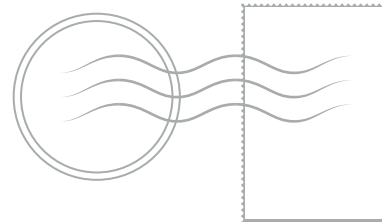


DESTINATIONS

THEME PARKS & ATTRACTIONS | ABU DHABI

POSTCARD

Yas Island



Abu Dhabi's ultimate playground has theme parks and attractions aplenty, but it isn't just for thrill seekers, finds **Elise Morton**

As someone not known for chasing adrenaline highs, I approached a day on Yas Island with a dose of scepticism. Just 30 minutes from the centre of Abu Dhabi, the island is home to some of the best theme parks in the region. Ferrari World, Warner Bros World and Yas Waterworld are just three of the attractions that drew more than 34 million visitors to the entertainment hub in 2023. But would there be something there for me?

The Yas Mall and chilled-out Yas Marina offer a welcome counterpoint to the action. I spent time perusing the shops and enjoying Mediterranean treats at waterside restaurant Mika, before taking a stroll around the marina, which offers a glimpse of the racetrack that hosts the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

With that in mind, paying a visit to Ferrari World felt particularly fitting. Stepping under the sprawling red roof – which clients can ascend on a Roof Walk Experience – I entered a new realm. The park isn't just a tribute to Enzo Ferrari's legacy: from walking through a replica of his quaint Italian hometown of Maranello to flying over Italy in the Viaggio in Italia simulator, I was immersed in a veritable Ferrari universe (complete with Italian eating options; gelato was an offer I couldn't refuse).

My first stop was Formula Rossa, which is the world's fastest rollercoaster, capable of reaching a speed of 150mph in a mere 4.9 seconds. The coaster is largely alfresco but employs a high-tech cooling system to make it enjoyable even in the heat of an Abu Dhabi summer.

My companions were enthralled by another rollercoaster, Flying Aces, with its high-speed twists and one of the world's steepest loops. But I found something more my pace in Bell'Italia, a family-friendly ride that offers glimpses of the Amalfi Coast, Venice and the Colosseum from the seat of a miniature Ferrari 250 California.

The theme park is also home to the world's first Ferrari Esports Arena and a Karting Academy. But I wrapped up my time at Made in Maranello, discovering how the sports cars are put together and bringing the experience full-circle with an insider's view of the Ferrari factory line, from the first designs to test drives around the Fiorano Circuit. **TW**



BOOK IT

Tui offers seven nights' B&B at the Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island from £1,538 per person, based on two adults and two children sharing a Double Room. The price includes luggage, transfers and flights departing Heathrow on July 28. Ferrari World Abu Dhabi tickets cost £73 via Tui Musement. tui.co.uk



TOP: The Formula Rossa rollercoaster

ABOVE: Entrance to Ferrari World

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