

DUBAI

# Matthew Morgan-Jones

The father-of-three and the man behind the charity All As One talks Hard Rock, Forbes and the generosity of Dubaians

**What brought you to Dubai?**  
I had been living in Sydney for three years when a job came up in the region. At the time I didn't know much about the area but the more I found out the more I was interested, so I applied for the position.

**What do you love about the city?**  
Dubai is constantly evolving and developing, with many new places opening, new things to see and new opportunities. It really doesn't stand still. The generosity of the people really makes the difference. In the last year I have seen such generosity that we have been able to keep the All As One orphanage in Sierra Leone open – saving the lives of abandoned and orphaned children and thanks to people's donations and support.

**Your favourite part of the city?**  
In the evening it's great to walk along the beach, stop at a cafe for shisha then jump on an abra (only Dhs1!) to the other side (beating the traffic over the bridge!) and explore the souks. This is the centre of trade and activity has been forgotten with the expanse of 'new Dubai', but

for me it really represents the foundations of Dubai – it's trading heritage.

**Where's your favourite restaurant/bar?**  
Teatro restaurant at the Rotana Towers on Sheikh Zayed Road – fantastic fusion menu, great atmosphere and staff. I've celebrated my birthday there a number of times and have always loved the whole experience.

**Best place for a sunset?**  
Pierchic – fantastic drinks, great seafood and just wonderful for a special treat.

**Top tip for surviving the city?**  
Keep your feet on the ground and treat others how you would like to be treated!

**What's the first touristy thing you did when you got out here?**  
When I first arrived I heard that the Hard Rock had opened. So I jumped in a taxi arriving at

what was then the middle of the desert with it standing tall and all alone. I thought Hard Rock must have been crazy to build something so far out, but now everything has been built around it. It's one of the best examples of how quickly Dubai has grown.

**Ski Dome or Autodrome?**  
Ski Dome for sure – the kids love it. Although we've not been that often – it's a fantastic way for children to experience the snow and obviously have a snowball fight!

**Wild Wadi or Dreamlands?**  
Dreamlands – good value plus not that busy, so you get to go on more rides in less time!

**What has been your best Dubai memory?**  
The All As One African Ball. It was the second major event I'd organised for the charity – so I was really flying by the seat of my pants. Over 220 people attended and we raised over Dhs135,000.

**YOUR DUBAI?** Email a photo and why you should be our next Ahlan! star to [mydubai@itp.com](mailto:mydubai@itp.com)

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