UAE: +971 522 89 7279 · UK: +44 7508 038 918 · CHRIS@AURABELLAPROPERTIES.COM

2026 EDITION

THE HONEST GUIDE TO BUYING BEFORE IT'S BUILT

THE DUBAI OFF-PLAN GUIDE 2026

How your money is protected, what it really costs, how you get out, and who shouldn't buy at all.

76%
OF DUBAI SALES ARE OFF-PLAN · Q2 2026

10 YRS
STRUCTURAL LIABILITY BY LAW

42%
OF 2024 PROJECTS HANDED OVER LATE



CHRIS CHANNER

REAL ESTATE ADVISOR · AURABELLA PROPERTIES

Years investing in and developing property in the UK before moving to Dubai, and an owner here now. Helping international buyers, investors and relocators navigate Dubai's property market with straight answers.

SCHEDULE YOUR FREE CONSULTATION

▶ SUBSCRIBE ON YOUTUBE

WHATSAPP · +971 522 89 7279

WHAT'S INSIDE

A complete guide to buying off-plan in Dubai, from the first question to the title deed.

THE MARKET

01 **Where the market actually is**
The 2026 picture, honestly

02 **Off-plan or ready?**
The real trade-off, both ways

03 **The supply pipeline**
The risk nobody puts in a brochure

YOUR PROTECTION

04 **Where your money sits**
How escrow actually works

05 **Oqood**
The registration that makes you an owner

06 **If the developer doesn't deliver**
Delays, your rights, the real data

THE NUMBERS

07 **Payment plans decoded**
Construction-linked vs time-linked

08 **Mortgages on off-plan**
And the 50% ceiling

09 **The true all-in cost**
Every fee, at every stage

THE DECISIONS

10 **Choosing the developer**
Not the area

11 **Getting out**
Selling before handover

12 **Handover and snagging**
And your real warranty rights

13 **Communities worth understanding**
Current data, honest caveats

14 **Who shouldn't buy off-plan**
Read this one first

15 **Glossary**
Every term you'll meet

16 **Working with me**
And what I won't do

EVERY FIGURE IS DATED

Property data goes stale fast. Every number in this guide carries the period it covers and the source it came from, so you can check it or discount it. Nothing here is a projected or guaranteed return.

CHRIS@AURABELLAPROPERTIES.COM

01

WHERE THE MARKET ACTUALLY IS

Most guides you'll read were written when everything was going up. This one wasn't. Here is the honest picture as at Q2 2026.

-31%	+1.9%	-4%	76%
TRANSACTIONS YOY Q2 2026	APARTMENT PRICES YOY Q2 2026	APARTMENT PRICES QOQ Q2 2026	OF SALES ARE OFF-PLAN Q2 2026

THE SHORT VERSION

Volumes are down sharply. Prices are not collapsing. Both of those are true at the same time, and the gap between them is the whole story.

Dubai recorded 34,850 residential transactions worth AED 84.9 billion in Q2 2026, down 31% by volume and 45% by value year on year. That sounds alarming until you look at what prices did. Apartments finished the quarter at AED 1,960 per square foot, up 1.9% on the year but down 4% on the quarter. Villas and townhouses were up 8.5% on the year and down 0.8% on the quarter.

So the market slowed. It didn't crash.

WHY THE VALUE FIGURE LOOKS WORSE THAN THE MARKET

A large part of that 45% drop in value is a mix effect, not a price effect. Transactions above AED 10 million fell 54% quarter on quarter. When the top of the market goes quiet the average transaction value falls hard, even if the price of a normal apartment barely moves. Secondary sales fell 59% year on year while off-plan fell 12%, which pulls the mix further still.

WHAT'S ACTUALLY DRIVING IT

Supply arriving. 27,300 units were handed over in Q2 2026 alone, the highest quarterly figure in years. More completed homes means more choice and less urgency.

Rents easing. Rents fell 8 to 10% across major communities in Q2 2026, and Ejari registrations were down 22% on the quarter. Falling rents are good news if you're renting and a headwind if you're buying purely for yield.

Prices had run hard. Cavendish Maxwell recorded 9.6% annual price growth in Q1 2026 and called it the slowest since Q1 2023. Growth slowing from a fast pace is not the same thing as decline.

