

Dubai	Orlando	Las Vegas	Duesseldorf (Drupa and some Viscom)	Istanbul
Hub, plenty of direct flights	Secondary to Miami but also many direct flights	Lots of direct flights	Secondary airport	Plenty of direct flights
Looonngg delays in airport lines entering country	Often long waiting lines	Often long waiting lines	Usually easy and not much waiting	Usually easy and not much waiting
Taxi reasonable	Taxi and shuttle	Taxi not cheap but airport is close	Free shuttle provided by Drupa	One expo at airport, other 40 min.
Hotels reasonable if you need this	Hotels reasonable if you need this	Hotels reasonable if you need this	Hotels grossly over-priced	Hotels reasonable if you need this
Plenty speak English	Plenty speak English and Spanish	Plenty speak English	Plenty speak English	Plenty speak English
Visa: easy unless you are a young unmarried female	Visa: tough for some, especially young unmarried female	Visa: tough for some, especially young unmarried female	Visa: easy	Visa really easy
Very safe and secure	Save and secure	Normally safe	Normally safe	Normally safe
hospitable	hospitable	hospitable	hospitable	hospitable
Great for shopping	Good for bargain shopping	Plenty of malls for reasonable prices	Not a place for shopping	Not a destination for shopping
Good for family, spouse or travel companion	Good for family, spouse or travel companion	Good for family, spouse or travel companion	Definitely not Orlando or Las Vegas or London	Great sightseeing opportunities
Shopping oriented, but also has discrete evening entertainment	Family oriented	"Sin City" in full public view		

Shanghai	London
Plenty of direct flights, or via Hong Kong	Hub, plenty of direct flights
Long lines but not as slow as Dubai airport	Long lines for everything in Heathrow airport
Metro and taxi at reasonable cost	Cab overpriced beyond belief, train requires too many changes
Hotels reasonable if you need this	Hotels grossly overpriced
Plenty speak English	Plenty speak English and many other languages
Visa easy	Visa easy
Normally safe	Normally safe
hospitable	hospitable
Prices not as low as I would have expected	Plenty of expensive brands for shopping
Great sightseeing opportunities	Plenty of sightseeing opportunities if you can afford it
KTV clubs provide everything from family entertainment to discrete evening entertainment	Was too far away from the city to bother to find any entertainment



**SGI 2013  
Available Reports**



**SGI Middle East 2012  
Free Report**



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

A new online Signage/Print Industry "Resource Center" Specific for SGI Dubai covering Middle East, Africa and South Asia Regions has been organized by Ryan Crist, which includes material from FLAAR Reports, under license from FLAAR for SGI Dubai: [www.signageresource.com](http://www.signageresource.com)

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