

Any UAE veteran expat, and especially the Emiratis, know that second to water, shade from the sun makes the difference between an enjoyable time outdoors and discomfort, and worse.

Thanks to Sela.ae, a forward-thinking new online shopping network, focused on delivering the right stuff for the UAE to your doorstep, I believe I've found the perfect gazebo for our sunny conditions – here's why.



Firstly, other options are few and in between.

The best is probably the traditional low-slung Bedouin tent. Fantastic, and historically the most awesome shield from the sun, effective for thousands of years – but, you need a camel to transport it, and a tribe to set it up; plus, it's made of woven goat hair, and so you'd first need a herd of goats... Maybe one day.

The car-mounted awnings are handy, but you're always stuck to the side of your car, and the shade area is actually not much; the other stand-alone type with collapsible ladder frames with a canvas top are bulky, clunky to set up, and they get bent out of shape after a few camp-outs.



Enter the Bo-Camp Party Tent – I was skeptical. Inflatable sounds like puncturable, and floppy after a while of use.

But I was wrong – the Dutch outdoors company Bo-Camp has built a quality product, that does the job with excellent results, and is currently my top option for outdoors camping shade in UAE.

The dimensions are exceptional, a square with sides of 3.65 meters and a central height of 2.3 meters – especially when compared to the weight and packed size: 5.8 kg, and a giant sausage that fits under-arm, around 80x25x25 cm.

On the ground flat, it looks like this:

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My first resistance of skepticism was “Who’s going to pump it up?” - but actually, it was incredibly fast as the design is very clever and makes use of only two long bladders, which can withstand a pressure of up to 7 psi. And you only pump up one side, in one valve, and like magic in 2-3 minutes of very light pumping, you have an instant air gazebo!



I immediately went to look for weaknesses and “where it’s going to leak...”

Well, I actually think this is going to last, and I very much doubt it will lose air. The four pillars are enveloped and protected by a tough outer skin, a layer of Oxford Polyester (UV resistant). It’s woven very tightly, and it really feels like you’d struggle to cut it even with a knife.



The stitching was perfect, and doubled, even quadrupled in points of stress.



And the support tubes cross over at the top, on the inside.



There was no assembly, no fiddling around – just pump and it's up!

We added a sidewall and another wall of mosquito netting, sold separately, so that we'd have one corner to aim into the wind and to provide shade in the mornings or evenings, when the sun isn't directly overhead – you could add two more walls of netting and end up with a superb fly-proof tent, and I think that's actually what I will do.



The walls zip on, and again, the zipper is up to the job.





Satisfied that the quality of build and the smart design will hold up, I found the aluminum pegs that come with it are fine for Dutch farm fields, but useless in sand – so they will be replaced by a good foot of construction rebar with a 180-degree bend at one end.








So it seems that our old trusty foldable gazebo is about to be replaced by an inflatable...





Good-bye old friend, you've served us to the best of your ability, but Sela.ae has found the new generation gazebo and it's time to move on.

To view and purchase the Bo-Camp Air Gazebo on Sela.ae, please click below - no commission comes to me, I'm just sending you to the newest online shopping site for the UAE, with an awesome outdoors and camping section.

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