

ELLE MAN

Arabia

June 2023
Debut Issue

**GUY
BOURDIN**
THE MAN WHO
CHANGED
FASHION
PHOTOGRAPHY
FOREVER



**TIME
CHECK**
THE 14
COOLEST
NEW
WATCHES

UNIQUE TALENT

REWARDED WITH THE HIGHEST ROYAL HONOURS, HUSSAIN AL JASSMI – THE MOST GIFTED SINGER IN THE ARAB WORLD – GIVES AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW ABOUT HIS JOURNEY, HIS ART AND HIS HOPES FOR THE PEACEFUL FUTURE OF THE WORLD



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OCTO ROMA



#SQUADONAMISSIÖN

Erling Haaland

Pro footballer,
member of the all star squad



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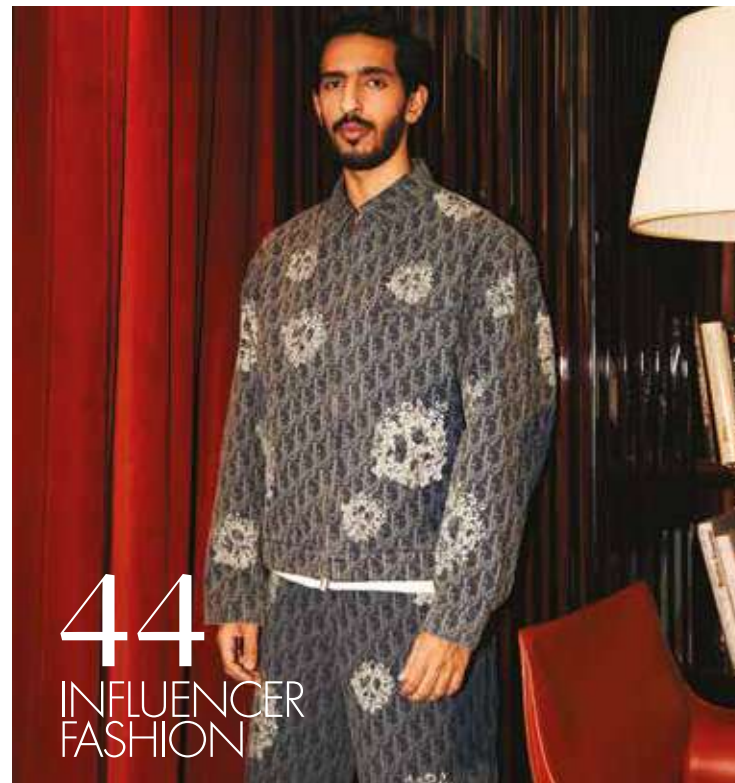
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June 2023 Issue 001 Contents



CULTURE

7. ART
Abdulrahman Al Zayani is one of the region's most prominent art collectors
8. GUY BOURDIN
Profiling the visionary French fashion photographer who changed the artistic landscape
14. ALULA
Saudi Arabia's tourism gem takes to the skies with a memorable festival
16. THE GUIDE
Cultural highlights from the page and screen
18. SAUDI ARABIA BIENNALE
A closer look at the Kingdom's burgeoning art scene from someone on the inside
24. ARAB FICTION PRIZE
Books by Middle East authors that are battling it out this season
26. PHOTOGRAPHY
Stunning images on a variety of topics from the World Press Photo Contest

ON THE COVER
Hussain Al Jassmi
Photographer
Abdulla Elmaz
Direction
Talat Kah

31. ASTON MARTIN
The dramatic unveiling of the British carmaker's DBS 770 Ultimate
32. COFFEE IN SAUDI ARABIA
History, heritage and hospitality are covered in a beautiful new book
40. JAMES BOND
Get up to speed with the latest 007 developments

STYLE

41. LOUIS VUITTON
Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama collabs on a stylish new accessory
42. CROWDLESS
The tenacious owner of Saudi Arabia's best style boutique reveals his story
44. INFLUENCER FASHION
Follow these Middle Eastern guys as they wear the season's hottest looks
52. THE KIT
Essential pieces for men, from

sandals to sunglasses
53. MOHAMMED ALAHBABI
Tracking the in-demand style of the influential Emirati creative
54. QASIMI
Find your nomadic spirit in the brand's SS23 eye-catching menswear
55. CHRISTYS'
Explore the rich history of the traditional British hatmakers
56. MICHAEL JORDAN
Once-in-a-lifetime sneaker collection goes up for sale
60. TOMMY HILFIGER
The iconic American designer charts the rise of his giant brand
64. HUSSAIN AL JASSMI
Emirati singer and musician speaks to ELLE Man about fame, his private life and his remaining ambitions
70. MEN'S FASHION WEEK
News and notes from the talked-about runway shows
72. FASHION SHOOT
Bring fresh ideas into your wardrobe with these blissed-out looks for men
80. BUKAYO SAKA
Arsenal's wonderkid is the hottest property in world football and a marketing dream
82. AMER MOHAMAD
Sharing the secrets of how to execute a luxury fashion shoot

WATCHES

83. WATCHES & WONDERS
All the gossip and new releases from horology's Super Bowl
96. WATCH AUCTIONS
Rare and prized pieces with historical meaning go under the hammer
98. AUDEMARS PIGUET
Happy birthday to the chunky Royal Oak Offshore sports watch
100. CHRONOGRAPHS
Three fantastic pieces from Breitling, Chopard and Bulgari

WELLNESS & GROOMING

101. DIOR
Fai Khadra introduces the mesmerising Gris Dior scent
102. Abdulla Al Gurg
Emirati businessman used art to help his recovery from a stroke
104. FRAGRANCE
A trio of fragrances based on the hypnotic note of wood

105. GROOMING EVOLUTION
One man lays out his grooming regime, from teen to adult
106. SAMUEL ROSS
Leading designer lends his eye to Acqua di Parma's iconic bottles

LIFESTYLE

107. MOONRISE
Chef Solemann Haddad is working wonders at his Dubai restaurant
108. COOL HOTELS
The hottest openings around the world, from the city to safari
116. CRUISE
Would you book a berth on a three-year cruise voyage?
118. BANYAN TREE ALULA
Desert escapism at this sophisticated Saudi Arabian sanctuary
120. AMAIA VILLAS
Take a tour of Dubai's most exclusive residences at Al Barari
122. MERCEDES-BENZ
This EQE SUV is the latest electric vehicle from the German manufacturer
124. INFINITI
Drive to the stars with the dynamic QX80 Black Edition
126. AUDI
Four exclusive models honour the unification of Saudi Arabia
127. LAMBORGHINI
A new legend is born with the Revuelto high performance electric car
128. SUPERYACHT
Step aboard the dazzling Aeolus craft that sets a new maritime benchmark
132. COUNTER CULTURE
Eat at the chef's pass for a truly authentic culinary experience
138. TAGOMAGO
Sun lovers are heading to this chic beach club and restaurant on the Palm
139. SAUDI ARABIA DINING
The top tables to know about for fine dining in Saudi Arabia
142. CIGARS
Alberto Lucchielli is the charismatic cigar sommelier at The Arts Club Dubai
144. FOCACCIA
Top chef Davide Galbiati on the dreamy bread at La Fabbrica Focacceria Italiana
148. DAVID GANDY
British supermodel talks us through his revolutionary new clothing range



ONE MORE THING...
LEMON, COCONUT AND
A SPRINKLING OF SALT
HAVE BEEN PACKED INTO
THE NEW BOSS BOTTLED
PACIFIC THAT'S TAILOR
MADE FOR SUMMER DAYS.

W

Welcome to the debut issue of Elle Man Arabia. Very nice to meet you. We are the petit frère of the glamorous Elle Arabia magazine for women that was founded in 2010. If Elle Man Arabia can be only half as successful as our stylish, informative, entertaining big sister, I'll be a happy man.

So, why are we here? Because magazines make people happy, because people like to read more than 280 characters, and because there's still something magical about flicking through a magazine and seeing wonderful photographs while smelling that glorious ink. Seriously, why hasn't someone made an eau de toilette called Magazine Page?

Since I started working in magazines 25 years ago, I've always believed a magazine should be like a friend, which I know sounds a little corny. Like a friend, a magazine should make you feel good, it should give you ideas, it should be something with which you have stuff in common, and I think it should occasionally nudge you into areas you've not explored before. Anybody who does that for me is a mate.

Elle Man Arabia has been simmering away for six months and I'm delighted and honoured to be editor-at-large of the debut issue – it's been a travail d'amour. And just in case you were wondering, every word was written by a human being, not ChatGPT.

We've tried to make a magazine that is unpretentious, approachable and fun, which I think is something that gets forgotten about. Inside you'll find (deep breath) coffee, cars and cuisine, books, boats and bags, focaccia, frogs and fragrance, hotels, hats and horology and much more.

I hope you enjoy this new magazine for today's man in the Middle East and, in the process, make a new friend.

Rob
ROB CHILTON

ELLE MAN Arabia

FOUAD KAMEL,
UNTITLED (THE
DRINKER)

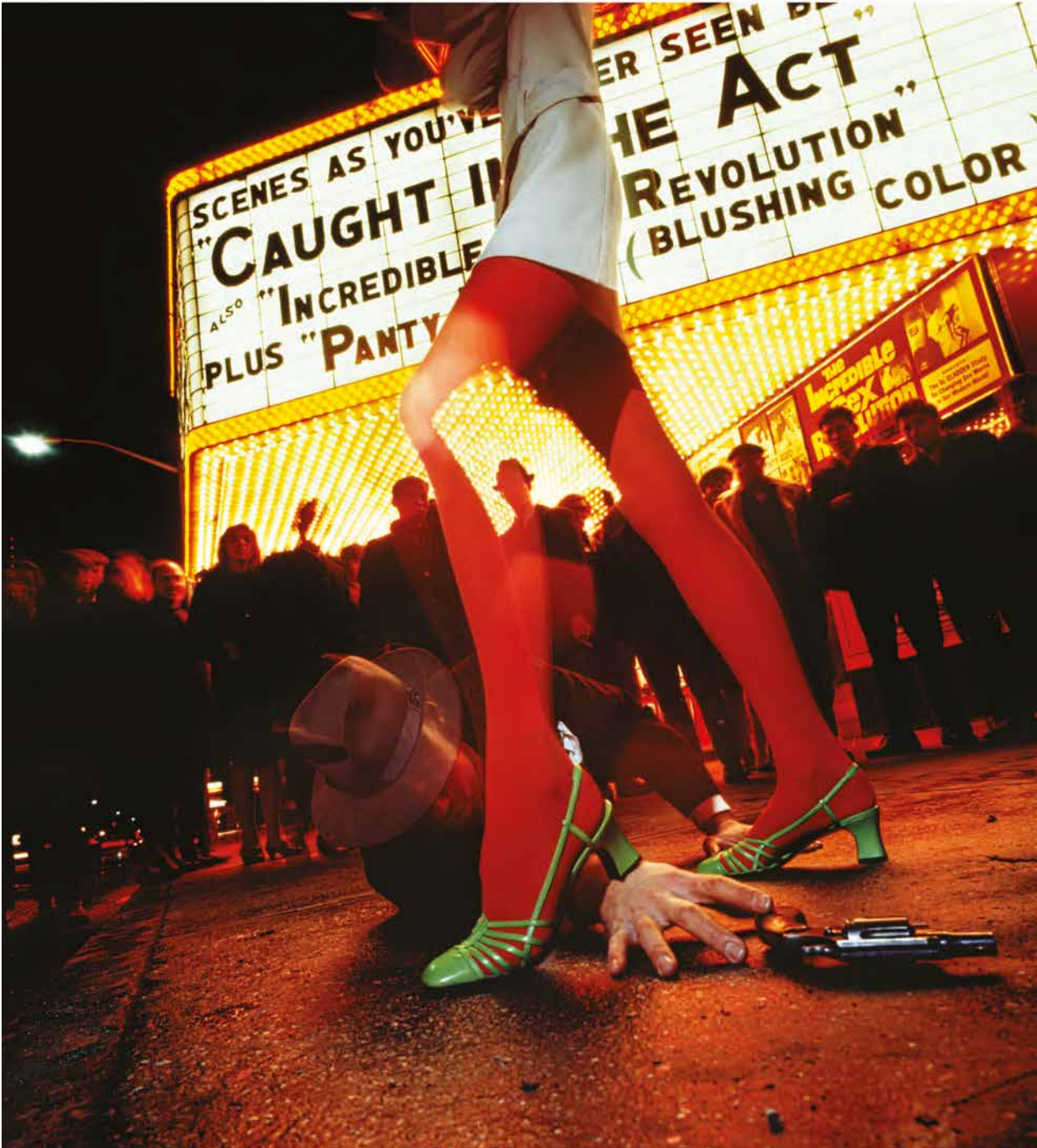
Culture

Art From The Heart

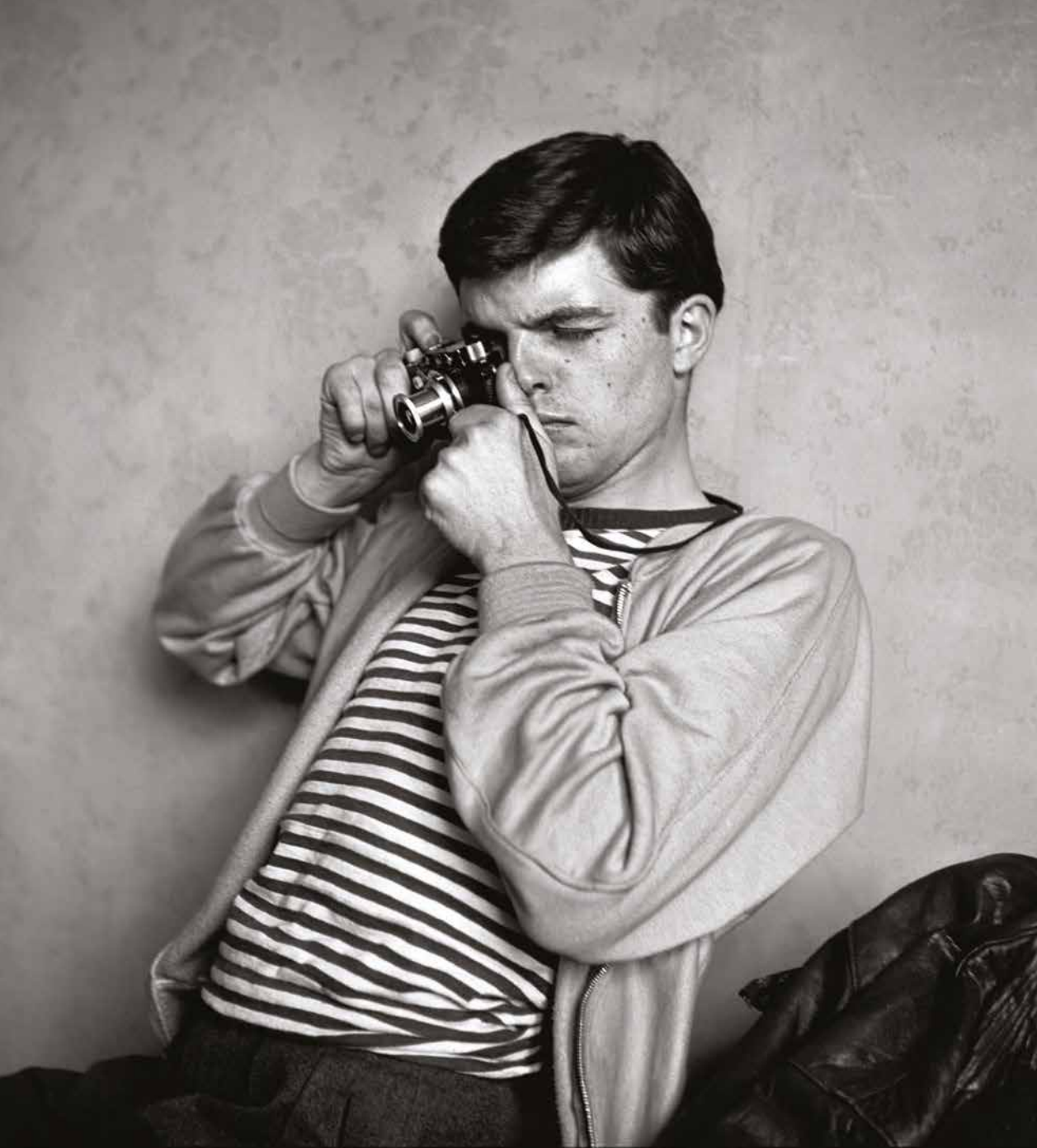
One of the Middle East's leading art collectors, Abdulrahman Al Zayani has released a superb range of pieces for auction in Dubai. The Al Zayani family explain the paintings have a special place in their hearts. "As we open the doors to our collection, the overarching sense is that these pieces were acquired with love, and we are excited for them to go to new homes where they will be discovered and appreciated anew," said the family of the sale at Sotheby's. The timeless artworks are proof, the family adds, of how far the Middle Eastern art world has travelled since they started collecting almost 20 years ago. "We are proud to witness and be a part of that evolution, living in a region that is now becoming one of the cultural hubs of the world

GIRLS ON FILM

Words by ROB CHILTON



In a first for the Middle East, French fashion photographer Guy Bourdin's playful spirit is celebrated with an exhibition that shows how he championed women in his pictures



T

The photographer Manbutte is looking at a photograph taken by Guy Bourdin and almost giggling in disbelief. It's a close-up image of a woman's foot crushing a man's hand that is holding a gun while a crowd of onlookers watch outside a brightly lit cinema at night.

"I still have no idea how he took the photo," smiles Manbutte, a leading fashion photographer in the Middle East. "Using the light from the cinema, getting that little shadow, and shooting at night... that's very tricky. Bourdin had an assistant who was holding a light and would move with him but, how he got the shot, I just don't understand it. You can't recreate this stuff."

Although perhaps not a household name, Guy Bourdin remains a hugely influential figure in fashion photography, a genre which he helped to define during the 1960s and 1970s with a series of provocative images that often depicted women in cinematic and sometimes surreal situations. Blessed with technical skill and a mischievous sense of humour, Bourdin's work challenges the viewer. His work is enjoying a long overdue reassessment in Dubai this spring thanks to a major sale of his photographs at That Concept Store in Mall of the Emirates.

"He's one of those photographers who's been an inspiration for every other photographer at some point," explains Manbutte. He believes the key to understanding Bourdin's talent lies in his background as an aerial photographer for the French Air Force while stationed in Senegal in the late 1940s. "All those aerial images he shot were landscapes, they were big and inspired by cinematography," says Manbutte. "To me, his photos look like scenes from a movie. When he was taking a photo, in a way, he was filming. There was always an action, a powerful woman, and a big moment."





pictures, they asked ‘Where are the clothes?’ Bourdin had to reshoot the campaign five times! He didn’t care and I love that about him. He’s a true artist.”

Seventeen of Bourdin’s most extraordinary images are now on sale at That Concept Store. Starting at AED 11,000, the large scale hand-printed and framed images were taken during the 1970s.

An accompanying exhibition is hosted by fine art e-commerce platform AP8.ART. Its curator and co-founder Viola Raikhel-Bolot believes “Bourdin single-handedly transformed advertising campaigns and fashion photography into an art form.” She adds, “There’s a lot of dark humour in his work, it’s tongue in cheek. You have to remember there was no digital photoshopping or retouching in the 1970s when these images were created. We see images all the time and we can place the time they were taken, but Guy’s work is elevated to a different level because of its timelessness. People see these images and don’t realise how old they are.”

Women play a central role in Bourdin’s photographs where they are celebrated, contrary to many advertising images from the same era. “At that time, women in advertising campaigns were perceived as second class citizens,” says Nez Gebreel, former CEO of the Dubai Design and Fashion Council and a leading fashion commentator in the region. “But in these pictures from Guy Bourdin they own the image and that was revolutionary. Women in Bourdin’s photos are empowered – they’re not a housewife.”



Although hugely successful and sought-after, Bourdin led a very private life and refused to sell or exhibit his pictures. Since his death from cancer in 1991, his work has been shown in some of the world’s most famous museums, including The Victoria & Albert Museum, Tate Modern, The Jeu de Paume, The Getty Museum, The National Art Museum of China, The Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, and The Moscow House of Photography.



Looking back on Bourdin’s work in 2023, arts journalist Rebecca Anne Proctor calls it “trailblazing” adding, “It stands the test of the time. This world Bourdin created is still being talked about and written about today.” Manbutte agrees, “These images are going to be here forever.”



Professor Francesco Fioretto is a photographer who has extensive experience of creative direction for fashion and luxury brands in Paris. He’s now the Director of Education of Istituto Marangoni Shanghai, one of the most important fashion schools in China, and believes Bourdin is responsible for the rise of narrative photography.

“The purpose of fashion photography is to leave the message a little bit foggy,” smiles Fioretto. “Guy Bourdin was a surrealist, his narrative is built in layers and his work is hide and seek – it’s mystery. Bourdin lets you guess what’s going on and that’s even more involving for us.”

Setting him apart from his rivals, Bourdin was able to blur the line between editorial and commercial work, skipping between a high concept editorial photo story for a glossy fashion magazine and an advertising campaign for a fashion house. One of Bourdin’s key collaborations saw him shoot advertising campaigns for the French shoe brand Charles Jourdan.

“Bourdin kept the balance between commercial and editorial,” says Manbutte. “He was able to create great advertising work, but it looked like art.” Fioretto agrees: “There’s a lot of conformity in fashion campaigns but Bourdin brought irony to fashion, which is not that common.”

Another renowned fashion photographer working in Europe and the Middle East is Francesco Scotti. “Bourdin was revolutionary in advertising photography because he didn’t focus on the product, he focused on the human, that was different,” he explains. “Once Bourdin shot a campaign for Bloomingdale’s and when the client saw the



“THERE’S A LOT OF CONFORMITY IN FASHION CAMPAIGNS BUT BOURDIN BROUGHT IRONY TO FASHION, WHICH IS NOT THAT COMMON”





High and Dry

Leave the earth behind at AlUla's Skies Festival in Saudi Arabia

WORDS BY ROB CHILTON



While most festivals invite people to let their hair down and disconnect from everyday life, AlUla Skies Festival encourages visitors to actually disconnect from the Earth's surface.

Look up and don't keep your feet on the ground seems to be the message coming from festival organisers at AlUla. Tours by helicopter and hot air balloon over North Hegra show visitors AlUla's landmarks and wide expanses of stunning desert. Minimal light pollution and dark night skies

enable memorable stargazing sessions that help modern day folk understand how Arabic people from a bygone age used the skies to navigate.

Running from April 26 to May 13, AlUla Skies Festival also features jazz concerts, an outdoor cinema, kite displays, a zipline, nighttime light shows 'performed' by drones, and a terrifying rope swing that hurls brave souls through a canyon 85 metres above the ground.

Or you could just grab a bean bag and watch the stars.



ART
VERMEER: THE GREATEST EXHIBITION

The Vermeer exhibition that opened in February at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam has been called ‘A miracle’ (The Guardian), ‘Practically perfect’ (New York Times) and ‘The exhibition of the century’ (The Times). Concluding in June, the exhibition is sold out, but art fans should not despair. A thrilling new film takes you into the museum – minus the crowds – to see the largest Vermeer exhibition in history for the first and last time with expert guidance from art curators. “There will never be another Vermeer show as great as this one,” says The Washington Post.

Out now



SPORT
CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

The ultimate showpiece in club football will be played out in Istanbul this summer with holders Real Madrid aiming for a remarkable 15th European title. The business end of the season is when Real Madrid’s Karim Benzema switches to beast mode and, even at the age of 35, few would be surprised to see the Frenchman lift the trophy again.

