

# 1 IN CIRCULATION & READERSHIP UAE'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE PUBLICATION

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# TRAVTALK

Day 1

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East

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# ATM attracts 2,600 exhibitors

Arabian Travel Market (ATM), that kicks off from April 28 at Dubai World Trade Centre, will witness over 40,000 travel professionals representing over 150 country pavilions and showcasing 2,600+ products from around the world.



H E Khalid Jasim Al Midfa  
Chairman, Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority

“As one of the largest regional travel and tourism events, the Arabian Travel Market provides a special opportunity to showcase Sharjah as the world book capital. A culture of reading is currently being promoted throughout the region and we will engage with key players in the industry to collaborate on new projects for the local tourism industry. We will reflect Sharjah's authentic traditions and cultural identity throughout our 22<sup>nd</sup> involvement at ATM as part of the ongoing bid to promote Sharjah as an ideal family destination and attract over 10 million visitors in line with Sharjah Tourism Vision 2021. We will place strong emphasis on ecotourism products, outdoor activities and the development of hotels that mirror the heritage and culture of the UAE.”

SHEHARA RIZLY



H E Marwan Al Serkal  
Executive Chairman  
Shurooq

“Shurooq continues to play an active role in boosting investment prospects and unique business opportunities in one of the most diversified tourism sectors in the region, incorporating a number of new elements, experiences and business prospects across archaeological, cultural, educational and ecotourism. Shurooq partners with

international operators such as GHM and Shaza Hotels across a variety of hospitality projects developed by the authority.”



H E Saeed Al Samahi  
Director General,  
Fujairah Tourism and  
Antiquities Authority

“As we have new partners joining us with exciting adventure programmes, we expect the meetings at ATM to be fruitful this year. With the participation of many new country pavilions, we will get the opportunity to showcase our rich culture and heritage to the world. An important aspect we need to add is the improvement of the hotel sector with new properties coming up in Fujairah that has given the emirate an opportunity to further develop the tourism sector.”



Haitham Mattar  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ras Al Khaimah  
Tourism Development  
Authority

“With over 7,000 years of history, Ras Al Khaimah is the perfect getaway for leisure, business and adventure travellers. As part of our Destination Strategy 2019-2021, we will continue to create compelling offerings that combine the emirate's key promises — pristine beaches, natural beauty, culture and heritage, excellence in hospitality and unrivalled experiences — to attract close to 1.5 million visitors by 2021 and three million visitors by 2025.”

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# TIME Hotels on an expansion spree

UAE-headquartered TIME Hotels is on a steady road towards expanding its footprint across the Middle East and North Africa. The hotel recently opened its new Central Reservations Office (CRO) in Cairo, Egypt. **Mohamed Awadalla**, CEO, TIME Hotels, shares details of growth plans over the next two years.

TT Bureau

## What is your focus at Arabian Travel Market this year?

Arabian Travel Market is an occasion to meet our partners and share our experiences in an industry that is increasingly becoming more competitive. We recently announced the signing of a new agreement to operate Dunes Hotel Apartments' three properties located in Al Barsha, Al Qusais and Oud Metha – further reinforcing our growth strategy to expand our footprint in the UAE. In line with our expansion in the Middle East and Northern Africa, we have recently relocated our Central Reservations Office to Cairo.

**“The new CRO in Cairo will manage room inventories for all hotels as well as coordinate and manage all reservations whilst providing up-to-date rates”**

TIME Hotels has seen an increase in the number of GCC travellers looking for short breaks and staycations, and the UAE is the destination of choice. Our popularity with guests from the GCC market is due to TIME Hotels' family-friendly facilities and competitive room rates. Our convenient location close to major attractions, malls and business hubs ensures our popularity with this market. We have been very strategic with our current pipeline of hotels and residences.

## What is the role of the new Central Reservations Office?

The new CRO in Cairo will be managing the room inventories for all hotels as well as coordinating and managing all reservations and providing up-to-date rates and availability for various distribution channels including TIME Hotels' online booking engine, its global distribution system and online travel agents. Supported by the existing TIME Hotels – Egypt Office, the new CRO will help ensure the efficient use of resources

and funds as well as provide better operational support across the MENA region.

