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Issue 142, December 2018



Founder / Essa Bin Mohammed Al Zedjali
Chairman & Editor-in-Chief / Mohammed Issa Al Zedjali
Chief Executive Officer / Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali
Business Director / Sophia Raman
Editorial Consultant / Suzy Fونتس
Art Director / Pushpender K. Sharma
Operations / M.V.V. Sagar



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 Tel: +968 24816952, 24815330

CONTACT

Telephone
 +968 24136771/2

Email - Editorial
 editor@facesoman.com

Email - Sales
 sales@facesoman.com

Website
 www.facesoman.com

We are on Facebook!
 'FACES Magazine, Oman'

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Editor's Note

December comes but once a year, and what a romance it weaves as it stitches together seams of seasonal cheers, friendly natters, festive spreads, inspiring traditions, and a whole lot of joie de vivre; the pleasant nip in the air adding to the riot of colours and the pulsating ambience in the city. There is, indeed, a palpable effervescence of celebration in the air.



Are you ready for the party season?

Prep your body for the party season with some tried and tested diet and fitness tips and guidelines



As the party season comes rolling in, you become a bit more indulgent as it is a time to relax and enjoy the festive season. However, you should prepare the festive season from giving your partying habits a break. This time of the year is not the best time to start a diet. If you do, you will be more likely to fail than succeed. Instead, you should focus on maintaining a healthy diet and staying active during the party season and the rest of the year. This will help you to stay fit and healthy throughout the year.

Food and Nutrition
 Calorie dense. If the size of portion looks like a serving, reduce portion size. Eat slow and chew your food to increase your food intake. All the festive eating and drinking can be enjoyed. However, it is important to remember that you should not eat too much. Instead, you should focus on maintaining a healthy diet and staying active during the party season and the rest of the year. This will help you to stay fit and healthy throughout the year.

takes a pause to give a bow to the year gone by with a round of applause.

Capturing this mood and tone is this FACES December issue, which is dedicated to the holiday season with gifts, parties and a whole lot of food. We have peppered the issue with seasonal flavours to perk up for the New Year celebrations to follow. The mood is distinctively jolly, as the new issue acts as an easy guide to festive parties and events in the capital, with guides to buy gifts as well as travel to destinations that promise a memorable New Year.

Come along and be a part of this beautiful end-of-year issue.

Compliments of the season, friends!



With the party season getting spruced up, the month will host many a family reunions, office get-togethers and musical extravaganzas in the food and beverage outlets in the capital. It will whip up a flurry of activities leading to the New Year with dazzling lights and peppy music. For, December is that time of the year when the world



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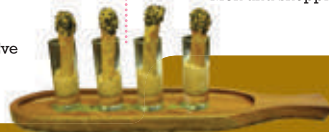
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Degrenne
 Paris

Truly together
on every occasion

Degrenne Paris, the legendary French maker of kitchen and tableware and the extraordinary industry leader, began its incredible success story in 1948 in "Normandy" in France. Degrenne Paris has always endeavored to create friendly, sincere and elegant tables, bringing the highest quality products that make you feel good with your nearest and dearest. All around the world Degrenne Paris symbolizes values of sharing, friendliness and simplicity. After running 330 shops in France, Degrenne Paris is now available in the UAE through its flagship store in Dubai Festival Center and available also in The Dubai Mall.

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Al Khuwair Natural Reserve

Al Khuwair Natural Reserve, the first collaboration of its kind between the private (Al Madina Real Estate Company) and public (Diwan of Royal Court) sector is focused on developing nature reserves and promoting eco-tourism. The project will open its doors to visitor in 2021 and will be an ecological destination to study local wildlife, as well as a diverse economical and recreational destination highlighting Oman's natural treasures. Towards this end, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Diwan Royal Court, represented by the Office for Conservation of the Environment, with Al Madina Real Estate Company. The MoU states that Al Madina Real Estate Company will develop the Reserve which covers an area of 300,000 square meters and prepare it for visitors from Oman and abroad.



Al Mouj Muscat announces launch of luxurious Juman Two Apartments

Al Mouj Muscat has announced the launch of Juman Two - an assortment of luxury apartments at the edge of Al Mouj Marina. Juman Two, which is a statement of luxury marina living, offers deluxe and high-end one- and two-bedroom apartments. The six-storey plus ground floor Juman Two project will be overlooking Al Mouj Marina. Juman is being developed as a district with privacy, exclusivity and state-of-art design, adeptly created by reputed global architects and designers. Residents and visitors are ushered in through

a private driveway to the building entrance. The Concierge service reflects a five-star resort experience, as does the landscaped leisure areas, modern gymnasium, reading lounge facing the marina and underground parking.

Nikon unveils mirrorless cameras Z7 and Z6

Nikon unveiled its full-frame mirrorless Z series. Launched with much fanfare at Sundus Rotana hotel, Nikon Z series saw a grand gathering celebrating the finest engineering in the photography arena. Nikon Z7's in-body image stabilisation enables lower shutter speed and ISO that delivers sharp image quality. Moreover, buyers will get an access to the Nikon Premium Membership (NPM) and Nikon School. This first ever FX-format mirrorless camera with high-megapixel of 45.7 is a state-of-art technology. It has a focus point of 493 that covers 90 percent of image you see. The Z6 features 24.5 mega-pixels - ready to excel broad range of shooting scenarios even in low-light. It is quick capture camera with a 12 frames per second (fps) in continuous running mode.



Hormuz Grand, Muscat joins Radisson Collection

Hormuz Grand, Muscat marked its official inauguration into the Radisson Collection with a formal launch ceremony at the Hotel. The Radisson Collection, part of Radisson Hotel Group, is a premium lifestyle collection of exceptional hotel properties in unique locations. The celebratory event was attended by dignitaries from the government and private sectors, owners of Azaiba Hotels LLC, and representatives from the Radisson Hotel Group. Guests were invited to 'experience the exceptional' and celebrate the launch of the Radisson Collection with locally inspired food prepared by the Hotel's Executive Chef, Thierry Quintric, alongside live music and entertainment.



OAM secures new brands in-line with its transformation mission

In its intent to evolve its retail mix and meet changing customer expectations and preferences, Oman Avenues Mall announced that it has secured new brands. The mall has strengthened its retail mix with



the securing of multiple new brands dedicated to apparel, jewellery and F&B categories. Among these brands are P. F. Chang's, Barbeque Nation and American Eagle outfitters. The mall is also now home to new brands, including

Cinnabon, SMYK, Yoko Sizzlers and Jawahara Jewellery, among others. Cinépolis, a leading world-class cinema exhibitor, is also steadily progressing fit-out works towards opening a large multiplex with 15 screens to provide a premium movie going experience to the residents of Muscat.

Mwasalat and Busworld to host International Passenger Transport Exhibition

Mwasalat has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Busworld Foundation to host 'Busworld Middle East' in Muscat in 2021. A first for the region, the event will be part of a series of exhibitions organised by the Busworld International, the biggest bus and coach trade exhibitors in the world. The signing took place during the IRU World Congress in Muscat, where leaders within the industry came together to network, discuss and debate innovative solutions to road transport, mobility, logistics and trade challenges in the 21st century. Mwasalat is part of Oman Global Logistics Group 'ASYAD', which was established to maximise the economic and financial returns from Government investments in ports, freezones, land and sea transport and logistic services companies.



Oman Air ranks best long-haul carrier

Oman Air has been recognised as the second cleanest and quietest carrier in contributing to the reduction of the noise footprint at UK's Heathrow Airport. The airline comes in behind Polish flag carrier LOT, making it the first best long-haul performer in 'fly quiet and green' chart in Q3 2018. This positive ranking comes as a result of the airline investing in modernising its fleet, phasing out the use of its older aircraft and replacing with eco-friendly Boeing 787 Dreamliners on the London Heathrow service. Heathrow's latest 'Fly Quiet and Green' league table, which ranks the performance of the top 50 airlines on seven noise and emission metrics, places Oman Air in second position; climbing up 26 places over the last quarter.



Starbucks announces the return of festive favourites

To mark the arrival of the festive season, Starbucks has announced this year's seasonal sips. For a limited time, customers can indulge in espresso-based delights including Toffee Nut Latte and Toffee Nut Frappuccino. The rich buttery flavour of sweet toffee is combined with the warmth of toasted nuts and blended with Starbucks' smooth espresso and velvety steamed milk to make the Toffee Nut Latte. The Holiday menu, which will be available across all stores in the Middle East and North Africa region until 6 January 2019, will also feature the Ginger Bread Latte, a sweet and spicy flavour combination, and the Signature Hot Chocolate, which will satisfy any chocoholics' cravings along with other delicious delights including an eye-catching and delicious Red Velvet Cake.



Kim Kardashian

With over 120 million followers on Instagram and a global recognition as the most powerful social media influencer, Kim Kardashian West's success story is nothing short of magical

Whether the television ratings of 'Keeping up with the Kardashians' is waning or sailing, the Kardashians', dubbed as the first family of reality TV, have managed to clinch the People's Choice Awards 2018. The Kardashians' have been wowing television viewers since 2007, and continue to do so, as the fifteenth season premiered in August this year, earning the show the coveted Best Reality Show at the People's Choice Award.

The Kardashians have their fingers on the pulse of their television

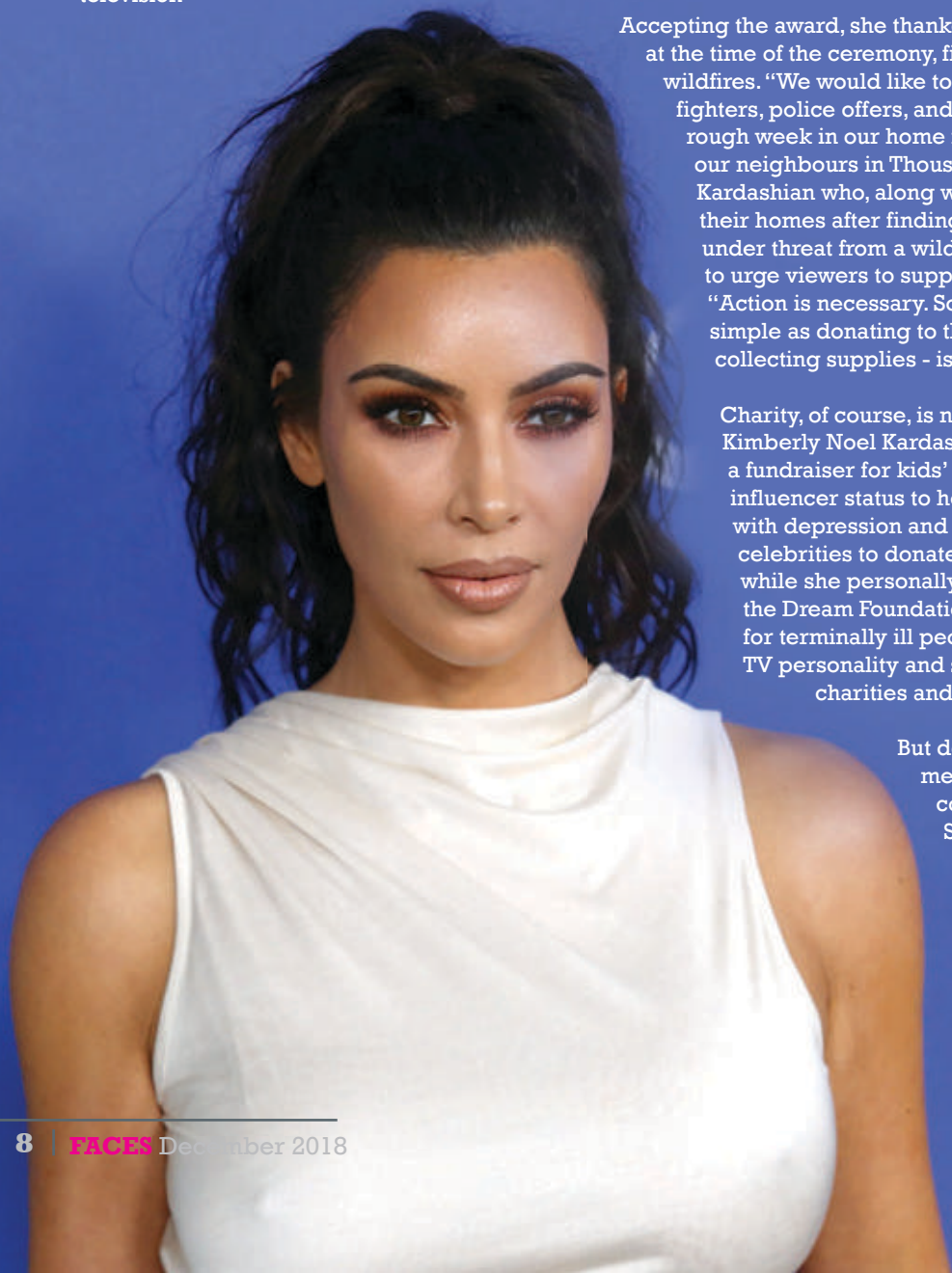
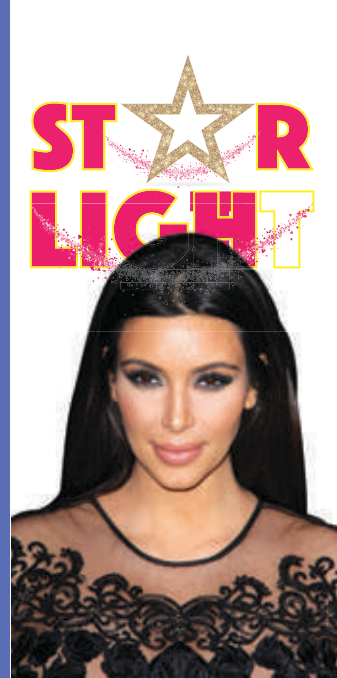
viewers and social media followers and know just what moves will grab them extra attention. The family does have a predilection for seeking attention – particularly, Kim Kardashian West. But then, she does not have to try hard as she has proven that getting attention is an art, one that she has well mastered. And whatever the naysayers have to say about her, there is no dearth of media coverage for this beauty and entertainment mogul, whose every word, every move, every look...is brought under the spotlight, whether to diss it or praise it.

There was, of course, all round praise for her tribute to the victims of the recent California wildfire. She not only drew global attention to the crisis, but also geared support and aid for the affected.

Accepting the award, she thanked the first responders who were, at the time of the ceremony, fighting the devastating California wildfires. "We would like to dedicate this win to all of the fire fighters, police offers, and first responders... It's been a really rough week in our home in Calabasas, Hidden Hills, and for our neighbours in Thousand Oaks and Malibu," said Kim Kardashian who, along with Kourtney and Khloé, evacuated their homes after finding out that their neighborhoods were under threat from a wildfire. She also used the platform to urge viewers to support and help the affected people. "Action is necessary. So anything we can do to help - as simple as donating to the many organisations that are collecting supplies - is too small," she urged.

Charity, of course, is not a new venture for 38-year old Kimberly Noel Kardashian West. She recently launched a fundraiser for kids' charity, using her social media influencer status to help thousands of children struggling with depression and anxiety. She is known to encourage celebrities to donate their clothes to charity auctions, while she personally donates hers to raise money for the Dream Foundation, a wish-granting organisation for terminally ill people. She has, in her capacity as a TV personality and socialite, supported a host of other charities and causes.