June 10

FILM
AIR

It’s hard to imagine today, but in 1984 Nike was a struggling sportswear brand. Then along came a college basketball star called Michael Jordan and the company’s path changed forever: last year Nike was valued at \$36.8 billion. The pivotal moment when Nike signed Jordan is explored in Ben Affleck’s fascinating movie Air. Affleck plays Nike co-founder Phil Knight while his buddy and long time collaborator Matt Damon plays a Nike executive gambling his career on signing the young phenom Jordan.

Out now



THE GUIDE
Don’t miss this season’s essential art, culture, movies and more

TV
FATAL ATTRACTION

It was the movie that terrified men across the world and introduced the term ‘bunny boiler’ to our lexicon. The 1987 infidelity thriller Fatal Attraction starring Glenn Close and Michael Douglas has been rebooted for TV with Lizzy Caplan and Joshua Jackson in the lead roles. “It’s a super intense story that delves much more deeply into the Glenn Close character, which is one of the most iconic and compelling characters ever put on screen,” explains Jackson. “Our show is a nightmare for men – it will make all men faithful to their wives forever.”

April 30



BALLET
SLEEPING BEAUTY

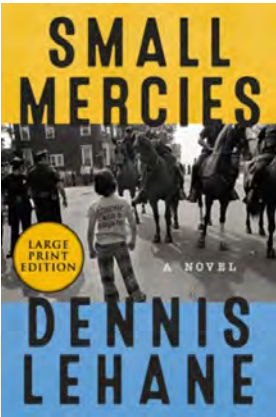
Supremely talented performers from the Moscow Ballet La Classique dance company arrive in Dubai to present the beloved tale of Sleeping Beauty. Staged across two nights at Dubai Opera, this is a wonderful opportunity to see Tchaikovsky’s classic work.

June 2-3

BOOK
SMALL MERCIES BY DENNIS LEHANE

Dennis Lehane adds to his greatest hits Shutter Island, Mystic River and Gone, Baby, Gone with his new thriller Small Mercies. Set in Boston in 1974, the book examines the city’s desegregation of its public schools that resulted in terrible violence. “A brutal depiction of criminality and power, and an unflinching portrait of the dark heart of American racism,” says Lehane’s publisher.

April 25





Words by ROB CHILTON

The Movement of People

By welcoming both the art community and pilgrims making the hajj, Saudi Arabia's inaugural Islamic Arts Biennale is a landmark moment that has energised the country's cultural scene and connected communities



W

When it comes to tag lines, the Islamic Arts Biennale in Saudi Arabia has a powerful one: “celebrating the art of Islam – the art of being a Muslim.”

Held at the gateway to Makkah at the iconic Hajj Terminal of King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah, the inaugural edition of the biennale concluded in late April, having achieved its goal to “bring together centuries of faith and artistic expression.”

The four-month art festival was themed on Awwal Bait (‘First House’) that refers to the Ka’bah in Makkah al-Mukarramah, the holiest site in Islam. For the Islamic Arts Biennale’s artistic director, Sumayya Vally, it’s been an emotional and richly rewarding experience that has brought people together and altered perceptions of Saudi Arabia at a crucial time in its cultural transformation. She spoke to ELLE Man about the “reflective and spiritual” journey that both she and visitors to the biennale have been on.

“I HAVE APPRECIATED THE DIVERSITY OF CHANGE THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE ON SO MANY LEVELS, IN DIFFERENT ARENAS, AT DIFFERENT SPEEDS. TO BE IN THE PROXIMITY OF THAT KIND OF CHANGE HAS BEEN PROFOUND.”

When I was first approached about the project I had no permanent relationship with Saudi Arabia. I was born in South Africa and I live between Johannesburg and London but I am a Muslim and holy sites such as Medina are at the heart of so many of our rituals. I first visited Saudi Arabia when I was making the pilgrimage aged 14 so I have always felt a symbolic and spiritual connection to the country. As a Muslim, this place and its traditions, rituals and cultures have always been inside me.

The biennale came along at absolutely the right time. Jeddah has always been a place that has been incredibly contemporary and has had the spirit of contemporary thinking. Due to its location as a port on the Red Sea, Jeddah is a place of cultural production and it is absolutely incredible – there is so much waiting to happen here.

I had no idea what to expect but I have been incredibly honoured to see a cross section of public engaging with the biennale. It's been a gathering place for people, friends and families to meet and to see all that happening in a space filled with art has been so meaningful. The biennale has the potential to be impactful and I have found that really profound.

The biggest contingent among visitors to the biennale have been pilgrims who have saved their entire lives to make the pilgrimage. They have felt extremely connected to the content and not intimidated by it. No matter where they have come from or what their background, they can learn. A lot of pilgrims will likely have never been in a space dedicated to the arts and yet the biennale has been a part of their pilgrim journey.

I've heard very moving things from young people, especially women, who have never seen themselves or their identities reflected in this way before. People from around the Muslim world have come to visit and said it has touched something instinctive inside them. It has also resonated with international visitors who said they have never seen an interpretation of Islam like this before.

Most artworks at the biennale are about communing and gathering, or internal spiritual reflection. By using immersive artworks we wanted to create experiences that resonated. We have



LOU JASMINE PORTRAIT (2)

combined historic objects with contemporary works because I wanted to give the contemporary works a lineage by placing them alongside historical objects and, in doing so, give them a future.

Looking to the future, the biennale will help seed the art ecosystem in Jeddah and the rest of the country. I have so many ambitions for this platform. I was excited and adamant to define Islamic art that reflects our lives. In the future the biennale will be a platform for different people to define Islamic art, so the possibilities are endless. There is so much that can be done in future editions with more institutional collaborations, satellite projects and legacy projects.

The biennale is leading an ecosystem that is bringing cultural transformation into being. I think it's inspiring to be around this energy of transformation and to see and feel and be part of a public that is excited to engage with culture.

Working on the biennale, I have gotten to know the city through its artists. I have appreciated the diversity of change that has taken place on so many levels, in different arenas, at different speeds. To be in the proximity of that kind of change has been profound.





Reading Reality

Tough issues facing the Arabic world are explored in the six novels shortlisted for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction

Love, death, war, migration and alienation are just some of the ambitious themes tackled by the six novels shortlisted for the prestigious 2023 International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF). The six authors come from different countries across the Middle East.

Chair of the judging panel, Moroccan writer and novelist Mohammed Achaari, is delighted with the vibrancy and diversity of the shortlisted books this year. “This multiplicity of voices and idiom, with contrasting styles, structure and narrative forms offers a dynamic snapshot of the contemporary Arabic novel.”

The winner of the 16th edition of IPAF will be announced in Abu Dhabi on May 21 and will receive a \$60,000 prize. Yassin Adnan is an IPAF Trustee, and explains, “The aim of the prize is to enhance the status of Arabic novels, shed more light on the Arabic world and reach the world through these novels.”

Judges of the IPAF 2023 are Egyptian academic and novelist Reem Bassiouney, Algerian novelist, researcher and journalist Fadhila El Farouk, Swedish university professor and translator Tetz Rooke, Omani writer and academic Aziza al-Ta’i, Yassin Adnan, an IPAF Trustee, and Prize Administrator Fleur Montanaro.

Professor Yasir Suleiman, Chair of the Board of Trustees, said the shortlisted novels “exhibit the ethnic richness and cultural diversity of

Arab social life.” He added, “They excavate the themes of marginality, alienation and dispersal in Arab life from different vantage points, interweaving them with nostalgia for the past in some cases, and the brutality of a failed political and social order in others.”

Judge Fadhila El Farouk is a judge and says the “diversity of topics will enrich the Arabic library.” The novels deal with complex and troublesome issues but El Farouk says they are a reflection of our reality. “The writer cannot write away from what she or he feels and sees in real life. There is war, drought, famine, climate change, broken relationships – life is not rosy. We are not in the era of happy endings.” Omani writer and academic Aziza al-Ta’i is pleased with the different visions and techniques in the shortlisted books and commented, “These novels open windows for Arab readers.”

For Tetz Rooke, the greatest challenge was reading 124 novels in six months. “I learned to read quickly,” smiles the academic and translator who came across many Arabic dialects in the pages. “The Exile of the Water Diviner, for example, was written in Omani local dialect and, frankly, there were words and expressions that I couldn’t understand, but this gives additional value to the text. Not living in an Arabic country, I found there were historical and cultural issues that I didn’t know about fully. But this is why we read, to learn about cultures we didn’t know about before.”

WORDS BY ROB CHILTON



Shortlists



DAYS OF THE SHINING SUN
by Miral al-Tabawy (Egypt)
This novel explores migration and upheaval, through people trapped between the hardships of their places of origin and the violence of their places of exile. Judge Mohammed Achaari: “It’s a novel about migration and the complicated relationship between east and west in the philosophical sense and the psychological dimension. We live with these characters and their painful first days of migration as they try to live in a new place and deal with the psychological suffering.”



CONCERTO QURINA EDUARDO
by Najwa Binshatwan (Libya)
An intimate portrait of human struggle in the face of injustice and political despotism, where the hell of the present seems only to signal a hellish future. Judge Tetz Rooke: “It’s a novel in the form of an autobiography that deals with the horror of bullying and shows a picture of Libya’s history. As it gradually unfolds, we finally see the whole picture.”



THE HIGHEST PART OF THE HORIZON
by Fatima Abdulhamid (Saudi Arabia)
It charts the terrors of death, and of love, and their constant intersections. Judge Mohammed Achaari: “This novel gives a completely different perspective to most Arabic novels. The writer presents to us the inner psychological world of her characters starting from the idea of the angel of death and the inner life of a child who grows older and discovers love and relationships.”



THE STONE OF HAPPINESS
by Azher Jirjees (Iraq)
It shines a light on how children and the weak bear the burden of society disintegrating after war and sectarian struggles. Judge Fleur Montanaro: “This novel looks at the economic, political and social events that took place in Iraq between 1965 and 2013 and uses courageous language to describe the pain of alienation felt by homeless street boys who want to achieve the dream of having a value in society.”



DROUGHT
by Al-Sadiq Haj Ahmed (Algeria)
It transports us to the world of the Sahara between southern Algeria and northern Mali, where drought, famine and tribalism mirror the brutal and fragile nature of the desert. Judge Fadhila El Farouk: “In a novel that breaks previous Arabic narrative frameworks, the novelist explores the tragic face of drought and the cruel climate in Mali that caused the migration of people into the desert.”



THE EXILE OF THE WATER DIVINER
by Zabran Alqasbi (Oman)
It focuses on water and its symbolism in the collective memory. Judge Reem Bassiouney: “I learned a lot about Oman and importance of water, the search of life but also, at the same time, a symbol of death. It’s a deeply psychological novel that talks about the alienation of being forced out of their homeland.”

Flooding along the Hawkesbury River, a major waterway that encircles the Sydney metropolitan region, on 31 March 2022. The flood level reached an average of more than 13 meters and was the catchment's wettest nine-day period since records began.

CHAD AJAMIAN



Words by ROB CHILTON

WORLD VIEW

All corners of the globe are explored in the regional World Press Photo Contest

Argentina football fans cheering their heroes, the Ethiopian drought, new technologies aiming to aid sustainability, and a cute baby alpaca are topics of winning photographs in the 2023 World Press Photo Contest.

Brent Lewis, photo editor at The New York Times, and chairman of the judging panel for the jury chair, explains, "The photographs that we have chosen to represent 2022 are indicative of this moment in time, and will serve as historical

documents of what the year was like for future generations to look back on and hopefully learn from."

Now in its 66th edition, the World Press Photo Contest recognises photojournalism and documentary photography from professional photographers. More than 60,000 images from more than 3,000 photographers were entered into this year's competition. These are the winners and runners-up that form a remarkable snapshot of a turbulent 2022.



Fans celebrate Argentina's victory at the 2022 FIFA World Cup on top of the Obelisk, at the intersection of two of the city's most important streets, Avenida 9 de Julio and Avenida Corrientes, in Buenos Aires on 18 December 2022.

TOMAS FRANCISCO CUESTA, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Alina Surquislla Gomez, a third-generation alpaquera (alpaca farmer), cradles a baby alpaca on the way to her family's summer pastures, in Oropesa, Peru, on 3 May 2021. ALESSANDRO CINQUE, PULITZER CENTER/ NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC



Silt in the Amu Darya in Uzbekistan gives the water a dark red colour, as water levels in the river continue to decrease.

ANUSH BABAJANYAN, VII AGENCY/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY



A water tower in Zagora, Morocco, pictured on 6 May 2022. Associations of families often build and finance these towers to benefit from a more stable water supply.
M'HAMMED KILITO

Samira, age 16, looks out onto Qolodo camp near Gode in the Somali Region, Ethiopia, on 16 May 2022. Her family owned 45 goats and 10 camels, all of which died during recent droughts.
JONATHAN FONTAINE,
HANS LUCAS



Net-Zero Transition

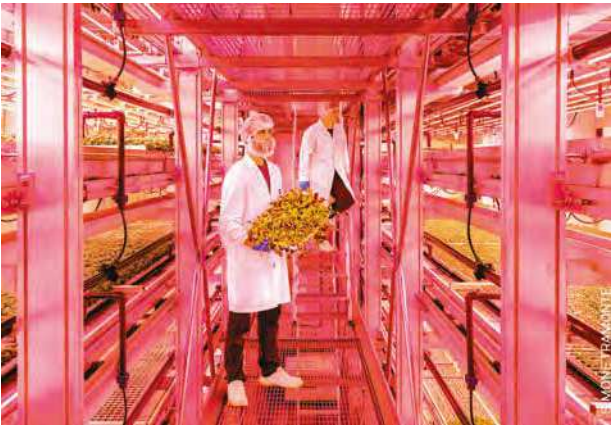
Renewable energies, new technologies for food production, and the circular economy can be seen as key directions among European companies seeking a green transition. Human-induced climate change is the largest, most pervasive threat to the natural environment and society that the world has ever experienced, according to the Organisation For Coordination Humanitarian Relief. This prompted the European Union to establish targets to cut greenhouse emissions by at least 55 per cent by 2030 and to reduce them to net-zero by 2050. The photographer Simone Tramonte documents innovative technologies that offer possible routes to these goals



An operator runs a routine check of a photobioreactor at a microalgae facility in Reykjanesbær, Iceland, on 13 July 2020. The company uses algae to produce a food supplement rich in antioxidants.
SIMONE TRAMONTE



Greenhouse operations in Ostellato, Italy, pictured on 22 February 2021, are based on a circular economy. Plant waste fuels the biogas (renewable fuel) plant that powers the greenhouse.
SIMONE TRAMONTE



Workers monitor seedling growth at a vertical farm, near Milan, Italy, on 10 November 2022. Crops grown in vertical stacks increase efficiency of land use, and reduce water consumption.
SIMONE TRAMONTE



Kristinn Haflidason monitors a photobioreactor at a microalgae production facility in Hellisheiði, Iceland, on 14 July 2020. The company cultivates omega 3-rich algae using waste and geothermal power.
SIMONE TRAMONTE



This solar plant in Fuentes de Andalucía, Spain, pictured on 17 October 2021, can supply uninterrupted power. Instead of sunlight, it uses solar heat (which is more easily stored) to generate electricity.
SIMONE TRAMONTE



People swim at Amager Strand, Denmark, on 13 July 2021, near a wind farm which is co-owned by 8,552 electricity consumers, and serves more than 40,000 Copenhagen households.
SIMONE TRAMONTE



OBJECT OF DESIRE

Aston Martin unleashes the chapter-ending DBS 770 Ultimate

Aston Martin are riding high in the Formula One standings so far this season, helped by the streetwise skills of veteran Fernando Alonso and the young enthusiasm of Lance Stroll. The British manufacturer is doing a pretty good job away from the track also, judging by the new DBS 770 Ultimate.

Limited to just 499 models – 300 Coupes and 199 Volantes – the DBS 770 Ultimate is the fastest and most powerful production Aston Martin ever with an uprated V12 engine delivering outputs of 770PS and 900Nm.

The DBS 770 Ultimate has been given an engineering overhaul for enhanced performance including a new front splitter, dramatic horse-shoe vent and deeper rear diffuser, for improved engine cooling and aerodynamic balance. It's a fitting farewell to a fine DBS generation and will become a highly collectible car.

Marek Reichman, Aston Martin's Chief Creative Officer, says, "This DBS 770 Ultimate has even more power and performance purity. Something so raw, and yet so beautiful – it's almost intimidating to look at."

For more cars turn to page 122

The cup of life

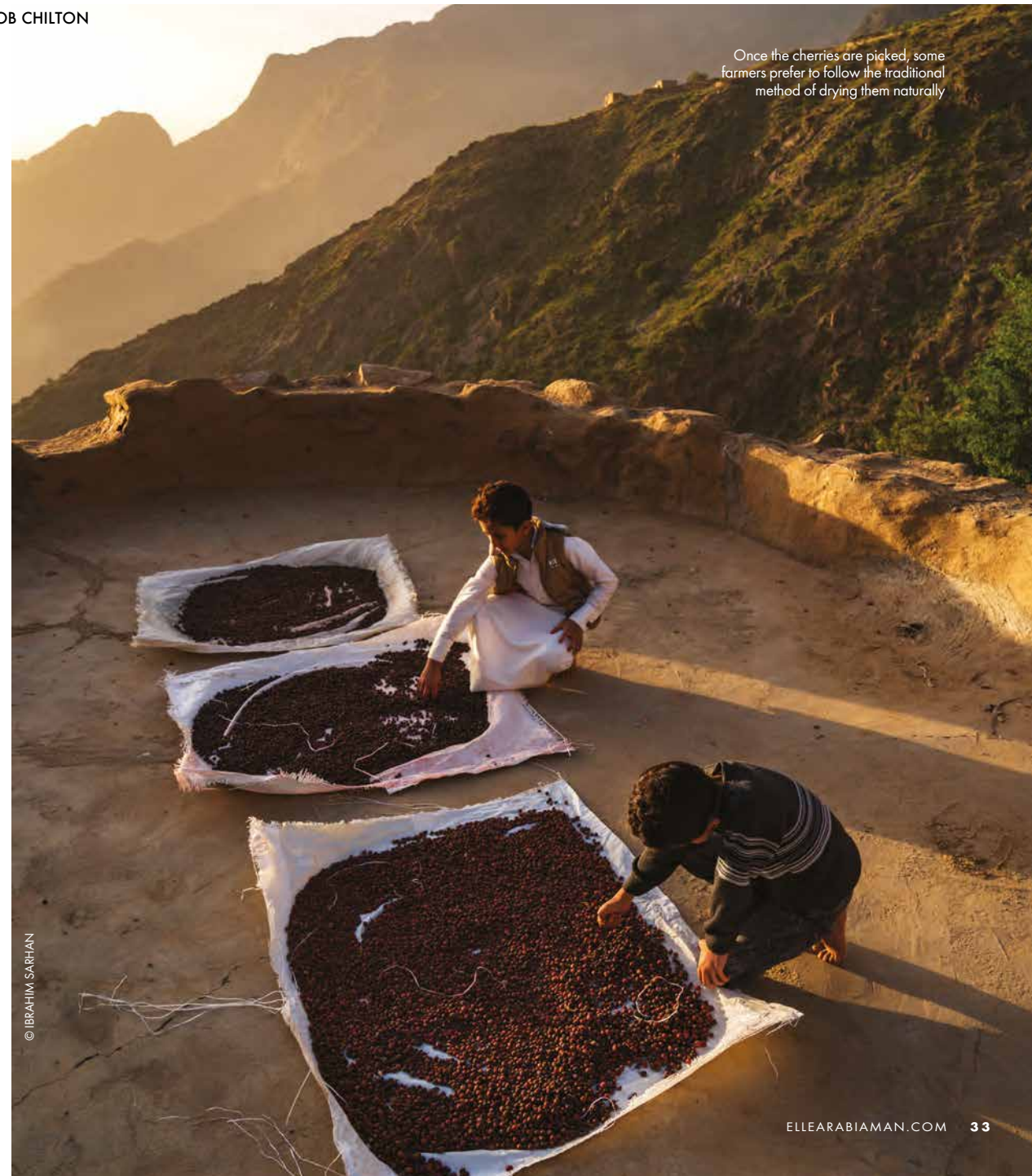
A new book explores the historic and treasured role that coffee plays in Saudi Arabian hospitality

Words by ROB CHILTON

Once the cherries are picked, some farmers prefer to follow the traditional method of drying them naturally



© OLIVER PILCHER



© IBRAHIM SARHAN

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For some, grabbing a coffee is an automatic job we enact every morning on our way to the office without a passing thought. But for others, it is a precious ritual that connects us as humans, strengthens friendships, and reminds us of the past.

In Saudi Arabia “coffee has grown from being just a beverage to one of the defining symbols of hospitality and generosity,” says Saudi chef and culinary educator Maher Al Nammari in an exquisite new book that charts the history and evolution of the brown bean and examines its place as a lubricant for social interaction.

Saudi Coffee: The Culture of Hospitality from luxury publishing house Assouline takes readers on an historical journey around the country to understand not only the diverse varieties, flavours and aromas of coffee but also the ancient traditions and values that surround the drinking of it which still exist today.

“To the people of the Kingdom, Saudi coffee is an integral part of their cultural identity and the soul of their generosity,” writes Al Nammari. “When people in the Kingdom brew a pot of coffee — dallah qahwa — it is meant to be shared. Be it in sadness or joy, mourning or celebration, for milestones, holidays or even the simple pleasure of someone’s company, coffee is a mainstay. The scent of coffee is the first to declare the festivities in the early mornings of the Islamic Eid holidays. Its warmth is a kind of consolation at funerals. And its sweet, spiced aroma is the first to greet visitors at the entrance of homes.”

Illustration of dallahs by Rafael Alterio.



© RUBEN ALTERIO

Farmers carefully pick the cherries to ensure quality harvesting



© OLIVER PILCHER

Enjoying a cup of coffee in a cafe in Saudi Arabia



© OLIVER PILCHER





Shelves of dallahs, traditional Arabic coffee pots.

© STOCKCREATIONS/SHUTTERSTOCK

In the book, great importance is placed on the Khawlani coffee bean, named after the Khawlan bin Amer tribe from Yemen. Although small, this bean packs a punch and is nicknamed in the southern regions of Saudi Arabia as ‘green gold’ for its unique aroma, high fat content and its trademark layer of aromatic oil when brewed. The khawlani bean produces coffee with a lower than average acidity that is slightly fruity with dark chocolate undertones and a delicate, nutty finish, says Al Nammariy the gastronome.

From ancient folk tales, the book travels through time and brings the story of Saudi coffee up to the present day with an analysis of the blooming coffee farms in the country. Al Nammariy writes poetically, “It is as if the sands of mystery that surround Saudi Arabia have parted and given way to a hidden paradise. The fertile lands plowed as fields now flourish with crops.”

Substantial investment in environmentally-friendly agricultural projects in Jazan, Asir and Al Baha – three regions mainly in the south and southwestern parts of Saudi Arabia, closest to historical cultivators like Yemen and Ethiopia – has enabled the growth of specialised varieties of coffee

trees, some of which are hundreds of years old. “These regions are found within the Bean Belt, an equatorial zone between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. Their climate, altitude and fertile lands create some of the best conditions for the cultivation of high-quality coffee,” explains Al Nammariy. Vegetables, fruits, legumes and grains are also grown here by farmers who receive governmental support from a KSA leadership that is encouraging non-oil-based economic ventures.



The book then shifts from agriculture to art and discusses Saudi’s attachment to coffee in poetry, literature and pop culture where coffee is a source of national pride that connects traditions of the past to the present. “A young, enthusiastic generation of Saudi Arabians believe that ambition and tradition are inseparable, like the Kingdom’s date palms, whose trunks and leaves cannot reach for the sky unless held by strong roots,” writes Al Nammariy. “To young Saudis, the love of coffee and its unfaltering attachment to their daily lives illustrate that ways of life may evolve but certain aspects of culture will not die.”