WHAT I'D SAY TO A CLIENT ABOUT THIS

The market's been slower over the last while. That's a combination of a lot of supply landing at once, rents coming off their peak, and prices having risen so fast since 2021 that they were always going to level out. That's a normal cycle, not a warning sign. It's also creating opportunity for people who couldn't get in at the old prices. Around 10% of tracked listings had their asking price reduced in the first half of 2026, totalling AED 1.7 billion in cuts. If you're buying, a market where sellers negotiate is a better one than a market where they don't. If you're buying to flip inside two years, this is not that market, and I'd say so on a call rather than let you find out later.

Betterhomes Q2 2026 (20 July 2026) · Savills Q2 2026 (13 July 2026) · Cavendish Maxwell Q1 2026 · AGBI (11 May 2026).

02

OFF-PLAN OR READY?

There is no universal answer. There is an answer for you, and it depends almost entirely on when you need the money to start working.

OFF-PLAN

Entry price	Usually below comparable ready stock
Payment	Spread across construction, 10–20% to start
Income	None until handover
Mortgage	50% LTV maximum
Choice	First pick of floor, view and layout
Main risk	The delivery date, and the market at handover

READY

Entry price	Full price at transfer
Payment	Deposit plus costs, all upfront
Income	From completion of the transfer
Mortgage	Up to 80% for expat residents, first home under AED 5m
Choice	Whatever is available now
Main risk	You inherit the building's condition and its service charges

THE HONEST VERSION

Off-plan lets you control a larger asset with less capital, and that leverage cuts both ways. In a rising market it's the better return. In a flat market you've paid instalments for three years on something that hasn't gained, and you couldn't rent it out in the meantime.

Ready property starts paying you immediately and lets you see exactly what you're buying, including the neighbours and the actual service charge rather than an estimate.

I've worked in both, and the thing people underestimate about the secondary market is size. An older apartment or villa often sits on a genuinely bigger plot and a larger internal layout than a new launch at a similar price. If space matters to you more than newness, that's worth knowing before you commit to a payment plan.

> **THE QUESTION THAT DECIDES IT**
>
> **Do you need the property to produce income within the next three years?**
>
> If yes, off-plan is the wrong instrument. If no, and you'd rather spread the cost than find the full amount now, off-plan makes sense.

03

THE SUPPLY PIPELINE

This is the risk almost nobody puts in a brochure, so let's put it in one.

77,500	146-161k	120,100	42.3%
UNITS DUE 2026	UNITS DUE 2027 (RANGE)	UNITS DUE 2028	OF Q1 2026 PROJECTIONS ACTUALLY DELIVERED

WHAT IT MEANS

Dubai has a very large amount of housing scheduled to complete over the next three years. If all of it lands on time that's real pressure on both prices and rents, and 2027 is the year people are watching.

The two sources I trust most disagree on the 2027 number, which tells you something in itself. Cavendish Maxwell has 146,400 and Betterhomes has 160,700. I'd treat it as a range rather than a figure.

THE PART THAT CUTS THE OTHER WAY

Projected supply and delivered supply are different things. In Q1 2026, 12,900 units completed against 30,300 projected. That's a materialisation rate of 42.3%. Historically, roughly half of what's scheduled arrives in the year it's scheduled for.

Savills also reported in Q2 2026 that developers are extending project timelines from around three years to around four, and that new launches collapsed to 5,335 units in Q2 from more than 45,000 in Q1. Developers are reading the same numbers you are, and slowing down.

So the pipeline is a genuine risk and it is almost certainly overstated. Both things are true.

> **WHAT TO DO WITH THIS**
>
> **One.** How many units are completing within two kilometres in the same year yours does? If the answer is thousands of similar apartments, your rental competition at handover is severe.
>
> **Two.** Is your unit differentiated by something that can't be replicated? A specific layout, a floor, a view, a boutique building somewhere nothing else can be built. That's the scarcity that holds value when volume stock doesn't.

Cavendish Maxwell Q1 2026 · Betterhomes (20 July 2026) · Savills Q2 2026 (13 July 2026).

04

WHERE YOUR MONEY SITS

The question I get asked more than any other: what happens if I pay and they don't build it? Dubai's answer is one of the strongest in the world, and most buyers have no idea it exists.

ESCROW, UNDER LAW NO. 8 OF 2007

Every off-plan project in Dubai must have its own ring-fenced escrow account. Your money goes into that account, not to the developer.

