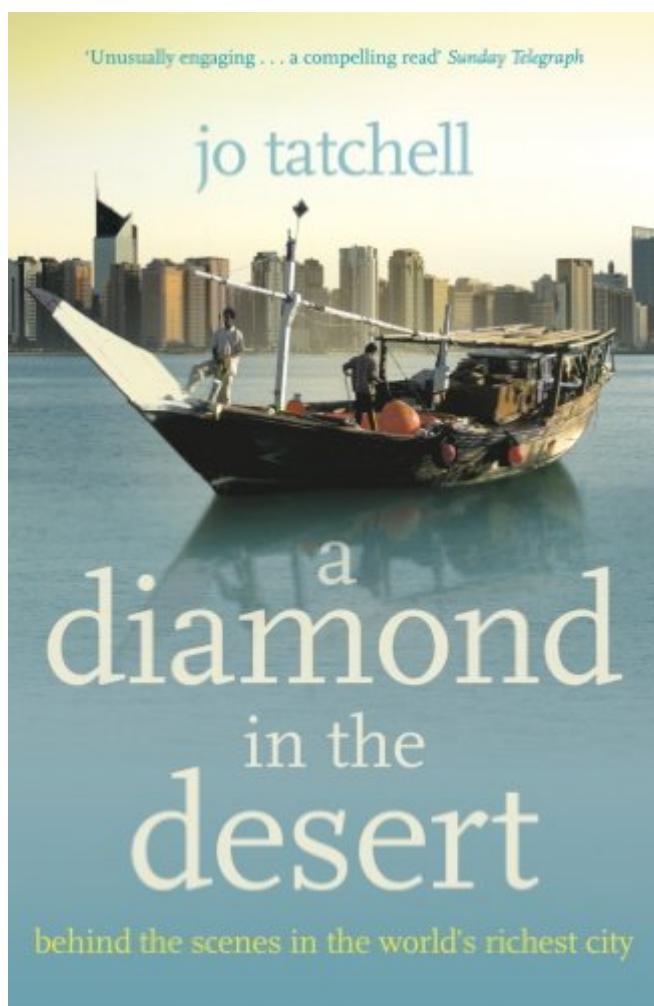


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A DIAMOND IN THE DESERT: Behind The Scenes In The World's Richest City: Behind The Scenes In The World's Richest City



Synopsis

Barely forty years ago, Abu Dhabi was a fishing village on the Arabian Gulf. Now the capital of the United Arab Emirates, its citizens are each worth \$17 million, it holds major stakes in Western economies, and has money to burn. In this timely, revealing and evocative portrait of a global player, Jo Tatchell traces the emirate's dramatic development and the sometimes ruinous effect of extreme wealth on its people and their desert culture. And as its rulers fund another giant leap forward, she probes behind the official facade to examine whether this secretive and controlled society can realise its breathtaking plans to transform relations between East and West.

Book Information

File Size: 1590 KB

Print Length: 305 pages

Publisher: Sceptre (July 5, 2012)

Publication Date: July 5, 2012

Language: English

ASIN: B0085NULT0

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,973,447 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #76 inÃ Books > History > Middle East > United Arab Emirates #745 inÃ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > Middle East #942 inÃ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Human Geography

Customer Reviews

In the timeline of Abu Dhabi history, this book is a follow-up to M.A. Fahim's excellent eyewitness account, "From Rags to Riches." Author Jo Tatchell revisits the country where she had arrived as a child in 1974 and spent her formative years. She is in an excellent place to compare the "then" and the "now" (meaning circa 2008), having absorbed a lot of fascinating information about the early days of the oil boom from her father, who managed Spinneys, the first supermarket catering to expats. She meets with some prominent locals and old-timers who have made the capital their

permanent home; they are happy to reminisce. Her efforts at gaining access to old newspapers in the National Archives, however, are somewhat less successful (partly due to the digitization process which is underway). Jo Tatchell is an excellent writer and I really enjoyed the book. Her observations are spot on and her background information appears well researched and quite accurate. Part memoir and part travelogue, with a bit of history thrown in, the book sometimes left me hungry for "more," which is a compliment as well as a complaint. In the years since the book came out (2009) a lot has happened in the United Arab Emirates. There was the global economic crisis, which hit the country late, but hard, followed by an ongoing recovery. The emirate of Abu Dhabi has proven itself to be smart and resilient in the face of this adversity, opting to become the cultural capital of the area. Here's room for a sequel.

Loved *A Diamond in the Desert*. I read when I was new to Abu Dhabi and still overwhelmed with the culture. This book helped explain as much as is possible, why culture is the way it is here while weaving a very interesting and personal story. A great read for anyone who is living in or considering moving to the UAE.

I wish more people would write books like this about other parts of the world. I liked this book because it went from story to story to explain the history of Abu Dhabi. Reading it was like listening to a friend talk about their travels. The book includes a mystery, tragedy and quirky cultural perspectives.

I did learn a bit about the United Arab Emirates when I read this book, but it seemed to move slowly and gave too much unimportant information.

Jo Tatchell lived there for a few years and then returned to look it over and write about it. A good view of the surface and what lies beneath in at least a few cases -- so you get a sense of the contradictions as well as the norms of everyday life.

The author relates sensitive realities from her first-hand experience on Abu Dhabi's sometimes not so subtle effort to gloss over perceived transparency with non-transparency. Ingrained cultural habits continue to prevail in spite of Western expatriates' attempts to expose injustices. The author perceptively forecasts the realities of change.

If you plan to visit Dubai, read this before you go.

Interesting account from someone acquainted with Abu Dhabi all her life.

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