Saudi Coffee: The Culture of Hospitality is a 216-page love letter to coffee – accompanied by beautiful photographs – that leaves no bean unturned in examining coffee’s place in Saudi society. It also provides something to think about the next time you dash into your nearest chain cafe on the way to work to grab a flat white.

Saudi Coffee: The Culture of Hospitality by Maher Al Nammariy is published by Assouline. assouline.com

A Bedouin grinds coffee with a mortar and pestle 1955



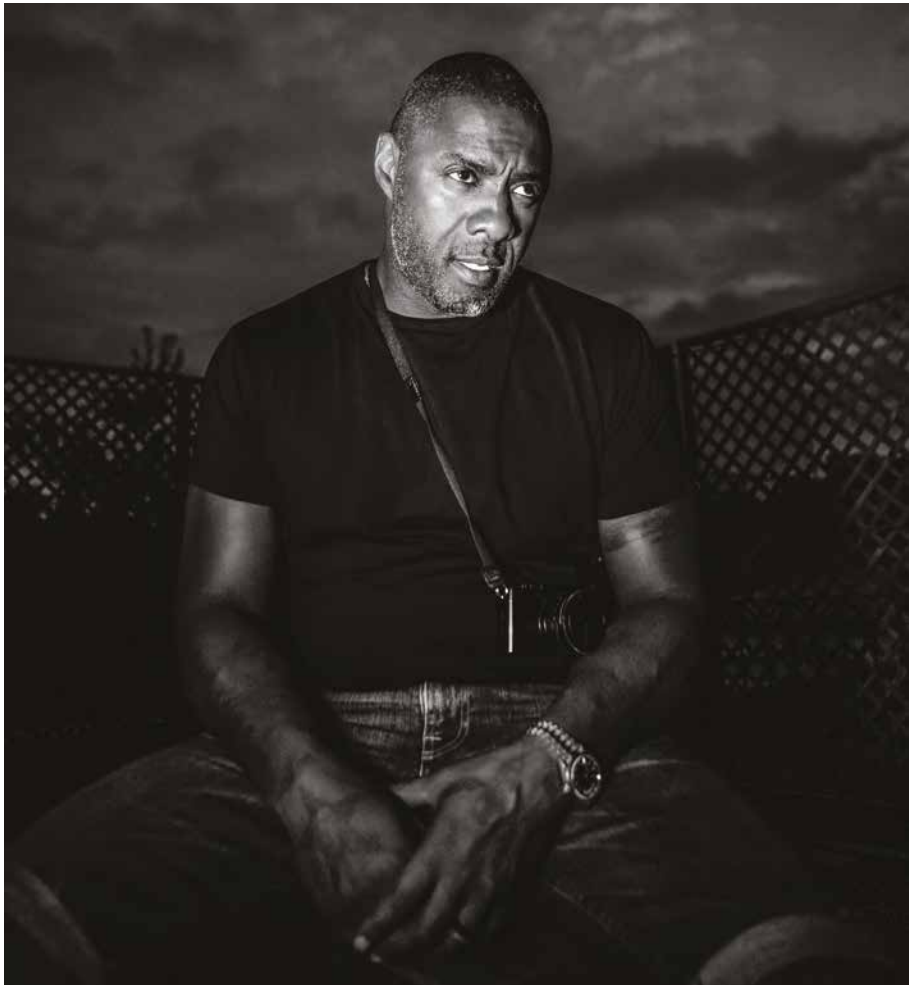
© GERTRUDE BELL/ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY/GETTY IMAGES

Poignant poems are reproduced in the book that demonstrate Saudi’s long-standing relationship with coffee. The poet Mohommed bin AbdulAziz Alquahtani describes the moment a Qahtani tribe member instructs his son to take his place and make coffee for guests.

*Oh Mohammed’s Father [term of endearment]
Take my place and light the fire
And in my absence serve the coffee to our guests
Enjoy being generous with weary travellers
And greet them with a warm welcome before passing the cup to them.*

Other Saudi writers, says Al Nammariy, “create a parallel between the joy of drinking coffee and love, romance or the company they yearn for” and illustrates his point with another poem, this time by Yassir Al Imad.

*My cup does not empty
Calming is her warmth
Deep within my existence
My heart obsessed at her sight
Beautiful are your deep auburn shades
Increasing in radiance and presence
Bright as coral
From wherever have you come from?
As she entered my garden with splendor
I come from Yemen, she replied
From no other place you will find me
We spent our time in joy and song
Wanting more from the cup of Sana’a.*



SPY GAMES

It's been a busy time at James Bond HQ

James Bond is cinema's second longest running movie franchise (Godzilla is number one) yet it still hogs the headlines. Idris Elba finally took himself out of the running to play the spy in the next movie by revealing "I'm not going to be that guy" during the World Government Summit in Dubai. Soon after, Macallan released six limited edition bottles to mark the six decades of the franchise that began in 1962 with Dr. No. It was then announced that new editions of



Ian Fleming's Bond books – reissued in April to mark 70 years since Casino Royale, the first book in the series was published – will have racist references removed. British actress Daisy May Cooper, meanwhile, has been linked with the role of Miss Moneypenny in the new Bond film. And lastly, Phoebe Waller-Bridge is in talks to direct the next Bond flick. The Fleabag star polished the script for the excellent No Time to Die and so seems to have the necessary killer touch.

ELLE MAN

Arabia

Style

LV. ALL OVER
PUMPKIN DENIM
BLOUSON.
DENIM PANT LOUIS
VUITTON X YAYOI
KUSAMA



Pumpkin Patch

Pumpkins have been a long-standing motif for avant-garde Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama and appear across the second drop of her clothing and accessories collection with Louis Vuitton this season. According to Kusama, pumpkins have a "generous unpretentiousness" and a "solid spiritual balance." And you thought they were just for Halloween.

TALKING SHOP

Saudi boutique owner Turki Alharbi talks to Elle Man about the emotional ups and downs of creating his Crowdless concept store

Words by ROB CHILTON



Setting up a clothing concept store next to a shawarma shack that emitted a strong smell of garlic was the first chaotic step in what has been a deeply personal journey for Saudi entrepreneur Turki Alharbi. After 13 years of wrong turns, lucky breaks and hard work, the 37-year-old has carved out a stylish niche in Saudi Arabia with his multi-brand boutique Crowdless. The contemporary Jeddah store stocks an eclectic range of streetwear and accessories that range from a AED 200 Pleasures t-shirt to a AED 1,500 jacket by Stüssy. Passionate about his store – but modest about his achievements – Alharbi spoke to Elle Man about losing everything, the joy of life's simple pleasures, and cunning retail tactics.

When did you start selling clothing and accessories? Back in 2011 I was selling bracelets, accessories and random things on Instagram while doing a 9-to-5 job. I had a good eye for buying and I knew what people wanted, but I had to hustle.

How did you hustle? I'm not proud to admit this, but I used to go to the gym wearing sunglasses to make other guys want to buy them [laughs]. A guy I knew worked out at the same gym as me and one day he asked me what sunglasses I was wearing, and I sold him a pair. In 2012, I started selling more stuff like sneakers.

What was the turning point? At the end of 2012 I quit my job. It was a bad salary in

a bad environment, I didn't feel myself and I wasn't happy. For three months I earned no income, I had AED 33,000 in the bank, no idea and no plan. One day I woke up and knew I had to put my money into a place or my brain will go insane. It took me another two months to make the decision and do it. I eventually found a tiny shop that could only fit two people inside. It was next to a shawarma place and all you could smell was garlic [laughs]. I did the interiors myself with recycled wooden shelves and opened in 2014 with one main mission: to start a culture.

How thrilling was the opening? I was so scared on the first day. I invited everyone I knew and I felt like the king of the world. Then on the second day nobody came, it was a nightmare. Nobody explained to me the corporate side of things, I'm a guy from Khulail, a village 200km from Jeddah. I posted videos on Instagram to promote my stuff and for six months I had no life. But the videos worked and sales grew.

How did you get brands on board? No brands wanted to work with me. I was using my Gmail, I didn't even have an official business email account [laughs]. Back in the day I asked, 'Can I stock your brand?' and they'd say, 'We'll think about it.' Now I'm in

a position where all brands want to expand in the Middle East – the game has changed.

What do you think people like about shopping at Crowdless? Variety is my strong point, you'll never find a store like mine. If you're a kid aged 16 or a 55-year-old guy, you can find something at Crowdless. We're now located in Al Rawdah in Jeddah and it feels like an indie store, there is no silent investor, I don't follow trends. We're low-key, almost anonymous, but if you know, you know.

What kind of personal journey have you been on in the last decade? I used to have a Porsche and a Rolex, but I sold everything. I live in peace now and material things don't matter to me anymore. I changed as a person and I appreciate the small things now.

Looking back, what do you think enabled you to make Crowdless a success? I'm very picky and very competitive. If I do something I have to be the best. For example, I started playing golf on a simulator and I broke the record. Also, I'm very artistic and I believe everything must have a meaning. I care about my audience and the store experience, I work hard, and I'm very proud of the store. I want my business to be famous, but I don't want to be famous. With Crowdless, I struggled but I think it was a beautiful struggle.



SEASONS IN THE SUN

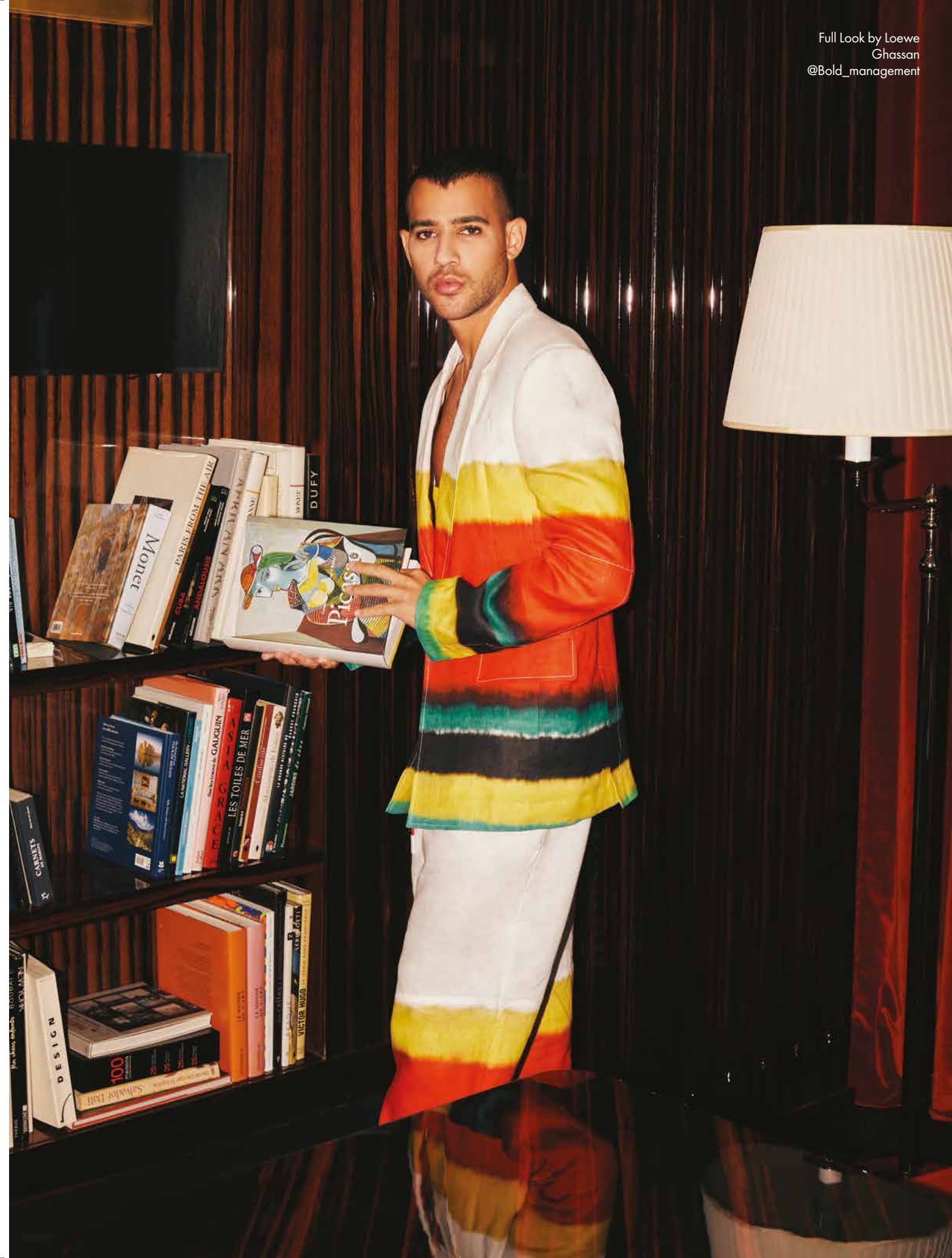
MIDDLE EAST FASHION INFLUENCERS
WEAR THE FRESH LOOKS TURNING
HEADS THIS SUMMER

Photographer DANIEL ASATER
Stylist & Creative Direction SLIMI





Full Look by Gucci
Ahmad Daabas
@Bold_management



Full Look by Loewe
Ghassan
@Bold_management





Full Look by Valentino
Lughass
@Bold_management

PHOTOGRAPHER: DANIEL ASATER; STYLIST/CREATIVE DIRECTION: SUMI; MAKEUP & HAIR: KASIA DOMANSKA; PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSISTANT: JEFF; LOCATION: FOUQUET'S DUBAI



Full Look by Louis Vuitton
Sultan Musaed
@Bold_management

THE KIT



Travel pouch, Ralph Lauren



Shirt, Sandro



Sunglasses, Cartier



Suitcase, Brunello Cucinelli



Sandals, Ancient Greek



Sneakers, Berluti



Hat, Etro



Swim shorts, Orlebar Brown



Holdall, Bally

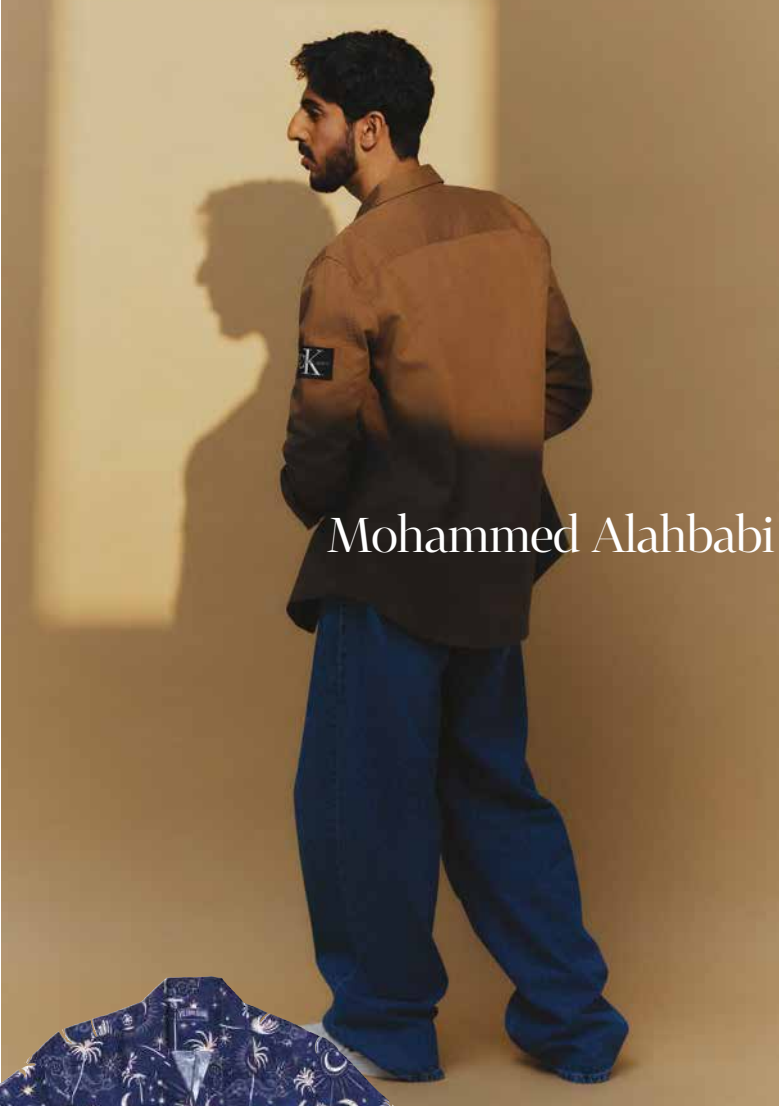
SUMMER DAZE

Pack the right gear for your vacation and get to the airport, pronto

ONE TO WATCH

Mohammed Alahbabi is a creative on the rise

Emirati photographer, filmmaker and visual artist Mohammed Alahbabi fronts not one, but two campaigns this season. First, he teamed with Vilebrequin for a capsule collection featuring moons, palms and stars that is available exclusively in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The Al Ain-based creative also collaborated with Calvin Klein for a GCC campaign shot in Dubai. For the Vilebrequin shoot, Alahbabi appeared alongside his nephew. Alahbabi explains, “I really enjoy being creative with my family members, because it’s a free comfortable zone that I have and they make it so special. You’re sharing your interest and at the same time, you’re creating joyful moments with them.”



SUMMER SOLE

Ferragamo puts a spring in our step this summer with its new unisex sneaker that comes in several colours. Urban, contemporary and daring, the shoe features Ferragamo’s signature Gancini hook on three tubes in the super-cushioned sole. Made using stretch knit, nubuck and split leather, the futuristic sneaker has graphic laces, the Ferragamo logo and hand stitched details that provide both style and sport.



WANDERING FREE

The nomadic spirit finds its way into Qasimi menswear this season

The beauty and desolation of the Sahara is the creative spark for Qasimi's SS23 collection that provides a modern uniform for today while encouraging us to find our inner nomad. Inspired by the Tuareg people, as well as the Saharawi and the Sahel regions of Africa, Qasimi's menswear pieces for this season have military themes and are made with technical fabrics.

Formed in 2008, the label is now under the creative direction of Hoor Al-Qasimi – also President and Director of Sharjah Art Foundation – after the sudden passing in 2019 of her twin brother Khalid Al-Qasimi, who founded the company.

Since its inception in London, Qasimi has connected the east and west with its innovative and explorative designs. The dove motif found on pieces this summer is taken from an image taken by Omani photographer Tariq Al-Hajri, which demonstrates Qasimi's fondness for collaborating with regional artists.

The latest collection, explains the brand, “spans genres and continents and is filled with optimism and nostalgia” as it “seeks to unite all in this increasingly turbulent atmosphere.”



Bill Nighy's wonderful Oscar-nominated performance in 2023's *Living* gave us the chance to see not only his fine acting skills, but also his character's devilishly debonair wardrobe of pinstripe suits and bowler hats designed by three-time Oscar-winning costume designer Sandy Powell. In fact, Nighy's character having his beloved bowler stolen and replaced by a Fedora is a key plot point in the touching movie about an uptight English civil servant in 1953 London.

While the bowler may have vanished from the wardrobes of modern day men,



the Fedora, the flat cap, and the Panama hat remain icons of style – just look at Ralph Fiennes in a Panama hat on the Morocco set of recent thriller *The Forgiven* or David Beckham who often favours a tweed flat cap – and let's not forget the ubiquitous baseball cap.

A timelessly traditional hatmaker that is honouring the rich history of men's headwear while observing modern sartorial trends is Christys' of London. Founded in 1773, Christy's has many proud achievements on its CV. For example, Marlon Brando wore a Christy's Homburg hat in *The Godfather*; Christy's has been the official helmet manufacturer of the British Police Force for over 200 years; the brand created the iconic design for the Stetson Ten Gallon Hat; and Queen Victoria's husband Prince Albert wore a top hat from Christy's.

Jonathan Boston is managing director at the firm and believes iconic accessories will always have a place. “The true classic hat styles that are made with quality and care by specialist craftspeople never go out of style,” he says. “Seasonal classics such as the warm weather Panama or the autumn-winter Fedora are always present, as well as caps that can be worn year-round. We're seeing a positive demand and trend for headwear that is made in England and classically British in style.”

Traditional techniques from 250 years ago are still employed by Christy's craftspeople in the 26-stage manufacture of a felt hat at the Oxfordshire workshop, using machinery and tools that are over 100 years old. Boston smiles and explains, “It's the best way.”

USE YOUR HEAD

Renowned London hatmaker Christys' is keeping traditional techniques alive



Happy Feet

Six Air Jordan sneakers worn by Michael Jordan in his title-winning games are the pinnacle of sports memorabilia

Words by ROB CHILTON





Gazing upon a hallowed collection of six Air Jordan sneakers – each one worn during Michael Jordan’s six championship-clinching NBA Finals games and each housed in a presentation case on a plinth – is an experience that borders on seeing a religious relic in a cathedral.

Game-used Air Jordans worn by arguably the greatest basketball player of all time (sorry, LeBron) are the pinnacle of sports memorabilia and created a slack-jawed awe and reverent silence during their exhibition at Sotheby’s gallery in Dubai. Now offered for the first time via private sale, the six sneakers are being sold as a set which is expected to break records and potentially reach into the tens of millions of dollars.

Eric Hirsch is a specialist in Streetwear and Modern Collectibles at Sotheby’s and is based in Los Angeles. He handles the auction of game-used sports memorabilia such as sneakers, jerseys, hats, baseball bats and other equipment. During a visit to Dubai to launch the Jordan sneakers – titled The Dynasty Collection – Hirsch explained how his department was a response to the rapid growth of a sports memorabilia sector. It’s also proof of the forward-thinking attitude of the auction house that was founded in 1744.

Hirsch says, “Equipment used in significant moments in significant games by superstar athletes command quite an exceptional value.” Elle Men spoke to Hirsch about the extraordinary Jordan sneakers now up for sale.



This sale cements Michael Jordan’s iconic status, doesn’t it? For sure, Jordan is one of the most iconic athletes of all time, and these sneakers are some of the most iconic objects of all time. This stuff doesn’t come to market very often.

How does this collection rank in the sneaker hall of fame?

We’re talking about the most significant collection of game-worn sneakers ever assembled – Michael Jordan game-worn sneakers are top of the top. These sneakers were worn not only in the NBA Finals but in the final game of each of his NBA championships. In the most significant games and moments of his legendary career, these sneakers were on his feet.

What other names are in the same league as Jordan when it comes to major sales of memorabilia? Items used by Jordan, Kobe Bryant, Diego Maradona or Wayne Gretzky can command exceptional value because they are considered the gods of their sport. There are a lot of great moments in great games so we’re striving for a jersey or a piece of equipment from a player at their peak moment.

These sneakers were worn in the 1990s – do they smell? Well, sometimes items have been laundered but others can be covered in dirt and they can smell a certain way. Actually, the more scratches and scuffs an item has is often a positive thing. To the collector it shows the item’s use in the most visible way.

Where have the six shoes been until now? After Jordan won his first NBA Championship in 1991 he gave one of his sneakers to Tim Hallam, the head of press for the Chicago Bulls. Jordan is a superstitious guy, so when he won the Championship the next year, he thinks he must do the same thing and so the tradition started. Jordan carried it on for every Championship and that’s how this

set was assembled. The current owner is a private collector who obtained the sneakers some time ago from Tim Hallam.

As well as their sporting importance, the collection also demonstrates the development of the Air Jordan, doesn’t it? Yeah, part of the appeal is that you’re getting a range of Jordans and seeing the evolution from the Jordan VI in 1991 to the XIV in 1998. There’s no question these are some of the more iconic designs and you’ll still see players today wearing the same model, not just in basketball but in football and baseball.

