THRILLS AS DAREDEVILS SOAR OVER ABU DHABI

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Thousands of spectators lined the breakwater and Corniche shorelines on Saturday afternoon to watch the final day of the Red Bull Air Races.

Visitors were also treated to the spectacle of a daredevil wing-walker, who performed on top of a Breitling aeroplane as it spiralled and took long dives close to the water.

“It was mind-blowing, amazing," said Krishna Rathod, an Abu Dhabi resident who watched the show with her husband and daughter.

Only after her husband showed her a still frame of the woman standing on top of the plane did Mrs Rathod believe someone was brave enough to fly through the air strapped to an aeroplane’s wings.

A performer with a motorised parachute floated up and down above the water, skimming it with the tip of his fingers and feet.

For Dindo Portes, a 34-year-old Filipino who came to practise his photography skills, the air show and race were dazzling.

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“I was expecting the race would be three aeroplanes, or four or five, at the same time," said Mr Portes. “Even though they are racing against time, it is amazing. See how they manoeuvre?

“They are so fast," he said. “It’s like riding a roller-coaster then suddenly they take a sharp turn."

The pilots’ sharp moves made the planes a difficult subject to photograph, said Mr Portes.

“Sometimes the pictures are blurry," he said.

Abdulla Al Braiki, a 28-year-old Emirati who has been working as a photographer for about nine years, said getting the right picture was a challenge.

“It’s about the speed of the planes so you have to take the right shutter speed with the right aperture to manage it," said Mr Al Braiki, who was using a Nikon D800 camera with 200mm and 400mm lenses.

“I’m trying to catch the action and I’m waiting for anything wrong to happen – an accident or hitting something, you know? It would be the beauty of the shot."

Mr Al Braiki said there were a few close calls on the first day, as pilots struck the inflatable pylons, but nothing too serious.

Mamta Sachdeva said the race was putting Abu Dhabi on the map. “It [the Red Bull Air Race] is world famous," Ms Sachdeva said. “It is just giving us a name.

“When you say UAE, I think people will think Dubai. They don’t know Abu Dhabi much.

“The people who follow Red Bull Race, they fly around the world, they travelled all the way from their countries to come here to see this."

As she watched the planes, Ms Sachdeva said her dream was to pilot a Red Bull Air Race plane.

“Aviation has always been my passion, it has always fascinated me," said Ms Sachdeva, a cabin manager with Etihad. “I wish I could do it. I would love to."

In the Master class, Frenchman Nicolas Ivanoff took a lead into the next round at Spielberg in Austria next month.

Leadership of the Challenger class was a tie between Kevin Coleman of the US and Daniel Ryfa of Sweden

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