But despite all her popularity in the social media circles, she is not out there to coax people to follow her footsteps. She says, "I'm not trying to influence anyone else; I'm not saying, 'Do what I do.' I think it's a little pretentious to say, 'I'm a role model'; I would never say that, and I don't think of myself that way." ■



HANDS ON THE WHEEL
EYES ON THE ROAD *safe*
MIND ON ^{safe} DRIVING

GET HOME SAFE



...That Time of the Year

It's that time of the year again; that time when parties need no ruse and the fun quotient is at a high with the festive spirit setting the pace for the month and the coming New Year

December is here in all its winter glory and what better excuse to party than to embellish the last month of the year with a fitting finale?

Indeed, there is something about December; something so very distinctive about its soft wintry notes, the festive splendour, the quaint traditions, the riot of colours and the kinship and friendship that it fosters. It is laced in a dreamy texture, as it brings up a whiff of all the past traditions and customs; of the holiday season replete with get-togethers and fun times. It also feeds on retrospection, giving the year that has whizzed past a thump on the back to set the pace for the year waiting to unfold.

The fun quotient stays put, flavouring the days with all that the month upholds. And with the party circuit in the capital looking primed to give December its due, the month could turn into a gamut of vibrant and colourful parties, down here in Muscat too. From the weekends packed with DJ nights and musical

extravaganzas to themed parties to welcome the festive season, Muscat does look poised to imbue the flavours of the season. Add to that equation a dash of private parties and the sum has to be wholesome entertainment.

But is that enough to hold party seekers and shopaholics from travelling to neighbouring countries to flavour their holiday season with exciting events and purchases? Muscat's night life may have miles to go before it is seen to be on par with others in the region, but event planners in the city are slowly finding their groove in the challenging world of events to up the ante. Whether it's presenting musical performances and DJ acts or stand-up comedy shows, there is a definite move among the new and established events cadre to create a brighter entertainment arena for residents who know the importance of getting their share of weekly amusement and doses of festive moods.

That holds true for the personalised gifts market too. With the gifting season looming large, the focus is on talented locals who have found creative ways to enhance the gifting market with handmade products that can double up as gifts for a variety of occasions. Relying on social media platforms, many have found leverage for their products, adding an element of novelty in the gifting market.

So, to complement the holiday season, the focus of the following Cover Story is on the importance of entertaining events to cater to different segments of the society, while highlighting the added attraction of gifting to mark the festivities in the coming days. Read on to find how the events horizon of the country is shaping up, as Oman Events, the local platform for events, throws the spotlight on the gradual shift in the events scenario; check out also the gifting market, as Laila Al Amri of Party Box presents her take on the options in the market.



Oman Events

Oman Events, the popular social media platform for events - planning, promotion and management - has been a close witness to the literal turn of events in the capital and has several spectacular aces up its sleeve to spice up the local events horizon

The figurative ebb and flow of the party circuit in the country may have dampened the spirits of many a new entrant in the market, but for those who have been there and done that, the events market has the potential to turn into a winner – provided one has the pulse on the finger of the demands of the highly unpredictable audience. Despite the apparent economic slowdown, the market is open for newer ideas and projects that can inject fresh flavours into the entertainment landscape of the country this season.

One such is the popular Oman Events platform, which has carved ways to leverage newer concepts on to the entertainment horizon. Over the past 9 years it has found its groove in the events industry, not just as a planner and manager, but also as a promoter of events and activities organised by others in the tribe. Mohammed Nasser Ali Al Farai, aka Moodi, the man behind Oman Events, has seen the literal turn of events from the early blackberry days when the task was often restricted to broadcast messaging of events, to the current social media platform which has boosted its profile as a reliable event management and planning outfit. What began as an information platform to connect with friends about the events happening in the city has a thriving portfolio today. It was, perhaps, Moodi's love for events that made him a magnet for people to find resources regarding the most happening events in the capital. The idea germinated when people wanted him to take on the onus of sourcing information on various activities. "It started very small," he states, recalling that it was mostly confined to broadcasting messages and connecting



Mohammed Nasser Ali Al Farai, aka Moodi



the concerned people with the audience. "From there we built the platform on social media and instant messaging. Today we have 38.9k followers on our Facebook page and 17.8k on the Instagram, in addition to Snapchat and Twitter accounts and a database of WhatsApp numbers to send broadcast messages," he states.

Events and Social Media

Their strongest point is social media marketing, with hotel and restaurant tie-ups gearing them up for an improved status. In the course of time they have also expanded to corporate events and have marketed and promoted around 25 companies. With a core team of four members, the company has found a foothold in the slowly but steadily growing market. An adhoc team is mobilised and hired to suit the requirements of every event, as the idea is to open avenues of opportunity for the youth to find relevant exposure and also find alternate sources of revenue.

Some of the highlights of their event circuit are outdoor concerts and popular stand up comedy acts. They have handled the operations of memorable concerts like Shaggy, Roger Sanchez, Fatman Scoop, Diamond Platnumz and Mr. P (P square) and marketed events like the recent one featuring Sean Paul. Come December, and the local crowd will be treated to the popular African artist Mr Eazi. The New Year's Eve also promises to be bang-on with an exciting line-up of parties and events.

Having moved into comedy events, the team is playing a major role in supporting the crop of local comedians. Shaher Shams, a core member of Oman Events, also doubles up as a comedian. He opened the Saurabh Pant show, held in September this year, and the team also presented East India Company on November 30.

Interestingly, Oman Events, despite its credentials as an event management company, has incorporated a wider portfolio of operations, including promotion of events organised by others in the market. "This is our USP. As long as it is the business of events, we take up any related task to keep our events pennants flying high," states Moodi, who like his other teammates has a regular day job.

Market Scenario

Talking about the current market situation, he affirms that the scenario is getting better in terms of events presented, but laments that the market revenue is yet to pick up. He attributes it to the culture of saving among people that has created a mindset against spending for entertainment. But he hastens to admit that things were different about four years ago when the events business was booming and people were open to the idea of paying for a show. According to him, one of the reasons for this change is the preference among the youth to go to neighbouring Dubai to catch events, even when the same event is scheduled to take place in Muscat. "The audience here is very unpredictable. We do sit and have brainstorming sessions to assess the feasibility of organising a show, but things don't always work out as planned. For example, we might have what would be classified as one of the best shows, but find very tepid response from the crowd; similarly, we might bring in an average artist, but the response might be astounding with a huge turnout. Over the years we have, of course, studied the market and are more alert to the factors that can be played to our advantage," he explains.

Having said that though, he points out that the percentage of people who consciously seek out events is limited. It is, very so often, the same people who attend most of the events. "60 to 70 percent of the crowd are repeat audiences at most venues," he notes. And, unlike Dubai, where tourism has also bolstered the events market, in Oman, tourists, often, prefer to seek the outdoors. "They like to go to wadis, trekking, hiking, snorkelling... It is a different market altogether," he adds.





There is an apparent move to change the status quo with food and beverage outlets opening their doors for event-related activities, popularly stand-up comedy shows. But, even here, there are certain limitations in terms of artists who can be engaged to perform. "For example, if you want an acrobatic dancer for a show, you will have to hire from outside, as they are not available locally. And when this happens, the ticket prices go up," he points out.

Venue also proves to be a constraint, as there are very limited options. "There are several areas in the events industry that need to grow... Business entities are not interested in establishing better venues, as there is a paucity of events to make it feasible. Besides, people in general also need to learn to spend for the entertainment they seek," observes Moodi.

Audience Response

Things will take a turn for the better if people open up to the very concept of paying for entertainment. People are, generally, wary of events that are priced more than 5 Rials, as the families are bigger and the price of an evening out tends to become expensive with any higher priced event. The dilemma of organising an event in an F & B outlet also poses the problem of attracting families who might want a more moderate ambience. "Compared to other countries, we are still in a growing stage and it will take us at least four

years to reach there. We do not have the requisite venues or stadiums for concert and planning becomes an issue. If I want to follow my heart and organise a major event for 10,000 people, with amazing sounds, lights and everything else, it will take a long time owing to various constraints, most prominently the lack of sponsorships from the corporate sector," he states.

Curiously, audiences in Oman are still not open to the idea of buying tickets online. Even when they are aware of the event and the opportunity of availing early bird offers, many wait until the last hour to buy their tickets, adding to the uncertainty of the success factor - not forgetting the free pass culture, which refuses to change. "Everybody asks for free passes," he laments.

To combat all the problems, the team at Oman Events conducts a feasibility study that involves zeroing on the right date for the show, identifying the target audience and the actual returns from the event. "But then there are some events we do purely because of the passion we hold; for the sheer pleasure of creating entertaining opportunities for people," he points out. On the other extreme of this spectrum are the possibilities of bringing in top performers who visit neighbouring countries, but the events do not materialise owing to the apathy of sponsors to pool in the required finances. Interestingly, though, the celebrities who have included Oman

in their itinerary have been taken in by the hospitality and the warmth of the people here, opening the avenues for more such interactions in the future.

DJ Culture

The recent years have seen a spurt in the growth of DJs, with most restaurants in the capital catering to the requirements of their patrons by incorporating DJ nights into their weekend schedules. "We have given opportunities to lots of DJs to play at our events and we continue to keep the doors open for anyone who wants to join. So yes, there is comedy, there is DJ, there is music and there is photography... We are equipped to handle most of the requirements of the events market. We believe everyone deserves a chance to prove themselves," states Moodi.

Oman Events' USP

Oman Events USP is their marketing strategy. "Our social media forum, our presence in the market...these have been our plus points. Our team members are always active on social media. We also believe in taking up only those projects that we can handle; we do not want to pile our plates with orders that we cannot meet," he maintains.

For party planners this festive season, Moodi suggests the following:

- Go with a theme
- Choose the date wisely
- Have a knowledge of the crowd/guests
- Ensure that the venue is suitable.



What are the ideal gifts for different occasions and for different ages?

I have specific gifts that cater to various age groups. For example, while I have unique items for college and university graduates, for babies and kids I have special items such as toys that are suitable for them. And for adults, the most suitable gifts would contain items such as perfumes, body lotions and makeup, and so on.

What would you suggest for the festive season?

It depends on the occasion and the

taste and budget of the customer; but generally it would be items such as imported chocolate bars, imported hot chocolate, range of imported teas with different flavours, etc.

What are the most challenging aspects of being in the business of gifts?

The most challenging aspect of the business is constantly coming up with newer and unique ideas and items. Besides, finding unique brands that are not available locally is a major concern.

What would be your top five tips for choosing a right gift?

1. Pick a gift that reflects your taste
2. Ensure that the gift is suitable for the person who is receiving it
3. Chose a gift that suits your budget
4. Try and find a gift that reflects how special the person you are gifting to is
5. Make sure the gift is suitable for the occasion or event ■



A National Day Tribute

From dental floss to art stings...practicing dentist Dr. Hafsa Banu Abid talks about her love for Oman that moved her to create an artistic National Day tribute

As Oman was decking up the streets with lights and flags and the corporate world was gearing up to observe the auspicious National Day, a practicing dentist was busy hammering nails and stringing up her wooden canvas to create a masterpiece to pay tribute to the leader, who has turned the fortunes of the country and created a benchmark of excellence in the international horizon. And the result is a three-foot by three-foot artwork on wood, featuring the portrait of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said!

Practicing dentist Dr. Hafsa Banu Abid used around 5000 nails and 900 yards of string to create the portrait, which took three months to craft to perfection. A self-taught artist, she has created several works of art over the years, but classifies the new portrait as her masterpiece. "His Majesty's portrait is my masterpiece. May Almighty Allah grant him a long, healthy and prosperous life," she wishes.

She got inspired to take up string art as a medium of expression following her son's school activity. He was required to create a work of art with pins and coloured threads on a mounting board, and she was taken in by the concept. "It was so satisfying and the end product was so beautiful... I went on to check out the different types of nails for wood and threads with different thickness," she explains, pointing out that string art or pin and thread art is an art form dating back to 1960s. It comprises of placement of pins or nails in a pattern, mostly on wood, and strung together with thread, wires or fibres.

Soon, she began making little works of art of for friends and family and the appreciation she received was, as she puts it, 'Masha'Allah'. "The way their face would light up in amazement made me look for more. I didn't want to confine myself to just geometric designs, so I tried Arabic calligraphy, scenic designs, portraits and wall art. Then, about three months ago, I felt I



could contribute to the National Day through my art. Having lived here most of my life I felt I owed it to the nation, and what better way than His Majesty's portrait itself!" she states.

Dr. Hafsa, Managing Director of White Smile Dental Specialty Clinic at Qurum, has been a resident of Oman since she arrived here as a six month old baby, about 30 odd years ago. "My parents have been residing here since 1973. I call Oman my first home, having spent most of my life here. I did my schooling at Indian School Muscat and Dentistry from Yenepoya Dental College in South India," she points out.





She has been inclined towards art since her childhood; always aspiring for more while attempting different mediums, be it sketching or painting on fabrics, glass, sand, ceramics, shells, casting and moulding of hand impressions, among others. Calling art her passion, she says, "Art is what gives me satisfaction and peace, with the recent string art portrait of His

Majesty occupying the top place. I have given away most of my work to friends and family; recently I have also donated art for the breast cancer awareness event organised by Oman Cancer Association."

Attributing her success to the support from her family and friends, she says it is the satisfaction that she derives in art that has kept the flame burning bright. "As a dentist you create beautiful smiles, so professionally and personally art is a part of me and always will be," she states. ■



Groundwork begins at historical Mina Al Sultan Qaboos

JV between OMRAN and DAMAC International paves way for region's largest waterfront transformation

Groundwork is underway at Mina Al Sultan Qaboos (MASQ), following the announcement of a joint venture between DAMAC International and Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN). Transformation of the historical port into a USD 2 billion integrated waterfront destination will include hotels, residences, food and beverage, retail and entertainment offerings.

Since the initial announcement of the joint venture, extensive project planning and placemaking research for Muttrah has been undertaken. This included third-party studies, technical evaluation and traffic flow analysis. After the master plan was granted approvals from Oman's Ministry of Tourism, demolition

began as the joint venture prepared sub surfaces for the first phase of construction.

Highlighting details of the project, Dr. Ali bin Masoud Al Sunaidy, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Planning, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of OMRAN, said, "The first stage of this project aims to set the foundation for the transformation, enhance traffic management, while establishing the necessary framework that will cement local SMEs' and Omani nationals' progressive role within the project."

The joint venture also announced plans to house an on-site discovery centre by the first half of 2019. The space will enrich visitors' experience with the heritage of Muttrah, while leveraging technology tools, such as virtual reality gear, to explore the community's rich past and its visionary future. The centre will also showcase details of the approved master plan for the waterfront destination. ■



'Inside the Mind of a Killer'



Iman Al-Qubtan

Iman Al-Qubtan, author of the recently published psychological thriller 'Inside the Mind of a Killer', shares the twists and turns that led her to become a writer*

Specialist psychologist Iman Al-Qubtan's 'Inside the Mind of a Killer' is a mini book of cases that takes the reader on a thrilling ride into the minds of killers whose modus operandi are deciphered by the cops to throw the spotlight on the workings of criminal minds. The book brings to fore the author's interests in forensics and relationships, counselling, psychological examination of criminal behaviour and behavioural analysis.

In the following interview, Iman, who has to her credit an academic project titled 'Cross cultural examination of the difference in attitude towards crime and punishment between the UK and Oman' and a 'Workshop on Analysing and Understanding Personality', shares the story behind her first novel, 'Inside the Mind of a Killer', which was released in October this year. A member of the British Psychological Society (BPS), British Society of Criminology (BSC), and the American Psychological Association (APA), Iman is currently working as a specialist psychologist at Muscat Private Hospital.

How, rather when, did the writing bug bite you?