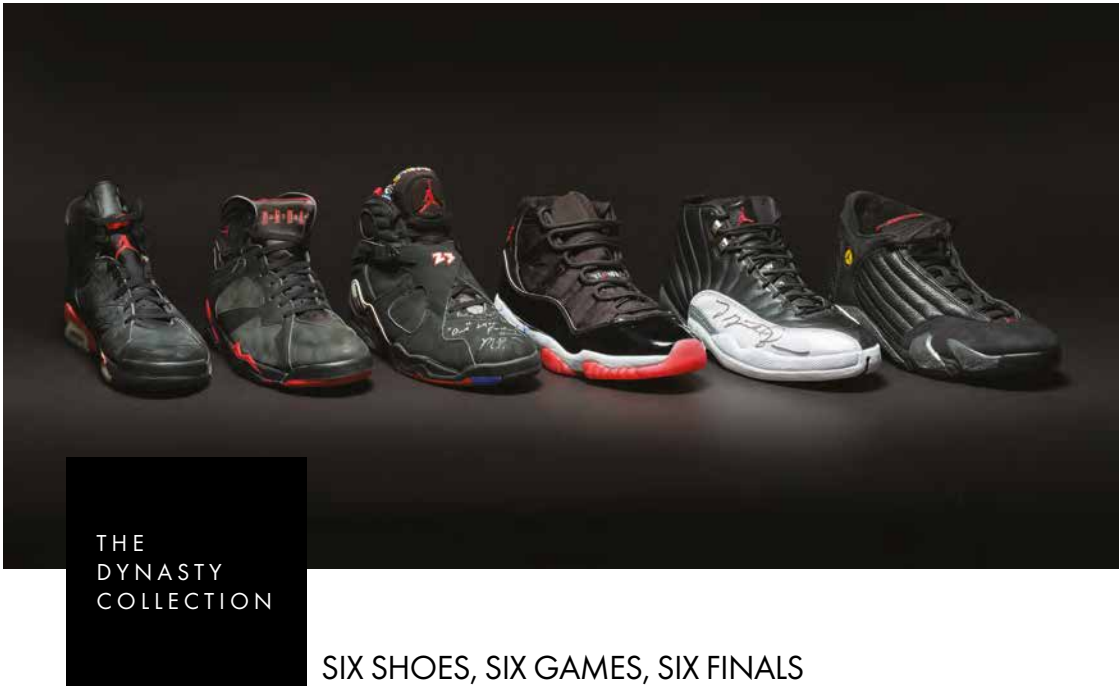
What’s your favourite? Personally I like the Jordan XI from 1996. It’s a beautiful colourway and it was his first NBA Championship after he came back from retirement, so it has a special quality that is memorable to a lot of fans.

Why have you chosen to launch The Dynasty Collection in the Middle East? We’ve noticed a real interest from people in this region about sneakers, especially from a younger demographic. It’s an exciting opportunity not just to find a buyer, but increase our presence in this category in this region.

Sotheby’s created its Collectibles department a couple of years ago.

What high profile sales has it overseen? The first ‘mega sale’ was Maradona’s Hand of God jersey which sold in May 2022 and set a record at \$9.3 million. Michael Jordan’s jersey from game one of the 1998 NBA finals sold in Sept 2022 for \$10.1 million. The current record for sneakers sold at auction is a pair of Nike Air Ships Jordan wore in his rookie season that sold for \$1.47 million in October 2021.

The sneakers are going on an exhibition tour in Dubai, Hong Kong, Singapore, New York and Monterrey. How are they transported? Very carefully! [laughs].



Air Jordan VI (1991) Bulls beat LA Lakers 4-1 • Air Jordan VII (1992) Bulls beat Portland Trail Blazers 4-2 • Air Jordan VIII (1993) Bulls beat Phoenix Suns 4-2 • Air Jordan XI (1996) Bulls beat Seattle SuperSonics 4-2 • Air Jordan XII (1997) Bulls beat Utah Jazz 4-2 • Air Jordan XIV (1998) Bulls beat Utah Jazz 4-2



How I Built My Brand

Tommy Hilfiger reveals the lessons he's learned in the construction of a fashion company that began in 1985 and recorded sales of \$9.3 billion last year

HAVE A DREAM

I was a teenager when I opened a small shop in Elmira, my hometown in New York. I sold jeans on the college campus and decided to build my own brand with \$150 and 20 pairs of jeans. I had a dream to build a global lifestyle mega brand. Those were the fun days when I did everything myself.

STAY RELEVANT

We started out with preppy clothes and morphed into a total lifestyle brand spanning the globe. But I always tried to keep the brand relevant and look to the future, which has a lot to do with the metaverse. I like evolution and the digital world – I'm excited about change.

LOOK AROUND YOU

I always try to embrace popular culture and stay one step ahead because I really believe pop culture is the needle in society that moves us forward. Whether it's sport, fashion, music or art, it's all pop culture. I use pop culture as an engine to drive sales and notoriety.

CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO

Fashion shows used to be attended only by fashion editors but now I see them as an opportunity to speak to the public. In 2016 I decided to open our shows to the public, and introduce the idea of 'see now, buy now' by allowing the audience to click and buy things they were seeing on the catwalk. It was entertainment and a new form of retail, which we found to be very successful. Millennials and Gen Z want immediate gratification, they want to buy it then and there. If they see the product too much on social media they're turned off by it.

Words by ROB CHILTON

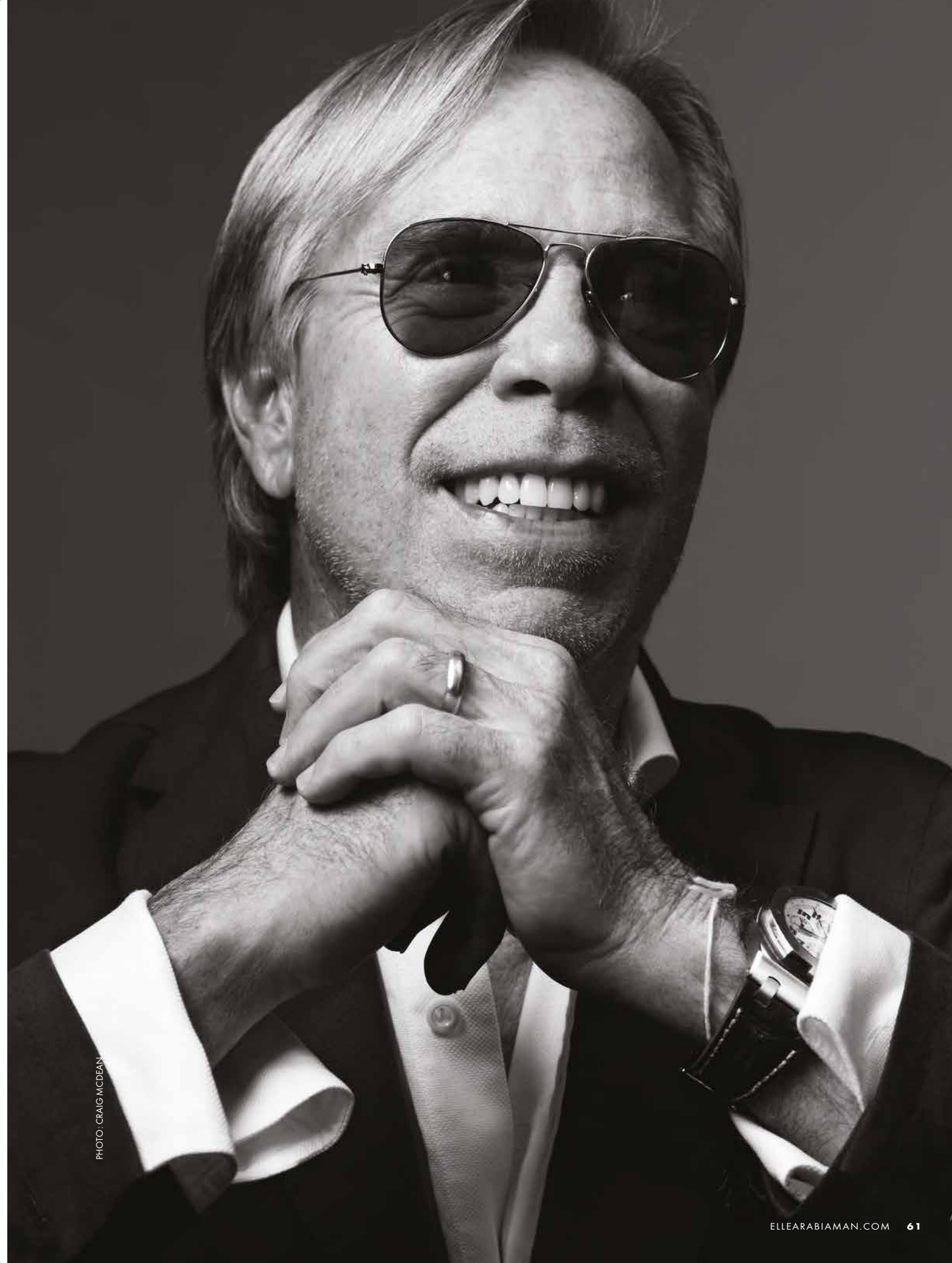


PHOTO: CRAIG MCDEAN



PICK THE RIGHT PARTNER

Collaborations are really important. I saw many brands bring celebrities to be the face of their brand but they're basically paid models. I want to engage celebrities and influencers by giving them a say in the design of our product. I want them to bring their energy to drive the brand forward. People like Travis Barker, Kate Moss and the Kardashians bring their personality and broadcast the brand.

LOVE THE PLANET

We feel we have a strong foothold in sustainability and recycled fabrics, and that's so important for today's youth and the environment. We've been working on sustainability for a very long time, we saw it coming, and it's now more important than ever. We have a duty to be socially responsible and we hope others will follow.

ALWAYS BE CURIOUS

We're always learning to be a better brand and incorporate learnings into everything we do. I try learning from everyone and I'm always open to learning something new. I'm a student of retail and I like to know what my competitors are doing at all times.

DON'T FORGET THE PRODUCT

I have learned that product is king, it's the most important aspect of the business. The product must be authentically ours, we never develop a product without our DNA. But you must put your marketing machine behind it. You can have the best product in world, but with all the clutter and competition out there you become invisible.

STUDY THE INDUSTRY

My advice to young designers is to learn the business. A few years after I started the company I went bankrupt. You can't just be a designer, you have to understand the business. In design school they don't teach you that and that's why so many graduates start a business and fail.

GET YOUR LOGO RIGHT

I have always thought a powerful logo is the most important asset in business – look at Gucci, Chanel or Mercedes-Benz. Our logo is meaningful to me personally. It's a yachting flag with my initials because I believed my brand should have its own flag like every nation or country. Our logo is sacred.



Above: Tommy stands outside his first store in Elmira, New York;
Above right: Travis Barker and Kate Moss pose for Tommy Hilfiger;
Right & Below: Scenes from Tommy's SS23 Collection



“WE FEEL WE HAVE A STRONG FOOTHOLD IN SUSTAINABILITY AND RECYCLED FABRICS, AND THAT'S SO IMPORTANT FOR TODAY'S YOUTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT”



GLOBAL

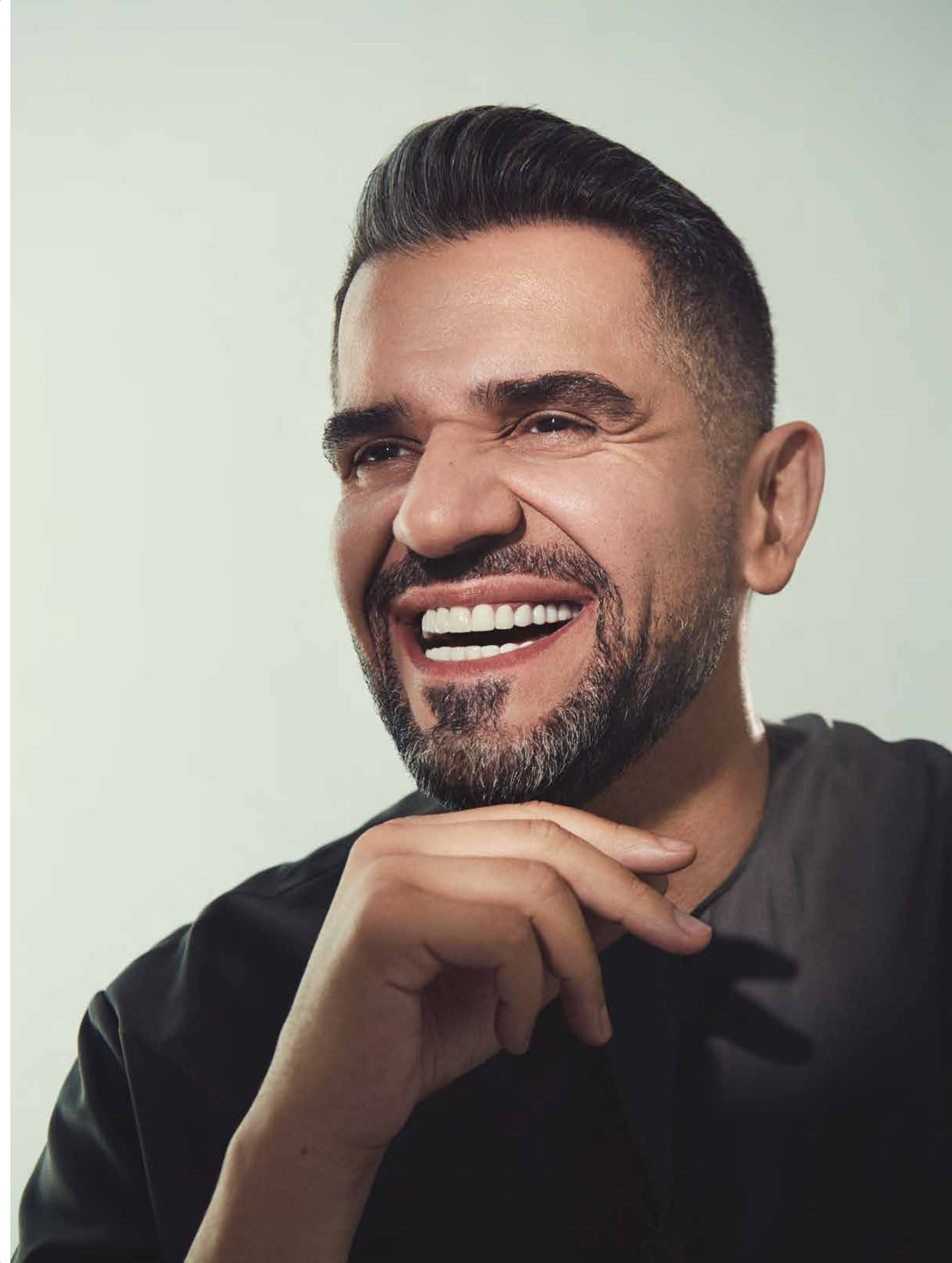
Fiercely private yet hugely popular, Hussain Al Jassmi is an Arab phenomenon with six million followers on Instagram and nine million YouTube subscribers. In a rare interview, the Emirati pianist, composer and singer talks to ELLE MAN about the power of music to increase social harmony, the passion of his fans, and what it means to represent the Arab world

VOICE

Photographer
ABDULLA ELMAZ

Direction
TALAL KAH





Throughout your successful and exceptional career, what are the moments closest to your heart? I have many moments that I don't forget. Among the most important of them is my meeting with our late founding father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan, may God have mercy on him, and the audience's love and their continuous follow-up, which I cherish. Also I'm very proud of my warm reception by the presidents and kings of the Arab world, my coronation with the highest official decorations and medals, the times I was awarded prizes in the most important Arab and international festivals, and my obtaining a number of honorary doctorates from academic platforms. These moments make me feel proud and encourage me to do my best and achieve even more.

You represent the Emirati and Arab man around the world. What does that responsibility mean to you? It is the identity that always accompanies me, it is my art, my culture, the culture of my ancestors in the Emirates and our Arabism, and it is a great honour to be its representative around the world. Thank God I stood on the most important international platforms in France, Russia, Italy, the Vatican and Malaysia in my language and my Emirati and Arabic music and my Arab dress that I am proud of.

Why do you choose to sing in several Arabic and foreign dialects? I consider it an exchange of cultures and music between people. I succeeded in singing in all Gulf and Arabic dialects, plus English, Hindi and Turkish as well. I do not hide my pride in the various Arabic dialects that carry our Arabic language and our diverse and rich culture.

Do you feel a duty to enhance the Arab music scene? It's very important to me. Through it, I carry the culture of a homeland and I want to develop the music industry for future generations by helping to empower Emirati and Arab talents, and supporting beautiful and new voices to contribute to creating a sophisticated generation of Emirati and Arab art. I believe in promoting teamwork to serve the arts, and I will continue to do this and contribute to the music industry.

Through your official YouTube channel, you have reached more than four and a half billion views. What is the secret behind this extraordinary success? The secret is the love and passion of the audience – I describe it as the heartbeats of love and I cherish it. My fans are the catalyst for my success and praise be to God, I give all my thanks and appreciation to them, whether in the Arab, or the wider world.

Ultimately, what do you try to achieve with your music? I always have an artistic vision through the melodies and music that I present to the public. I place the audience as my first priority in order to reach with them new and beautiful places in the world of song. I have always been passionate about developing my music and my choices of songs. I have great interest in the music industry and its production and the audience is the first catalyst for that. Thanks to God, the results have been successful.

How powerful do you think music can be in uniting the world? Music is a language that all people everywhere can understand, and it is the language that can touch all human feelings. I consider music a human message that has a clear impact on national, emotional and social issues.

Why is your work with humanitarian initiatives so important to you? We grew up in the Emirates with its humane, peaceful culture, loving goodness and tolerance, and working with it wherever we go and live in this world. In all my practical plans, I carry optimism, ambition, and I look forward to a future of success and love.

The audience is a witness and is present between us, and my appearance is always thoughtful and at the right time.

Do you feel your audience has the right to know about your private life? My private life is mine and it is a right for me and my family. Praise be to God, the public respects my privacy, and I reciprocate the same respect and love for them.

What are your personal ambitions and your wishes for the rest of 2023? I wish for mankind to enjoy love, peace and tolerance among themselves, and for the wishes of every person to be fulfilled, because everyone deserves to live in safety and security.

OFF STAGE

What are some of your earliest memories of music? Since my childhood, I have loved music and learned it diligently with the aim of making it – along with my voice – a source of joy in people's hearts. I realised that contributing to joy is a wonderful thing that makes you feel beautiful and joyful.

Tell us about your love for the piano. I fell in love with playing the piano, it was my first musical love, and I devoted great time to it in order to become a professional. The piano has accompanied me in almost all my concerts, in my office, in my studio, and in my home.

Is there a difference between you as a performer and you as a man? Both of them love the UAE and the Arab world, and they both have a sense of obedience and respect to parents and leaders. I am always proud of my national and humanitarian work and promote it in the same way that I work in order to reach the public and achieve its noble goals.

From spending time with you, we've noticed that attention to detail is crucial for you, isn't it? Yes, a successful piece of work must always have interest, effort, follow-up, and commitment to time, and these things are essential to its completion and success.

There's so much debate about artificial intelligence right now. How do you see AI affecting the world of music? I follow with passion and interest every new and innovative development that is related to my field, my work, and my daily life as well. I keep pace with these things constantly and spend a lot of time planning and thinking. I do not hide my happiness with modernity and renewable ideas that have become widespread through social media.

How do you view the speed of change happening in technology at the moment? We always look to the future with optimism and hope – the optimistic spirit is what achieves miracles. Today we see our leaders making intellectual and civil directives for a bright future. We must choose what is suitable for our society and in the best interests of our existence and happiness.

PUBLIC EYE

Why do you make so few appearances in the media? The media and I are partners in success, and our communication through my work is continuous.

PHOTOGRAPHER: ABDULLA ELMAZ; DIRECTION: TALAL KAHIL; AI ARTIST: FUTURE BEDOUN; GLAM: MICHEL KIWARKIS; GROOMING: BILEL FADLOUN



News and notes from men's FW23 fashion week

FALL OUT



Best Dressed Duo

French-Algerian actor Tahar Rahim and ex-Game of Thrones star Kit Harington buddy up at the Louis Vuitton menswear show in Paris.



Man About Town

Wild patterns reminiscent of 1970s curtains and upholstery were the talking point of Etro's show in Milan, attended by Qatari influencer Abdulla Al-Abdulla.



Mellow Yellow

Who said autumn menswear had to be restricted to beiges and browns? Alessandro Sartori's FW23 collection for Zegna included a sunny hue named Aurora Yellow.



EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT...

JW Anderson's Frog Loafers

The playful collaboration with Wellipets brought a blast of childhood nostalgia to the runway.



Check It Out

Ex-Bottega Veneta design chief Daniel Lee made his debut for Burberry at London Fashion Week with a strong collection that breathed new life into the brand's beloved check. A string of dapper chaps such as footballers Reece James and Son Heung-min joined boxer Stormzy, actor Jason Statham, and an incognito Future.

Walk Like an Egyptian



Dior men's artistic director Kim Jones must have had a nightmare getting a permit to show his FW23 collection at the Pyramids of Giza, but the red tape was worth it. Pieces were embellished with Jones' playful AsteroDior motif that is "inspired by graphics from the world of comics combined with emblems from the Egyptian realm," says the brand.

TRAVEL WARDROBE

Berluti have you covered for your next autumn city break



For the flight



For sightseeing

For a casual lunch

UNLEASHING

THE BOLD

Photographer CARINA JAHN
Stylist SHIMA KHAZEI

Blazer: Brunello Cucinelli; Shirt: Drykorn; Pants: Brunello Cucinelli; Socks: Bode



Blazer: Tom Ford; Pants: Dolce & Gabbana



Cardigan: Les Deux; Pants: Loro Piana



Blazer: Drykorn; Shirt: Dondup; Pants: Drykorn

Shirt: Valentino



STYLE



Total look: YPS

PHOTOGRAPHER: CARINA JAHN STYLING: SHIMA KHAZEI MODEL: DEAN FABER
HAIR & MAKE UP: SUZANNA SANTALAB C/O BIGODDI USING 13 MICKO

Shirt: Balenciaga; Pants: AMI Paris



New Balance branding guru explains the symbolic connection between Bukayo Saka and the sneaker brand

Words by ROB CHILTON

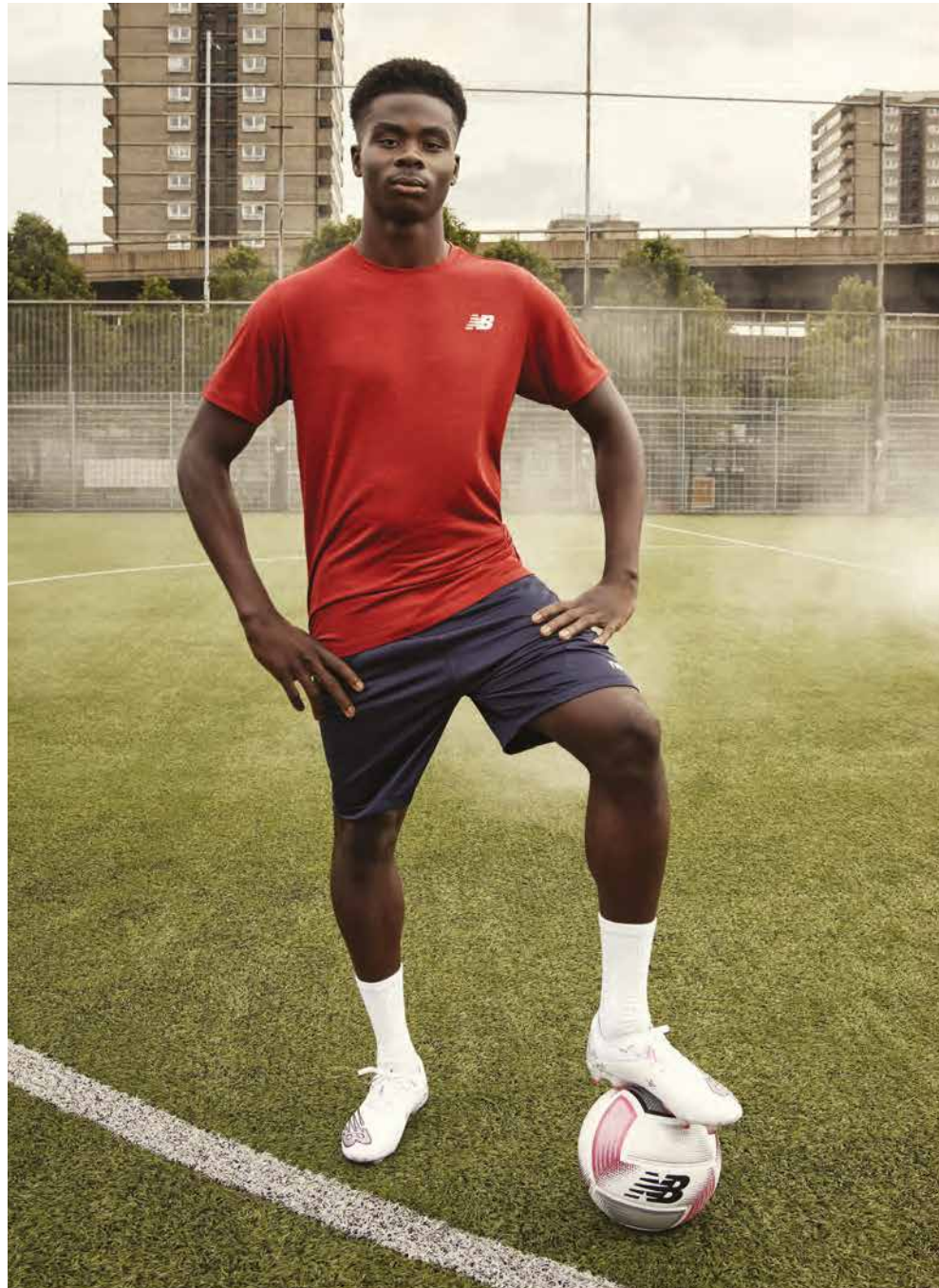
Bukayo Saka is a wanted man. The Arsenal footballer is desired by the biggest European clubs and also by leading lifestyle brands desperate to be associated with his infectious smile, his squeaky clean image and his prodigious talent.