PROTECTION	WHAT IT ACTUALLY MEANS
20% before any sale	The developer must deposit 20% of estimated construction cost into escrow, or provide a bank guarantee for the same, before a single unit can be sold. They must also own the land outright, unencumbered.
Milestone releases	Money only leaves the account against construction progress verified by an independent engineer and approved by RERA. Not on the developer's say-so.
No cross-funding	Using your building's escrow to fund a different development is prohibited. This is what stopped the domino failures of 2008 from being repeatable.
Annual audit	Accounts are audited every year by RERA-approved auditors.
5% retention	5% is held back for a year after handover against structural defects. You have a retention behind you even after you have the keys.

THE HONEST HALF

Escrow protects your money from being spent on the wrong thing. It does not guarantee the building gets finished, and it does not guarantee it's finished on time.

Projects do still fail. In June 2026 the Dubai Real Estate Court ordered a developer to refund a buyer AED 1,370,749 plus AED 150,000 in compensation after legal attachments on the property prevented the title transferring, despite the buyer having paid in full.

I'd read that case as evidence for the system rather than against it. Things went wrong and the buyer got their money back with compensation. That is what the framework is for.

WHAT TO ACTUALLY CHECK

Ask the developer for the **escrow account number** and confirm it directly with the bank. Not with the sales office. Under Dubai's advertising rules any off-plan advertisement must display the developer's name, the escrow account number, the expected completion date and the proposed service charges. If an advert doesn't show those, that tells you something before you've asked a single question.

Dubai Law No. 8 of 2007 · Gulf News (5 June 2026) · EGSH on Trakheesi advertising compliance (13 April 2026).

05

OQOOD

You can't get a title deed for a building that doesn't exist yet. Oqood is what you get instead, and it's what makes you a legal owner rather than someone holding a contract.

WHAT IT IS

Oqood is the Dubai Land Department's interim registration for off-plan property. It places you on the **Interim Real Estate Register** under Law No. 13 of 2008. Your name is recorded against that specific unit at the DLD.

WHAT IT COSTS, AND WHEN

4%	At SPA	90 days
OF PURCHASE PRICE PLUS AED 580 ADMIN	PAID AT SIGNATURE VIA PROJECT ESCROW	DEVELOPER'S DEADLINE TO REGISTER YOU

Developers usually add their own administration charge of somewhere between AED 1,000 and AED 6,000. Your certificate typically issues within one to two weeks.

> **THERE IS NO SECOND 4% LATER**
>
> When your Oqood converts to a title deed at handover you pay a title deed fee of AED 250, a map fee of AED 250 and a small number of minor charges. Some buyers budget for the 4% twice. You don't need to.

WHY IT MATTERS

Without Oqood registration an off-plan sale is difficult to enforce. With it you have standing at the DLD, your payments sit inside the escrow framework, you have cancellation rights if the project stalls beyond RERA's tolerance window, and you have the right to sell the unit on before handover.

CHECK IT YOURSELF

Download **Dubai REST**, the Dubai Land Department's official app. Your provisional registration certificate should be visible there under your name. Do this within 90 days of signing. If it isn't showing, that's a conversation to have immediately rather than at handover.

Dubai Law No. 13 of 2008 · Property Finder Partner Hub (16 December 2025) · Oliva (26 May 2026) · Dealr (12 July 2026).

06

IF THE DEVELOPER DOESN'T DELIVER

Delays are not the exception in Dubai off-plan. They are the norm. Anyone who tells you otherwise is selling.

42%
OF PROJECTS DUE IN 2024 WERE DELAYED

8.5 mo
AVERAGE DELAY 2024 HANDOVERS

12 mo
THE SAME AVERAGE IN 2018–2020

Roughly four in ten projects scheduled for handover in 2024 arrived late, by anywhere from three months to more than eighteen. The average slip was about eight and a half months. That has improved. The same measure was around twelve months in 2018 to 2020. The regulation has worked. It hasn't eliminated the problem.

IT VARIES ENORMOUSLY BY DEVELOPER

TIER	TYPICAL DELAY	ON-TIME RECORD
Emaar, Meraas, Sobha	3–5 months	80–90%
Established mid-size	6–10 months	—
Smaller and newer	10–18 months, some 24+	—

This is the single strongest argument for choosing the developer before you choose the postcode, and it's why I spend more time on delivery record than on renderings.

YOUR LEGAL POSITION

Under **Law No. 13 of 2008**, where a delay runs beyond roughly twelve months past the contractual handover date you can apply to RERA for cancellation and a refund from the escrow account.