Actually, I have always loved criminal psychology. When I first joined my Master's Degree programme, I opted for a forensic project. After graduation, I conducted a workshop on personality and, later on, while working as a psychologist, I wrote my first book 'Inside the Mind of a Killer'.

Did your psychologist background have a say in the content of your novel?

Yes, the themes were based on my psychological analysis of criminal

and law enforcement behaviour, as well as a checklist related to the crime scene and what goes on in the killer's mind. I watch real life documentaries, and regularly look up the FBI's latest information and victims, that is in addition to my forensic psychology studies at the university where we had examples of real life victims in each chapter.

Could you provide an outline of the book?

'Inside the Mind of a Killer' is a mini book of cases that deals with themes such as life insurance; crimes of jealousy, love and revenge; disturbed psychopath; law manipulations, child

custody and divorce; mental illness; demographics related to theft, gangs and murder...

The first section includes three case scenarios with three main characters Don, Beth and Elena. Each scenario demonstrates a murder case that revolves around life insurance compensation. The second section includes four case scenarios with murder as a consequence of jealousy, love and revenge. The four main characters in those scenarios are Amelia, James, Brian, and Albert. The third section includes four case scenarios of murder committed by individuals with mental illnesses

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such as schizophrenia, anti-social personality disorder, multiple dissociative personality and borderline personality disorder. The main characters in those scenarios are Grieg, Sean, Enrique, and Gerard.

The fourth section includes four case scenarios of murder, where the main motive is lies - the four main characters in these scenarios are Mortimer, Holly, Edward, and Albert. The section that follows includes three case scenarios with the three main characters Alex, Bob, and King. In these scenarios, the murder is committed by a psychopath serial killer who could be a sexual offender. Next is a section that includes one case scenario of murder with the primary motive of child custody and divorce by means of law manipulation. The main character in this case scenario is France. The final section includes the case scenario of a murderer from an impoverished locality known for theft, gangs, drugs and murder.

The above scenarios trace how the police catch the murderer, identify the murder weapon, how the murderer tries to cover up the crime, how the murder was committed, what increased the police suspicion after the murder, where the killer disposed off the body, and how the body was found... Finally, there is a small part at the end on love, lust, physical attraction, and relationships based on a survey conducted through Qualtrics online.

What have been the challenges you faced on the way?

The challenges were finding a good graphic designer to design my sketches. My challenges were to get people to understand the concept of my book along with marketing strategies, as my book is self-published.

Who has been the inspiration in your writing journey?

My mother, she always proof reads my work - even while I was doing my Master's degree.

What has been the most interesting factor in your debut novel?

I am interested in love (which makes up the second part of my book). The answers I chose for the definitions of love, lust and physical attraction were interesting to me. The first part of the survey, in general, had interesting questions and answers. The most

interesting factor was that it could be read from a criminal point of view or the police point of view; also the checklist matches the current range of crimes and it is interesting for the reader to match the points stated in the checklist with the case stories.

What makes a good story?

According to me, the story should be short and containing the area of interest of the specific reader. Also the anonymity of the answers and the dedication makes it interesting.

How can readers get hold of your book?

My book is available for sale directly from me and is also available in

E-book format with the option for print on demand. The E-book is currently available at Scribd, Amazon, COPIA, Google play, iBooks, BOOKSHOP, Kobo, Gardner books and e Central, while the print on demand is available on Ingram, Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Baker and Taylor and Powell's.

Any future plans...?

Yes, I am currently in the process of writing my second book 'Emie'. It will also have a dedication, a survey, and author's opinion. ■

* *Iman specialises in talk therapy, relationship and family counselling, and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).*



'Tis the Season to be jolly

Blow away the cobwebs of monotony from your calendar; December is here with a long line-up of exciting parties and fun events to end the year on a high note. Check out what is trending in the hotels and top destinations in the country this month...



Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel

With halls decked in boughs of holly, family, friends and loved ones can create unforgettable memories by enjoying delectable culinary experiences, entertaining events, Ritz Kids fun, and New Year's glitter at Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

Join the merrymaking at the Christmas tree lighting ceremony on December 6th. Sing to your heart's content along with a children's choir and enjoy season's favourites, including mince pies, Christmas cookies, macarons, delicious hot chocolate, warm apple cider and more. Every weekend throughout the month of December, children can enjoy decorating their own gingerbread delights, under the guidance of the hotel's extraordinary pastry chefs, at the Hotel's Atrium Lobby Lounge.

Tantalise your palate with turkey and all its trimmings during the Hotel's Christmas Day brunch at Al Khiran Kitchen. A festive buffet with live stations, traditional favourites and decadent desserts, the brunch will also include a surprise appearance by Santa Claus. Countdown to 2019 and ring in the New Year under the stars at the Gala Dinner. Dress up to celebrate in style with live performances and the magical release of Chinese lanterns into the midnight sky.



Al Mouj Muscat

Al Mouj Muscat has a wide range of celebrations for the upcoming holiday season, including festive packages, promotional deals and new store opening across its various destinations. As part of the holiday season, Al Mouj Muscat will also be offering a Festive Turkey Takeaway, from the 7th to 25th of December. The Walk, Al Mouj Muscat's luxury retail destination, will be opening doors to the Dose Café and will be welcoming various new brands to its retail line-up during the holiday season.

At Al Mouj Golf, the celebrations will kick off with a Festive Brunch on 25th December. It will also have on offer exclusive deals on memberships, presenting discounted prices for individual, family and junior categories in both Championship and Academy Memberships. Members will also get exclusive benefits that include payment plans, flexible memberships as well as a membership gift pack.

The Academy Restaurant at Al Mouj Marina will also be part of the celebrations and will introduce a new menu themed around oyster; it will include a three course meal around oysters - Fresh Oyster, Grilled Oyster with Cheese for starters and a Creamy Oyster Stew for the main course.



Grand Hyatt Muscat

As the countdown to Christmas begins, guests can join a mystical experience at 'The Garden' as The Muscat Singers and the British School Muscat Choir present a Grand Christmas Musical on December 11. Guests looking to tuck into traditional home baked Christmas favourites can come over to Sirj Tea Lounge from 10th December to 25th December. To usher Christmas in style, the Hotel will present a special Christmas Eve buffet dinner at the Mokha Café on December 24th. At The Grill House, guests can dine under the stars with a host of options from the grill, including slow roast turkey. Diners at Tuscany can opt for the Special Christmas Eve menu, which will be priced a la carte. Christmas day will be a family affair with the 'Jingle Bells Brunch' at Mokha Café. This time around, the New Year's Eve will be a French Affair - 'Paris by Night - NYE' - at 'The Garden'. The award winning International band 'The Swing Revue' will perform from 8pm onwards, along with some exciting performers taking the fun quotient of the evening to a top-notch.

At Tuscany, guests can indulge in a true Italian style New Year's Eve - on offer is an elegant 5-course menu, including premium beverages. The Grill House offers a perfect setting to immerse in the evocative mood of the evening. On the agenda is a Special Gourmet Set Menu, which includes premium beverages with live entertainment.



Hormuz Grand, a Radisson Collection Hotel

From tree lighting and gingerbread house workshop to traditional brunches with all the trimmings, Hormuz Grand is set for festive season. Taking the festive spirit forward is the 'The Bar Snowman' at The Vault every Thursday of the month. 'The Mad Hatter's Tea', to be held on December 8th at the HUB, will present holiday inspired teas. Children up to 15 years of age can learn baking at the 'Santa's Elves Baking Class' conducted by Chef Thierry Quintric, on December 14th, and avail an opportunity to brunch and play in the pool later. December 21st is dedicated for the 'Festive Friday Brunch', offering a modern take on Christmas. At OMNY, the Christmas Eve Dinner will feature a festive themed 5-course dinner. This will be followed by 'The Exceptional Christmas Day Lunch' at the Straits, offering an exceptional spread and traditional treats.



Dance into 2019 in Cuban style with live music from an all Cuban Band. The NYE Havana Night will present a gala buffet dinner with a spread of international food and desserts. NYE at OMNY will feature a chef's degustation menu that is inspired by the season. At Qureshi Bab-Al-Hind, there will be a selection of authentic dishes from the Hotel's gourmet international buffet, and, at The Vault, the party will ensure that the social scene comes alive with groovy tunes played by the DJ.

Park Inn Muscat

Spread the Christmas cheer – book your year-end corporate parties for colleagues, staff or friends in advance this season at the RBG Grill or Sama Terrazza rooftop. Choose from a selection of mouth-watering set menus for groups of 20. On Christmas Eve, enjoy a 3-course dinner with roast turkey station including soft drinks at the RBG Grill.

Make the New Year's Eve a sizzling affair; feast on an exquisitely prepared dinner buffet including unlimited soft drinks – the perfect finish to 2018. Countdown and toast in 2019 at the RBG Grill and enjoy free access to NY's Eve rooftop party at Sama Terrazza. Revel in the unparalleled Sama Terrazza rooftop ambience as the two female international DJs (DJ Erika Greys from Italy and DJ Leo from India) work up a musical frenzy to get all party goers in the mood.



Radisson Blu

Experience Christmas magic at Radisson Blu's Christmas Eve Dinner in Olivos Restaurant from 7pm onwards. Follow that with a Christmas Lunch from 12pm to 3pm with packages inclusive of buffet and drinks.

Come 31st and the mood will turn to Carnival with a memorable New Year's Eve Party, featuring live band, the 'Electric Street Band'.

Other special events to add to the mood of the season include Winter Break Party on December 20th and international DJ on December 27th and 28th. The theme nights continue: Midweek Tuesday, Afro-Arabic nights on Wednesday, DJ Night on Thursday, DJ/Ladies night on Friday and Asian Night on Saturday.



Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa

On December 24th and 25th, Al Tanoor restaurant at Al Bandar Hotel will offer a glorious buffet dinner featuring international festive delicacies from around the world. Samba restaurant at Al Waha Hotel will have a lavish festive buffet showcasing the very best of seafood, meat and poultry, salads, soups, live cooking stations and delectable desserts. Signature seafood restaurant Bait Al Bahr will extend a delightful 5-course festive seafood menu prepared by Chef Magesh; Capri Court too will have a delectable 5-course set menu created especially for the festive season.

Guests are invited to explore an enchanting winter wonderland from 13 – 27 December with a host of seasonal festivities, including a seasonal Festive Market and annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony. The Festive Market will feature six stalls offering a selection of food and beverage items, arts and crafts, souvenirs and gift opportunities.

An eco-friendly Christmas tree will take pride of place as the centrepiece in Al Bandar lobby to highlight the volume of plastic water bottles consumed in the country. In 2019, the Resort will stop the use of plastic water bottles in outdoor areas with the installation of water fountains to encourage guests to refill reusable water bottles.



Shangri-La Al Husn Resort & Spa

Shangri-La Al Husn Resort & Spa will offer a range of dining options throughout the festive season including signature dining, sumptuous buffet and casual dining packages on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day as well as a spectacular Fire and Ice themed party at Turtle Beach to welcome 2019 in style. The Sultanah restaurant invites guests to start the festive celebrations in style on the Christmas Eve with smooth classics and festive tunes performed by the renowned jazz duo, while savouring many seasonal favourites at the delicious buffet spread. On December 25th, Sultanah offers a festive celebration with a sumptuous and more intimate celebration for two with an indulgent set menu of 5 course, featuring a host of international delicacies and vegetarian dining options.

Six Senses Zighy Bay

Six Senses Zighy Bay is gift wrapping a festive season packed with experiences on land, in the air and at sea between December 23 and January 2. The culinary team will lay on a banquet of delicacies on Christmas Eve. There will be a carving station for slow-roasted turkey and a grill station for local fish and desserts. A high altitude Christmas Day dinner will take place 950 feet above sea level at Sense on the Edge, the Resort's literal top table. Like every year, Santa Claus will make a dramatic entrance, dropping down from the sky, bearing gifts for the young and joy for the young at heart.

Ring in the New Year by the saltwater pool, before partaking in an extravagant culinary experience, featuring buffet and barbecue corners, fresh salads, Asian delicacies, Mediterranean influences, lavish deli counter, Arabic hot and cold mezze and grill stations and a selection of desserts.

Guests can look forward to exhilarating experiences like private dhow cruises, paragliding, sunset Sabatyn excursions and catamaran cruises along with spa and wellness workshops and special food and beverage workshops.





Sundus Rotana

Mark the start of the festive holidays with Sundus Rotana's inaugural Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony on December 6. Kids can look forward to a visit from Santa with a bag of goodies. Warm up for the merry season from December 7th to 30th with festive treats and buffet spreads. Ginger, Teatro and Lobby Lounge will be serving a selection of dishes, specially designed to present festive meals all month long. Enjoy the real taste of the season with Ginger's Christmas Day Brunch featuring traditional roasts, pies, pastries and more.

Step into 2019 in style at Ginger's New Year's Eve Decade Party with delicious food, drinks and entertainment by the in-house DJ. Teatro Restaurant will present an 'All That Sparkle' party on the last evening of 2018. For an unforgettable New Year's Eve add a one-night stay inclusive of late breakfast the next day.

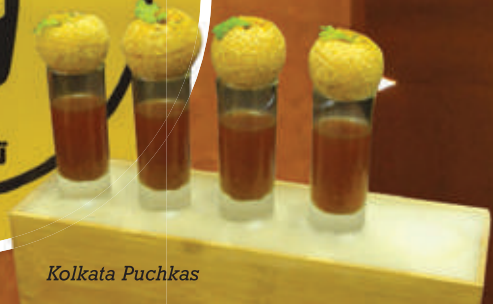


Kempinski Hotel Muscat

The holiday season begins on 12th December with the switching 'on' of the Christmas tree lights. From 19th to 26th December, the resident Christmas Choir will sing a medley of festive favourites and classic carols at the Hotel Lobby. The Advent Afternoon Tea at Amwaj Lounge will present seasonal favourites, while the resident pianist plays classical melodies to inspire the holiday mood. From 10th December to 10th January, Café One will open the amazing festive collection, including ginger bread houses, Stollens, Panatone, cinnamon treats and even Christmas turkey. Christmas Eve supper at The Kitchen will have on offer spectacular live interactive cooking stations, roast turkey with all the trimmings and the Artisan French cheese corner. Following that, the Christmas brunch, will feature traditional carvery stations and seemingly endless trimmings.

New Year's Eve at The Kitchen will be an extravagant and sumptuous affair, while the glittering ambiance of Zale's exclusive beachfront party will feature a fusion of fresh Omani seafood and signature Mediterranean bites. A sophisticated soirée, with oysters and the finest selection of caviar will be on offer at Amwaj; at Bukhara, the fun filled New Year's Eve celebration will present the culinary diversity of India and Soi Soi will create a lively Bangkok street style food fiesta. The New Year's Day Brunch at The Kitchen will craft a sensation and theatrical start to the year.

Fun Dining at Tuk Tuk Taxi



Kolkata Puchkas



Chole Kulche Canapes



Hail the Tuk Tuk Taxi at City Centre Muscat for a food ride along the aromatic lanes of India, with a dash of spice and all things fun

Why 'Tuk Tuk', why not auto-rickshaw...? That was our first thought as we booked a food ride at the newly opened Tuk Tuk Taxi.

The answer, obviously, lies in the musical intonations packed in the name. 'Tuk Tuk' has a lyrical tone and an onomatopoeic touch, which can bring a spontaneous smile; and for those who have ridden one, a gush of emotions. The open framed structure, with its traffic-dodging abilities and manoeuvrability in the narrowest of lanes, is reliable, accessible and, best of all, fun.