Able to take his pick of enticing deals from sportswear companies, Saka surprised many in 2021 by choosing New Balance. A few months later, his England teammate Raheem Sterling also joined the NB stable. After visiting the Boston HQ, Saka said “It made me feel part of the family and more connected with the brand.” In January Saka unveiled his first collab with New Balance, the Furon v7 Signature edition boot, that is emblazoned with the words ‘unity’ and ‘progress.’

Chief Marketing Officer at New Balance, Chris Davis says Saka’s ambitious nature chimed with the brand that sits behind Nike and Adidas in the league table of sneaker companies. “Bukayo understood he was going to have to put in more work to this partnership but would get a tremendous amount in return,” explains Davis.

“We’re the third largest footwear company in the world but we’re not a

FOOTBALL FAMILY



“BUKAYO REPRESENTS US IN THE WORLD OF FOOTBALL, RUNNING AND LIFESTYLE ACROSS 130 COUNTRIES, AND THAT’S SOMETHING HE WANTED – TO BE A TRUE BRAND PARTNER.”

giant,” says Davis. “We’re a challenger brand within our industry, and we maintain that challenger brand mindset. Bukayo in particular really resonated with the notion of being a fearlessly independent brand ambassador and understood the idea of having a partnership over a sponsorship.”

As well as his attributes off the pitch, Saka’s remarkable talent on the pitch was tremendously alluring to New Balance. A pivotal player in Arsenal’s title charge this season, Saka has provided 12 goals and 10 assists in 28 Premier League matches. Such success has elevated Saka to become a household name aged only 21.

“Bukayo didn’t want to just be a footballer,” says Davis, son of billionaire New Balance chairman Jim who bought the company in 1972. Chris Davis adds, “Bukayo represents us in the world of football, running and lifestyle across 130 countries, and that’s something he wanted – to be a true brand partner.”

As a New Balance ambassador, Saka finds himself alongside hugely talented and culturally relevant athletes such as tennis star Coco Gauff, baseball wonderkid Shohei Ohtani, NBA players Zach LaVine and Kawhi Leonard, and athletics phenom Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone.

Speaking at The Retail Summit in Dubai, Davis concludes, “Bukayo understood that when you join New Balance, you’re joining a family.”



HEAD SHOT

Photographer Amer Mohamad is a leading light in the Middle East's creative community. Here, he breaks down the secret to a successful photo shoot

I think sometimes people forget that fashion is supposed to be fun. It's exciting when things get spontaneous on a photo shoot. People think spontaneity is unprofessional but I think it's fun – I think a photo shoot has its own self, if you know what I mean.

"When I walk onto a set, 60 per cent of the work is done beforehand, a lot of which comes from the mood board, the art direction, the brand book or guidelines of who we are working with, all of which are created during the preparation process.

"When I arrive on set, it's important that I get to know the model and find a connection before we start shooting. If the model is nervous

I joke around because I want her to feel beautiful and confident. If the model is relaxed, she'll bring all her energy to the shoot.

"A photo shoot is a true collaboration. The photographer, the model, the clothes, the styling, the hair, the make-up – everything has to come together. I always ask the opinion of the whole team during a shoot because it's really important that they're into what we're doing – I want everyone to be happy because that makes the best result.

"My work always has a lot of colour. Throughout my life I've been attracted to colour, whether it's in fashion, photography or art. When I was growing up in Syria I didn't go to art museums because they didn't exist, and I thought artists weren't allowed to express themselves. When I moved to Russia aged 17, I went to galleries and saw paintings from decades ago in reality rather than online and I was shocked. From that point, I think I've always been fascinated by colour. I believe colour creates a big emotional response and is a fantastic way to establish a connection to the audience.

"Taking amazing photographs is about getting out of your comfort zone so I always try to choose jobs that push me. I think my work is edgy because that's my identity and attitude as a photographer. I was never taught photography, but my work just naturally has that energy. Photography is the ideal job for me because I like to take risks."

INTERVIEW: ROB CHILTON

EL MAN

Arabia

Watches

Time Travel

More than 40,000 visitors – fuelled by hastily gulped espresso – politely queued to enter Watches & Wonders in Geneva this year. The seven day horology circus was a dizzying whirl of tourbillons, calibres and complications that signalled the vitality and creativity of the global watch industry that's estimated to be worth \$28 billion.

Meeting

Highlights, news and gossip from the world's most

important horology gathering, Watches & Wonders

Time

The world's watch community descended upon Geneva in March for Watches & Wonders, a giant seven-day festival of horology during which around 40 brands proudly unveiled their latest pieces. The press scribbled down news and notes while members of the public admired both the new timepieces and the glamorous installations that brands constructed to show off their handiwork. Celebrities such as Roger Federer (Rolex), Julia Roberts (Chopard) and David Beckham (Tudor) turned up to support their brand partners, while Ronaldinho was presumably just there to go shopping. Among the dozens of remarkable new watches, ELLE Man picks out its favourite pieces.

Words by ROB CHILTON



Chanel

Monsieur Tourbillon Météorite

A meteorite that landed in Sweden is the basis for Chanel’s stunning new Monsieur timepiece. As a result, every one of the 55 steel pieces crafted by watchmakers at Chanel is different. A lion, Coco Chanel’s lucky mascot, appears on the lower sub dial of this masculine piece that has a power reserve of 70 hours, an understated matte black finish, and a nylon strap with a comfortable calfskin lining. Peek at Chanel’s 5.1 movement inside the partially open-worked 42mm watch that has quite a roar when on the wrist.



Hermès

H08 Chronograph

Hermès launched its sporty H08 watch in 2021 and has finessed it to become a chronograph that still catches the eye today, thanks to its round dial that sits inside a cushion shaped case made from graphene powder and carbon fibre. ‘Choreography chronography’ is the cute phrase Hermès uses to describe the process of making the H08 that has the distinctive Hermès H on the crown. Green, yellow, orange and blue are the four available colours of the new 41mm H08 that is light yet robust, sporty yet elegant, and wonderfully comfortable to wear thanks to a rubber strap that carries a pattern reminiscent of Hermès fabrics. Our favourite colour? Green, 100 per cent.



Charles Zuber

Touching story of a shy genius with a big heart

Charles Zuber was a watchmaker whose skills earned him the nickname Goldfingers. Born in Switzerland, Zuber’s first name was Karl (Charles in German). After moving to France in 1952 to become a goldsmith, he changed his name to the French sounding Charles. Perfos Karl, the new skeletonised piece revealed at Watches & Wonders is a tribute to Karl and is packed with strong design features and extraordinary watchmaking expertise. The dial has a metallic sheen thanks to a galvanic deposit of satin-finished, hand-sunlit ruthenium, and reveals the inner workings of the watch. The dial is surrounded by

36 baguette-cut orange sapphires that contrast with the rose gold hands. The watchmaker behind the Perfos Karl, Cédric Johner, says it’s an honour to continue the work of “the great master Charles Zuber.” Johner adds, “He was an extraordinary craftsman, a genius, who made a number of pieces recognised throughout the world. I was as precise and qualitative as possible to follow his path.” Charles Zuber will open a store in Abu Dhabi in May and will sponsor the city’s art festival in November. Limited to eight pieces, the watch’s name perfos means ‘through the light’ in Greek and is a fitting tribute to Zuber who died in 2013.



Nirmal Purja

Montblanc *Geosphere Chronograph O Oxygen*

In the Eight Thousanders club are 14 mountains that rise 8,000 metres above sea level – intimidating peaks that have been climbed by only a few brave souls. Reinhold Messer was the first mountaineer to climb all 14 between 1970 and 1986. Then in 2019, Nimsdai Purja became the fastest person to complete the set, managing the extraordinary feat in just six months and six days. It's Purja's skill, courage, and physical endurance that are the inspiration behind a new piece from Montblanc, the Geosphere Chronograph O Oxygen, limited to 290 pieces.

Profiles of the 14 mountains have been squeezed onto the 41mm titanium caseback of this new outdoorsy watch. The dial is a sfumato dark grey that replicates the colour of the rock and ice at 8,000 metres. Colours of the dial fade between light and dark which is a reminder of being at high altitude and observing mountains. The glacier pattern was achieved through a special technique called gratté-boisé. Against this grey dial are orange touches that honour not only the colour that Tibetans believe has spiritual power but also the colour of mountaineering equipment.

The watch features two 3D turning globes with



the Northern Hemisphere at 12 o'clock and the Southern Hemisphere at six o'clock. The northern part has 14 orange dots, marking the location of the 8,000m peaks. A 30-minute chronograph counter sits at three o'clock, and a 12-hour chronograph counter is at nine o'clock. The watch lights up in darkness with glacial blue luminescence. The textile strap, meanwhile, has been inspired by mountaineering rope. A nice technical detail is the case that has zero oxygen inside to prevent oxidation and eliminate fogging that can occur with drastic temperature changes at altitude.

One last personal touch can be seen on the caseback, which features two mottos from the record-breaking mountaineer Purja: 'Don't be afraid to dream big!' and 'Giving up is not an option.' Words to live by.

Hublot *Classic Fusion Chronograph Orlinski*

Full titanium could be the title of an action movie starring Jason Statham. But it's also the name of Hublot's elegantly rugged new chronograph revealed at Watches & Wonders. The 41mm piece has extraordinary angled architecture in tribute to the work of French artist Richard Orlinski with whom Hublot has been partnering since 2017. If you remember your geometry lessons at school, you might know the bezel's shape is dodecagonal, while the microblasted titanium gives the watch a matte finish and an overall look that is quietly powerful.



IWC *Ingenieur Automatic*

Legendary watch designer Gérald Genta first released his IWC Ingenieur SL in 1976 and the booth at Watches & Wonders is a playful archive of objects from that decade such as a TV, a coffee maker and a dial telephone that takes visitors on a nostalgic trip. The newly engineered Ingenieur Automatic 40 in 2023 has five impressive polygonal screws on its bezel, a grid dial in aqua, and a power reserve of 120 hours. A soft-iron inner case protects the movement from magnetic fields on this luxury stainless steel sports watch that prolongs Genta's legacy. "It's not every day that a designer gets the chance to work on an icon like the Ingenieur SL," says Christian Knoop, IWC creative director. "We were aware of the enormous responsibility this task entailed and proceeded very cautiously. The watch is a special story close to the brand's heart."





Panerai

Radiomir Otto Giorni

Inspired by the very first Radiomir prototype in 1935 that was created for the Royal Italian Navy, this highly readable watch screams vintage, largely down to the slim wire lugs, grainy chocolate brown dial, and hand finished case that gives each piece a unique personality. The case is made from eSteel, a trademarked metal obtained from pre-consumer recycled steel scraps whose production significantly reduces CO2 emissions. The watch has an eight day power reserve, a small seconds display at 9 o'clock and a graphic at 3 o'clock that reads 8 Giorni Brevettato, a phrase from Panerai's archive in 1956 meaning 'eight days, tried and tested.'

Oris

Big Crown Calibre 473

According to the official description from Oris, the colour of the dial on its new Big Crown watch is 'blue' but that barely does justice to the beauty of the shade that adorns the dial of this sublime watch. Sitting somewhere between sky blue and pale turquoise, the colour of the dial is the perfect partner for both the olive brown leather strap and red pointer date hand

on this 38mm timepiece that looks modern yet feels vintage. Fitted with the in-house Calibre 473 that took four years to develop, the Oris Big Crown continues a lineage of watches that has been in the brand's collection since 1938. The handy 120-hour power reserve indicator is positioned on the back of the movement and tells the wearer when it's time to rewind



Jaeger-LeCoultre

Reverso Tribute Chronograph

Jaeger-LeCoultre's iconic Reverso watch that was made for polo players who wanted to protect its glass face by flipping it over, has been reimagined for 2023 as a chronograph, following on from the first Reverso chronograph released in 1996. Flipping the new Reverso watch allows its complex inner workings to be admired against a sunray-brushed dial. Revealed on the other side are a 60-seconds large dial and a 30-minute dial positioned underneath that is retrograde and sees the blue hand jump back to zero in less than 1/8th of a second. The rectangular cases – in pink gold or steel – are 49mm long and 30mm wide and are still highly redolent of the Art Deco period and the year 1931 when the Reverso was born.



Cartier
Santos-Dumont Skeleton Micro-Rotor

Born in 1873, the pioneering aviator Alberto Santos Dumont continues to have an impact on cutting edge watchmaking at Cartier. The Brazilian aviator and inventor would no doubt be thrilled to see the 2023 version of the Santos-Dumont watch he commissioned way back in 1904, which was also the first-ever pilot’s watch.

Unveiled at Watches & Wonders, the latest Santos-Dumont Skeleton Micro-Rotor piece comes in stainless steel, rose gold and a limited edition yellow gold model, all of which show the new 212-component calibre that took Cartier two years to develop. Look closely and you’ll see the micro-rotor is in the shape of Dumont’s Demoiselle plane that he invented in 1907, which is a beautifully romantic detail.

TAG Heuer
Carrera Chronograph

Happy 60th birthday to the TAG Heuer Carrera, a milestone that sparked a huge buzz at Watches & Wonders this year. To mark its anniversary, TAG unveiled two new models, the Carrera Chronograph and Carrera Chronograph Tourbillon to take the watch into its seventh decade. In his introduction, TAG Heuer CEO Frédéric Arnault called the pieces “keystone designs in our collection.”

It’s hard to pick a winner but the 39mm chronograph in polished steel feels like the true embodiment of the racing spirit that launched the original Carrera in 1963. The sapphire crystal in the 2023 model has a little more curve, which helps it to glide over the tachymeter scale around the edge of the dial and into the case. One chronograph has a blue dial on a blue calfskin leather strap, while the other has a black and silver reverse panda face on a fantastic perforated calfskin racing strap. Both are highly legible, elegant and comfortable on the wrist.



TAG HEUER’S HERITAGE DIRECTOR NICHOLAS BIEBUYCK RUNS THROUGH THE HISTORY OF THE CARRERA...

“First launched in 1963 by Jack Heuer, the Carrera is one of the most iconic chronographs in the history of watchmaking. The Swiss watchmaker’s timeless model has defined performance watchmaking, racing spirit and refinement.

“The watch’s name is inspired by the legendary Carrera Panamericana road race that ran for five editions between 1950 and 1954. The world’s best sports cars took part in the race over 3,000ms across five days from north to south Mexico. The race was cancelled in 1955 but its stories of bravery, endurance and survival remained.



“In 1962 Jack Heuer met the parents of Mexican Formula One racing brothers Pedro and Ricardo Rodriguez at the 12 Hours of Sebring race and they got talking about the Carrera Panamericana race. Jack kept hearing the name Carrera and it inspired his next great launch in 1963 – the Carrera Reference 2447, a design icon that lay down the foundations for the modern line we know today. In 1965 a date complication was added and in 1971 Jack signed the Ferrari partnership that would put the Carrera on the wrists of major racing drivers and form an indelible link between Heuer and motorsport.

“Now on its 60th birthday, the Carrera is one of the most recognisable watches ever created and the quintessential racing chronograph.”



Piaget
*Polo Perpetual Calendar
Ultra-Thin*

Four sub dials sit on the spectacular emerald face of this Piaget piece but it doesn't look crowded or chaotic, such is the clarity of the design. An iconic watch in the Piaget portfolio, the Polo now appears for the first time with a mechanical perpetual calendar. The ultra-thin 4mm calibre advances the day, date, year, months, moon phases and leap-year cycle until the year 2100. Measuring only 8.6mm in thickness, the new 42mm Piaget Polo Perpetual Calendar Ultra-Thin is a return to Piaget's roots and is limited to just 18 pieces.



Vacheron
Constantin
*Patrimony Retrograde
Day-Date*

Sending out strong design signals from the 1920s and 1930s, the wonderful new Patrimony Retrograde Day-Date from Vacheron Constantin has a platinum case and a salmon coloured sunburst dial that leaves plenty of empty space for the eye to enjoy. Probably the most noteworthy design feature of the 42.5mm piece are the days of the week stamped around a curve on the lower portion of the dial. The retrograde day and date indications are shown by blued steel hands while hours and minutes are pointed out with hands in white gold that are curved to match the shape of the domed dial. In short, salmon plus platinum equals serious wow factor.



Rolex
Oyster Perpetual Sky-Dweller

World travellers who like a bit of rough and tumble will be happy to learn Rolex's Sky-Dweller is now available on an ergonomically pleasing Oysterflex rubber strap made from high-performance black elastomer. The Glidelock system under the clasp cover means there's no need for fiddly tools to adjust the strap's length. Furthermore, white gold returns to the adventurous model after its disappearance in 2018. It's the first time this metal and bracelet have partnered and we think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship. The hard as nails 42mm Sky-Dweller has a power reserve of 72 hours and is now equipped with the calibre 9002, which enables it to display the date and month, as well as an additional time zone in 24-hour format, plus the hours, minutes and seconds.



Roger Federer



OVERHEARD
AT WATCHES &
WONDERS

"I WISH I'D WORN SNEAKERS."
"HAVE YOU SEEN THE ROLEX SET-UP?
IT'S LIKE A HOTEL."
"WOW, JULIA ROBERTS IS TALL."
"I DIDN'T WEAR MY GUCCIS BECAUSE
THEY MAKE MY FEET SWEAT."
"PIAGET JUST PLAYED WHITNEY'S I
WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU IN THEIR
BOOTH."
"HOW MANY TOUCH-AND-FEEL
SESSIONS DID YOU DO TODAY?"
"NINE, I THINK. THREE MORE TO GO."
"I'M IN SWITZERLAND BUT THERE'S
NO CHOCOLATE ANYWHERE. I NEED
CHOCOLATE."
"THE BLURB ON THE NEW PANERAI
RADIOMIR SAYS ITALIANITY
- IS THAT A WORD?"
"DO YOU WANT SOME CHINESE
BEEF JERKY?"

HAMMER TIME

Vintage watches that sold for \$9.3 million at Christie’s Middle East this month is further proof of Dubai’s position as an international horology hub



Parmigiani
Fleurier, Tonda

A community of watch collectors is growing in the UAE, thanks to the efforts of Christie’s Middle East, the auction house based in DIFC. Its passionate team of watch specialists reach out to build relationships with collectors around the world and help to facilitate private sales and acquisitions.

Christie’s Middle East has just closed its latest online auction, The Dubai Edit, which again saw the sale of rare, vintage watches from many brands. Dominating the auction, as always, were pieces from the coveted watchmakers Rolex and Patek Philippe.

“Around 80 per cent of sales at watch auctions are Rolex and Patek,” says Nitin

Nair, associate specialist at Christie’s Middle East. “Those brands have uninterrupted heritage, they make high quality and sturdy watches with a level of craftsmanship that nobody else matches, and that makes them extremely collectible.”

In recent years, average total sales at a Christie’s Middle East auction have rocketed. From around \$6.5 million across two auctions in 2014 for example, the figure rose to \$25 million in 2022 as Dubai cemented its presence as a major player in the horology auction landscape.

Among the 138 lots at The Dubai Edit in May were several key pieces from Rolex and Patek Philippe. A platinum Nautilus



Audemars Piguet Royal
Oak Ref. 4100BA

Ref. 5711 from Patek with a bezel set with 32 baguette-cut blue sapphires and 12 sapphire hour markers fetched \$604,800.



Patek Philippe,
Nautilus Ref. 5711

From Audemars Piguet, a rare gold Royal Oak Ref. 4100BA featuring the signature of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai and Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, set a record for its reference in the sale and realised \$75,600.

Rolex Daytonas always attract attention at auction and The Dubai Edit featured a yellow gold Ref. 6265 that sold for \$201,600. Interestingly, the 37mm manual winding watch has the word ‘Oyster’ below ‘Rolex’ but omits the word ‘Perpetual.’ Nair says, “Prices of vintage Rolex Daytonas remain constant, it’s a rock solid investment.”

Away from Rolex and Patek, Nair points to a Parmigiani Fleurier PF Tonda Split Seconds Chronograph Platinum, one of only 25 made and the first to be offered at auction. Introduced in 2021 to celebrate Parmigiani’s 25th anniversary, the watch has the maison’s first integrated chronograph movement, which is hand-crafted and finished in rose gold. “An integrated chronograph movement made from the ground up is a statement – and it’s not easy,” smiles Nair.

As well as the big ticket pieces, Christie’s also offers more accessible watches at auction. “It’s important to cater to rookie collectors with less expensive pieces, explains Nair. “We don’t want the auction to be intimidating, we want it to be a welcoming environment for people entering the collector’s market.”

Remy Julia is Head of Watches at Christie’s Middle East, India & Africa and believes Dubai is a crucial cog in global watch auctions. “Dubai’s central role as a business hub and as a cultural crossroads strengthens its position as a gateway into the watch universe for collectors and aficionados,” he says. “The incredible diversity and energy is something you always see reflected in Christie’s watch sales here.”



LOTS OF HISTORY

Two rare Paul Newman Daytonas go under the hammer

Two Rolex watches worn by legendary movie star and motorsport icon Paul Newman are expected to fetch around \$1 million each when they are auctioned in June.

Firstly, a Zenith Daytona automatic chronograph that was presented to Newman after his victory at the 24 Hours of Daytona Race in 1995. Then aged 70, he became the oldest driver to win the race. Engraved on the stainless steel piece are the words ‘Rolex at Daytona 24 Paul Newman Rolex Motorsports Man of the Year 1995.’ Newman auctioned the one-of-a-kind watch for \$39,000 in 1999 to raise money for his children’s charity The Hole in the Wall Gang, but was seen wearing it years later. It’s thought one of

his friends bought the watch back for him.

The second watch up for auction is Newman’s last Rolex Daytona, gifted to him by his wife of 50 years, Joanne Woodward which bears the touching inscription ‘Drive Very Slowly Joanne.’ The white gold automatic chronograph is the only precious metal Daytona Newman ever owned and is one of only three known Daytona watches given to him by his wife.