If a project is abandoned entirely it goes to the **Special Tribunal for Liquidation of Cancelled Real Property Projects**, established under Decree No. 33 of 2020, which exists specifically to unwind failed developments and return investor money.

THE PRACTICAL ADVICE

Assume a delay and plan for it. If you're relying on rental income from a specific month to service something else, build in a year of headroom.

Villas and townhouses in large master communities slip more than apartments in single buildings. Infrastructure for an entire new community takes longer than one tower.

Choose construction-linked payments over time-linked. More on that overleaf, and it's the most useful protection you can negotiate.

Real Estate Club Dubai (26 March 2026) · Dubai Law No. 13 of 2008 · Decree No. 33 of 2020. Delivery records are indicative and from a single source.

07

PAYMENT PLANS DECODED

The payment plan is where most of the risk in an off-plan purchase actually sits, and where the least attention gets paid.

THE STRUCTURES YOU'LL BE OFFERED

STRUCTURE	HOW IT WORKS
Construction-linked	Instalments fall due when construction milestones are hit. Common splits are 80/20, 60/40 or 50/50 between construction and handover. Deposits typically 10–20%.
Time-linked	Instalments fall due on fixed calendar dates regardless of build progress. The 1%-per-month plans are usually this type: 10–20% down, then 1% monthly.
Post-handover	Between 40 and 60% of the price deferred past handover, interest-free, usually over two to five years, occasionally seven to ten.

THE ONE DISTINCTION THAT MATTERS MOST

Construction-linked protects you. Time-linked doesn't. If a project slips eight months on a construction-linked plan, your payments slip with it. On a time-linked plan you keep paying on schedule for a building that isn't progressing. Given that 42% of projects arrive late, this is not a theoretical difference. Ask which type you're being offered. If the brochure doesn't say, ask again.

ON POST-HANDOVER PLANS

They're genuinely useful if the rental income covers the instalments. They become dangerous when the plan only works on the assumption that prices rise, or that the unit rents immediately at the projected figure.

Run the numbers assuming it sits empty for three months and then rents 10% below the estimate. If it still works, it's a good plan.

WHAT I'D WALK AWAY FROM

A plan that only works if the property appreciates. Post-handover terms stretching seven years or more, which usually means the price has been inflated to fund the financing. Any rental guarantee attached to the plan, because if a return has to be guaranteed to make the deal attractive the underlying numbers don't work. And a time-linked plan from a developer without a strong delivery record.

Dealr (12 July 2026) · Savills Q2 2026 (13 July 2026). Plan structures vary by developer and by launch.

08

MORTGAGES ON OFF-PLAN

Most people assume off-plan finance works like a normal mortgage. It doesn't, and the difference is large enough to change what you can afford.

50%
MAXIMUM LTV
ON OFF-PLAN

80%
MAXIMUM LTV, READY PROPERTY
EXPAT FIRST HOME UNDER AED 5M

THE 50% CEILING

Off-plan lending in Dubai is capped at 50% loan to value, regardless of your nationality or the price of the property. You are finding half the purchase price yourself.

On a ready property an expat resident buying a first home under AED 5 million can borrow up to 80%. UAE nationals up to 85%. Above AED 5 million it drops to around 70% for expats.

That gap is the single most commonly missed fact in off-plan planning.

WHEN YOU CAN BORROW

Not at launch. Lenders want construction underway first, typically between 30% and 50% complete, and the threshold varies by bank. Some want you to have paid a proportion of the price as well. Which means the early instalments come from your own capital. Plan for that.

WHAT IT COSTS

Off-plan rates have run around 4.49% fixed with salary transfer and around 4.99% without, against roughly 3.5 to 4.0% headline rates on ready property as at July 2026. You pay a premium for the additional risk the lender is taking.

HOW THE MONEY MOVES

The bank doesn't hand you a lump sum. It disburses to the developer against construction progress, in line with the payment plan. You're servicing a loan that is still being drawn down.

> **BEFORE YOU RELY ON ANY OF THIS**
>
> Rates and LTV limits move, and lenders set their own construction thresholds. Confirm current terms directly with the lender before you commit to anything. Figures as at July 2026.

Dealr (12 July 2026) · haus & haus (Q1 2026 data). Sources differ on the construction threshold: 30% to 50% depending on lender.

09

THE TRUE ALL-IN COST

The price on the brochure is not what you pay.