That is the essence that Tuk Tuk Taxi has captured in its bright and vibrant interiors, in its culinary presentations and in its taste quarters, which distinguishes it from most other Indian restaurants. Located on the ground floor of the busy City Centre Muscat, the restaurant is evocative of the fun ride that the three-wheeler tuk tuk promises. Commonly referred to as auto rickshaw in most parts of India, a trip in a tuk tuk is comparable to a joy ride, if one is not in a rush to reach a destination.

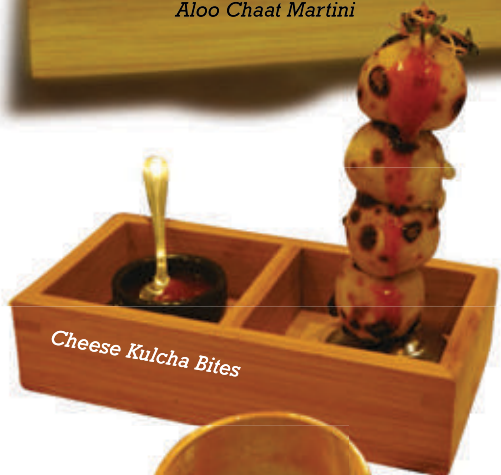
Like us...

We were not in any rush to end our ride, as we took a long culinary trip, starting with cardamom flavoured cutting-chai and culminating with a 'Digestive shot' – a paan flavoured churned milk, served in little shot containers with the added drama of molecular fumes.

Everything about food presentation at Tuk Tuk Taxi is imbued with some element of drama...



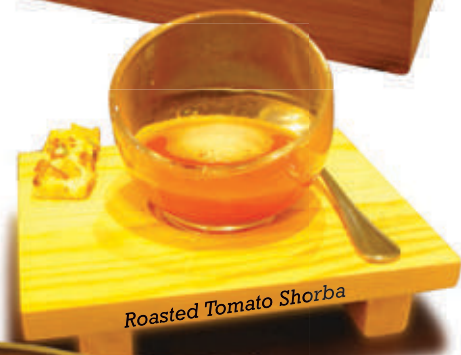
Aloo Chaat Martini



Cheese Kulcha Bites



Edible Samosa Cigars



Roasted Tomato Shorba



Lamb Seekh Shawarma with Briyani Rice Risotto

Our food ride began with an array of starters that are Indian in their concept, but are presented with a touch of fusion that is at once unique and flavourful - which, in effect, is the major attraction of this new entrant in the culinary horizon of Muscat. Opened in October this year, it has, in the short span, managed to draw foodies to its fold, providing newer metaphors for Indian cuisine. The stereotypical hot and spicy definition has been toned down, rather turned on its head to present a sense of diversity in the flavours to cater to diners from different walks of life.

As the picture-heavy menu suggests, the idea is to provide a 'fun' dining experience. And what a fun memorable experience it was - thanks in large doses to the friendly staff, the congenial atmosphere and the open setting that is reflective of an inviting home.

With an assortment of starters and mains, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, and a host of chaat items modified as appetisers, alongside Pizzaans - a take on the regular pizza with an Indian touch - the menu is an amalgamation of different states of India.

We started with a warm bowl of 'Roasted Tomato Shorba with Coriander Foam', which is what a food doctor would advise on a cool winter evening. It is full of flavours with the common tomato taking on the role of a culinary queen. The sweet and tangy 'Aloo Chaat Martini', that came next, was a delightful take on the regular Indian fast food; it is served with pipettes of three different

chutneys to flavour the item. Staying on the chaat course were the 'Kolkata Puchkas' or fluffed up balls of dough, served with a shot of spiced pomegranate water. For devoted pani-puri lovers this new twist on the regular item might not seem such a big draw.

We followed that with 'Biryani Arancini', which is a completely novel take on the regular biryani rice. Featuring in this item are deep fried biryani balls stuffed with spiced cheese and served with mint and tomato chutney. The series continued with 'Cheese Kulcha Bites' (mini flatbreads stuffed with mozzarella cheese and served with a spiced garlic relish); 'Edible Samosa Cigars', which is served in a shot glass filled with delicious ketchup and tobasco flavoured mayonnaise; 'Chole Kulche Canapes', featuring masala chickpeas served on mini Indian spiced bread; and the 'Smoked Tulsi Paneer Tikka' with dehydrated olive dust. This is, again, a total novelty, as the paneer is dredged with olive dust and smoky basil marinade.

The build up from all the chaat and vegetarian items led us to one of the best items on the menu - 'Golden Prawns with Sweet Chilli Sauce and Quinoa Crunch with Lemon Air'. Delicious! We also got to try the 'Lamb Seekh Shawarma with Briyani Rice Risotto', '3 Pepper Chicken Seekh Kebabs', 'Sundried Tomato Chicken Tikka with Blackberry Chutney' and 'Malabari Lamb Uttapam' (boneless chunks of lamb tossed in south Indian



Sundried Tomato Chicken Tikka

spices and served on a crispy rice pancake). Of all the dishes we tried at Tuk Tuk, the only one that could present a 'oh spicy' reaction would be the lamb uttapam.

To give our luncheon a true Indian touch, we tucked into classic Punjabi chicken tikka; aromatic chicken biryani; and creamy butter chicken and butter paneer with naan and kulcha.

In between the starters and the mains we sipped on 'Khus sherbet', 'Shikanji' - Indian style mojito with mint and chat masala, 'Thandai' - a special blend of cardamom, dry fruits and saffron mixed with milk, and 'Smoky Iced Peach Tea'.

For the desserts, we had 'Coffee Halwa with Oreo Ice Cream', 'Saffron Gulab Jamun Cheesecake' (saffron flavoured cheesecake set on gulab jamuns, with a base of Oreo cookie) and 'Edible Orange Chocolate Candle', which is a total food art, as the candle comes lit to the table. Our vote, though, went to the Coffee Halwa.

At Tuk Tuk Taxi dining is fun all the way! ■



3 Pepper chicken Seekh Kebabs



Saffron Gulab Jamun Cheesecake



Coffee Halwa with Oreo Ice Cream

Refreshing Mocktails

Get into the party mood with these refreshing mocktail recipes



Classic Mint Julep

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup water
- ¼ cup white sugar
- 1tbsp chopped fresh mint leaves
- 2 cups crushed ice
- ½ cup lemonade
- Fresh mint sprigs for garnishing

Method:

1. In a saucepan, combine the water, sugar and chopped mint leaves. Stir and bring to a boil.
2. Cook it until all the sugar has dissolved; remove from heat and set aside to cool for about an hour. Strain out the mint leaves.
3. Fill 2 large glasses with crushed ice and pour half of the lemonade into each glass. Top the glasses with a splash of the sugar syrup and garnish each with a mint sprig.
4. Serve!

Watermelon Mocktail

Ingredients:

- 1 small watermelon – deseeded and cut into chunks
- ¼ cup fresh lime juice
- 2tsp agave syrup or honey
- ¼ cup sparkling water

Method:

1. In a blender, mix enough watermelon chunks to get two cups of watermelon puree. Add lime juice and agave and blend again.
2. Pour the mixture into two cups and top it with sparkling water.



Ginger Peach Soda

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup sugar
- ½tbsp minced fresh ginger
- 1 ripe peach - pitted and thinly sliced
- ½ litre seltzer
- 4 fresh mint leaves for garnish

Method:

1. Place a saucepan over medium heat, add half a cup of water, sugar and ginger and bring to a gentle simmer. Keep stirring until the sugar dissolves. Remove from heat and keep it covered for about 30 minutes.
2. Take a medium bowl and pour the syrup through a fine-mesh sieve. Press the minced ginger against the sieve with the back of a spoon to get all the flavours into the bowl. Refrigerate the syrup until well chilled.
3. To serve, place the peach slices in two tall glasses and lightly press them with the back of a spoon to release their juice. Pour the chilled syrup evenly over peaches and top it with ice cubes and seltzer. Stir to mix the syrup, peach juice and seltzer evenly. Garnish with mint leaves



Fries and Chips

Turn green apples and bananas into delightful party snacks with Simran Dhanju's tried and tested recipes



Cinnamon Spiced Green Apple Fries



Ingredients:

- 2 Granny Smith green apples
- 1½ tbsp lime juice
- 1/3 cup corn flour
- 1/3 cup caster sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon powder
- Sunflower oil for frying

Method:

1. In a bowl, mix sugar, salt and cinnamon together and keep aside.
2. Remove the core from the centre of the apples with the help of corer; peel and cut them into French fries shapes.
3. Pour lime juice on apple fingers, mix well; toss them in corn flour, shake off excess flour and deep fry them in medium to high heat in small batches.
4. Cook for about 3 minutes until golden brown and drain on absorbent paper. Toss them in cinnamon sugar and serve hot with vanilla ice cream.

Banana chips with guacamole

Ingredients for Banana chips:

- 4-6 large raw bananas
- Kosher salt
- Oil for frying

Ingredients for Guacamole:

- 2 avocados, ripe and firm
- 1 lime, juiced
- ½ tomato, deseeded and finely chopped
- ½ onion, finely chopped
- 1tbsp coriander, chopped
- Salt to taste

Method:

1. Take a large bowl of water, add a tsp of kosher salt and keep aside.
2. Heat oil for deep frying.
3. Wash, pat dry bananas. Take one banana at a time and thinly slice along the skin with the help of mandoline slicer; immerse them in bowl of salt water.
4. Follow that by taking the slices out one by one from water; remove excess water on absorbent paper and drop them in medium to hot oil (make sure not to overcrowd the pan).
5. Fry for 4-5 minutes and drain on absorbent paper. Sprinkle with little kosher salt and leave to cool. Repeat with the rest of the bananas.
6. For guacamole, cut avocados, scoop out flesh and mash with back of fork; add all the other ingredients and mix.
7. Serve banana chips with guacamole for the tea or a party snack.



Simran is a celebrated chef and a winner of multi cooking competitions; she creates visual delights artfully by merging traditional flavours.

Most Indulgent

NYE Party

Parties Ever

Check out some of the costliest New Year's Eve parties held around the world



Russian Extravaganza

Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich is known for throwing extravagant New Year's Eve parties, and in 2010 he went all the way to make it one of the most memorable one - at the cost of \$7.6 million! The party had guests staying at his 536 foot super-yacht 'Eclipse' and the 377 foot yacht 'Luna' and indulging in caviar and sushi. The party featured Red Hot Chili Peppers and had a guest list of international celebrities.



Twice in a Night

Imagine saying Happy New Year in Sydney and then zipping all the way to Los Angeles to ring in the New Year again. That's what was on offer when a company called Private Fly upped the party mood with a tempting NYE - twice in one night - offer for a whopping \$210,000. The party ushered in the New Year at the Sydney Opera House before boarding a private jet to fly to Los Angeles to say Happy New Year - again.



It's a Cameo

For \$100,000, guests opting for the 2013 Cameo Nightclub NYE in Miami were treated, along with four other friends, to an exclusive package that featured a night at a recording studio with Lil Wayne and a hamper of fine beverages. The pulsating night featured music, dance, feast and a large dose of fun.



NYE at Gansevoort Turks & Caicos
Another \$100,000 deal of a NYE party, floated by Gansevoort Turks & Caicos (Wymara Resort and Villas) in 2011, was an out and out rich affair. The ticket, priced for two, was designed to take pampering to new heights with a private jet service, an oceanfront penthouse suite, a personal chef, conch-shell diving opportunities, spa treatments, exclusive pool service and even cashmere blankets, among a host of others.



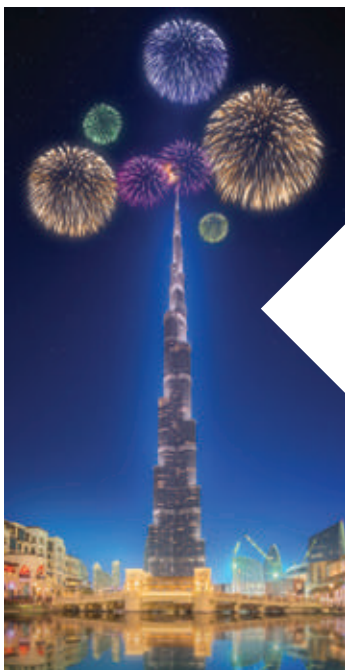
VIP Affair

To welcome 2017 in style, the Fontainebleau Miami Beach played host to a five-day shindig. Priced \$500,000, guests got a 9,850 square-foot multi-floor Sorrento Penthouse (accommodating up to 10 guests), which has five bedrooms, six luxurious baths, a private pool, Jacuzzi, a striking dining room and a fully equipped kitchen. The package also included a private poolside cabana and the opportunity to enjoy private dinners at fine dining restaurants within the property. Guests had access to luxury cars, private yacht transfers, shopping sprees, and, best of all, a table for Justin Beiber's New Year's Eve performance.



A Plastic Deal

In 2009, when Dr. Stephen Greenberg organised a 'Plastic Surgery Event', guests were required to shell out \$100,000, for what was touted as one of the most expensive NYE package. The price included three tables for concerts of Lady Gaga, John Legend and Brody Jenner, in addition to first class round trip tickets from New York to Miami. There was more - a choice of penthouses at five-star hotels in South Beach for a month and a chance to go under the knife for some plastic surgery deal.



Neighbouring Dubai

Dubai is known for doing things extravagantly, and the December 31, 2016 event was no different. There were seven tables on offer to sit back and watch fireworks at the iconic Burj Khalifa. The spectacular display of pyrotechnics has proven to be a big draw for NYE party-makers around the world. On a general note, a study found that the average cost of ringing in the New Year in Dubai would cost a minimum of Dh 2,240 per person.

A Margaritaville NYE

It was, indeed, another day in paradise at singer-songwriter Jimmy Buffet's 'Margaritaville' Beach Resort when a happening New Year's Eve party was organised for \$45,000 for two nights. Guests had the option of staying in the presidential suite or the Coral Reefer vice presidential suite and charter a yacht



Best Festive Beauty Buys For 2018



Rachel Vera presents some of the best beauty buys of 2018, to stock up on and to look perfect for the party season

Where did the year go? Amidst all the thoughts on our collective minds right now, this one echoes the loudest. It's been a nice year for some of us and a tough one for some others, but one emotion we can all agree upon is the speed with which the year just whooshed past us and here we are, December again.

December brings with it both a sense of excitement for the huge festive season, and also a sense of wistfulness for the year that was. I'd say the best cure for all the bad decisions made this year is to invest in products you won't regret, trust me. I have actually used these products after reading hundreds of rave reviews about them, and boy, was I taken by surprise. So here's presenting to you guys the best beauty buys of 2018 to stock up on and to look perfect for the season.

Stila Cosmetics Glitter and Glow Eye Shadow:

There's no time like the festive season to rock glitter in all forms of it. Choose which shade/colour of these glitter works best for you and you can use them all over your eyelids for a beautiful glittery look! The perfect purchase for your festive look goals!



Cover FX Custom Enhancer Highlighting Drops:

You can never have enough of highlighting! These beautiful liquid highlighting drops are meant to be used under your foundation or makeup base, to give you an all over festive glow that looks like you have spent hours at the salon.



Nars Orgasm Afterglow Lip Stain:

The blush in the same colour is a huge bestseller and well known for the soft shimmer it imparts. This lip stain is perfect to pair with dark, smoky eyes. It balances out your look and gives you a soft peachy-pink sheen on the lips. So dreamy!



Suave Professionals Hairspray Compressed micro Mist Hold:

This product is amazing to hold your hairstyle in place. So whether you are attending a wedding or a long party, this one will help your hairstyle stay put for up to 8 hours!