Leigh Safar, Head of Sale, Important Watches & Specialist, Americas at Sotheby’s, says the two Rolex pieces worn and owned by the Hollywood actor “narrate the everlasting love he shared with his wife, Joanne, and his deep passion for racing.”



Rolex Ref. 116519
Daytona & Ref. 16520
‘Zenith’ Daytona

SHORE THING



The Royal Oak Offshore – which has always attracted stars from sport and cinema – unveils new 30th anniversary model



Above: Arnold Schwarzenegger
Below: Shaquille O’Neal and Audemars Piguet CEO François-Henry Bennahmias



Jay-Z



It’s 30 years since Audemars Piguet launched its Royal Oak Offshore, which seems like a good opportunity to take a look at some of the famous faces who have worn the chunky dive watch. Here’s your 30-second guide to the Royal Oak Offshore, nicknamed The Beast...

LeBron James



In the early 1990s, watch designer Emmanuel Gueit was given the task to beef up the Royal Oak into its Offshore persona. He boosted its size to 42mm and covered its crown with rubber and included a compass, which was eventually replaced with a chronograph. The timepiece was inspired by offshore powerboat racing and was aimed at the younger generation. Steve Urquhart, co-CEO of Audemars Piguet at the time, registered the name Offshore before any sketches were made.

The Offshore model 25721 caused controversy upon its release and didn’t even carry the name Offshore on the caseback. Royal Oak creator Gérald Genta called the Offshore “an elephant in the sea.” But public opinion eventually shifted. Raphaël Balestra, AP’s Heritage & Archives expert explains, “The scandal it caused at the time of its release matched its excessiveness. But if the watchmaking world was outraged, young people adopted it.”

A turning point came in 1997 when Arnold Schwarzenegger endorsed the Offshore. He later launched the Offshore End of Days piece in 1999 to coincide with the release of his movie that had the same name. In 2005 Jay Z teamed up with AP for a special edition Offshore that came with an iPod loaded with his music. LeBron James was the next famous face to partner with the Offshore in 2013. Serena Williams and Shaquille O’Neal have also championed the Offshore. Fast forward to today and AP unveils a reinterpretation of its original 1993 Royal Oak Offshore in black ceramic for the first time.

Speed Dial

Three new chronographs we want to take for a spin



Bulgari

Since 2014, watchmakers at Bulgari have been on a record breaking frenzy with their Octo Finissimo range. But with the new Octo Roma line, there are no world records, just three really exceptional watches with cases that blend a circle with an octagon. Of the Automatic, Chronograph and Tourbillon, our pick is the 42mm Chronograph that is wonderfully legible and has a Clous de Paris 3D effect on the dial that displays a central seconds hand, a 30-minute counter, and a 12-hour counter.

Chopard

The Mille Miglia car race is again the launchpad for the design team at Chopard who have unveiled its new Classic Chronograph with a 40.5mm case made from the brand's exclusive Lucent Steel. Fantastically rugged and masculine thanks to a strap that mimics a car tyre, the watch has a lovely vintage look and two understated flashes of red on the seconds hand and the Mille Miglia logo.



Breitling

Joining the Ford Mustang, Chevrolet Corvette, and Shelby Cobra on the starting grid of Breitling's Top Time chronograph collection is the Ford Thunderbird. New for this spring, the colourful 41mm stainless steel piece comes with a red perforated strap, a white dial, a teal Thunderbird logo, red chronograph hands and subdials that mimic vintage dashboard gauges. Under the bonnet is the Breitling Manufacture Caliber 01 with a 70-hour power reserve – vroom vroom.

ELLE ARABIA MAN

Grooming



Fade to Grey

The Los Angeles-born Palestinian model, artist and musician, Fai Khadra is fronting Gris Dior, a powerful unisex eau de parfum that is anchored by intense chypre. Part of Christian Dior's elite La Collection Privée range, this fragrance is woody yet floral and is intriguingly multifaceted – just like Khadra himself.

CAMPAIGN PORTRAITS BY MIKAEL JANSSON
FOR PARFUMS CHRISTIAN DIOR



From PowerPoint to Painting

A debilitating stroke at the age of 37 led successful corporate leader Abdulla Al Gurg to pick up his paintbrush and discover the healing power of art



WORDS BY ROB CHILTON



In 2018, after suffering a stroke that paralysed the left side of his face, arm and leg, Abdulla Al Gurg lay in hospital and sent an emotional message to his mother. “I told her, ‘I’m having a stroke, I don’t know if I will be able to talk again so I want to let you know that I love you’.”

Then aged 37, Abdulla was embedded in the long hours and relentless pace of corporate culture as a member of the Board of Directors of Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group, one of the UAE’s most eminent family businesses with 27 companies in its portfolio and a history dating back to 1960.

“I was fit and I went to the gym but I was stressed,” he explains. “I wanted to make everyone around me happy, but not me. I kept a lot inside.”

As he embarked on a six-month rehabilitation programme, Abdulla re-evaluated his life, his career and his personal goals with a new clarity of vision. This period of retrospection led him back to the hobbies of his youth such as playing the piano and, more significantly, art. An enthusiastic painter as a child, Abdulla gravitated towards the easel where he discovered that art was an effective tool in his healing.

“During my recovery I noticed I was doing things that were in my blood – I went back to my roots,” he says. “I used to love painting



Abdulla Al Gurg

as a kid and so I started again. I became peaceful when I painted and I wanted that feeling of peace more and more.”

Now recovered and mobile – but still with a 10 to 15 per cent weakness on his left side – Abdulla wants to use his art to help others. This spring Abdulla, 41, is auctioning some of his artworks at Christie’s in Dubai to raise money for The Omère Foundation, a philanthropic organisation he set up to improve preventative medicine through technology, innovation and organic healing methods. “I want to share these paintings to help those dealing with injury or mental trauma because I believe people can heal through art,” he explains.

The message Abdulla hopes to transmit through his paintings is simple: happiness. “My art is happy and energy driven,” he says. “The pieces come from my mind, they come from inside me, and I cannot paint when I’m sad, only when I’m happy. Every painting relates to a happy moment in my life and I want to give these moments back to people.”

Reflecting on where he finds himself today, Abdulla smiles. “My life has changed so much. I’ve changed my daily habits and I’m a different person. I now work in a healthy way, not a haphazard way. Some people behave like a bulldozer at work but that’s not the right attitude. You must have a clear mind to achieve your targets. I guess you could say my journey has gone from hard to soft. I’ve learned that you have to embrace the soft spirit inside you.”

Father of four children, Abdulla’s family dynamic has also changed for the better. “After my stroke I have built beautiful relationships with my children and spent more time with them. I have become a more hands-on father,” he explains. “I’m lucky that I can catch up on time that I missed. I feel like I have another chance to live a very beautiful life.”

Post-recovery, Abdulla felt compelled to begin his entrepreneurial journey, launching his own investment company AGGI in 2020 and establishing LeCrans Hotel & Spa, a wellness resort in Switzerland. “Before my stroke I never thought I could become an entrepreneur because I was destined to take over the family business,” he says. “But after the stroke I knew I had to create something of my own. This is my second chance at life and I’m going to use it right.”



Wood is the addictive note in three new fragrances this season



**FOR BACK-TO-BACK
POWER MEETINGS
IN DUBAI**
*Paco Rabanne Invictus
Victory Elixir*

This powerful fragrance in a show stopping bottle is intense and will stay with you all day, providing a constant olfactory boost of energy to help keep you going. Spicy, woody, yet fresh and slightly sweet, this new scent from Paco Rabanne’s successful Invictus family is unapologetically bold.



**FOR A BLACK TIE
DINNER IN RIYADH**
Guerlain Oud Khol

Deep, dark and very stormy, the luxurious Oud Khol comes from Guerlain’s high end fragrance division, L’Art & La Matière. Smoky oud wood mixes with leather and incense for a nocturnal scent that resonates strongly with the Middle East. It’s not all dark though – perfumer Thierry Wasser has added a splash of caramelised praline to lighten the mood.



**FOR SUNDOWNERS
AT AN IBIZA
BEACH CLUB**
*Loewe Esencia
Eau de Parfum*

In the kitchen, tarragon is a herb that pairs well with chicken, but in the perfume lab these green leaves are a key ingredient in one of the year’s most addictive men’s fragrances. Loewe Esencia Eau de Parfum has more than 200 elements including vetiver, lavender, red pepper berries and basil for a masculine, earthy, fantastically easygoing scent.

Ever since watching my dad shave with a plastic orange Bic razor and then splash on aftershave that made him wince with pain, I’ve been obsessed by grooming. Today, aged 47, I have figured out what works for me and what doesn’t – but I took some wrong turns along the way.

Aged 12, I borrowed my dad’s bottle of Brut Body Splash and used half of it to impress my first crush Nicola Hunt – it must have scorched the poor girl’s sinuses. My dad used Vaseline Hair Tonic so I had a go with that, too, but it made me look like a bad version of Danny Zuko in Grease. Still, my dad is 78 and has a fantastic head of hair so maybe using the oily goo will benefit me in the long run.

As a teenager, my mate Joe had Dunhill Edition eau de toilette that used to sneakily squirt when I visited his house. If I smell it today I am instantly taken back to house parties, golden summers and happy school days.

In 1994 I went to university and my then girlfriend gave me Paco Rabanne XS, which was my first grown-up fragrance. Playing sport six days a week in the freezing wind and rain, eating terribly, and late nights studying in libraries (dancing in nightclubs) took its toll on my skin so I had the bright idea to use Nivea Body Lotion as a facial moisturiser. No wonder I look shiny and greasy in all my photos from that time.

After graduating and getting my first paycheck, I discovered Kiehl’s and its brilliant Ultra Facial Cream that was the perfect protection for cold winters in London and New York where I lived in my 20s and 30s.

I became loyal to Kiehl’s and bought the Close-Shavers Squadron Shave Cream, which was too thick and clogged up my razor. The Post Shave Repair Gel was cooling and minty but

**MY GROOMING
EVOLUTION**
After years of mis-steps,
Rob Chilton has finally
nailed his regime

I’ve come to believe that aftershave balms are a waste of time – just use moisturiser, it’s the same thing. I also experimented with facial serums for a while but, again, came to the conclusion that they’re not really worth it and simply add an unnecessary step to my grooming routine.

Then, seduced by the marketing power of David Beckham I experimented with the skincare line he endorsed, Biotherm Homme. Great packaging, amazing smell, but the Aquapower face moisturiser that called itself ‘oligo-thermal care dynamic hydration’ (pardon?) was too lightweight for my skin. Next I tried Clarins’ Super Moisture Balm, but it was the same story: smelt wonderful, comfortable on the skin but too weak and watery. Malin & Goetz with chamomile eventually proved too lightweight. Next on the merry-go-round of face creams, and on the cheaper end of the spectrum, I gambled on Bulldog’s Sensitive Face Moisturiser with willow herb, oat and baobab, but I developed dry patches. I have learned that any facial moisturisers that have words like ‘gel’, ‘hydra’ or ‘lotion’ are far too feeble for my skin.

Moving to sunny Dubai 10 years ago forced me to solve my face moisturiser conundrum and so I turned to my old pal Kiehl’s. Its Facial

Fuel with SPF 19 is rich, protective and smells amazing and has become an essential part of my bathroom toolkit.

Sunny weather and swimming pools is a heady combination and when I became bitten by the swimming bug, I noticed that daily swims dried out my hands. Haeckels hand cream with seaweed and geranium is a part of my daily routine after a few lengths in the chlorine-saturated pool.

I’m 47 and I think eye creams are a valuable asset to tackle those inevitable dark circles and laughter lines. Facial scrub, too, instantly brightens my skin and makes it feel lighter and cleaner when used three times a week. The latest stage of my grooming evolution is – shock horror – using my wife’s pot of Charlotte Tilbury Magic Night Cream before I go to bed. If you spend all day in front of a screen, have young children that wake you up at 5am, and live in a sunny, dusty city like Dubai a blast of deep hydration while you sleep is a tonic, let me tell you.

After many puzzling lessons, my grooming education continues and is proof that, like a lot of things in life, finding a solution is all about trial and error.



From left: Biotherm Homme Aquapower; Kiehl’s FF; Malin & Goetz; Nivea body lotion; Dunhill Edition; Bulldog; Vaseline Hair Tonic; Clarins balm; Haeckels hand cream; Charlotte Tilbury night cream



Colonia Limited Edition designed by Samuel Ross

City Scents

London and Milan inspire Samuel Ross’s new Acqua di Parma bottles

You may think Acqua di Parma’s distinctive bottle is pretty near perfect, but acclaimed product designer Samuel Ross was able to put his own inimitable spin on it for a new trio of limited edition flacons containing the brand’s iconic Colonia fragrance.

When designing the new bottles, Ross had in mind the sun glazing across London’s brutalist architecture, plus the buildings of Renzo Piana such as Centre Georges Pompidou in

Paris, London’s The Shard, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City, and Istanbul Museum of Modern Art.

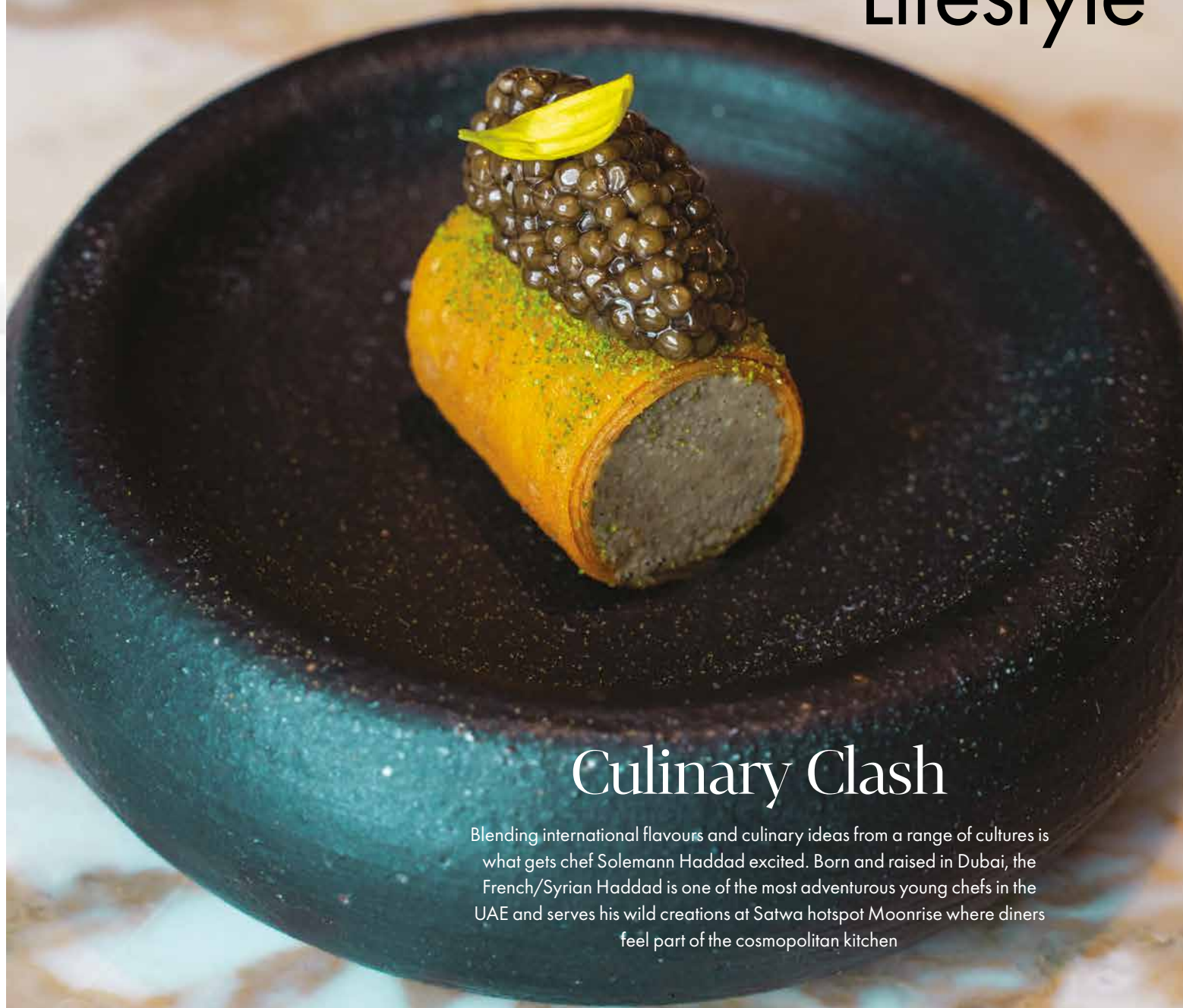
Sun_Rise_Yellow, Grass_Blade_Green and Ultra_Orange are the titles of Ross’s bottles, which is the first project of a three-year partnership between him and Acqua di Parma. The multi-disciplinary artist previously founded A-Cold-Wall fashion brand and once designed for Off-White under mentor Virgil Abloh.



MAN’S BEST FRIEND

Luxury skincare brand Gentlemen’s Tonic has arrived at the swish Sense Spa inside the beautiful Rosewood Hotel in Abu Dhabi. Babassu and bergamot give the classy British range its zesty scent, which is backed up by science to result in products that actually work. The spa now offers three facials for guys – hydrate, detox and express – using products that are packed with vitamins and antioxidants.

ELLE MAN ^{Arabia} Lifestyle



Culinary Clash

Blending international flavours and culinary ideas from a range of cultures is what gets chef Solemann Haddad excited. Born and raised in Dubai, the French/Syrian Haddad is one of the most adventurous young chefs in the UAE and serves his wild creations at Satwa hotspot Moonrise where diners feel part of the cosmopolitan kitchen

COOL HOTELS

Explore the world with a stay at these luxurious new openings, from the French Riviera to the forests of Zimbabwe

Words by ROB CHILTON



FRANCE

Promenade Chic

ANANTARA PLAZA NICE HOTEL

After a two-year renovation, an historic 19th century two-storey landmark of Nice's famous boardwalk has been restored to its glorious Belle Époque era and now houses the Anantara Plaza Nice Hotel. Overlooking the glamorous Promenade des Anglais, this grand hotel set inside a 175-year-old building has reopened with 151 rooms including 38 suites, many with sea-facing terraces and balconies.

Interiors are a marriage of old-world elegance and contemporary luxuries that pay homage to the original hotel that opened in 1848 as Nice's very first luxury hotel. A highlight is the 54-square-metre Baie des

Anges Signature Suite which comes with a spacious living area, a kitchenette and a panoramic terrace. Even grander is the 75-square-metre Presidential Suite located on the 5th floor, an elegant space with breathtaking views of Baie des Anges from an inviting terrace designed for sunbathing and private celebrations.

On the rooftop sits SEEN by Olivier, the hotel's signature restaurant, serving contemporary Mediterranean dishes from Portuguese chef Olivier da Costa who runs hotspot eateries in Lisbon, Sao Paulo and Bangkok. Take in the 360 views as you try Niçoise specialties subtly scented with black truffles from the nearby village of Le Rouret to briny sea urchins and plump oysters from local waters. Les Colonnades is a glamorous caviar and seafood lounge with decor inspired by Nice's tropical gardens.

Not far away are St Tropez, Monaco, Cannes and Alpes-Maritimes for more VIP fun. Fashion fans can learn about Coco Chanel on a special day tour that provides insights into the creative life of the iconic designer and a visit to her official residence in Nice. The spa uses premium products and bespoke natural essential oils from the Grasse region, plus transformative pedicures from celebrity pedicurist Bastien Gonzalez.



NEW ZEALAND

Kiwi Buzz

NAUMI WELLINGTON

Yes, it's a long flight to New Zealand, but the welcome at Naumi Wellington will be worth it. This luxury boutique hotel in Wellington's vibrant Cuba district is filled with eclectic design touches and bold colours such as lilac, avocado green, red and turmeric – and no white anywhere. Bedside lights come from Swedish Ovature Studios while mirrors are by young Kiwi design start-up, Made of Tomorrow. The walls of each room are draped in sumptuous velvet that provide soothing acoustics and a cosy atmosphere. If you want to take in a movie after a day spent exploring Wellington, the rooms are equipped with the largest televisions in the country at 65".

Ideally situated on Cuba Street, one of Wellington's most charismatic areas, the 62-room Naumi Wellington is a great base to engage with the city's street art, galleries, cafés, and culture scene.



Foodies should try the South-East Asian menu from award-winning chef Kiran Ghate at the hotel's restaurant Lola Rouge, which is a stylish blend of old world glamour and new world romanticism. For afternoon tea, step into the pastel enclave that is The Parlour, which is inspired by Parisian conservatories and is decorated with floral sculptures from renowned New Zealand artist, Judy Darragh.

Stay here and you'll be helping the local community through the hotel's philanthropic organisation, Naumi Humanity, which aims to reduce food insecurity and provide nutritional support to children from impoverished communities across Singapore, New Zealand and India while providing women from low-income communities around the world with upskilling and employment opportunities to increase household income.



FRANCE
Burgundy Greenery
COMO LE MONTRACHET

Food to make your soul sing can be found at the new countryside retreat from the masters of minimalist cool, Como Hotels. Its new property sits in a gorgeous 19th-century building on an estate in Burgundy near the historic village of Puligny-Montrachet. Named after different types of homes in the traditional French village, rooms are designed to be quiet, elegant spaces with beautiful limestone walls and high wood-beamed ceilings. The restaurant at Como Le Montrachet is headed by Romain Versino, who is serving authentic dishes made with the finest local produce.



KENYA
Five-Star Safari
JW MARRIOTT MASAI MARA LODGE

The Masai Mara National Reserve in southwestern Kenya is one of Africa's most renowned wildlife conservation and wilderness regions and is the setting for a newly opened luxury lodge that overlooks the banks of the River Talek.

Tranquility, wildlife, and jaw-dropping scenery await at this sophisticated retreat that offers a mindful and holistic approach to holidays through a strong connection to its environment.

The Masai Mara is home to lions, leopards, buffalos, rhinoceros and elephants. Between June and September, the reserve is host to the annual

wildebeest migration which sees more than 10 million animals travel a distance of 1,800 miles from the Serengeti in neighbouring Tanzania.

Natural materials and soft colours help guests relax in the cosy Adventure Lounge that is lined with books; the pool deck is a place to reflect on your day of wildlife spotting or try a guided star gazing session. The JW Garden is a peaceful spot to connect with nature and practice meditative reflection and is also where chefs grow ingredients to craft personalised meals.

Reinforcing the lodge's holistic theme is the spa that offers locally inspired techniques and therapies using organic products sourced from the continent's minerals, oceans, flowers, herbs, fruits, seeds and oils, by renowned African skincare brand, Healing Earth.

JW Marriott Masai Mara Lodge has 20 private tents, some of which have a private plunge pool, a private terrace and jacuzzi overlooking the river and the Mara plains.



BALI
Clifftop Home
MANDARIN ULUWATU ESTATE

For a truly memorable stay with friends and family in Bali, the eight-bedroomed Mandarin Uluwatu Estate should be on your radar. Crafted by Mandarin Oriental Exclusive Homes, this breathtaking property has spectacular clifftop views and an indoor-outdoor vibe with open-air living areas, immaculate gardens and reflection pools connecting the eight independent suites plus the staff apartment. Modern and thoughtful, the luxurious interiors retain elements of tasteful Balinese style.



As any visitor to Bali soon realises, wellness is a key theme of the island. Mandarin Uluwatu Estate has a private spa plus a team of on-call yoga instructors. Nearby spots Blue Point Beach, Padang Padang and Canggu, meanwhile, are a surfer's paradise. Intimate meals at home or romantic candle-lit dinners on the beach using local produce are no problem for the culinary team. Elsewhere, the estate's chauffeur can transport guests to Bali's renowned beach clubs.