AT PURCHASE

ITEM	COST
DLD registration via Oqood	**4% of purchase price**
DLD admin fee	AED 1,000
Developer administration	AED 1,000–6,000
Agency commission, where applicable	~2% + 5% VAT
Mortgage arrangement, if borrowing	~1% of loan, often capped
Mortgage registration, if borrowing	0.25% of loan + AED 290

THE NUMBER TO PLAN AROUND

Budget **5 to 6% on top of the purchase price** if you're buying in cash. More with a mortgage.

AT HANDOVER

ITEM	COST
Title deed issuance	AED 250
Site plan	AED 250
Knowledge and innovation fees	AED 20
Snagging inspection	AED 500–1,200 apartments · AED 2,500–5,500+ villas
Final instalment	Typically 5–10% of price

ONGOING

Service charges are the number that quietly determines your actual return. They run from around AED 12 per square foot in mid-market buildings to AED 35 in premium ones, and higher again in towers on district cooling.

Net yield typically lands one and a half to two percentage points below gross once service charges are accounted for. A building advertising 8% gross can deliver closer to 6% net, and in a high-charge tower less than that.

> **GET IT IN WRITING**
>
> Get the service charge estimate in writing before you sign. Off-plan advertising is required to disclose proposed service fees. If nobody will give you a figure, that is the answer.

Real Estate Club Dubai (30 April 2026, updated 16 July 2026) · Dealr (12 July 2026) · Cravy (13 May 2026). Fees change; confirm current rates at the time of purchase.

10

CHOOSING THE DEVELOPER, NOT THE AREA

Most buyers pick the postcode first. In my experience the buyers who do well pick the developer first.

The reason is simple. A good area with a developer who delivers eighteen months late, in poor condition, with a service charge nobody warned you about, is a bad investment. An ordinary area with a developer who delivers on time and manages the community properly is a good one.

WHAT I CHECK, IN ORDER

	CHECK	WHY
01	**Delivery record**	How many projects completed, and how late? A matter of record, not opinion. The strongest single predictor of what happens to yours.
02	**Build quality on completed stock**	Not renderings. Go and look at something they finished three years ago and see how it has aged. Lifts, lobbies, common areas, whether the landscaping survived.
03	**Escrow compliance**	Confirm the account exists and is project-specific, directly with the bank.
04	**Post-handover management**	A developer whose completed communities are well run three years on is telling you how they'll treat yours. This affects your service charge and your resale value more than any brochure feature.
05	**Whether the payment plan is honest**	A plan engineered to look cheap usually has the cost buried in the price.

ON BOUTIQUE DEVELOPERS

I'll often steer people towards a smaller developer building a few hundred units rather than one building tens of thousands. Better layouts, upgraded amenities, better customer care, and crucially, scarcity. If your building is one of five hundred near-identical units by the same developer within a kilometre, you're competing with those five hundred at resale and at rental. If it's genuinely distinctive, you aren't.

That's a real conversation, not a rule. Large developers have far better delivery records, and that matters. It's a trade-off, and it depends what you're buying for.

11

GETTING OUT

Almost every off-plan guide explains how to get in. Very few explain how you get out.
This is the page I'd read first.

YES, YOU CAN SELL BEFORE HANDOVER

It's usually called assignment, or a transfer of the SPA. You sell your contract to another buyer before the building completes. You'll need a **No Objection Certificate** from the developer, and most require you to have paid **30 to 40% of the purchase price** before they'll issue one.

IMPORTANT, AND WIDELY MISUNDERSTOOD

That threshold is a contractual term set by the developer, not a Dubai regulation. There is no law restricting off-plan resale in Dubai. Every developer sets its own rule and it's written into your SPA. Read it before you sign, because it determines when you can exit.

You may have seen reports of new off-plan resale restrictions in 2026. Those apply to **Abu Dhabi**, not Dubai. Different emirate, different rules.

WHAT IT COSTS TO GET OUT

ITEM	COST
Developer NOC	AED 1,000–5,250 + VAT, varies by developer
DLD transfer fee	**4% of the new sale price**
Trustee office	~AED 4,200–5,250
Agency commission	~2% + 5% VAT
Round trip	**Roughly 6 to 8% of the value**

Those are the mechanics. The page overleaf is what they actually do to your return, and it's the part that changes how most people think about off-plan.

THE MATHS NOBODY SHOWS YOU

Say you buy at AED 1.5 million and sell before handover at AED 1.65 million. That's a 10% gross gain and it feels like a good outcome.