Jergens Honey Body Lotion:

Amidst all that partying, let's not forget to take care of our skin and keep it nice and hydrated in the winter weather. Jergens Honey lotion is a rich moisturising lotion that leaves you with supple, nourished skin.



Olay Clay Stick Masks:

A face mask in a bottle. How cute is this? For an easy ten minute prep before getting ready for your party, just take the lid off, roll on the mask on your face, and relax for ten minutes. Wash off after, and say hello to smooth, clean skin with visibly minimised pores and less oily skin!

Burt's Bees Micellar Cleansing Towelettes:

Take your makeup off in one swipe! As fun as it is to do our makeup and dress up, it's equally important to clean your skin and go to bed with cleansed skin. These towelettes are really handy to carry around, and take all your makeup off in a single swipe. Follow up with a liquid cleanser and you have clean skin!



Stock up on these affordable beauty and skincare products this season and enjoy the festivities! ■

* Rachel has a deep passion for wellness and beauty and regularly writes on wellness, skincare and travel. Rachel can be found on Instagram @cookieibrary

LIFESTYLE MANTRA

PARTY GUEST LIST By Sophia Raman



OF ALL THE TASKS ON YOUR PARTY CHECKLIST, THE MOST DEMANDING ONE IS THE GUEST LIST YOU NEED TO DRAW UP BEFORE YOU FINALISE ON THE MENU AND THE VENUE

As the party season draws closer and your shindig looms large, the biggest, rather the main question would be who to include in the guest list. While birthdays and anniversaries often tend to be close-knit affairs, festive events demand a more elaborate planning, with the list including even acquaintances from work/business.

So, how do you go about ensuring that the list is just right?

You could start by following some of the established do's and don'ts that are designed to ensure your venue and menu complement the guests on the list. If your venue can accommodate 50 guests or less, draw up a list that begins with guests who are on top priority. While friends and family are bound to feature on the list, you might also want to consider as priority those that you need to invite owing to social obligations. If you have been invited by colleagues or acquaintances to one or more parties during the course of the year, party etiquette requires you to do the same – unless you are not keen to attend more such events in the coming year.

You might also want to consider the mix of guests on the list to reduce your party day stress. Having guests who will get along well and share similar interests can turn your party into a winner. Alternately, make two guest lists: include names of all those who are on your priority margin in the first and follow that with a second after you hear regrets from the ones listed in the first.



Dress up to the Nines

...To the nines, and nothing less, as you get ready for the party season with fashion ideas picked from styles flaunted by celebrities and fashion influencers



Shed the stiff office wear and the casual jeans and tee attire, the party season is here to get you dressed to the nines. From office parties to evening dos, the month will have you picking out your best party wear... But before you go shopping to give the month a truly spectacular festive flavour, check out what is trending in the world of party fashion this season.



To take a cue from experts in the business, follow the foot to head routine when getting party ready. Start building your look from the ground up - that's the suggestion from fashion influencers who uphold the importance of footwear in making the right fashion statement. Sophistication, they opine, begins with the right footwear for the dress you pick. Many, in fact, pick the shoes before they zero on the dress to rock their feet. And if it is a big bash, opt for a pair with interesting colour textures and embellishments that make it stand out.





With party dress making a grand comeback, you have the option of going with the never-fail black dress or the more vivacious red velvet one. The party colour palette has several options to suit partygoers looking for their special shade. On the trend counter are deep sea tones like sapphire and green, delicate pastel hues, little black dresses with pretty details – even black and gold, and shades of grey. Wear them in mini and midi dresses, black-tie dresses and even dress alternatives (like jazzy jumpsuits, fancy skirts, sequined trousers, peplum tops...) which have wowed fashion watchers and those doing the rounds of the international fashion circuit.

If bold is your style, wear a bright dress topped with a bold jacket; and if you vouch by white, go for a shirt dress layered with a fancy belt. Sequined outfits are best saved for that lavish year-end party; even the smallest of shindigs will open up the platform to come in your shiny best. What better time than now to flatter your look with some festive shimmer, right?

Whatever outfit you pick for the big day, ensure that you have the right accoutrements to make your dress stand out and give you that touch of perfection. With right footwear, gorgeous dress and a perfect hairdo, you will be the cynosure of all eyes at the party.



Big is Beautiful

Presenting Tina Vincent, a pioneer of plus size fashion in India

Started in October 2000, Tina Vincent's is the first fashion label in India with an exclusive plus size high fashion garment store - XXL - that caters to an overlooked category.

A firm believer in the 'Big is beautiful' concept, Tina maintains that her forte is her western line, which she considers her first love. She is equally passionate about Indian couture, which satisfies her love for colours and embellishments. Tina's line covers a multitude of sizes and caters to a fiercely strong and independent woman, with a wide range of options in style, fabric, and colours from across the globe.

Pointing out that preparation for special occasions is special for everyone, irrespective of size, she states that for plus sized shoppers it takes all the more time to figure out which dress would be perfect. Choices for plus size people are generally limited when it comes to quality readymade outfits. However, with Tina Vincent, finding a dress with the correct blend of colour, fabric and customised - Indian, western and fusion - designs is never a challenge. She also designs clothes exclusively for trousseaus and wardrobe orders.

Tina Vincent is set to establish a global presence and her brand will



soon be available in UK, US, Middle East and Malaysia through stores and e-commerce platforms.

For more info, check <https://tina-vincent-fashion-designer.business.site/>





‘Unrounds Collection’

When round diamonds are not enough, get dazzled by Malabar Gold & Diamonds special line of ‘Unrounds Collection’, featuring princess, pear, marquise and oval cut diamonds. The collection presents a unique medley of fancy cut diamonds which are high on the trend list and are definitely here to stay for a long run.



Le Petit Marseillais

France's number one body wash brand
'Le Petit Marseillais' arrives in Oman

France's number one body wash brand Le Petit Marseillais (Leuh Peh-tee Mar-say-yay) brings its iconic range of deliciously fragrant shower crèmes and gels to stores across the GCC. Born in sunny Provence, the body care products are filled with sun-kissed ingredients and true-to-nature scents that will transport you to warm summer days in the South of France.



Le Petit Marseillais will make its GCC introduction with six body wash and five hand wash variants, strongly influenced by the picturesque harbour-side city of Marseille from where the brand originates. From lavender fields to citrus orchards and beautiful olive groves, Le Petit Marseillais brings a little bit of France to every bottle of its shower crèmes and gels.

Using sun-drenched ingredients and simple but proven formulas, Le Petit Marseillais' dermatologically-tested, pH-neutral body washes leave the skin feeling moisturised, nourished and refreshed. Their fragrant, garden-fresh scents turn daily cleansing into a colourful discovery, providing nature's goodness to help illuminate natural optimism. With every use, Le Petit Marseillais is an invitation to embrace the sunny side of everyday life and rediscover your joie de vivre.

The brand 'Le Petit Marseillais' is distributed by Ramniklal B. Kothary & Co LLC, the Distributor for 'Johnson & Johnson' range of consumer products in Oman.



ESQUE IT WITH ALE

LET'S GET DRASTIC!

ALE AL ZADJALI, WHO TURNED 25 LAST MONTH, HAS ADOPTED A 'CHANGE' MANTRA – THE BOLDER THE CHANGE THE BETTER THE IMPACT

I just turned 25 and maybe I'm being over dramatic, but it's a big turning point in my life. I'm ready to take on more challenges and changes that I avoided, or got people to convince me out of them previously.

In keeping with the theme of this column, I want to talk about my new favourite accessory - bleach! Okay that sounds dramatic and out of context, but to be more specific, I mean bleaching your hair. I did mine and now I'm Goldilocks (well a mixture of Goldilocks and a bear).

There is something enlightening about it, whether it's the constant stares, the constant need to find creative ways to hide it at work or the perfect illusion of thinking I look like Ally from 'A Star is Born'; it's just a thrill!

This is my tip! Do a drastic change; whether it's highlights in the hair or getting your lips done, as long as it's something you always wanted to do. Let's be more adventurous, as long as it doesn't get us in trouble.

To misquote Lady Gaga "there could be 100 people in a room and 99 don't believe in you(r change), but you just need one that does" - make that one you, and embrace it.



Ale Al Zadjali is a 25 year-old award-winning fashion designer; he is the brain behind the 'Esque By Ale' line of clothing

Weekends and Wadis

With winter heightening the lure of the outdoors, it is time to flavour your weekends with wadi trips to experience large doses of nature and inspiring vistas of Oman

Trapped water, green groves and rolling mountains... There's a picture postcard feel to most wadis in Oman - from the rugged mountains bordering the horizon to the fresh water trembling to the moods of the breeze. Oman is blessed with more than its share of picture-perfect wadis, most of which are easily accessible and immensely popular as picnic spots, even camping destinations.

The ones endowed with water all through the year are scenic locales with green foliage, palm trees and even flowering shrubs. Seen from the eyes of a tourist or an intrepid traveller, the potential for adventure and even a languorous picnic is immense. There is that element of being away from the city and its accompanying cacophony; the feeling of oneness with nature, generated by the lush spread of greenery; and the choice of indulging in some wadi-bashing or even trekking on the uneven terrain...

Most of the wadis are accessible only with a four-wheel drive, owing to the rocky sediments on the bed; but for trekkers, there is no dearth of options. So, taking off from Wadi Arbaeen, which we featured in these pages last month, we go on a wadi trail to present some of the popular wadis in and around Muscat to gear you up for the pleasant winter weekends.

Wadi Al Abyadh

Located in Nakhal, in the South Batinah region, Wadi Al Abyadh is about one and a half hours away from Muscat. It is a scenic wadi, which has earned repute as Al Batinah region's most popular valleys. Inspired by the white rocks that dot the place, Wadi Al Abyadh promises a stunning visual presentation. Exploring this Wadi, however, may demand a four-wheel drive, presenting the visitor with a visual treat of beautiful green foliage and strikingly white boulders and rocks.



Wadi Al Hoqain

This Wadi is accessible from the Wilayat of Rustaq (it is 40kms away from Rustaq and 150kms from Muscat) and is characterised mainly by its many springs which flow between the granite rocks and form beautiful waterfalls, cascading from up to 10 meters height. Visitors to this place can also savour history packed in the Al-Hoqain fort, which dates back to 1722.

Wadi Bani Khalid

Approximately 200 kilometres away from Muscat is this popular Wadi in the Sharqiyah region; it has constant flow of water. Interestingly, this Wadi is home to some cave formations, including the Kahf Maqal, which is the country's underground chamber. This formation opens opportunities for those seeking adventure – it requires one to crawl and even scramble in some places. The gushing water adds to the excitement of being a part of this Wadi.





Wadi Bani Awf

Located in Al Batinah South Governorate, Wadi Bani Awf is a stunning wadi, with diverse terrain that makes it one of the most challenging destinations. Driving on this Wadi requires patience, skill to manoeuvre rough and steep roads and a big sense of adventure. The Wadi itself leads to the famous Snake Gorge, which has been so named for the serpentine effect created by the narrow valley in between the mountains. It skirts through rock pools, waterfalls and boulders. Trekking along this path is tempting but it can be difficult and even dangerous if there are signs of rain.



Wadi Shab

Wadi Shab is located in Tiwi, which is 140kms from Muscat, on the Quriyat – Sur Coastal Road. Driving to this Wadi is a scenic affair, with the road opening striking mountainous terrain of Oman; the



Wadi itself presents an opportunity for adventure. This popular Wadi is known to attract picnickers to the fresh water cascading from mountain tops.

Wadi Tiwi

Approximately two kilometres away from Wadi Shab is Wadi Tiwi, which stretches about 36 kilometres inland, ending strikingly at the mountain village, Mibam. The Wadi itself ambles through quaint villages which have dates and banana plantations. Nature lovers should watch out for the sea that is visible as one climbs up the hill and treks down to the valley. Fruit trees and groves make it picture perfect.

Wadi Dayqah

Closer to Muscat is the Wadi Dayqah, which was described as 'the most singular piece of earth sculpture in Arabia', by explorer S.B. Miles, more than a century ago. It is located about 90 kilometres from the Wadi Adai roundabout in Muscat and is popularly known as the 'Devil's Gap'. Deep pools and huge boulders mark this Wadi ■



December Destinations

Before the countdown to the New Year turns to a frenzy and unending festive shopping takes over your imagination, plan a quick holiday to enjoy the season's glory at one of the top December destinations around the world.



Austria

Vienna in Austria is beckoning festive observers for an experience of a lifetime. The city is decked up in festive finery and the markets are bursting with Christmas goodies, presenting a dreamy sequence to the ongoing holiday season. From toys and gifts to gingerbread and roasted chestnuts, the markets are packed with all things Christmassy to infuse visitors with the pleasant vibes of the season.

Brazil

With Brazil sharing a synonymy with spectacular parties and fun times, the festive season is indeed the perfect time to visit this happening destination. White sandy beaches conceptualise the spirit of 'White Christmas', presenting a sun and surf affair with decorative lights and buntings on palm trees adding to the mood of the season. The New Year's Eve promises to be a big hit with the popular Reveillon celebrations setting the tone for holiday revellers.



Brazil



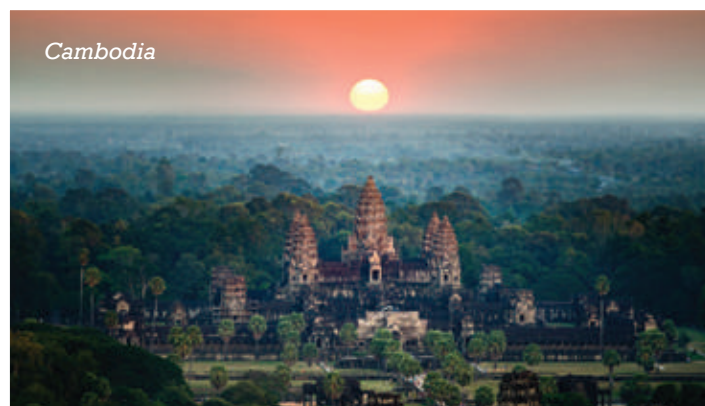
Austria

Cambodia

If you aren't very keen on getting the chills this winter, opt for Cambodia where temperatures do not dip below 26 degrees and where skies are blue and beckoning to explore the popular Angkor Wat. You will also have your share and more of pristine coastline, verdant jungles, quaint straw hut villages, ancient cities and the warm and hospitable people.

Colombia

There is no dearth of pleasant weather and pristine beaches in our part of the world, at this time of the year, but if December holiday is on the agenda, visit Colombia - Cartagena, to be specific, for a fascinating interlude with history. The Old Town of Cartagena is a UNESCO World



Cambodia

Colombia



Heritage site. A stroll around its streets will present a sharp contrast between the old and the new, as Spanish Colonial architecture stand starkly against new eateries and renovated structures. And with December ushering the festive season, get an eyeful of Christmas décor and New Year's Eve fireworks.

Malta

Visit Malta to savour some of the best nativity scenes, as people open their doors to showcase their grottos to the public. There is also the Bethlehem f'Ghajnsielem, a life-size nativity scene, which is spread over 20,000sqm of abandoned fields. It is an annual, open-air tourist attraction, featuring actors from the villages who take visitors back in time. Watch out also for carol singers and Christmas pantomime.



Malta

South Africa

December marks the official start of summer season in South Africa. While that is not a major attraction for travellers here, who have to endure a long stretch of summer season, what is indeed appealing are its popular mountain ranges and national parks. You could opt for a safari experience, laze at one of the spectacular beaches or treat your senses to some scenic delights from the Table Mountain.