## Why did you decide to open the CRO in Egypt?

Opening our new CRO in Cairo not only reflects the potential of the Egypt market but also its strategic geographical position, serving the wider MENA market, in particular the Levant and the North African markets.

## Could you share some of your expansion plans?

New openings are scheduled to take place in Dubai, Sharjah, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, taking our total portfolio to 20 properties by the end of 2020. This year will see the opening of



**Mohamed Awadalla**  
Chief Executive Officer  
TIME Hotels

TIME Hotels' first beach resort in Egypt, TIME Nozha Beach Aqua Park Hotel & Resort, a four-star property located in Ras Sudr, on Egypt's Red Sea coast.

## DISCOVER AMAZING LANDSCAPES OF KAZAKHSTAN

Looking for a destination to spend your school and summer holidays? Kazakhstan has many things to offer. Whether you like hiking, horseback riding, exploring the nature or just chilling with kids, vacationing in Kazakhstan is wonderful any time of the year.


Air Astana operates daily flights to Almaty and 5 times a week to Astana with onward connections to other cities of Kazakhstan.

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## TRAVTALK

## EDITORIAL

## Global meeting point

Over the years, Dubai has steadily displayed its prowess as a hub for meetings, conferences and events. A fine example is Arabian Travel Market in all its glory celebrating 26 years of unstinted networking proficiency ensuring that the world meets in Dubai. For those who have been in the trade for a long period of time, understand the importance of this trade show which displays over 100 country pavilions, leading hotel brands and travel technology pavilions. ATM launched the inaugural Arabian Travel Week this year, an umbrella brand which comprises four co-located shows — ATM 2019; CONNECT Middle East, India and Africa; ILTM Arabia and ATM Holiday Shopper.

Saudi Arabia's tourism potential will be a focus at this year's ATM especially as the kingdom is working towards its 2030 vision. The Travel Tech Show will also return to ATM 2019 with 45 international exhibitors and an agenda of debate in the Travel Tech Theatre – sponsored by Sabre Corporation. Once again, this year there will be a new exodus of clientele flying in from various parts of the world, some actually exhibiting for the first time. The Middle Eastern travellers are always on the look-out for new destinations for shopping, sports and adventure along with their requirement for bigger spaces.

As the month of Ramadan is scheduled to begin in the first week of May, the Airport Show has also been scheduled from April 29 to May 1 which would mean that the entire trade centre arena and the Zabeel halls will be occupied by the whole travel, tourism and hospitality flying in from around the world. At this year's show, the 'Women in Aviation' takes place on May 1, 2019. In the Middle East, Emirates, Etihad and flydubai have already exercised their pledge with over 40 per cent of female employees in different roles, ranging from pilots to engineers.

## What causes the delay?

Filippo Sona, Managing Director of Global Hospitality, Drees & Sommer, attributes poor communication, contractor deadlines and delayed sub-contractor activities to the delay in opening of 67 per cent of new hotels.

Our latest research paper, 'Hotel Pre-opening: A Tactical Approach', has shown that the handover date from contractor to hotel owner has delayed 67 per cent of new hotels due to lack of communication between project stakeholders, contractor time pressures and delayed deliverables from third party contractors. In order to minimise this, and ultimately minimise the negative impact on the hotels' return on investment and profitability of the first year of operations, we have identified seven key tactical pillars to help reduce the potential losses including project stakeholder alignment, value procurement approach, technical building delivery, realistic opening date and asset performance strategy.

With Dubai aiming to attract 20 million visitors in 2020 and overnight visitors to the Middle East exceeding 64 million in 2018, it is vital the risk of budget overspend, delayed openings and the tactics to avoid further issues are nullified.

Within the white paper, we have highlighted the main challenges and proposed solutions for each of the seven pillars, resulting in savings in five categories, including furniture, fixture and equipment expenditure, hotel recruitment phasing, operating supplies and equipment expenditure, advertising, promotions and hotel organisation structure.

The role of the asset manager is a complex one, not only do they have to achieve the owner's objectives by managing the investment but also resolve any misalignment between the parties, including the

**“ We have identified seven pillars to help reduce the potential losses including project stakeholder alignment, value procurement approach, technical building delivery and realistic opening date ”**

project manager, operator and the owner in order to boost overall asset potential. This is critical in the pre-opening phase, which typically lasts between six and nine months.