+10%	~46k	~3%
GROSS GAIN ON PAPER	AED, NET AFTER ALL COSTS	REAL RETURN ON YOUR ORIGINAL 1.5M

Not nothing. Considerably less than the 10% headline suggests, and that's before you account for the money being tied up for two or three years.

WHAT THIS SHOULD CHANGE

A 10% paper gain is roughly a 3% real gain. Off-plan works on a longer hold and a larger move, not on flipping a small uplift.

Know your developer's NOC threshold before you sign, because it sets the earliest date you can get out if your circumstances change.

In a slower market, exit takes longer. Secondary transaction volumes fell 59% year on year in Q2 2026. There are fewer buyers for your assignment than there were.

THE QUESTION I'D ASK BEFORE YOU SIGN ANYTHING

If this property is worth exactly what you paid for it on the day it hands over, are you still happy you bought it? If the answer is yes, because you want to live in it or hold it long term, off-plan is a reasonable choice. If the answer is no, you're relying on the market rather than on the asset, and that's worth knowing about yourself before you commit.

Dubai Livin (28 July 2026) · Westgate Dubai (26 March 2026) · Pearlshire (5 February 2026) · Oliva (11 January 2026) · Betterhomes Q2 2026. Fees vary by developer and change.

12

HANDOVER, SNAGGING AND YOUR WARRANTY

What actually happens between the completion notice and the title deed, and what you're really covered for afterwards.

THE HANDOVER SEQUENCE

	STAGE	TYPICAL TIME
01	Developer obtains a Building Completion Certificate from Dubai Municipality and issues your handover notice. Final instalment, typically 5–10%, falls due.	14–30 days
02	You inspect. This is your snagging window.	7–14 days
03	Handover appointment and keys.	7–14 days
04	Your Oqood converts to a title deed at the DLD.	7–14 days

Roughly **30 to 90 days** from notice to title deed.

SNAGGING

Have the unit professionally inspected before you accept it. Expect AED 500 to 1,200 for an apartment and AED 2,500 to 5,500 or more for a villa, depending on size. Do it before you sign the handover acceptance, not after. Once you've accepted, your position on cosmetic and minor defects weakens considerably.

YOUR WARRANTY — AND A CORRECTION WORTH HAVING

You'll read almost everywhere that Dubai off-plan comes with "one year on MEP and ten years structural." That's half right, and the half that's wrong matters.

The ten-year structural liability is law. It sits in Articles 821 to 824 of Federal Decree-Law No. 25 of 2025, in force since 1 June 2026. Ten years from handover, joint and several on the contractor and the supervising engineer, and it **cannot be waived by contract**. Claims must be brought within three years of discovering the defect.

The one-year MEP period is not law. Mechanical, electrical and plumbing defects are covered by whatever your Sale and Purchase Agreement says, typically twelve months. It's a contractual term, which means it can vary, and it means you should read it.

IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG

Written notice to the developer first. If that doesn't resolve it, a complaint to the DLD or RERA through Dubai REST or the DLD portal, which typically takes around two months to review. Dubai Courts after that, within three years of discovery. You also have the 5% escrow retention held for a year after handover sitting behind you on structural issues.

Federal Decree-Law No. 25 of 2025, Articles 821–824 · Kayrouz & Associates (20 April 2026) · UAE Expert Hub (31 August 2026) · Dealr (12 July 2026). Snagging costs vary by provider.

13

COMMUNITIES WORTH UNDERSTANDING

Not recommendations. Three of the five areas people ask me about most, with what the current data says and what I'd want you to know before you looked seriously.

DUBAI CREEK HARBOUR

AED 2,600/sqft · Jan–Jun 2026 · 14% below Downtown

Genuine waterfront masterplan with real handovers arriving through 2026 to 2029.

KNOW THIS

The marketing leans heavily on Creek Tower. Foundations went in during 2018, work stopped in April 2020, and the tender was only reissued in Q1 2026. That's six years without vertical construction, and Emaar has confirmed it will be shorter than originally planned. The Metro Blue Line station is due 2029. Treat Creek Tower as a possible long-term catalyst, not a reason to buy now.

DUBAI SOUTH

AED 950–1,600/sqft · gross yields 6.5–9% · off-plan is 98% of volume

The value play, and the numbers on entry price and yield are real.