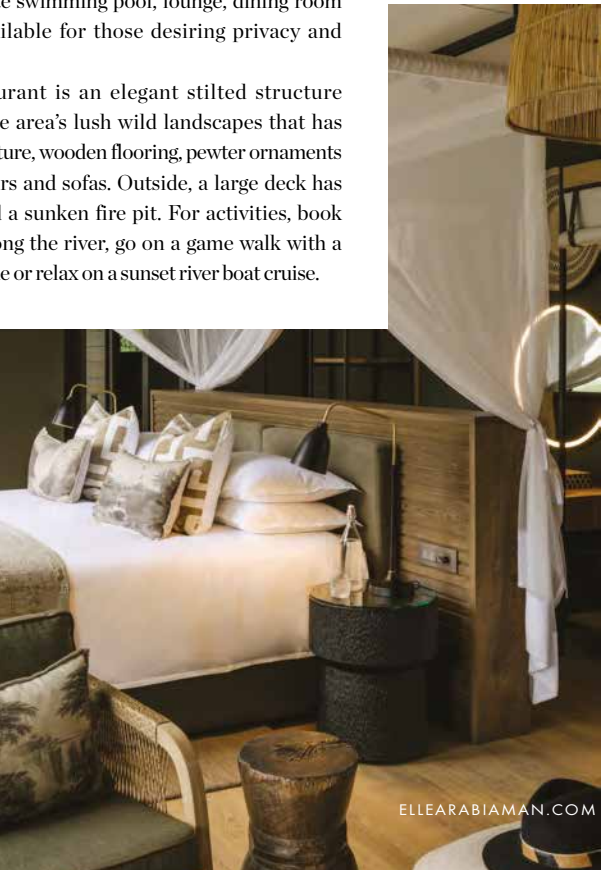
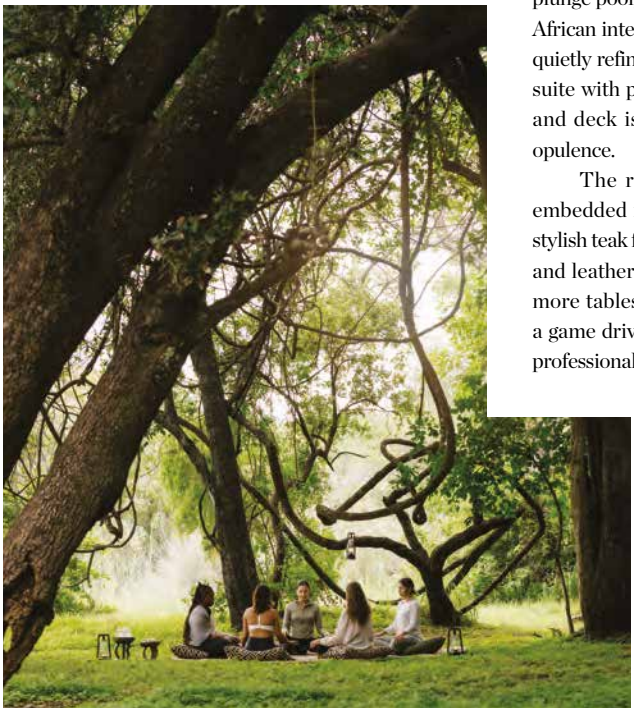


ZIMBABWE
Eco Haven
ZAMBEZI SANDS RIVER LODGE

Stunning greenery surrounds Zambezi Sands River Lodge, a five-star luxury just an hour from the magnificent Victoria Falls. This newly renovated resort sits inside Zambezi National Park for a truly authentic African experience. Keep your eyes peeled for wandering hippos that often spend part of the night feeding in and around the camp.

The 10 bedrooms are more like African style tents connected by boardwalks, six of which have a private plunge pool, and have been designed by renowned South African interior designer Yvonne O'Brien, known for her quietly refined style. For GCC travellers, a two-bedroom suite with private swimming pool, lounge, dining room and deck is available for those desiring privacy and opulence.

The restaurant is an elegant stilted structure embedded in the area's lush wild landscapes that has stylish teak furniture, wooden flooring, pewter ornaments and leather chairs and sofas. Outside, a large deck has more tables and a sunken fire pit. For activities, book a game drive along the river, go on a game walk with a professional guide or relax on a sunset river boat cruise.





UAE City Style

MONDRIAN ABU DHABI

From the cool folk who bought you SLS Dubai, Hyde Dubai and 25 Hours Hotel One Central, comes the Mondrian Abu Dhabi that will opens its doors in 2024. Designed by award-winning architect Tristan Du Plessis, the hotel will be an urban hotspot of simple, contemporary and inviting interiors.

Set in the capital city's downtown area alongside the Abu Dhabi canal, Mondrian Abu Dhabi will have waterfront views overlooking Reem Island and Maryah Island. Six restaurants, 221 rooms, 80 serviced apartments, a spa, a swimming pool, a kid's club, and a world-class fitness area will ensure the hotel makes its mark on Abu Dhabi's hospitality landscape. A talking point is the lagoon offering ocean views, an infinity pool, lounges and daybeds.

Mondrian Abu Dhabi comes from Ennismore, leaders in lifestyle hospitality who have big openings in 2023 including Maison Delano Paris; Mama Shelter in Rennes; SO/ Uptown Dubai, Tribe Bangkok, Mondrian Singapore; and The Hoxton in Germany.



BOTSWANA Tree House

SITATUNGA PRIVATE ISLAND SUITE

An intimate two-bedroom eco suite is the new addition to Botswana's latest Okavango Delta water-based Réserve-Collection Safari Camp. Set to open on July 15, the two-bedroom Sitatunga Private Island Suite from eco-tourism experts Great Plains will open within the Sitatunga Private Island Camp.

Built on a raised, wrap-around railway sleeper private deck, the suite can accommodate up to four adults (or two adults and up to three children) while providing optimum seclusion in the Okavango Delta and the chance to see elephants, crocodiles, hippos and birds as



well as sitatunga, the rare aquatic antelope from camp and by boat.

Perched up high in the ebony trees on the private island, the suites echo the shape of giant bamboo fisherman basket structures used by the Bayei people who historically occupied the area and have thatched canvas walls and roofs.

Explore the Okavango Delta by canoe, go on a guided morning walk, or enrol in a fishing or photographic safari as each suite comes with a professional camera and lens set. Sitatunga Private Island Camp can accommodate eight people in total and children must be aged six or above.



Around the World

The longest ever cruise embarks on an epic three-year voyage in November for AED 300 per day

If spiralling Dubai rents are pricing you out of the housing market, why not spend the next three years living on a luxury cruise ship for AED 300 per day?

Setting sail from Istanbul on November 1, the giant seven-deck Gemini liner will embark on the world's longest cruise, stopping off at 375 destinations in 135 countries on all seven continents on a 210,000km voyage – boy, the breakfast buffet is going to get pretty repetitive after a while.

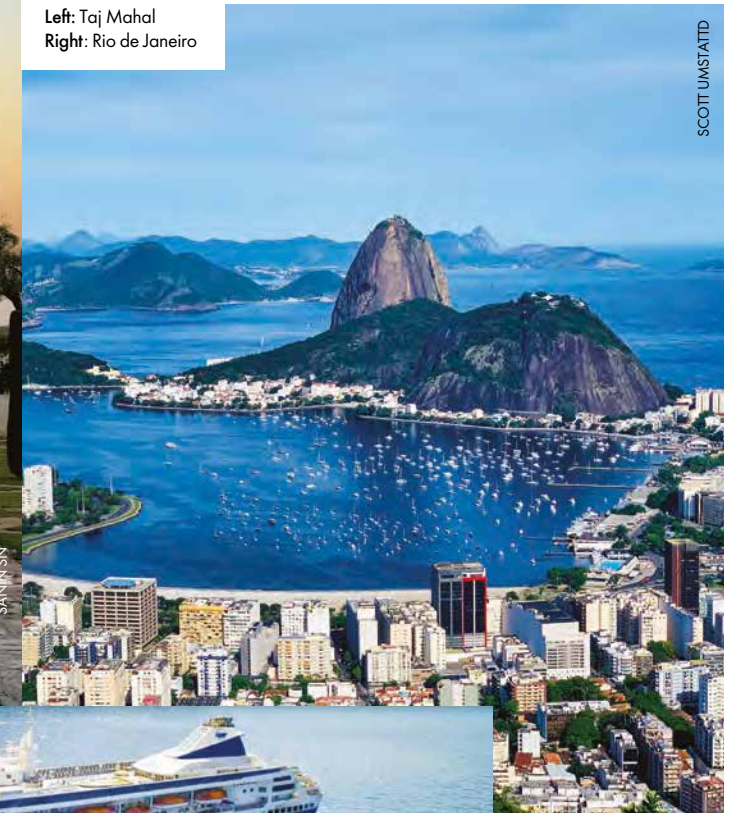
Passengers can enjoy extended stays at numerous ports to see highlights such as Rio de Janeiro, the Taj Mahal, Chichen Itza in Mexico, the pyramids of Giza, Machu Picchu and the Great Wall of China. The voyage travels around South America to the Caribbean and central America, up the Californian coast and across to Hawaii. Japan, South Korea and southeast Asia are next, followed by New Zealand and Australia, India, the Maldives, South Africa, and the Mediterranean. Christmas will be spent in Brazil and the New Year in Argentina.

Operated by Miray Cruises, the 160-metre long Gemini has 400 cabins, which are being sold by the month on a residential basis. Passenger numbers will be limited to around 600 for the three-year voyage. Most passengers are expected to be aged between 50 and 70 and the boat is equipped with a hospital staffed by a team of three doctors and a pharmacy. A business centre filled with 14 offices will suit those who want to work from sea. The boat has an auditorium, gym, wellness centre, hair and beauty salon, plus dance and music classes. The cheapest cabins are priced at AED 110,000 a year – including all meals – and are expected to sell out in May, before departure in November. The Gemini will sail through the Northern Hemisphere in the summers and the Southern Hemisphere in the winters so the sun will always be shining. You're going to need your sea legs for this one.

Words by ROB CHILTON



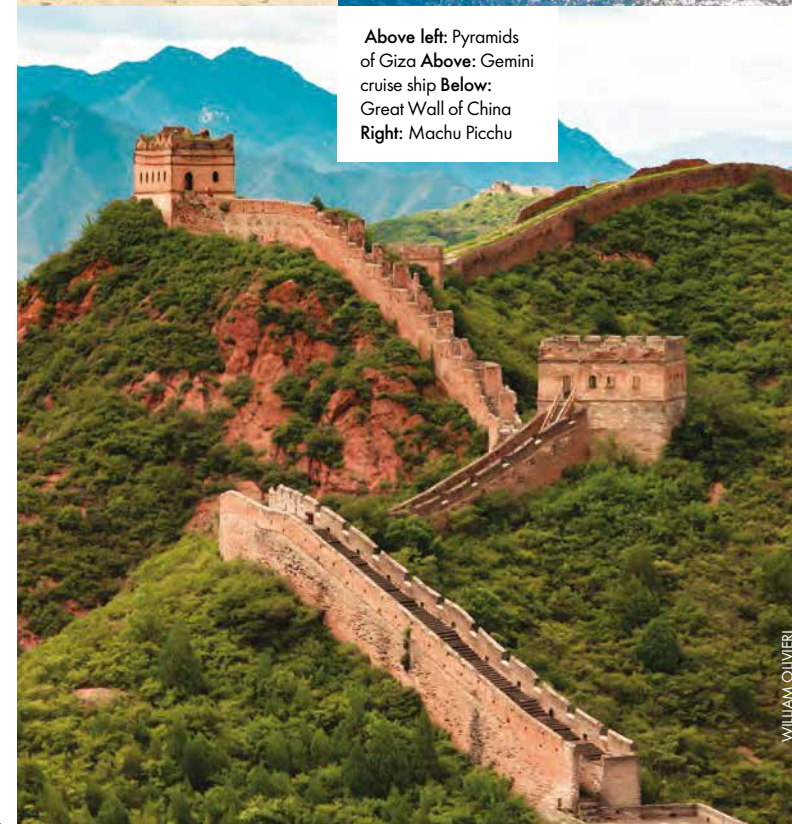
Left: Taj Mahal
Right: Rio de Janeiro



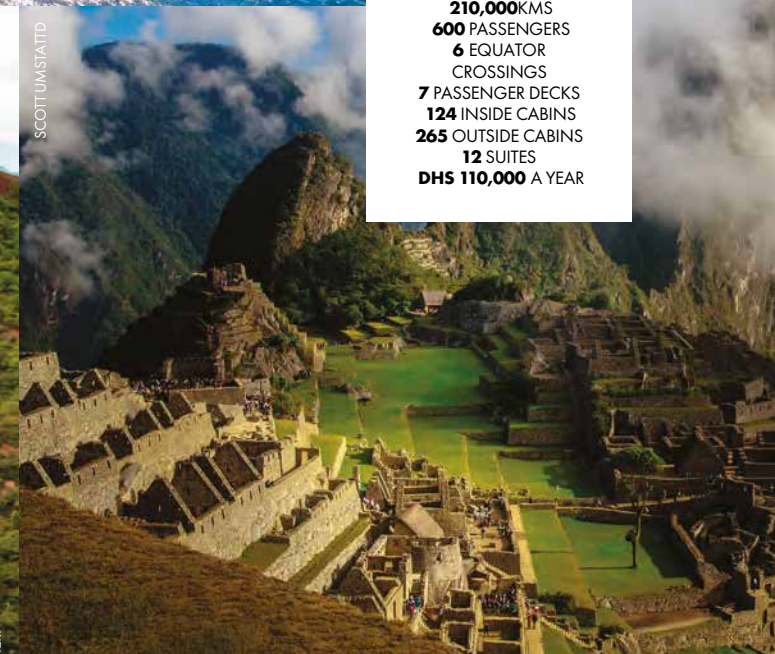
SCOTT UMSTATTD



OMAR ELSHARAWY



Above left: Pyramids of Giza Above: Gemini cruise ship Below: Great Wall of China Right: Machu Picchu



SCOTT UMSTATTD

WILLIAM OLIVIERI

LINER NOTES

The world's longest cruise in numbers

3 YEARS
375 DESTINATIONS
135 COUNTRIES
7 CONTINENTS
400 CABINS
210,000KMS
600 PASSENGERS
6 EQUATOR CROSSINGS
7 PASSENGER DECKS
124 INSIDE CABINS
265 OUTSIDE CABINS
12 SUITES
DHS 110,000 A YEAR



Vintage Land Rover

Time Travel

Retreat into the desert dunes at the magnificent Banyan Tree AlUla sanctuary in Saudi Arabia

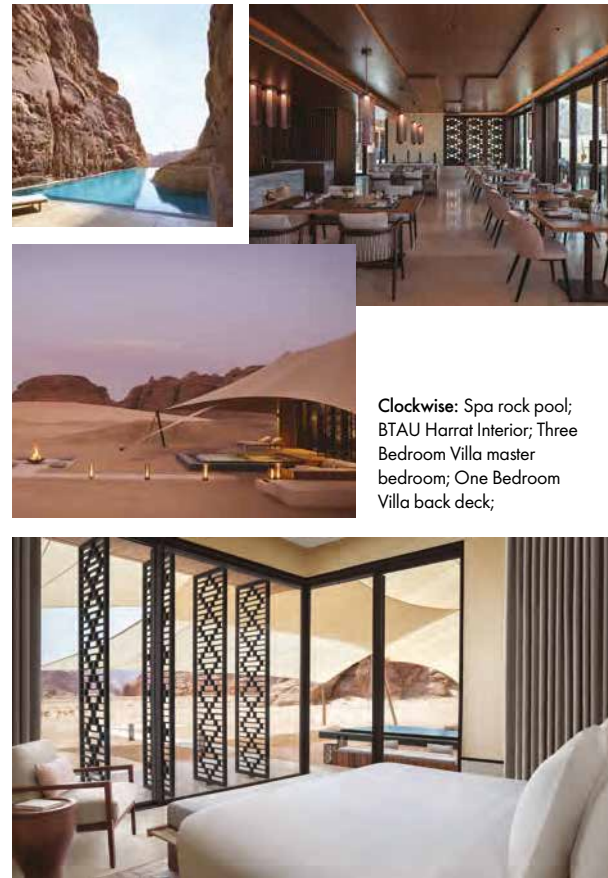
Utter seclusion and stillness are hard to find in the modern world, but both are present within the mesmerising desert paradise that is Banyan Tree AlUla.

One of Saudi Arabia's most enchanting and unique resorts, Banyan Tree AlUla is set deep inside the Ashar Valley, far away from the trials and tribulations of everyday life. Easy to reach via a short flight from either Riyadh or Jeddah, this romantic all-villa resort blends beautifully into the stunning terracotta-coloured rock formations and majestic golden sands of AlUla, known as the world's largest living museum and undoubtedly one of the country's most impressive tourism attractions.

Once here, you'll find privacy in the resort's villas that are designed in the Nabataean style and tastefully enhanced with authentic handcrafted antiques inspired by AlUla's heritage. One, two and three bedroom villas are available and all provide views of the mysterious desert that lies beyond. External fire pits, outdoor dining areas, private plunge pools, and sweeping sand-coloured canvas canopies overhead are just a few of the luxurious features that make a stay in these villas so unforgettable.

Three philosophies form the foundation of a visit to Banyan Tree AlUla. 'In-villa' provides guests with bespoke experiences in dining, wellbeing and entertainment.

WORDS BY ROB CHILTON



Clockwise: Spa rock pool; BTAU Harrat Interior; Three Bedroom Villa master bedroom; One Bedroom Villa back deck;

'In-valley' invites visitors into the natural surroundings through outdoor treatments, nomadic chef's tables, active adventures, and private events staged in spectacular settings. Lastly, 'En-voyage' takes guests through privileged immersions crafted with local talents, continuously unlocking new facets of AlUla's rich heritage.

After spending time at Banyan Tree AlUla and engaging in some of the sunset and sunrise activities that give guests a taste of the Bedouin lifestyle, you'll soon find yourself in a blissful state. But if you want delve deeper into tranquility, book a treatment at the resort's spa. The heavenly Banyan Tree AlUla Spa uses natural ingredients to provide a holistic series of treatments based on traditional Asian wellbeing and healing therapies.

Banyan Tree AlUla has two fine dining restaurants led by executive chef Ricardo Lujan from Mexico who has almost 20 years of experience with leading five-star luxury brands. Ricardo's creativity and innovation are brought to life by his fondness for ancestral ingredients. At Saffron, Banyan Tree's signature Thai restaurant, every meal is a gastronomical journey that envelops diners in contemporary and authentic flavours from Thailand. Harrat, meanwhile, showcases a variety of mouthwatering Middle Eastern cuisine in a setting that is more than just a restaurant. Harrat is a multi-sensory experience that immerses guests in a space inspired by desert culture and decorated with locally made handicrafts.

Magical and mysterious, Banyan Tree AlUla invites guests to enjoy Saudi Arabia's stunning natural landscape and reawaken their senses in a location that is truly special.

Two Bedroom Villa, back deck





Mohamed Zaal



TREE HOUSE

Beautiful living spaces surrounded by premium oxygen, AMAIA Villas are green and serene

What does AED 45 million get you in the Dubai real estate market these days? Freshwater streams, a private lake, your very own forest – including 2,000-year-old olive trees – and a villa that is something approaching paradise.

Six villas hidden in the lush, tropical greenery of Al Barari are the handiwork of visionary entrepreneur Mohammed Zaal and represent the epitome of botanical bliss. For Zaal, the AMAIA development marks another chapter in his involvement with Al Barari’s real estate landscape, which he has been developing for the last 15 years.

Natural materials such as marble and oak, endless natural light, and subtle water features induce a huge sense of tranquility,

while kitchens fitted with the world’s best appliances would satisfy Gordon Ramsay. Skip up the travertine staircase and dreamy bedrooms are fitted with walk-in wardrobes which, judging by the vibe of the living space, should be filled with lots of beige linen and creamy cashmere.

What else? An outdoor kitchen, a top of the line Kamado BBQ grill and a wood-fired pizza oven will ensure you host epic garden parties while, for calmer moments, step into the wellness pavilion. One villa has been bought already, leaving five up for sale.

“This project came from the heart,” says Mohamed Zaal. “These eco-luxury developments are the soul of Al Barari and are the very last of their kind.”

For enquiries, contact Allsopp & Allsopp.



WATT’S UP?

Six things you need to know about the new electric Mercedes-Benz EQE SUV

- The EQE SUV is the latest electric vehicle from Mercedes-Benz and the fourth in its eco-friendly portfolio. First came the EQS sedan, then the EQE sedan, then the EQS SUV and now the EQE SUV that has a range of more than 590 kilometres.
- It’s packed with driver assistance systems including Attention Assist, Active Brake Assist, Active Lane Keeping Assist, Parking Package with reversing

camera and Speed Limit Assist, all of which are shown in a full-screen view in the driver’s display.

- The optional MBUX Hyperscreen means no scrolling through menus or giving voice commands. Situational and contextual applications appear at the top of the field of view as three displays merge into one another. The front passenger in the EQE SUV has the option of a 12.3-inch OLED display with its own user interface.

- Planning the fastest and most convenient route is a breeze with a navigation system that plots charging stations while calculating the estimated costs per charging stop. Drivers can add preferred charging stations along the route and exclude others.
- The sporty EQE SUV recognises driver habits and adjusts pre-entry climate control accordingly. If the system detects that the car regularly sets off from a certain place at a certain time, this is entered into

the departure time menu automatically, enabling pre-entry climate control at the ideal moment. The battery can be charged to the required level in time for departure if the corresponding charging programme is selected.

- The EQE SUV marks the debut of the soundscape titled Serene Breeze that offers a relaxed and natural sound for vehicle feedback, while an optional interior driving sound is available that adapts to the driving style.



Night Fever

Exclusive to the GCC, the Infiniti QX80 Black Edition is a stylish SUV with stealth



Words by ROB CHILTON

The QX80 is the granddaddy of Infiniti's five-strong portfolio and exudes presence on the road. Yet with its size, charisma, and 5.6 litre V8 power comes an elegance. It's a little like Manchester City striker Erling Haaland who can outmuscle a defender and then delicately curl the ball into the top corner.

This summer, Infiniti is introducing the QX80 Black Edition exclusively across the GCC, which is a tribute to the region's mesmerising night skies.

To accompany the launch, a short movie depicts Mohamad Talafha, a renowned research observer for astronomy and space sciences at the University of Sharjah, heading into the desert with his son to gaze at a blanket of stars overhead. Captivated after spotting his first eclipse with his father aged four, Talafha hopes to pass on his planetary passion to his son and continue a tradition that has endured in the Middle East for centuries.

"Stargazing in the desert has stood the test of time, and we wanted to pay homage to this ritual that is synonymous with the region's heritage," explains Zaher Ayat, head of marketing at Infiniti Middle East.

While the interior is clad in buttery soft leather, one of the most eye-catching features of the QX80 Black Edition's exterior is the double arch grille inspired by Japanese origami. Equipped with 22-inch forged alloy wheels and chrome accents, the car twinkles in the darkness. Folding seats in the rear provide plenty of room for lovers of the outdoors to store their kit, while inside a series of drive assist and safety systems provide peace of mind. Luxurious, powerful and easygoing – this SUV is a superstar.



"Stargazing in the desert has stood the test of time, and we wanted to pay homage to this ritual that is synonymous with the region's heritage"

Kingdom of Cars

Audi releases 93 “passion project” cars in tribute to Saudi Arabia



Audi is releasing 93 highly exclusive models of the S6, S7, A8 and Q8 to commemorate 93 years of the unification and patriotism of Saudi Arabia.

