



Words & Photos : Travis Beaton

# WINTER IN THE EMIRATES

**T**eam GB's Travis Beaton spent the off-season riding and coaching wakeboarding and wakesurfing in the United Arab Emirates. It proved to be a rewarding experience.

My main base was Eywoa Marine Sports near Yas Island in Abu Dhabi. This school operates from an inland estuary and is very well sheltered so conditions are glassy every day. They have a Malibu 24MXZ, which is the main boat I use, as well as an Axis A22. It has been great to be able to coach from these boats as the power wedge makes it really easy to adjust the wake dependent on the riders' level so the same boat can be used for beginners right through to advanced riders very easily.

The main difference between coaching out in UAE and my regular coaching jobs in the UK is that, in the UAE, driver and coach are completely separate roles. This has been particularly helpful when I am coaching surfing as I can be on the back of the boat talking and demonstrating to the rider without them needing to fall off. However, I have had to adapt my coaching to communicate with both the rider and driver as, when I coach and drive, I can make instinctive

adjustments to the speed or wake as required, but with a driver I need to tell them these things.

I was mainly based in Abu Dhabi and had clients from the UK come out for coaching. Some of the German wakeboard team came and rode for a week with me too. Aside from this, I was coaching the school's existing customers and travelling to Dubai for guest coaching days. The main package I offered at Eywoa was seven days long, with five days riding twice daily behind the Malibu 24MXZ being coached by me and an opportunity to stay in a hotel within walking distance of the marina using an exclusive deal I managed to secure with the hotel before travelling.

Spending the winter months in the UAE was an amazing experience from both a coaching and exploring point of view. Being able to travel between Abu Dhabi and Dubai to ride and coach at different schools allowed me to develop as a coach, from teaching young children to get up for the first time through to teaching people their first invert on a wakeboard.



For my own riding, it was great to ride without a wetsuit in warm and idyllic conditions for an extended period of time. It was also fun to almost re-establish a reputation for myself. In the UK people know me and I have a strong clientele but, in the UAE, I had to build myself up right from scratch and had very positive

feedback from everyone I coached. For example, in Dubai, a guy contacted me to come and give him some lessons behind his Malibu M240 and he has invited me to go back and ride with him. He made lots of progress, learning to surf backside, ollies and much more.

When I went to a school in Dubai called Surf High, I got to ride behind a very familiar boat. Their 23LSV actually came from Malibu Boats UK and I rode it when it was in the UK a few years back. This was quite possibly one of the coolest experiences I have had wakeboarding, with the backdrop of the Burj Khalifa (the world's tallest building) and dolphins jumping out of the water close to the boat and really good conditions. It's something I definitely wouldn't have been able to get if this boat had stayed in the UK!

There were lots of fun things to do on my day off.

I enjoyed seeing the sights, such as the Burj Khalifa, the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque and walking through the mangroves. I was also able to chill by the pool or on the beach with friends and family when my mum came out to visit me. My personal favourite experience was exploring the dunes and desert on dune buggies with the German wakeboard team.

It was a great way to spend my winter and I would like to say thank you to Eywoa Marine Sports, Rotana Hotel and Malibu & Axis Boats UK for helping to make this experience possible.

## WHAT A TRIP

**STEVE VAUGHAN WAS COACHED BY TRAVIS ON A WEEK-LONG VISIT TO YAS MARINA AND THE W HOTEL**

"This was an incredible location to get the most from riding with minimal effort when it comes to hauling your kit around on foot. As a package, W Hotel & Eywoa watersports was absolutely perfect for me! I've been extremely lucky since I started wakeboarding, from learning the ropes at CJM then continuing my progression at LDB where I met Travis Beaton. This guy has propelled me further than I ever thought possible. The simple adjustments Travis has made to my riding have given me the confidence to compete later this year which I am absolutely buzzing for! His knowledge, drive and passion for the sport really stands out when he's coaching. If you're lucky enough to get time on the water with Travis you'll surprise yourself too and the whole team at Eywoa are super friendly and accommodating. I plan to make this trip in January a yearly thing".