KNOW THIS

The thesis rests almost entirely on Al Maktoum airport, and the first major terminal phase is scheduled for the early 2030s. Commute to Downtown runs 60 to 90 minutes at peak, and amenities are still thin. This is an eight-year-plus proposition. If that's your horizon it's credible. If you need it working by 2028, it isn't.

TILAL AL GHAF

AED 2,021/sqft · +6% YoY · Q1 2026 · yields 5–7%

Of the five, the one performing best on current data. Lagoon-centred masterplan by Majid Al Futtaim, strong family demand, average lease AED 586,197 and rising.

KNOW THIS

Entry pricing has already moved substantially. The easy gains have happened. Model returns conservatively from here.

COMMUNITIES CONTINUED

JUMEIRAH VILLAGE CIRCLE (JVC)

AED 1,347/sqft · −1.4% YoY · gross yield 6.6% · rents −3.1% YoY

Still one of the most liquid rental markets in Dubai, and the yield is genuinely competitive.

> **KNOW THIS**
>
> This is the caveat that matters most in this guide. JVC is Dubai's heaviest supply zone, with roughly 16,850 units across 2025 to 2027. Prices are down 1.4% year on year, rents down 3.1%, and there were over 3,100 live listings as at July 2026. I'm not telling you to avoid it. I'm telling you that in JVC the specific building, floor and layout matter far more than the area does, because you will have a great deal of competition at rental and at resale.

NAD AL SHEBA 1

AED 2,200–2,950/sqft · 8.4% five-year CAGR · gross yields 5.4–5.8%

Established villa community, land-constrained, close in. Around 3,200 villas with roughly 600 transactions in 2025 and a median 88 days to sell.

> **KNOW THIS**
>
> Buyers regularly confuse Nad Al Sheba 1 with Nad Al Sheba 3, which is materially cheaper. Check exactly which one a listing refers to. Service charges run AED 5.20 to 8.50 per square foot.

A WORD ON ALL OF THESE

Community data moves faster than anything else in this guide. These figures are from Q1 and Q2 2026 and they will be out of date before long. Ask me for current numbers before you act on any of it, and treat the caveats as more durable than the prices.

Engel & Völkers Q1 2026 · RE/MAX Hub (2 July 2026) · Oliva (19 April, 4 May 2026) · Real Estate Club Dubai (16 June 2026) · Dubai Property Insight (15 April 2026) · Morgan's Realty.

14

WHO SHOULDN'T BUY OFF-PLAN

I'd rather tell you this now than after you've signed.

IF THIS IS YOU	WHY OFF-PLAN IS THE WRONG FIT
You need income within three years	Off-plan produces nothing until handover, and handover is late 42% of the time. If the money needs to work sooner, buy ready.
You can only afford it on the maximum payment plan	A plan with no headroom leaves you exposed to a delay, a change in your circumstances or a rate move. The buyers who get hurt are almost always the ones who were fully stretched on day one.
Your horizon is under three years	After a 6 to 8% round trip on costs, a short hold rarely covers itself. The maths on page 13 is the reason.
The plan only works when prices rise	Model it flat. If it doesn't work flat, it isn't a plan, it's a bet.
You can't visit before handover	Not essential, and plenty of my clients buy remotely. It does mean you're relying entirely on your adviser's eyes, so be sure about whose eyes those are.
You want certainty	Off-plan is a good instrument with real risks. If uncertainty will keep you up at night, ready property will suit you better and there's no shame in that.

IF SEVERAL OF THOSE DESCRIBE YOU

Tell me on a call and I'll say so. I'd rather have the right conversation than the quick one.

15

GLOSSARY

Every term you'll meet, in plain English.

Assignment	Selling your off-plan contract to another buyer before handover. Also called SPA transfer.
Decennial liability	The ten-year statutory liability for structural defects under Articles 821 to 824 of Federal Decree-Law No. 25 of 2025. Cannot be waived.
DLD	Dubai Land Department. The government body that registers all property ownership in Dubai.
DLP	Defects Liability Period. The contractual window, usually twelve months, in which the developer fixes non-structural defects. Set by your SPA, not by law.
Dubai REST	The DLD's official app. Where you verify your Oqood registration and lodge complaints.
EOI	Expression of Interest. A refundable booking deposit, usually AED 20,000 to 100,000, to secure priority at a launch.
Escrow	The ring-fenced, project-specific bank account your payments must legally go into, under Law No. 8 of 2007.
Handover	The point at which the developer transfers the completed unit to you.
LTV	Loan to Value. The percentage of the purchase price a lender will finance. Capped at 50% for off-plan.
NOC	No Objection Certificate. The developer's written consent, needed to sell before handover.
Oqood	The DLD's interim registration for off-plan property, placing you on the Interim Real Estate Register.
Post-handover plan	A payment plan deferring part of the price past handover, typically two to five years, usually interest-free.
RERA	Real Estate Regulatory Agency. The DLD's regulatory arm. Governs developers, brokers and escrow.
Service charge	The annual per-square-foot charge for building and community maintenance. The main gap between gross and net yield.
Snagging	Professional inspection for defects before you accept handover.
SPA	Sale and Purchase Agreement. The contract between you and the developer.
Trakheesi	Dubai's advertising permit system. Every property advert must display its permit number.