Now available to reserve or buy online, the Kingdom Edition models have been carefully selected to align with the prestige of Saudi Arabia. The S6 and S7 sedans were chosen for their high-performance sports engines; the A8 for its comfort, status and authority; and the spacious Q8 SUV coupé for its sporty personality.

The exterior paint of the cars is an exclusive Goodwood Green inspired by the Saudi Arabian flag, with leather upholstery as standard. Other special features include Kingdom Edition scuff plates, KSA map stitching in the headrests, a green rhombus pattern on floor mats and Saudi-inspired digitised motifs in the door entry lights.

“The Kingdom Edition series is a tribute to the visionaries who have shaped the Kingdom’s history and its bright future,” explains Carsten Bender, Managing Director of Audi Middle East.

National Marketing Manager at Audi Saudi Arabia, Furqan Ahmed, adds, “The Kingdom Edition is the first special edition range designed and inspired specifically for Saudi Arabia and is a passion project for Audi Saudi Arabia.”



Feel the Revolution

Lamborghini marks its 60th birthday with an electric icon and a gala dinner in Saudi Arabia

Lamborghini threw a birthday bash in Riyadh to celebrate its 60th birthday and then showed the world its futuristic new electric car. The Saudi Arabia gala dinner is part of a series of global events to commemorate 60 years of the iconic Italian carmaker. Lamborghini commissioned a local Saudi artist Nugamshi to create a unique piece of art on the bonnet of a Lamborghini Urus.

Chairman and CEO of Lamborghini, Stephan Winkelmann said, “Saudi Arabia is a country with a rich history and passion for luxury and high-performance vehicles. This event is proof of Lamborghini’s commitment to innovation, design, quality and performance.” General Manager of Lamborghini Saudi Arabia, Abdul Aziz Moolla said, “For the brand to reach this milestone anniversary is a wonderful achievement, and we look forward to continuing this legacy for many years to come.”



A key part of Lamborghini’s legacy is the newly unveiled Revuelto, the first super sports V12 hybrid High Performance Electrified Vehicle. Here are the highlights:

- Revolutionary architecture
- Naturally-aspirated V12 engine
- Eight-speed, double-clutch transverse gearbox makes its debut on a 12-cylinder Lamborghini
- Three electric motors
- Thirteen drive modes
- All-wheel drive also available

in fully-electric mode

- New Lamborghini Infotainment System
- Maximum output of 1015 CV from the combined power of a new combustion engine and three electric motors

Winkelmann calls the Revuelto a “milestone in the history of Lamborghini” and adds, “it creates the perfect balance between delivering the emotion that our clients want with the necessity to reduce emissions.”



WINDS OF CHANGE

Inspired by the winds and built for an eco-friendly future, Aeolus is a ground-breaking yacht that marks a new chapter in maritime design

Words by ROB CHILTON





Feminine curves and masculine presence can be found on the revolutionary new super yacht Aeolus that caused a wave when it was revealed by Oceanco at the Dubai International Boat Show in March.

Named after the Greek god of the wind, the beautiful 131 metre long craft is a floating sanctuary that allows passengers to find peace and privacy on board, confident in the knowledge that sustainability has been top of mind in its design process.

Inspired by the J Class sailing yachts of the last century, Aeolus and its pod-like decks signal an exciting new era in yacht design that its creator believes now sets the tone for others to follow.

“The collaboration and innovation resulting in the Aeolus design has been remarkable,” says Oceanco CEO Marcel Onkenhout. “She is an example of how we envisage the evolution of yachting, from the perspectives of both her design and technology. To build the yachts of tomorrow, we need to leave behind the preconceptions of yesterday. With Aeolus, I think we have achieved that.”

Giles Taylor is responsible for the stunning exterior design that blends strength and delicacy. “Aeolus’s design sculpture is harmonious and borne of the function and flow envisaged for her future owner,” he explains. “Her curves do not make her overly feminine because there is a masculine quality to her bold, forthright architecture. Apart from the deck surfaces themselves, not one surface is flat or brutally geometric, which provides a unique aesthetic that sets Aeolus apart.”

Interiors from Njord by Bergman Design House use fully sustainable and traceable materials, including biomaterials to create a sense of comfort and tranquility.

“Organic nature, sensual being and playfulness played a big part of Aeolus’s design, bringing that exterior language to her interior for a soft and cocooning feeling,” says Sarah Colbon, co-founder of Njord. “Every element has been rigorously considered, including sourcing and traceability of materials and working with some of the world’s most innovative artisans in biomaterials and sustainable development such as Desserto, a premium vegan leather alternative that is made from climate-positive cactus plants and Oliveri Homes, which exclusively works with Global Organic Textile Standard cottons and uses non-toxic processes and dyes to create its materials.”

With an eye on the future and the ever-evolving developments in maritime mobility, Aeolus is equipped with an Energy Transition Platform (ETP) that enables it to adapt to future technologies and a net zero output.

“Any yacht built today will have to span the energy transition, a period of significant change in available fuel types and associated technologies,” says James Roy from Lateral Naval Architects. “This demands an adaptable technical architecture that can accommodate the alterations to layout, configuration and specifications needed to integrate future technologies and alternative fuels in the least invasive way possible. Lateral and Oceanco have developed the ETP to ensure multiple technical pathways can be pursued as technologies mature during the energy transition timeline.”

Powered by bold technological innovation, a forward-thinking philosophy and dynamic design, Aeolus aims to make impactful change in the world while offering a captivating glimpse into the future of sea travel.



“ANY YACHT BUILT TODAY WILL HAVE TO SPAN THE ENERGY TRANSITION, A PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN AVAILABLE FUEL TYPES AND ASSOCIATED TECHNOLOGIES”

Scoring a seat at a trendy restaurant in Dubai is hard enough these days. Couple that quest with a mission to land the best seat in the house – i.e. at the chef’s counter – and the challenge becomes that much more real. Still, between up-close aromas, perfect kitchen vantage points, and the intermittent chef-diner small talk, the experiential pay-off of getting those choice chairs are big. From Michelin-standard cooking near Satwa to wholesome ramen bowls in The Greens, here are six counters worth saddling up to.

Counter Culture

Dining at the pass where you can feel the heat of the kitchen is all the rage in Dubai. Here’s where to find the best front row seats to the culinary action

Words by LAURA LAI COUGHLIN



MOONRISE

Moonrise doesn’t simply have a chef’s counter – the place is a chef’s counter. The entire Satwa restaurant hinges around this idea of dining as a personal experience. Regulars and first timers all want an up-close perspective on Solemann Haddad’s cooking, which showcases Middle Eastern and Japanese seasonal ingredients. The Michelin Guide’s Young Chef award-winner serves 12 guests at two sittings each night, telling colourful culinary stories as they enjoy his unique creations. While the menu rotates regularly, signatures include a delicate pani puri with layering flavours of foie gras, date syrup, saffron chutney and truffle, and an outstanding take on the first dish Haddad ever made – a grilled cheese sandwich. This one features charcoal-kissed Hokkaido milk bread, black garlic carpaccio, and 36-month aged Parmigiano Reggiano. www.moon-rise.xyz



HOSEKI

The next-level endurance test to secure one of the nine spots at the ultra-chic sushi counter at Bulgari Resort Dubai will be familiar to anyone who has ever attempted it – Hoseki is booked up for weeks in advance. But beyond bragging rights, the reason Dubai’s Japanese food purists put themselves through all the rigmarole is the opportunity to watch sixth-generation sushi master Masahiro Sugiyama and his team show off their impressive knife skills. The one Michelin star restaurant presents the day’s beautifully fresh prime ingredients imported directly from Japan to create an omakase experience like no other. At a starting cost of AED1,750 per person, Hoseki’s tasting menu ain’t cheap, but it is spectacular.
www.bulgarihotels.com

KINOYA

Perhaps nowhere blends the gourmet with the good times better than last year’s World’s 50 Best One to Watch recipient, chef-owner Neha Mishra’s two-years-young restaurant Kinoya. Tucked within the strip mall-style location of Onyx Tower in The Greens, Kinoya has four parts: a main dining area, two private rooms, a chef’s table and a counter-style izakaya where 17 diners are treated to a convivial kitchen theatre. Here you can watch Neha ladle up soul-warming bowls of goodness to her legion of giddy fans. It’s the perfect after-work kick-back spot.
www.kinoya.ae



FOLLY

Eight seats provide a front row view to the handiwork of chef Bojan Cirjanic and team, who serve up modern European fare from Tuesdays to Saturdays directly from their kitchen bar in Madinat Jumeirah. Do spring for the chef’s tasting menu, a five-course meal that may feature some interesting fried bread, a crispy hen’s egg with pancetta, and elegant flavours that pull from across the continent.
www.folly.ae

COMING SOON



JUN'S
Drawing from third-generation Chinese-Canadian chef Kelvin Cheung's global travels, this exciting new Downtown Dubai restaurant creates a menu that takes fusion to the next level. With wild yet well-considered creations such as lobster pani puri and rainbow heirloom carrots with smoked labneh, almost every dish blurs the boundaries between cuisines. Look out for the launch of Kelvin's dedicated chef's table, which places five guests along a narrow counter with prime seats to spy on Kelvin as he chats, chops, sprinkles, and generally artfully prepares his unique dishes.
www.junsdubai.com



TERO THE EXPERIENCE BY REIF OTHMAN

Reif Othman was the first to elevate chef's counter dining when he opened his restaurant The Experience back in 2017. Fast forward six years and Tero is essentially Reif's latest innovation playground, creating omakase menus of unconventional Far-Eastern fare for a handful of lucky guests. He has successfully operated Tero as a four-seater counter experience within his Michelin Bib Gourmand Reif Japanese Kushiya restaurant, but this month the award-winning chef opens a standalone, licensed Tero in Dubai Hills complete with show kitchen, U-shaped counter and just 12 available seats.





ISLAND LIFE

Tagomago is Dubai’s hot new Balearic beach club



Tagomago – is that a new kids’ TV show? No, it’s the super swish, brand new beach club on the Palm in Dubai.
You’re sure it’s not the name of a cute dragon in a cartoon on Nickelodeon? Positive. It’s a chilled restaurant and bar with a private beach at Azure Residences, inspired by an island off the coast of Ibiza.
What does it look like? Like an Ibiza chiringuito – a trippy mix of 1970s psychedelic swirls, lamps fringed with dry grass, and a dreamy magenta and orange colour scheme.
Peace and love, man. Exactly. Tagomago comes from the same cool kids that launched La Cantine du Faubourg, Twiggy, Mimi Kakushi and Lana Lusa, so the vibe is effortlessly cool.
What did you eat? Octopus with paprika, a giant pan of seafood paella, and a goat’s cheese cheesecake draped in honey that was insanely good.
Sounds like an adults-only place, right? Actually, no, bring your kids and a bucket and spade. They’ve imported that nice luxury sand that’s not from a construction site – perfect for sandcastles.
Luxury sand? You’ve been in Dubai too long. Probably.

Culinary Kingdom

Dine in style with our guide to Saudi Arabia’s hottest restaurants

Words by ROB CHILTON



Belgravian Brasserie

IDEAL FOR: A cosy date night

The romantic world of French brasseries has been fused with the elegance of London’s swanky Belgravia neighbourhood at Belgravian Brasserie inside the Al Matal Complex in Al Khobar. Tasteful Art Deco touches create a real sense of European grandeur at this restaurant that has sea views. A varied all-day menu includes extravagant platters of oysters, lobster and caviar as well as lighter bites such as salads and sandwiches while a piano tinkles away in the background. The seafood market is a visual delight, but look out for the patisserie counter that displays tempting French sweet treats such as eclairs and the famous Paris-Brest cake.





LPM

IDEAL FOR: A glam lunch with friends

Riyadh marked the sixth global location of the beloved LPM restaurant group and is a popular destination that serves Mediterranean and Niçoise inspired cuisine in a bright dining room surrounded by colourful and whimsical art. LPM is a sophisticated heavyweight of the Riyadh dining scene and is set behind Al Faisaliah Hotel within the city’s financial centre. The menu is packed with LPM’s greatest hits such as burrata with sweet tomatoes, snails with garlic herb butter, lamb cutlets, and the dreamy vanilla cheesecake. Raphael Duntoye is Chef Patron of LPM and believes Riyadh is “without a doubt, one of the fastest growing cities in the world.”



Nozomi

IDEAL FOR: A lavish birthday dinner

Located in the same waterfront complex as Belgravian Brasserie, Nozomi is jaw-dropping Japanese dining at its best. A dark and inviting dining room featuring calming stone and wood surrounds guests in sleek Japanese style. Top quality seafood and meat is shipped direct from Japan, which adds a feeling of luxury to the menu. The sando has become a common feature of high-end Middle East restaurants in the last couple of years and Nozomi offers one filled with wagyu beef and sprinkled with gold confetti for a truly Instagrammable dish.



Zuma

Fusion powerhouse

After a successful pop-up at Riyadh Oasis in 2021, the perennially popular Zuma is putting down permanent roots in the city with its third Middle East outpost after Dubai and Abu Dhabi.



Porterhouse

Chic steakhouse

A modern New York style steakhouse with strong interior design, Porterhouse does a nice line in reimagined classic dishes and succulent dry-aged steaks grilled over fire.



Myazu

Japanese minimalism

The best produce is sourced to enable Myazu’s culinary team to create Japanese dishes with international flourishes in a gorgeous setting. Contemporary and cool, this is fine dining that stays in the memory.



WHAT TO ORDER

DESIGNED BY INTERIORS GENIUS LUKE EDWARD HALL, JOSETTE IS DIFC’S LATEST GLAMOROUS RESTAURANT OPENING. HERE ARE THE THREE DISHES YOU NEED TO TRY AT THE STYLISH FRENCH RESTAURANT



STARTER Escargots de Josette (AED 110) are smothered in heavenly almond butter and garlic and served with light-as-a-feather toasted brioche. Delicious, satisfying, and a real conversation starter.

MAIN COURSE A beautifully creamy piece of pan fried sea bass (AED 180) is topped with thin slices of potato in the shape of fish scales and draped in a citrusy Maltaise sauce. On the side, try the smokey grilled asparagus and the ridiculously addictive matchstick fries.

DESSERT The St. Honoré (AED 65) is layers of crispy puff pastry laden with a generous slab of vanilla Chantilly cream and dotted with caramelised pieces of choux that provide a gentle crunch, which contrasts with the fluffy cream.

What to wear: Berluti loafers, no socks

Listen out for: Billie Jean, Living on a Prayer and Rolling in the Deep performed by the in-house string quartet

What to talk about: Hot new movies at the Cannes Film Festival

What not to talk about: Emmanuel Macron’s pension reforms

Words by ROB CHILTON

SMOKE SIGNALS

The wit and wisdom of cigar sommelier Alberto Lucchelli



Cigars can make people lose track of time. “Smokers from the Middle East like a robusto cigar, something longer that they can smoke, pause, and relight,” explains Lucchelli. “Some people like to smoke two or three cigars over eight hours. When you puff a cigar, they say you should remove your watch.”

During Covid sales of cigars rose sharply as people sought ways to relax at home in stressful times. Demand was so high that tobacconists in London ran out of cigars.

Lucchelli has twice visited tobacco plantations in Cuba’s western province of Pinar del Rio and on both occasions was struck by the sense of the past. “You can feel the history and the tradition,” he says. “Cuba is a tropical island that is a perfect microclimate for growing tobacco because the soil contains no chemicals or pollution. They still use cows to pull the ploughs in the fields because if the soil is compressed the tobacco plant cannot grow. When I watched the people working, I saw that their hands are like iron.”

Unsurprisingly, the majority of cigar smokers are men aged between 40 and 60, but Lucchelli is seeing more and more women showing an interest. “Women are very picky about what they smoke and, believe me, they have a greater sense of smell than men.”

Lucchelli must tend to his beloved humidors at The Arts Club which are carefully controlled for temperature and humidity. Before he goes, he stops and provides one more maxim. “There’s an old saying: ‘Cigars help you transform dreams into reality.’ I like that.”



Humankind has been seeking ways to bring about world peace for centuries with little success – maybe we should all just smoke cigars together. That’s the opinion of Alberto Lucchelli, the vastly experienced cigar sommelier at The Arts Club Dubai. A qualified Master of Habanos, the Italian believes the simple act of smoking with other people dismantles our differences and builds new bonds.

“Cigars bring people together,” he smiles. “When people puff cigars there are no issues, you forget about politics and talk about about life and family – you become best friends. Cigar smokers are the friendliest, most polite people in the world. Cigars are not a moment for yourself, they create an opportunity to meet new people and enjoy new conversations.”

For Lucchelli, is a highlight of his work is guiding members at The Arts Club from all corners of the globe on what cigar to choose and then observing them lighting up while striking up conversations. “It’s a way for different cultures to mix,” he explains. “I love that feeling of community. I see it all the time: at the start of the evening strangers start puffing together and by the end of the night, they are best friends.”



“IN ITALY, BREAD IS GOLD”

An Italian family has created a community in Dubai with mouthwatering focaccia, patience and a Michelin-starred chef who doesn't interfere

Words by ROB CHILTON





Davide Galbiati is talking to ELLE Man while gazing out at the sea of Portofino. “It’s one of those beautiful days when it’s hard to distinguish between the sea and the sky,” he grins. Galbiati’s day job is head chef at the Michelin-starred DaV Mare restaurant in the luxurious Splendido Mare hotel in the glamorous Italian harbour town where he concocts such delights as risotto with homemade pesto, Santa Margherita Ligure prawns and tomato emulsion. But today we’re talking about a humble staple of Italian cuisine: focaccia.

Along with his aunt and uncle, Maurizio Galbiati and Karam Annab, Galbiati opened La Fabbrica Focacceria Italiana in Dubai’s hip Wasl 51. In contrast to the bakery’s fanbase that sprung up quickly, the light and fluffy focaccia at La Fabbrica is made slowly. Galbiati, 39, explained the simple yet ancient secrets surrounding this magical Italian bread.

When it comes to focaccia, it’s all about the bubbles, right? The bubbles you see in focaccia is nothing else than fermentation of the yeast. When the yeast activates inside the dough, it lets air out but that air remains within the



“IT’S SO HARD TODAY TO MAKE SOMETHING TRUTHFULLY HOMEMADE THAT ISN’T A BYPRODUCT OF CHEF’S EGO OR JUST FOLLOWING A TREND”

dough and that’s how you get bubbles. **What’s the key to good dough?** It’s very important that the dough is stretched well. The more you stretch the more air you get inside. At La Fabbrica we make sure the dough is fermented for 72 hours before baking and that’s what creates those beautiful bubbles.

Why is fermentation important to good bread? When you eat something that hasn’t been properly fermented, you end up with bread that bloats your stomach because the yeast is still living, it ferments inside you and that makes it hard to digest. Customers say our focaccia feels very light and that they can eat two slices because it doesn’t bloat them. Sometimes they even stretch to three.

Did it take a long time to perfect your recipe? Making focaccia in Dubai is a nightmare! We had to do a lot of testing because of the high temperatures and humidity here. Patience is important. You must respect the dough and don’t rush it.

What does focaccia mean to Italians? Bread is part of our culture, whether you’re rich, poor or middle class. It’s just flour and water so it’s simple and

cheap but in Italy, bread is gold.

Would you say focaccia is a typical peasant food? It was invented by the Romans 2,000 years ago as something that fed a lot of people and filled them up with only a tiny bit. Bread is cheap so focaccia is certainly the people’s food.

What kind of community has grown at La Fabbrica? My uncle Maurizio and his wife Karam run the shop and they are beautiful people. They’re always in the shop having a chat to customers and I think that’s very important because people want a feeling of community in Dubai. We wanted La Fabbrica to feel like a friend’s house. Italian people love it because it’s a small piece of Italy in the UAE and the focaccia takes them home.

Where did Maurizio get the idea? He’s been living in Dubai 15 years and is always looking for Italian comfort food but he could never find good, proper focaccia in Dubai. One day he called me and asked me what I thought about opening a focacceria. It’s a concept we didn’t see in Dubai and we knew we could do it.

Why do you think La Fabbrica has struck a chord with Dubai foodies? The secret is that it is homemade. It’s so hard today to make something truthfully homemade that isn’t a byproduct of chef’s ego or just following a trend. Many concepts in Dubai are all about Instagram.

It must be helpful having a Michelin-starred chef like you on board? Actually, the key to its success is that I’m not there [laughs]. I’ve always cooked in Michelin star restaurants and I have an ego! It would be easy for me to lose the authenticity and start doing fancy things. Maurizio is not a cook but he has a big passion for cooking and cooks his mother’s food. Maurizio’s cooking has not been conditioned by Michelin stars – he cooks because he loves it and he brings the authenticity.

Do you love the tactility of making bread? Oh, for sure, I love it. Food is supposed to be touched with the hands, not a pair of tweezers. I love working with dough because you can create so many different things with just two or three ingredients. Bread is magical, it’s alive and it has to be respected. Bread is like a baby – you must look after it.

Tea Time

New Parisian cafe is brewing up a storm in Riyadh



Crisp pastries, delicate sandwiches and an exotic range of teas from Italy, Japan, India and China await at café ELLE, the new Parisian eatery at Saudi Arabia’s luxurious lifestyle hub Via Riyadh. Inspired by the iconic ELLE magazine, the bright and airy cafe serves breakfast, lunch and dinner, as well as afternoon tea. café ELLE is yet another culinary destination from Cool Inc, the lifestyle brand behind numerous hit restaurants in Saudi Arabia. Within Via Riyadh, Cool Inc has launched or is planning to launch fine dining restaurants such as Ferdi, Madeo, Spago by Wolfgang Puck, Gymkhana, Scott’s, Sexy Fish and Les Deux Magots.



LAST WORD

Supermodel and long-time Dolce & Gabbana collaborator David Gandy has created a menswear brand that he believes can improve our mental wellbeing

centre of every decision that that company makes. I had a brand for 20 years – which was me. I wasn’t arrogant enough to think I could just start a brand but I’ve been learning the business for a while and that gave me confidence.

“Before Covid we saw a change in how men were dressing. Loungewear wasn’t even a category a few years ago but all that changed with Covid and the market became saturated with loungewear. We knew that wouldn’t last, so where did we stand after Covid? Men wanted comfortable clothing but they also wanted to be a little smarter.

“All clothing is emotional to people. Subliminally, we choose what to wear, maybe because it’s comfortable or because it makes us feel confident – that’s the power of clothing. I wanted to delve into that emotion and understand why we choose comfortable clothing and what it creates in our brains. Researchers did tests on students and found their results improved when they wore comfortable clothing. When people are dressed comfortably they’re more productive, confident and open.

“I’m very into cars and driving. We created a wrinkle-free, hybrid driving trouser called the Easy Tapered Pant. I recently raced here in the UAE for four days across 1,000 miles and I wore them every day. I was racing a car and then jumping out to do an interview or attend a dinner and these stayed on all the time.”

INTERVIEW: ROB CHILTON

I don’t follow trends, I never have. People often ask me what’s in trend for men and I have no idea. It’s better to start a trend than follow one. Men are not trend-driven, certainly not as much as women. Men are very loyal customers. If they like a t-shirt they’ll come back and buy 10.

“It’s not easy being a start-up, especially in the fashion world. I take everything personally and anything I put my name to feels part of me in some way. With David Gandy Wellwear, I’m in charge and if the brand doesn’t do well, my team doesn’t get paid, so there’s added pressure.

“There’s no better example to learn from than Domenico and Stefano. I had the privilege see how they run Dolce & Gabbana and they are still at the



ALPINE EAGLE

With its pure and sophisticated lines, Alpine Eagle offers a contemporary reinterpretation of one of our iconic creations. Its 41 mm case houses an automatic, chronometer-certified movement, the Chopard 01.01-C. Forged in Lucent Steel A223, an exclusive ultra-resistant metal resulting from four years of research and development, this exceptional timepiece, proudly developed and handcrafted by our artisans, showcases the full range of watchmaking skills cultivated within our Manufacture.

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HORIZONS NEVER END

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