South Africa

Thailand

One of the most popular destinations among frequent travellers in this part of the world, Thailand has a mix of all the right ingredients for every kind of tourist. Whether one is seeking water sports and nightlife or nature treks and shopping, Thailand's attractive destinations have the best offerings for short and even long holidays. December's ideal weather conditions make this a perfect destination to soak in the beach life.



Thailand

The Galapagos Islands

The Galapagos Islands

Although there is no one particular travel season to visit the Galapagos Islands, December is, perhaps, the right time to visit, as it marks the shift from the cool and dry season to the warm and wet season. This shift presents the best of both seasons, with a greater opportunity to view wildlife. For nature lovers, this is an ideal destination - and what better time than now to get a dekko of this spectacular biodiversity? You also get to see the Giant Tortoise eggs hatching and the sea lion mating season. ■





New eye implant to manage glaucoma

Glaucoma, a group of related eye disorders that cause damage to the optic nerve, causing blindness, may be corrected with a new implant that could reduce intraocular pressure. Although there are already a number of implants to reduce the pressure, majority of them stop working within five years owing to films of organisms growing inside them and blocking their drainage channels. The new implant is activated via externally-applied magnetic fields; its drainage tube contains tiny magnetic microactuators, which vibrate when exposed to a magnetic field. These vibrations shake loose any biomaterials that have built up within the tube, allowing them to be flushed out along with the fluid.



Most calories burnt during late afternoon

Researchers have found that people burn 10 percent more calories in the late afternoon and early evening than in the morning. This study reinforces the role circadian rhythm plays in regulating metabolism and also sheds light on why those who have irregular sleep schedules are more likely to gain weight. Participants in the study burned the fewest resting calories late in the biological night, when people experience a drop in their body temperature. Energy expenditure was highest about 12 hours later, in the biological afternoon and evening.

Tiny pacemakers to do away with big surgeries on babies?

If a new prototype miniature pacemaker reaches commercialisation stage, infants receiving pacemakers may not require open-chest surgery. With the new prototype, only a single small incision would be required; this would mean shorter surgeries that are less painful with faster recovery. The device is about a cubic centimetre in size and to implant it a 1-cm incision is made just below the ribcage, from which a two-channel access port (kind of a double-barrelled tube) is temporarily inserted into. An endoscopic camera is then fed up one of those channels, going to the heart, while the pacemaker's electrical lead wire goes up the other.



Blue light reduces blood pressure

According to a study, exposure to blue light causes a significant reduction in blood pressure, which is the leading cause of stroke, and a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease. A randomised study that exposed volunteers to visible blue light for 30 minutes on one day, followed by 30 minutes of exposure to a control light on a subsequent day, found that while exposure to the control light had no effect, the blue light sessions resulted in a systolic blood pressure reduction of almost 8 mmHg (millimeters of mercury). It is believed that the blue light exposure triggered a release of nitric oxide from the skin, allowing it to enter the bloodstream. There it proceeded to relax the blood vessels and increase blood flow, resulting in a decrease in blood pressure.





Potential biomarker for depression

Brain activity monitoring has revealed a potential biological marker for depression. The research involved monitoring the brain activity of volunteers for 7 to 10 days. The subjects were epilepsy sufferers who had 40 to 70 electrodes implanted in their brains as part of the routine preparation for surgery to remove scar tissue that triggers seizures. Researchers compared the brain activity of all the subjects with their reported mood data and found that 13 of the 21 participants exhibited one common pattern of activity in the brain's hippocampus and amygdala regions, which highly correlated with daily bouts of bad mood or a depressed state throughout the duration of the study. All the volunteers had scored highly on a psychological analysis of baseline anxiety ahead of the experiments.

Dehydration from sleep deprivation

A new research suggests that insufficient sleep may cause dehydration by disrupting the release of a hormone that regulates hydration. Researchers examined the records of over 20,000 healthy young adults, who had provided urine samples and completed questionnaires concerning their sleeping habits. They found that people who regularly got 6 or fewer hours of sleep each night had more concentrated urine than those who got about 8 hours per night. Besides, people who reported that they regularly slept for 6 hours or less each night were 16–59 percent more likely to be dehydrated than those who slept for 8 hours a night. Researchers' advice those who are not getting enough sleep and are feeling tired the next day, to drink extra water.



Coffee may protect against Alzheimer's and Parkinson's

While drinking coffee has previously been linked to a reduced risk of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, recent research has found that it is because phenylindanes (chemical compounds that form during the brewing process) inhibit the growth of proteins associated with degenerative brain diseases. Researchers analysed the chemical components of three different samples of instant coffee - light roast, dark roast, and decaffeinated dark roast - and exposed extracts of each sample to two types of proteins, amyloid beta and tau, which are known to be hallmarks of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. All three coffee extracts prevented the 'clumping' of these proteins, which happens when Alzheimer's and Parkinson's progress, suggesting that something in the coffee may be protective against the progression of disease.

Breast cancer risk for late risers

A large-scale study, conducted recently, found that women who function better in the morning may be less likely to develop breast cancer. Researchers used a method called Mendelian randomisation to study gene variants that affect sleep traits; they focused on genes that have an association with certain sleep factors, such as a preference for morning or evening, sleep duration, and insomnia. Data analysis showed that women who preferred mornings, nicknamed larks, had a 40 percent lower breast cancer risk than those who preferred the night, known as owls. The results also showed that women who slept for longer than the recommended 7 to 8 hours per night had a higher risk, which increased by 20 percent for every extra hour that they slept.





Are you ready for the party season?

Prep your body for the party season with some tried and tested diet and fitness tips and guidelines



As the party season comes calling and festive food becomes obligatory, is it any wonder that the body goes on a 'whatever' mode? All the festive banquets, yearend get-togethers, family reunions and office parties will have a telling effect on your body, even before the New Year rings in – if you do not take stock now, that is.

So, if you are willing to give in to some expert advice and make smarter decisions, you could prevent the festive season from giving your year-long workout a beating. Make your mind up to not let go all the hard work during the party season and take stock of all the food and beverages you are bound to tuck into. For starters, get into a detox session even before the banquet invitations come calling...

Here is a little guide to help you sail through the season in one piece:

Food and Nutrition

Consume fibre: If the line-up of parties looks like a swing towards definite weight gain, start now with fibres in your diet to cleanse your bowl before all the heavy eating and drinking gets started. According to nutritionists, supplementing your diet with fibres will help you digest all the foods and drinks you will be consuming during the festive season; add to that vegetables, as they will provide required nutrients at every meal.



Introduce festive foods: Another way to prep up for the party season is to train your body to metabolise foods that are bound to feature in the festive menu – for example, roasted potatoes and fried snacks. As one expert noted, introducing food that is not a part of your regular diet, but is expected to be on the party spread, will help the body to be ready for the onslaught of unending canapés, mains and a host of desserts. However, if your body is not able to metabolise them in the early stages of introduction, the best way to tide

over the season is to stay away from such foods.

Eat healthy fats: Having a bite or two before going out for the party can prove to be a better bet to stay away from consuming all the fried starters and heavy desserts. Eat a meal of healthy fats before stepping out, as they will help in slowing the digestion process. Drinking plenty of water and even herbal tea on the party day will be effective in hydrating your body. On another note, avoid caffeine for a couple of hours or more before the party.



Workout and Training

Morning exercise: With parties leading to late nights, skipping exercise does seem to be the easiest option to make up for the lost sleep. But if you want to stay in shape and get set for the new day, make time for that workout and feel energised. Remember, working out in the morning, either on an empty stomach or 3 to 4 hours after eating is ideal to prep your body for the season. Besides, it ensures that you are not distracted from your task later in the day. Following the workout, leave a gap of at least half an hour before you eat anything.

Try Pilates: Pilates helps to condition the entire body by focusing on alignment, core strength and breathing. It is aimed at improving muscle control, flexibility, breathing and posture, which will all come in handy during the hectic party season. Although some Pilates classes use special machines, it also includes a host of floor exercises that you could do in the confines of your home. There are a host of online resources to get you started and help you get ready for the big season.



Cardio sessions: Burn calories by following a 20-minute cardio interval session, as many times as you possibly can during the day. Your objective should be to do as many reps of each exercise – jumping jacks, squat jumps, side-to-side hops and burpees – as you can in one minute, before moving to the next. Follow the set with a one minute rest in between, before repeating the circuit at least 3 to 4 times.



Movement helps: To keep your body in an active mode, keep moving every half an hour or so. Even indulging in light activities for five minutes in between will help you stay active in the long run. ■



Man... it's time to go shopping!



From memes to caricatures, male ennui for all things shopping is depicted facetiously, thanks in no small measure to the drama that unfolds in many a home when 'shopping' is appended to the weekend agenda

Although a recent research has us believe that men are equally, if not more, into shopping than women, the reality is that the figures cobbled up by that survey in Britain – to demonstrate a change in men's shopping patterns - is reflective of online shopping trends than mall or hypermarket buying. Most men have yet to warm up to the idea of going out shopping to spend hours browsing through the store aisles to pick an item of clothing, footwear or skincare. And that status quo might continue for a really long time, going by the male shopping jokes circulating on WhatsApp and Social Media. One of Instagram's parody account, 'Shopping with their ladies: The miserable men of Instagram', in fact captured photographic evidence of bored men waiting for their wives/partners outside shops and mall.

Men, seemingly, have an inherent aversion to shopping that is laced as therapeutic by the world of commercial marketers. And that is not heresy or stereotype; according to American bi-monthly magazine Psychology Today, there is evidence to indicate men's dislike for shopping. Quoting a 2013 study conducted in Britain, the magazine states that men become bored after only 26 minutes of shopping! Women, on the other hand, can continue for another hour and a half. There is more: 80 percent of men in the survey didn't like shopping with their spouse/partner, 45 percent strongly avoided it, and 50 percent of them ended the shopping trips with arguments.





Types of Shoppers

A research conducted couple of years ago to identify 'Male Consumer Decision Making Styles' classified male shoppers between the ages of 18 and 35 into six different types: confident shopper, fashion uninterested shopper, reluctant perfectionist shopper, confused and time restricted shopper, value seeking shopper and recreational trendsetting shopper.

Confident male shopper will only patronise brand outlets and department stores that promise quality products. In comparison, the fashion uninterested shopper is indifferent to brands or to fashion dictates and will, often, pick items that are easy on the pocket. The reluctant perfectionist shopper, like the confident shopper, also hankers after fashion and style but is conversely wary of shopping, often resulting in purchase of expensive products. The confused and time constrained shopper is

These arguments, obviously, stemmed from the large differences in their individual shopping times.

Grab-and-go Shoppers

Women are, generally, browsers, while men are search-and-retrieve shoppers who prefer to get in and out of the store in a jiffy. The search-and-retrieve or the grab-and-go shoppers are usually alone and are not in any mood to browse other aisles or check for best buys. They will simply follow the shopping list and not waver in their task. The ones who do accompany their partners might follow the wait-and-whine routine, often ensuring that the whining leads to a sudden brake in the shopping trip. Interestingly, there is also a segment of male shoppers who want to stubbornly toe the stereotype path and avoid shopping in the fear of earning a feminine tag. They fear that their masculinity will be threatened if they engage in a task that is seen as women's.

So what kind of shopper are you? Would you classify yourself as the stereotypical bored shopper accompanying his wife/partner? Or are you a metrosexual male who prefers to deliberate over fashion and beauty products to get the best deal for yourself?



guided by whims than by brands; he is not really bothered about browsing or checking out better deals in other shops. In stark contrast is the value seeker who will take time and effort to scour for best deals and quality products and doesn't shy away from comparing price and quality at different outlets.

Despite what the stereotypes insinuate, there is also a small percentage of male shoppers who are recreational trend setters and genuinely love to shop. They see it as a fun event, one that allows them to give in to their fancy and buy trendy items despite the expensive tag on them. This category of shoppers comprises mostly of young men who openly indulge their sense of fashion with trendy buys from big brands.

And so, while the
refuses to

traditional male shopper stubbornly
be typecast in any other mould than that
of a grab-and-go shopper, the younger
folks are definitely unabashed about
their strong leanings towards
shopping for fashion and style,
whether it is purely as an online
chore or a high street one. Many
are, in reality, showing clear
preference to go out and shop
in malls and department stores,
as they do not see shopping as a
masculinity sapping act... ■



Clean-up and Declutter

Before the year ends in a whirlwind of parties and outings, declutter your home and reboot positive vibes into your living space



Whether you declutter to make more space or to simply provide a newer perspective to your home, tidying up your home could also provide you an opportunity to do some charity. Use your annual cleaning project to give away unused items to some charity or to some needy family in your neighbourhood. From clothes maintained in good condition to utensils in the kitchen that have no use for your home requirements, your decluttering exercise could bring out a variety of items to give away. The objective, however, should not be to get rid of old things, rather to give away things that have been lying in their boxes for months and even years for want of a better use in the home.

To begin, start by making a list of all the things in your wardrobe, your kitchen and even your bedroom and sitting room that do not to have any obvious requirement for you and your family. If you do not have second thoughts about retaining a particular item in your home, it is a clear indication that its time is up; time to get rid of it and add a fresh feel to your living space. As one interior design expert suggested, the best way to initiate your year-end cleaning job is to sort the belongings into categories: give-aways (items that you can donate to a charity or to a needy), storage (items that might have use in the near future), put-away (items that need to go back to their original space), recycle (items like newspaper, books and the like that can be sent to recycling firms) and trash (items that need to go into the bin).

Do not attempt to clean and declutter the entire house in one go; tackle the job one room at a time, giving yourself more time to get a grip of things that are occupying space in every room. Use cardboard boxes to sort items, especially for those things that you plan to give away. This will make your chore so much easier.

Cabinets and drawers

If you have designated cabinets and drawers for specific items in the house, begin your cleaning mission from there. Your medicine cabinet could be your first stop. Empty the cabinet to check out the expiry dates of tablets and syrups; throw away all



the outdated ones and place the others back in the order of their importance. Do the same with your dressing table. Bring out all the skincare products and makeup items that have gotten pushed to the back. Again, do a quick check to throw away expired products and arrange them in the order of your everyday needs. Follow the routine with the bathroom cabinets as well as the kitchen drawers. The biggest task, however, might be the shoe cabinet...

Bedroom

If you have a clothes stand, start from there; especially if you are like the majority of busy executives who use that stand to hang all the worn clothes that are not yet ready for the laundry. Then, move over to the nightstand, which may be covered with books, notebooks, creams, chargers and what have you. Your dressing table is the next; keep only the daily essentials on top, moving the rest to the drawers. Follow that with the wardrobe... This is a task that requires every member of the family to chip in to mark the ones that need to be put-away and those that are ready to be given-away. You could pack worn and weathered clothes in a separate box to use for cleaning purpose or to give vent to your creative recycling ideas. Check for some quilting resources online to create a memory quilt from children's old clothes. Once you are done with sorting clothes into the trash and the give-away box put the ones that you intend to keep in the order of their clothing type, so it becomes easy for you to pick and



choose during the morning rush to work. The cleaning chore can be cumbersome if children are small and their rooms are cluttered with toys and knickknacks. Many a toy might have undergone a beating, requiring you to either recycle them or throw away.

Living room

Often, living room is the only zone in the house that is clutter-free, owing, perhaps, to the fact that you entertain guests there. But that



Kitchen

Kitchen is, perhaps, the most difficult area to declutter, as it has several shelves and drawers holding all the whimsical purchases you would have made over the year. While many may still have use in your cooking or party

requirements, what is essential is to sort them according to their category so you do not make any more random purchases. And, like majority of folks in this part of the world, if you too are wont to storing empty plastic bags and what have you under the kitchen sink, get down on your knees and do a thorough arranging of all that it holds, or throw away things that have really lost their use.

