

We sat down with DJs ChadPhunk and Stew Magoo, the two guys behind the hugely popular Immaculate Touch on Al Maya Island, to find out what makes a successful pool party



**How did Immaculate Touch come about?**

**CP** Immaculate Touch was started through us seeing a gap in the market here in Abu Dhabi. For us, it was a case of trying to showcase what we could do and proving to ourselves that we could actually put on a great event.

**SM** Immaculate Touch was actually started in the UK by one of our friends and he's taken it around the world to places like Morocco, Ibiza, Thailand. It's currently running at The McQueen in London as well. He also used to have a residency at Eden in Ibiza, which is quite an achievement for a small brand. It's not something that we've just started from nothing, there's actually a bit of history behind it, which is something all good brands need.

**When did you bring it to Abu Dhabi?**

**CP** We started on Yas in September 2010 at Centro and within a short space of time it really kicked off to the point where we now get between 1,000 and 1,500 people at each party on Al Maya.

**SM** There were other pool parties around at the same time but I think that Immaculate Touch has the kind of energy that Abu Dhabi people need. We may not have the music they like

because we don't play the likes of David Guetta and Rihanna but if you can entertain them in a different way, they forget about the names and enjoy the party all the more.

### **Can you talk us through what goes into a typical pool party on AI Maya?**

**11am the day before: SM** Getting up at 11am is a really early start for us, particularly if we only went to bed at 5am! Typically it takes us two days to set up for each party. We'll pack everything up – we have banners, the robot, CO2 bottles to pick up and all our other paraphernalia. Then we'll head down to the jetty and load everything onto the boat.

**12am the day before: SM** We'll spend six or seven hours prepping the area. We're putting banners up, making sure Immaculate Touch is everywhere. We help with the stage set-up, light set-up and sound set-up. **CP** At the same time we're constantly facebooking, tweeting and SMSing, making sure everybody knows what's happening. We're also running online competitions giving tables away for the event, so all of this needs to be constantly monitored.

**6pm the day before: CP** By now we'll have done pretty much everything we can so it's time to head back home to get ready for our 'day' jobs. However, if I do get a spare hour then I'll be going through my music making sure I know where certain tracks are.

**11am on the day: SM** It's another early start for us as we're back on the island just as the sun starts warming up. We have a walk round and make sure everything's stayed in place because it's quite windy out on AI Maya. We make any changes and do a final check on the music system.

**12.30pm: SM** There's just time to grab a quick shower and that's it – the party's started. If anything goes wrong now it's tough, there's nothing we can do about it.

**1pm: SM** I always start the show and Chad always finishes. For the pool parties, I always play Balearic, Latino or African tribal sort of stuff for the warm-up because those kinds of rhythms are something that people do connect with quite easily.

**CP** Meanwhile, I'll be down at the jetty greeting people and making sure they get on the boat ok. Just making sure that everything's running smoothly and answering any questions that people might have.



**3pm: SM** Once I've finished my set then Cliff Townley will take over for the next couple of hours. He's a really good DJ and he'll continue to warm the crowd but at the same time he'll also start to pump up the tempo a little bit and get the crowd ready for Natalie Brogan, who's the next DJ.

Although I've finished my set that doesn't mean I can relax. I've got to go off and deal with the dancers, make sure the changing rooms are ready for the girls to get changed, start giving mix CDs out to people who have arrived, give other freebies away and make sure our photographer's going round getting plenty of shots.

**5pm: SM** Cliff's set is done and he hands over to Natalie. In between sets we've obviously got dancers and the IT-Bot but we've also got a live percussionist who accompanies sections of the sets. We have this guy, Adam L, who plays the saxophone and honestly sometimes when he's playing along to Cliff or Natalie I don't even realise it, it just sounds like part of the track!

**CP** By now pretty much everyone who is coming has arrived, so I head back to the island to see if I can help Stew out. He's normally running around like a headless chicken so I just try to calm things down a little bit.

**7pm: CP** The party's in full flow now and it's time for me to play the final set. Everybody's having fun, the dancers and IT-Bot are right in the middle of things and, as a DJ, these are the moments we live for.

**9.30pm: CP** My set's finished now and the party's winding down but that doesn't mean I can stop. Everything still has to be packed away and loaded back on to the boat – although it's normally a lot easier taking stuff down than putting it up. A lot of people think that a DJ can just turn up to an event and play a few tracks but there's a lot more to it than that, there's so much going on behind the scenes.

**SM** Yeah, it is pretty full on but that's what you've got to do to be successful. We never switch off – I'll switch off when I retire!

**Final thoughts: SM** For me the best thing is when I'm up in the DJ booth and I can see boats coming and going, dropping people off. You know there are 25 to 50 people on each boat and you just think to yourself 'yeah, this party's going to be big today'. It's just a great feeling knowing you've put something together – not just the music but the whole event – and given someone a good time.

**CP** That's right but I'm also a firm believer that as a DJ or promoter, you're only really as good as your last event. So, afterwards Stew and I will shake hands and say 'well done' but then it's straight on to the next party. The moment you sit back, stop and think you've made it, that's the moment it all starts falling apart.

**The next Immaculate Touch Pool Party on Al Maya Island is Friday 13th April and every two weeks thereafter. For more information, email [info@immaculatetouchabudhabi.com](mailto:info@immaculatetouchabudhabi.com) or call 055 650 6337**

*Jon Muller*