16

WORKING WITH ME



CHRIS CHANNER

REAL ESTATE ADVISOR · AURABELLA PROPERTIES

I spent years investing in and developing property in the UK before I moved to Dubai, and I own here myself now. So I've made these decisions with my own money, and I've been through the buying process from the buyer's side of it, not just the agent's.

That background is also why I look at a building differently. Coming from construction, I notice things on a viewing that don't show up in a brochure. What's structural and what isn't, which walls could move, where a layout is wasting space, and where a finish is going to cause problems in three years.

HOW I WORK

I'll tell you when something doesn't fit	If the project you're asking about isn't right for what you're trying to do, I'll say so. That's a shorter conversation than the alternative, and cheaper for you.
I compare across developers, not within one	I'm not tied to a single developer's stock, which means I can tell you when a competitor's building is the better answer.
I don't quote returns I can't evidence	No guaranteed yields, no projected appreciation presented as fact. If I give you a number it comes from a research report or a real comparable's actual performance, and I'll tell you which.
Nothing in this guide is a recommendation	It's the information I'd want if I were buying, so you can ask better questions of whoever you end up working with. Including me.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO TALK IT THROUGH

Send me a project you're considering and I'll give you an honest read on the developer, the payment plan and what I'd want to check. No obligation, and no expectation that you buy anything.

Book a no-obligation consultation call

Message me on WhatsApp **Watch on YouTube**

chris@aurabellaproperties.com · UAE +971 522 89 7279 · UK +44 7508 038 918

IMPORTANT NOTES

THIS IS GENERAL INFORMATION, NOT ADVICE

Nothing in this guide is legal, tax or financial advice. Figures carry the period stated and can vary by case and by property. Property values and rents can fall as well as rise. Take independent legal and financial advice before you sign or pay anything.

Regulatory matters, including visa eligibility and thresholds, change. Confirm current requirements directly with the relevant government authority.

No figure in this guide is a projected or guaranteed return. Where a range is given, it reflects genuine disagreement between sources rather than a forecast.

SOURCES

Betterhomes Q2 2026 (20 July 2026) · Savills Q2 2026 via DubaiHaus (13 July 2026) · Cavendish Maxwell Dubai Residential Q1 2026 · Engel & Völkers Dubai Q1 2026 · AGBI (11 May 2026) · RE/MAX Hub (2 July 2026) · Real Estate Club Dubai (26 March, 30 April, 16 June 2026) · Kayrouz & Associates (20 April 2026) · UAE Expert Hub (31 August 2026) · Oliva (11 January, 19 April, 4 May, 26 May 2026) · Dealr (12 July 2026) · Dubai Livin (28 July 2026) · Westgate Dubai (26 March 2026) · Pearlshire (5 February 2026) · Property Finder Partner Hub (16 December 2025) · Grovy (4 July 2026) · EGSH (13 April 2026) · Gulf News (5 June 2026) · Dubai Property Insight (15 April 2026) · haus & haus (Q1 2026).

LEGISLATION REFERENCED

Dubai Law No. 8 of 2007 (escrow accounts) · Dubai Law No. 13 of 2008 (Interim Real Estate Register) · Dubai Decree No. 33 of 2020 (Special Tribunal for Cancelled Projects) · Federal Decree-Law No. 25 of 2025, Articles 821–824 (decennial liability, in force 1 June 2026) · Dubai Law No. 7 of 2013 and RERA Administrative Decision No. 134 of 2013 (advertising).

COMPILED SEPTEMBER 2026

Market figures in this guide date fastest. If you're reading this more than a quarter after publication, ask me for current numbers rather than relying on these. I update it every quarter.