As the rule book says, anything that has not been in use for six months or more is redundant. ■

Gift a Homemade Candle



If you have been scouring the city malls wondering what to gift friends and family this holiday season, read on to learn the art of crafting homemade candles that can easily turn into evocative gifts that spread love and cheer

Every time a gift is given with a sheepish 'it's the thought that counts' dictum, isn't it, curiously, seen as an empty rhetoric than as an expression of genuine thought for the gift receiver? That phrase does tend to undermine the importance of the actual gift item, as if the gift giver was simply trying to palm off the item to get done with the duty of gift-giving.

But gift giving is an art; a thoughtful art at that. Simply picking up an item as a gift, because it is convenient, undermines the essence of the 'thought' packed in the above phrase. Whatever be the occasion, it requires the giver to focus on the receiver; to observe and to engage in conversations to understand what

would please or satisfy him/her. While expensive gifts have their own place on the scale of likes, what does make the difference is a gift that reaffirms one's relationship with the receiver.

And if the gift is handmade, even an amateur work of art will be valued dearly.

Agree?

Depending on your creative skills and some Internet help, you could vault on to the DIY club to make this holiday season truly special for all those on your list of recipients. If candles are on your radar, the following guideline will help you get started. Candles are special, more so at this time of the year, when little lights add to the festive décor. Each candle can be customised to suit the

taste and even the personality of the receiver, as the options are plenty to design each one uniquely. Besides, you could personalise your candle gifts by infusing specific aromas and colours into each one.

Materials needed

To begin, visit your neighbourhood craft store to check what kind of wax they supply. While paraffin and beeswax are popular, there is a new variety called soy candle, which could be an easier option. Paraffin wax is easily available though, and if you work with care, it could be as effective as soy or beeswax. Additionally, you would need candle wicks, fragrance oils, colours and pots and pans for melting wax.





Read the 'pots and pans' as a double-boiler - alternately, you could place a medium sized pot with water on heat and top it with another smaller pot or a steel bowl on which you could melt wax. You would also need a mason jar, a sturdy glass or any fancy container of your choice to pour the wax into.

Candle making

Follow precautions while melting wax, as excess heat can cause it to become flammable. It would help to use a thermometer to ensure that the melting wax does not exceed 250 degrees Fahrenheit; but you could manage without one by stirring the wax on the double boiler frequently. Add fragrance oils of your choice once the wax is melted and stir it a couple of times. You could also add colours at this stage with chopped up crayons. Next, prepare the wick by attaching one end of it to the container base with glue or even wax. Tie the top to a tooth pick or a small stick or even a clothes clip

and pace it on top of the container in such a way that the wick is exactly at the centre. This is very important to ensure that your candle burns evenly. Now pour in the wax, ensuring that the wick stays put. Let the wax set at room temperature for a minimum of four hours. If there is any crack on the top of the candle, you could easily repair it by melting more wax and adding it to the candle.

Decorative candles

Once you get the hang of making a basic candle, you will be amazed by the options it provides to decorate and create special candles for special people. From floral candles with dried petals to coloured candles, the options of creating handmade candles that are different from each other are plenty. Besides, you could find interesting containers from any novelty store to add a measure of class to your gift. With some creativity and lots of research on the Internet, you could also create picture candles by transferring your favourite photographs on to the ready candle or by embedding printouts on to the container before pouring in the wax. The options are, indeed, limitless. Find right ribbons and accoutrements to jazz up your candle, and your gift is set to rock the season ■



Meethaq ‘Little Investor’ programme to train 10,000 more school students

Following on the success of the ‘Little Investor’ financial literacy programme, Meethaq, the pioneer of Islamic banking in Oman from Bank Muscat signed an agreement with Injaz Oman to extend the programme to reach 10,000 more school students across the Sultanate. Targeting school students, the ‘Little Investor’ programme is aimed at developing a healthy savings habit as well as entrepreneurial skills from an early age. Sulaiman Al Harthy, Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Islamic Banking, and Khaula Al Harthy, Chief Executive officer of Injaz Oman, signed the agreement at the bank’s head office. Launched in association with the Ministry of Education and Injaz Oman, the ‘Little Investor’ programme trained over 10,500 students across the Sultanate in the first year of the programme in 2018.



project will create a series of online teaching resources tailored to the UK National Curriculum for use in the classroom to build a long-term understanding of the Sultanate and the Middle East region amongst students in both primary and secondary schools throughout the UK.

OMRAN’s ‘Discovering Oman’

Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN) has partnered with the educational not-for-profit foundation Outward Bound Oman on a unique project that will raise awareness of the Sultanate as a tourist destination in UK, a key source market. Over the past 12 months, Outward Bound Oman and OMRAN have been working closely on a new, two-phase project to create two up-to-date, online educational resources -one specifically about the Sharqiya Sands, and the second that compares Oman and the UK, called ‘Discovering Oman’. The

8th Annual Meeting of the Middle-Eastern Association for Cancer Research

The Food Science and Nutrition (FSN) Department at Sultan Qaboos University, in collaboration with the Middle Eastern Association for Cancer Research (MEACR) and College of Medicine of Qatar University, is organising the 8th Annual Meeting of the Middle-Eastern Association for Cancer Research. The MEACR organises an annual meeting in a different Middle Eastern Country, and this year, Oman was solicited to host this important clinical cancer meeting. In brief, the meeting aims to address the basic understanding of cancer, its risk factors, preventive measures, and possible treatments currently available in the world and the Middle Easter Region, including Oman. The expected outcomes for this event are to increase knowledge and awareness in the Omani community about different types of cancer as well as preventive measures.



Kempinski Hotel Muscat appoints Frederic Krueger

Kempinski Hotel Muscat has announced the appointment of Frederic Krueger as the Director of Sales and Marketing. He joins the property from his assignment as Director of Sales from Kempinski’s opening projects in Yangon and Singapore. Frederic started his career with Kempinski as a Sales Manager at Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten Kempinski Munich in 2012, moving to Hotel Adlon Kempinski Berlin in 2015 and playing an important role in the restructuring of the commercial team. At Kempinski Hotel Muscat he will further develop the sales, marketing, and public relations team, as well as establish the hotel as the premier luxury lifestyle hotel and event venue in Muscat.

Muscat Eye Laser Center at the forefront of refractive surgery

Dr. Juan Guillermo Arbelaez, Muscat Eye Laser Center's Cornea and Refractive Surgeon and Associate Scientific Director, presented his latest research in ophthalmology at the 36th Congress of the European Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons (ESCRS) held recently in Vienna, Austria. With over 9,400 ophthalmologists from 130 countries worldwide, the Congress provides an exclusive opportunity for top ophthalmologists from the world to meet and discuss their recent breakthroughs. At the congress, Dr. Juan presented papers on myopia correction, single step transepithelial PRK (TransPRK) with SmartPulse Technology and the combination of this procedure with XTRA (Accelerated Crosslinking) to strengthen the cornea, as well as the new asymmetric intra corneal ring segments (ICR Keraring AS).



PEIE unveils its new brand identity 'Madayn'

The new brand identity of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates was unveiled at its silver jubilee celebration at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, recently. The brandmark of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates is now known as Madayn. Meaning 'small cities', the name Madayn has been chosen to represent the Sultanate's thriving nationwide network of world-class business hubs. The grand ceremony began with a speech delivered by Hilal bin Hamad Al Hasani, Chief Executive Officer of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), who stated that the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates was established in 1993 to complement the march of Rusayl Industrial Estate Authority with the objective of planning, establishing, managing and developing the industrial estates across Oman.

Radisson Hotel Group signs two hotels in Oman

Radisson Hospitality AB, publicly listed on Nasdaq Stockholm, Sweden and part of the Radisson Hotel Group, has announced two new hotel signings in Oman - Radisson Hotel Apartments, Muscat Hills and Park Inn by Radisson Hotel Apartments, Salalah. This brings the group's portfolio to 84 hotels and more than 20,000 rooms in operation and under development across the Middle East region. The hotel apartments will be located near the Muscat Hills area and conveniently close to many leisure attractions, as well as the Oman International Exhibition Centre and the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre. Park Inn by Radisson Hotel Apartments, Salalah will be strategically located close to Salalah city center, in the coastal area and just 5km away from the new Salalah international airport.



Millennium Hotels TooMooH Initiative

Millennium Hotels and Resorts, Middle East and Africa, one of the fastest growing hotel management companies in the region, has launched one of its key initiatives, "TooMooH", in Oman. Translated literally as ambition, TooMooH is a comprehensive development programme established by Millennium Hotels and Resorts MEA, and designed to support, train and empower the talent of GCC Nationals looking to develop a lengthy career within the hospitality sector. The comprehensive programme features

four levels focusing on the development of fresh graduates, executives and leaders. As a first step, TooMooH will launch the Executive Development Programme (TEDP). This is a fast-track development programme for National colleagues between levels 4-6, with the potential to assume managerial positions upon successful completion with mentorship from General Managers.

The new Mercedes-Benz C-Class Sedan

The new Mercedes-Benz C-Class sedan debuted in Oman last month at an exclusive event hosted for members of the press. In its 2019 edition, this new vehicle offers state of the art intelligent drive, enhanced comfort settings and upgraded exterior and interior design. The appearance of the C-Class is defined in particular by its front exterior and the design of the headlamps and tail lights. The sporty interior exudes class, featuring flowing forms in a new interpretation of modern luxury. The centre console is characterised by an elegant flowing trim. The Multicontour Seat package is new. With this package, the side bolsters and lumbar support can be individually adjusted by means of an electrically driven pneumatic pump. The C-Class adopts the display concept of the current S-Class, with an optional fully digital instrument display.



Dhofar Automotive launches amazing offers on Dodge Models

Dhofar Automotive, the official distributor for Jeep, Dodge, and RAM vehicles in Oman, has announced an amazing offer with huge discounts ranging from 22 percent to 34 percent on the Dodge Durango, Charger, and Challenger, until December 20. In addition, customers purchasing one of these models will also receive a variety of benefits comprising free registration, warranty of 5 years/100,000km, and free service package of 5 years, among others. As per the offer, the price of the Dodge Durango will be OMR 13,590, while the Challenger will be OMR 11,990, and the Dodge Charger will be OMR 10,990; resulting in savings of 34 percent, 29 percent, and 22 percent respectively.



Mitsubishi completes first trip of Team Pajero Desert Adventure

General Automotive Company (GAC), the official distributors for Mitsubishi in Oman, has successfully completed the first of a total four planned trips of its annual desert excursion, the 'Team Pajero Desert Adventure'. The first trip took place on November 9 and 10, which saw 215 people in 43 Mitsubishi Pajeros drive into desert for a weekend of fun and adventure. Each of these trips aims to give Pajero owners and enthusiasts a taste of a true desert adventure in the Mitsubishi Pajero. The second trip is scheduled for December 14 and 15, and the third trip is scheduled for January 11 and 12, 2019. The 16th season ends with the fourth trip on February 15 and 16, 2019.



The 2018 Ford Expedition's Sand Mode Secrets

For Middle East owners with an eye on the great outdoors, the all-new Expedition's four-wheel-drive and Terrain Management System opens the region's remote reaches to adventure for the entire family. Expedition's all-new easy-to-use Terrain Management System™ lets customers select from seven special drive modes that help Expedition automatically adapt to different road conditions. This includes Normal for around town driving, Sport for more spirited trips, Tow/Haul for improved towing and hauling performance, Eco for enhanced fuel economy, Grass/Gravel/Snow for loose terrain, Mud/Rut for uneven surfaces, and Sand mode for driving in soft, deep sandy conditions found throughout the Middle East. To give the Expedition a true go-anywhere capability, Ford fitted four-wheel-drive equipped vehicles with a two-speed transfer case and electronic limited slip differential.



Al Jenaibi International Automobiles Launches Cullinan Drive

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Al Jenaibi International Automobiles launched the most anticipated automotive luxury drive event of the year in Oman - Al Jenaibi International Automobiles Cullinan Drive, recently. VIP customers and guests, and the editors of Oman's motoring and lifestyle titles were invited to the exclusive event to experience Rolls-Royce's most anticipated vehicle that combines the finest materials in the world with the ultimate 'Magic Carpet Ride' driving experience over every terrain. Four Cullinan cars left from the luxurious Al Bustan Palace, A Ritz-Carlton Hotel, in a convoy of that toured the city's roads with an off road mountain experience before heading back to the Hotel.

Cullinan holds true to Rolls-Royce's historic foundations of prestige and performance while embarking on a daring new venture and development for the Middle East market. A tough, robust concept with broad appeal, Cullinan is the most versatile, family oriented, fun-to-drive, prestigious SUV ever constructed. Its contemporary and functional design ensures its iconic status, with its long bonnet, short front, and long rear overhangs give it the unmistakable look of a Rolls-Royce. Cullinan's imposing presence and proud stature on the road are complemented by key luxury design touches, including increased height and the integrated execution of the famous grille. It is the next chapter in the story of Rolls-Royce's 'Architecture of Luxury' that began with the Phantom and which will underpin all future Rolls-Royces.



Chill Out

MOVIE REVIEW



Director

James Wan

Cast

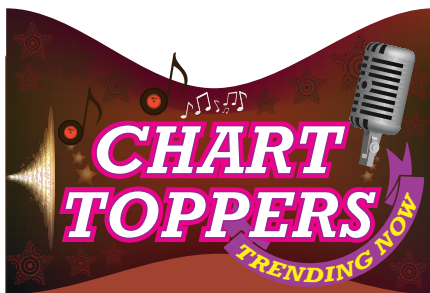
Jason Momoa (Aquaman)

Amber Heard (Mera)

Willem Dafoe (Vulko)

Patrick Wilson (Orm)

Dolph Lundgren (King Nereus)



1. Girls Like You - Maroon 5 & Cardi B
2. Sicko Mode - Travis Scott
3. Happier - Travis Scott
4. Lucid Dreams - Juice WRLD
5. Better Now - Post Malone
6. Youngblood - 5 Seconds Of Summer
7. Zeze - Kodak Black, Travis Scott & Offset
8. Sunflower - Post Malone & Swae Lee
9. Shallow - Lady Gaga & Bradley Coope
10. MIA - Bad Bunny & Drake



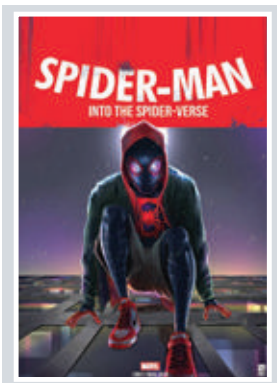
Aquaman

Aquaman tells the adventures of Arthur Curry, King of Atlantis, and member of the Justice League

Aquaman is an American superhero film based on the DC Comics character of the same name; it is intended to be the sixth installment in the DC Extended Universe (DCEU). It is the third

live action theatrical film featuring the title character, following *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* (2016) and *Justice League* (2017) and will be the first full-length feature film centered around the character. The film reveals the origin story of half-human, half-Atlantean Arthur Curry and takes him on the journey of his lifetime - one that will not only force him to face who he really is, but to discover if he is worthy of who he was born to be - a king. Arthur Curry, the heir to the underwater kingdom of Atlantis, must step forward to lead his people against his brother, Orm, who seeks to unite the seven kingdoms against the surface world.

