

Glampitect has designs on Dubai

Glampitect, a glamping site design consultancy, is expanding into Dubai less than two years after forming in Edinburgh.

Set up in the capital 18 months ago by friends Calum MacLeod and Alisdair Young, the international expansion comes after a remarkable period of growth for the market-leading firm.

From Brora to Bournemouth, the dynamic start-up has been involved in more than 200 glamping projects across Britain since its inception in August 2019.

With a growing team of specialist architects and consultants, the firm assists clients from conception to completion including planning permission, building warrant and site set-up.

With the UK operation well established, the decision was taken to embark on something similar in the UAE as the first stage of a planned global expansion, with destinations such as Ireland, Australia and the USA all on Glampitect's radar.

The Dubai facilities will comprise luxury canvas lodge-style units measuring up to 40 square metres, all with air conditioning, en-suite bathrooms and the latest in five-star amenities.

"It's really exciting to be entering this growth phase," said 27-year-old Mr MacLeod. "We pride ourselves on the unparalleled service we offer our clients and are now taking

our expertise to one of the most desirable and sought-after places in the world.

“It was always my plan to expand into the UAE but the pandemic has accelerated things a bit quicker than I had anticipated.

“The growth of glamping, or eco resorts as they call them in the Middle East, is massive and like in the UK, demand is far outstripping supply. In fact, the demand in Dubai is probably greater than anywhere else in the world right now and our expertise is helping people establish these sites as a business so it is a good fit for us.”

According to a study by Grand View Research Inc, the global glamping sector will be worth USD 4.8 billion by 2026, achieved through a compound growth rate of 12.5% each year.

“Glamping can have a return on investment in less than two years and popularity is growing every day so there has never been a better time to start a site,” added Mr MacLeod.

“Our group has grown rapidly, and we now have a strong team of architects, site designers, glamping feasibility experts, marketers and site set-up consultants. A glamping site isn’t something that you can set up on a whim. It requires careful planning, a flexible mindset and experts like us to guide people through the process.”



Calum MacLeod

Mr MacLeod will base himself in Dubai and hopes to begin building a team of consultants.

“We’re really looking forward to establishing ourselves here as a consultancy to help people set up their own glamping sites,” he said. “This will cover everything from liaising with the planning people in Dubai to providing advice on how to sell units and market the facility.

“We will work closely with architects who know all the planning regulations in Dubai and will do all the ground work, including lay-outs of the sites; provide a masterplan, if you like, of what the site will look like, including amenities, communal areas, swimming pools, etc.

“Long-term it is our aim to have our own planning department based here so we can offer the full service like we do in the UK and assist people to maximise their revenue and occupancy.”

Mr Young, 39, said: “Launching our brand in the UAE is a hugely important milestone for Glampitect. It represents the first step in our goal of having an international presence. This will allow us to promote the UK’s established glamping industry, as well as our own specialist services, to new markets and develop new products in diverse and alluring destinations.”

The young Edinburgh entrepreneurs began their glamping journey nearly two years ago in the Highlands when they partnered together to set up North Coast 500 Pods in Achmelvich, Sutherland.

“We set up our own glamping site in May 2019 and did all the planning applications for that,” said Mr Macleod. “Later that year when I was at the Glamping Show in Warwickshire I was struck by the fact there was no-one there offering what we could provide.

“There were plenty of manufacturers but nobody to actually help set up the sites and that’s when I decided to leave my full-time job as a consultant electrical engineer to set up Glampitect to provide a five-star service to those with similar dream.

“We will provide the knowledge but the clients will be the decision makers. They may have land to build on, or want us to help them secure some land within a certain budget, and we will advise accordingly on their business model.

“They may want to site a few luxury safari tents, or set up a sustainable yoga retreat, with a unique accommodation offering and a 5-star vegan chef. It’s completely up to them!”