

Tapping the tempo

# CAN YOU BEAT IT?



PHOTOS BY VIRENDRA SAKLANI

**BIG BANG:** Around 250 people of all ages and races pound their hearts out

Seven times a year hundreds of drumming enthusiasts come together to find their communal rhythm under a desert moon

BY VIKRAM SINGH BARHAT  
LEISURE REPORTER

This is a sound way to beat the monotony of a humdrum life.

Playing drums, that is. On a full moon night, with a group of 250 drummers, in the middle of the desert.

It is magical, it is musical, it is Dubai Drums, a venture whose objective is to bring people together, give them a good time and experience the pleasure of community drumming.

A brainchild of Julie-Ann Odell, the managing director of Dubai Drums, it was the result of six months of research on community activities around the world.

"I came across many drumming circles in the US and thought it was a great community activity. Rhythm is a language and everyone understands it. Music brings out people's creative energy. It brings them closer. What better way to build community

than unity through rhythm"

Although she is a trained drummer, Julie-Ann says anyone can drum as long as they have a beating heart. The Full Moon Desert Drumming camps are proof enough. Up to seven times a year, around 250 people of all ages take part in community drumming under a full moon at Gulf Ventures' desert camp in Al Awir.

The setting of the camp is so exotic it could be a set for *Arabian Nights*.



**Location:**  
Gulf Ventures desert camp in Al Awir  
**Cost:** Dh100 for dinner and drumming. Children from 5-15 years pay Dh50. Under 5 free. Refreshments available to buy.  
**Timing:** 6pm to around 11 pm.  
For details call Julie-Ann Odell on 050-659 2874

**"WHAT BETTER WAY TO BUILD COMMUNITY THAN UNITY THROUGH RHYTHM?"**

JULIE-ANN ODELL, MANAGING DIRECTOR, DUBAI DRUMS

Located 40km from Dubai off the Hatta road, the camp is a middle-of-nowhere spot in the desert. At night it looks like a crater and when you reach the outer rim, the view takes your breath away.

One moment all you can see is a moonlit stretch of silvery sand and the next a beehive of pounding activity in a huge pit filled with light and sound.

The drumming area is circled

by tents where participants can unwind, chat, and get lessons from the veterans.

Those feeling peckish can pick from the large and varied selection of food. Fancy some drumsticks anyone?

And there is plenty to keep the younger ones engaged too.

The entire venue is encircled by large sand dunes where kids can be seen sliding down on their sand boards.