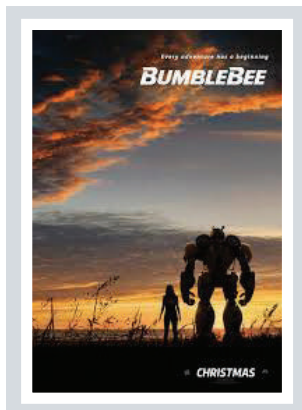
UPCOMING RELEASES



Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse

Shameik Moore (voice o Miles Morales), Liev Schreiber (villain), Mahershala Ali (Aaron Davis), Brian Tyree Henry (Jefferson Davis), Jake Johnson, Luna Lauren Velez

Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse is an upcoming American computer-animated superhero film based on the Marvel Comics character Miles Morales / Spider-Man. The film introduces Brooklyn teen Miles Morales, and the limitless possibilities of the Spider-Verse, where more than one can wear the mask. It is set in a shared multiverse called the 'Spider-Verse', which features different alternate universes.



Bumblebee

Hailee Steinfeld, Jorge Lendeborg Jr., Jason Drucker, Abby Quinn, Rachel Crow, Ricardo Hoyos

On the run in the year 1987, Bumblebee finds refuge in a junkyard in a small Californian beach town, where a teenage girl named Charlie Watson takes him in. Charlie, who is on the cusp of turning 18 and trying to find her place in the world, discovers Bumblebee, battle-scarred and broken. She revives him and quickly learns this is no ordinary, yellow VW bug.

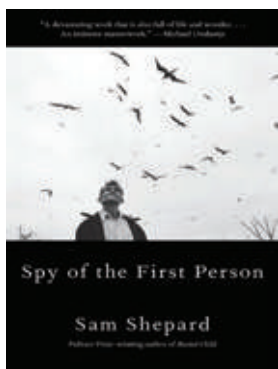


Mary Poppins Returns

Emily Blunt, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Meryl Streep, Ben Whishaw, Emily Mortimer, Colin Firth

Set in Depression-era London of the 1930s, 'Mary Poppins Returns' sees Michael and Jane Banks now grown up. After Michael suffers a personal loss, Mary Poppins re-enters the lives of the Banks family and, along with the street lamplighter Jack, uses her unique magical skills to help the family rediscover the joy and wonder missing in their lives.

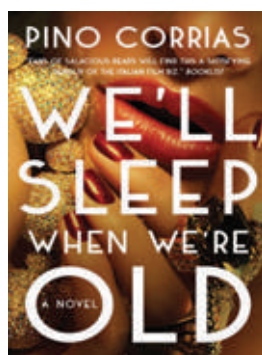
BOOK REVIEW



Spy of the First Person

Author: Sam Shepard

Sam Shepard's 'Spy of the First Person' tells the story of an unnamed narrator who traces his memories of work, adventure and travel as he undergoes medical tests and treatments for a condition that is rendering him more and more dependent on the loved ones who are caring for him. The narrator's memories and preoccupations fuse with those of the readers, as it traces the vulnerabilities that make one human.



We'll Sleep When We're Old

Author: Pino Corrias

Oscar Martello, the protagonist of the novel, is the president of a film production company. He is a self-made man, who is also a cutthroat and ruthless visionary. When a fire devastates Oscar's villa in one of the city's most fashionable neighborhoods, and he goes missing, all of Rome is left to wonder about his fate. The story weaves evidence against Oscar's muse, beautiful actress Jacaranda, as well as his best friend Andrea Serrano, a scriptwriter.



Elmet

Author: Fiona Mozley

Elmet narrates the story of Daniel, his sister Cathy, and their gargantuan boxer father, as they struggle to make a living in modern-day England. The siblings believe their father when he tells them that the corpse in Elmet was theirs alone. But greedy local men begin to circle the property like vultures and terrible violence grows in their father... The book provides a lyrical commentary on the contemporary society, while exploring the bonds between the father and children.

Chill Out

WEB WORLD



Movies • Books

Say Ho-Ho-Ho

Get into the mood of the season with northpole.com, your one stop resource for Christmas fun

From Santa's Secret Village to Santa's Den, Northpole.com is a treasure house of Santa fun for children. You could scroll over buildings to learn more about all the fun things to do at Santa's Secret Village or check out Santa's Den, which has a host of personalised and hidden stories as well as lists of holiday music, books and movies.

At Santa's Workshop you could read stories about toys and elves and also print out story pages to colour; at Elf Clubhouse you could join Santa's elves for games, puzzles and some



ElfChat. There is more in the northpole: there is an Elf Pal Academy, where you can try your skills at mazes, word searches, connect-the-dots, flash cards, and more; a Craft Cottage packed with fun and festive craft ideas, from ornaments to holiday décor to handmade cards; a Weather Station to find out how cold it is at North Pole; a Reindeer Barn for stories of adventure; a Gift Shop for some gift-giving inspiration; a Toy Shop to check out the special toy collections and links to online resources; and also Mrs Claus' Kitchen, where all the yummy goodies are made.

And, as you scroll down the site, you will find more delights. Under the Connecting with Santa box, you have an option to send a mail to Santa or check out whether you have been naughty or nice. The latter opens to a list of Santa's naughty or nice list of questions, which will assess to see where you stand.

The site also contains options for Baking and Cooking, Holiday Reading, Making crafts,

Learning, Giving and, most important of all, Spreading the Christmas spirit.



Riddle Time

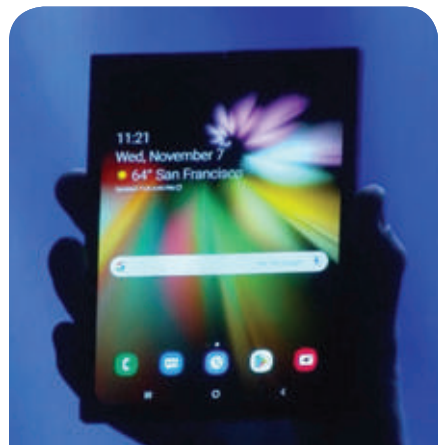
- 1 What do you get when you cross fish and an elephant?
- 2 What's a belt with a watch on it?
- 3 When is the best time to go to the dentist?
- 4 What did one aspiring wig say to the other aspiring wig?
- 5 How do baseball players stay cool?



Riddle Time Answers (November 2018)

- 1 Why did the music teacher need a ladder?
Answer: To reach the high notes.
- 2 What is brown and has a head and a tail but no legs
Answer: A penny.
- 3 How do you make an Octopus laugh
Answer: With ten-tickles.
- 4 Did you hear about the crab that went to the seafood disco?
Answer: He pulled a muscle.
- 5 What do you call an unpredictable, out of control photographer?
Answer: a loose Canon

GADGET NOTES



Samsung's foldable Smartphone

In what is heralded as the future for portable devices, Samsung introduced its upcoming foldable device at a recent annual developer's conference. Samsung announced that its new device will have a folding screen that lets Smartphone open into tablet. It uses a new display technology called 'Infinity Flex Display', in which the user can open and close the device over and over, without any degradation. The foldable phone can run up to three apps at the same time, which Samsung calls Multi Active Window. The company aims to have battery life that lasts as long as current Galaxy Smartphone. The Cover Display, when the device is closed, is 4.58 inches and has a resolution of 840x1960, with a screen density of 420 dpi.

Transparent window coating to lessen load on air conditioners

A transparent film applied to office windows has been found to significantly reduce incoming solar heat. A team of engineers have created a see-through coating for windows that's reported to reflect up to 70 percent of heat coming in from the sun. The team estimates that its heat-rejecting film could reduce a building's air conditioning (and energy) costs by as much as 10 percent if all exterior-facing windows were coated with the film. With micro particles embedded within, the film remains pretty much see-through up to temperatures of 32° C (89° F), but anything above that will result in the phase-changing material shrinking to give the film a frosted glass look, limiting the amount of heat allowed through.



Muse 2 personal meditation assistant

Muse by Interaxon Inc., a consumer neurotech company and the creator of Muse, the brain sensing headband, has announced the release of Muse 2, a revolutionary device that functions as a personal meditation assistant. The device is designed to provide real-time



feedback on brain activity, body movement, breathing patterns and heart rate during meditation. It uses built-in bio-signal, inertial, and heart sensors to create real-time audio experiences in four key areas to help users find focused calm, improve posture, and increase breath and heart awareness. With the companion app, Muse 2 will translate the internal state of the meditator into immersive soundscapes to provide subtle guidance during meditation.



"Martha", said Rosie to her best friend, "it was awful what happened yesterday after the birthday party. You know how half of the birthday cake was left over? I knew Bob would be fuming at me for eating it, with my diet and all, but I couldn't help myself. It started with just a small nibble and before I knew it the whole cake was gone!"

"Oh my!" clucked Martha, "was Bob really upset?"
"He never found it", responded Rosie with a big smile, "I just baked another cake and ate half of it!"

--
As the movie progressed, Shirley was getting more and more annoyed, with the couple in front of her. "Will they ever be quiet?" she fumed, silently. Finally, after close to a half hour into the movie, she couldn't control it any longer and tapped the shoulder of the

chatterbox in front, and politely said, "Excuse me ma'am, but I can't hear." "YOU ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO!" she exclaimed, "THIS IS A CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSION!"



Chill Out

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December 2018



Sagittarius

(November 23 and December 21)

Sagittarian, you could well start the month out in one of those dreamy states, where moods rule and it's hard to get a whole lot accomplished. Don't shake it off, embrace this slow but deeply imaginative period. It is winter, and well the festive season to boot – so yes, it's truly the season of imagining. Get ready for some great changes, as your dreams and your reality are aligning and there are flashes of brilliance and lots of bright colours too.

Aries

Aries, as winter settles in and you start to feel that nip in the air, you might have corresponding deep thoughts and emotions. Don't fret if thoughts of how and when and where and why of your existence creep into your life. Thoughts of work and bonus are bound to come up, but if love finds a place, don't fight it.

Taurus

Expect an intense start to the month. This month you will feel deeply and experience things more completely. Agree, some of the painful moments might be more painful, but your wonderful moments will be more wonderful than ever. So embrace this feeling of intensity! You will soon realise just how lucky you are to have friends in your life.

Gemini

Gemini, if you are feeling as if you are being inexplicably drawn toward helping others, don't struggle with it. Give it all your energy. You could seek a volunteering opportunity or some charitable event to realise your goals. You are a naturally giving kind of person, so the more you indulge this facet of your personality, the more fulfilled you will feel.

Cancer

Are you feeling emotionally drained? Don't take it too hard. After all, the holiday season is right around the corner, and it has an impact on everybody, whether it's a positive one or not. So, instead of reacting to the situation, do what you can to keep the focus on yourself. Try yoga or even trekking to relax and rewind.

Leo

Leo, this month calls on you to look at any issue deeply. Whether it is a problem or a new approach, give it your all. If it is a problem, consider it completely and if you want to try a new approach to your life, go all out. Now is the time for going all in. You have it in you to turn 180-degrees and take a new look at the world from a different perspective.

Virgo

Right, your curiosity knows no bounds. You are exploring questions your colleagues never thought to raise, and your answers could really shed some new light on how things get done. Outside the office zone, your spiritual explorations into how you fit into the scheme of things and how you relate with the people around you will transform the way you look at things in a big way.

Libra

Libran, you might find yourself having a whole lot of super creative urges this month. You want to sing, paint, dance and create your festive decorations – go on, do it. However, do not forget to take a step back, when the time comes, and give yourself plenty of time for rest and relaxation. Your energy level is great and it will help you to respond quickly to changing circumstances.

Scorpio

Scorpio, a fantastic month awaits you. Revel in all this wonderfulness. The more you can implement your ideas, the better! If you believe in yourself, you will realise that your concepts are terrific, and they will absolutely work wonders when they are put in place. On the work front, read all the fine print before you sign anything at work.

Capricorn

December suggests that you look at all of the details to see just what pattern emerges from them. Whether you are a mason, a librarian or a corporate lawyer, you will be the one responsible for a major breakthrough at work, thanks to your attention to the little things. Await all kinds of wonderful recognition that is coming your way.

Aquarius

This month, the focus appears to be very much on your career. If you want to know where you stand in your career graph and if you are content in what you are doing, remember, the answers are all out there, and as long as you look for them with an honest heart and an open mind, you will find them. You will soon get commendable feedback in every area of your life.

Pisces

Yes, there are those days when you should be on the alert for potential trouble brewing, and early part of December happens to be in them. Now, this doesn't mean you should go around in a constant state of paranoia. No. Just take red flags seriously when you see them. Remember, helping hands are all around.

Britney Spears

(December 2, 1981)

Britney Jean Spears is an American singer, dancer and actress. Born in McComb, Mississippi, and raised in Kentwood, Louisiana, Britney appeared in stage productions and television series, before signing with Jive Records in 1997. With the release of her debut album '...Baby One More Time', in early 1999, Britney became an international success, selling 13 million copies of 'Baby' and 9 million (as of July 2001) of her sophomore album, 'Oops!...I Did It Again', released in May of 2000. Referred to as 'Princess of Pop', she is credited with influencing the revival of teen pop during the late 1990s and early 2000s.



WEIRD NEWS



Can I lower my age?

A 69-year-old man is seeking to legally lower his age to 49. Dutch media personality Emile Ratelband wants to prove it's legally possible to be as old as you feel. He has filed a lawsuit against the Dutch government requesting that his date of birth be switched from March 11, 1949 to March 11, 1969. He told a court hearing that having an official age which did not reflect his emotional state was a challenge for his career and love life. Ratelband said that in exchange for being legally younger he would agree to renounce his pension. "We live in a time when you can change your name and change your gender. Why can't I decide my own age?" he questioned authorities.



11-year-old boy takes car on joyride

An 11-year-old boy in Ohio is facing charges after taking police on a high-speed chase after his mother took away his PlayStation. The boy stole his mother's 2013 Dodge Durango after they got into an argument that led to her taking away his PlayStation. She went to bed after the argument, only to be awakened by a phone call from the boy's father, who

said he saw their son driving the SUV. The boy drove recklessly, reaching speeds above 70 mph, until he crashed the SUV into a parked truck. He was taken to a local hospital, where he was treated for minor injuries.



Woman seeks to wed a ghost

A British resort has agreed to host a woman's wedding to a ghost, thereby effectively removing 'till death do us part' from the vows. Amethyst Realm of Bristol announced that the unnamed ghost proposed to her during a road trip to England's Wookey Hole caves in Somerset. Following the announcement, the resort where the caves are located has offered to host the wedding of Realm to her ghostly groom. "There was no going down on one knee — he doesn't have knees," she said about the proposal. "I could actually hear his voice, and it was beautiful." No wedding date has been announced yet.

Old Facts on New Year

Some fun facts about the traditions and customs that is observed on New Year's Eve even today

- New Year has been celebrated as a festival for over 4,000 years.
- It was the Babylonians who were first recorded to have celebrated the New Year 4 millennia ago.
- However, they celebrated the New Year during the first new moon that occurred after the vernal equinox, which occurs in late March.
- According to the early Roman calendar, March 1 was designated as the New Year — the calendar had just ten months that started with March.
- It was in 1582 that the Gregorian calendar restored January 1 as New Year's Day.
- In the present day, New Year's Eve is one of the most celebrated holidays around the world.
- The first New Year's Eve party in Times Square occurred in 1904 and the first NYE Ball was dropped in 1907.
- The first Ball was constructed out of wood and iron, and had one hundred light bulbs on it.
- New Year's Eve traditions vary around the world: in China, the celebrations of the lunar New Year are not until a few weeks after the Gregorian New Year.
- In Greece, children sing the New Year's carols to get money or treat.
- In Spain people eat twelve grapes right before midnight as a reflection of their hope for each month of the New Year...



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