We have also highlighted the challenges of handover from the project manager to the operator, with the main obstacle being the lack of efficient communication. The result of misinterpretation is the potential delay in opening date and negative impact on costs. A lack of procurement strategy can also have a negative impact on budgetary overspending.

The delivery of a quality hotel product is another topic we have discussed in the report, with challenges often arising when the value level of the project finishing is not agreed at an early stage. From a technical perspective, inefficient testing and a lacking handover schedule can also create delays.

The pre-opening budget is another area researched. Excessive spending on payroll and unnecessary costs in marketing due to a lack of market intelligence and limited benchmarking can have a negative impact on budget constraints.

*(The views expressed are solely of the author.*

*The publication may or may not subscribe to the same.)*



**Filippo Sona**  
Managing Director of Global Hospitality  
Drees & Sommer

## Advancing the rights of children

Central Hotels and UNICEF renewed their partnership to help children fleeing poverty and conflict in the Middle East. Every initiative in this journey is a major advance in creating a better future for children by helping them achieve their full potential. The partnership between Central Hotels and UNICEF demonstrates how private organisations can contribute to the welfare of the community. Central Hotels has been working closely with UNICEF to support the organisation's causes.





# France eyes the ME market

Travel trade from the Middle East shared their views on 'Rendez-vous en France' organised by Atout France that hosted over 900 agents in Provence.



TT Bureau



**Susan Kamal**  
Chairman  
Star of Egypt

“As my first time in Marseilles, I enjoyed every moment of the programme — right from the pre-tours where we were able to witness interesting attractions. To our clientele, Provence and its surrounding areas will be exciting to explore. In terms of the conference, I am happy that I was able to engage in some very fruitful meetings with sellers from France.”



**Mohammed Jamil**  
General Manager  
Jamil Travels & Tourism, Kuwait

“Marseilles was an excellent experience and extremely promote-worthy for the Kuwait market. This will surely be a new destination for our clients with interesting sites to experience. I am thankful to Atout France for hosting us to experience the destination first-hand. Sofitel Marseille Vieux-Port is one of the most magnificent places for a view of the entire city.”



**Chithra Nair**  
Tours Manager  
IFA International Travel & Tourism, Kuwait

“The pre-tours were superb because the destination was a completely new experience for us. We learnt about many new places and had some enjoyable moments with people accompanying us. The two days of exhibition kept us preoccupied as we met various suppliers. The objective of the organisers was to sell the entire country rather than just the capital.”

“We managed to see quite a lot of Provence area. It is integral to promote these unexplored areas and develop awareness of these destinations. Even the smaller cities like Toulouse or Lyon have many attractions that would appeal to the GCC market. They are working towards developing some states to attract more visitors to various destinations.”



**Mohammed Hamed**  
General Manager  
Platinum Travel & Tourism, Riyadh

“We visited many interesting places such as perfume factories, soap and olive oil factories. We had some very fruitful meetings at the exhibition and found lots of details about not just one or two areas but the whole of France. Most Saudi clients know the capital of France well but these untapped cities and regions around have so much to offer.”



**Imtiaz Khan**  
Travel & Tourism Specialist  
Fursan Travel, Riyadh

“We are in the process of developing our European city programme; so this event was key for the French market that has generated a substantial amount of new contracts and partnerships for us. Sofitel Marseille Vieux-Port offered stunning views over the old port. I strongly feel that Marseille could be the next big destination for French tourism.”



**Alex Callahan**  
Purchasing Manager—  
European Cities  
Youtravel.com, Dubai

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## A TALE OF A DREAM DESTINATION FOR A PERFECT VACATION

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Wyndham Garden Ajman Corniche is operated by R Hotels under a franchise agreement with Wyndham Hotel Group.



# 93+ UAE exhibitors at ATM

This year's Arabian Travel Market will focus on the emergence of innovative technologies that have revolutionised the travel, tourism and hospitality sector. **Danielle Curtis**, Exhibition Director—ME, Arabian Travel Market shares more details about the show.



## What is new at Arabian Travel Market this year?

Cutting-edge technology and innovation will be adopted as the show theme and launched as a platform to inspire the travel and hospitality industry about the next generation of technology whilst bringing together senior travel executives to conduct business with innovative tech providers. Launching this year will be the inaugural Arabian Travel Week from April 27 – May 1, an umbrella brand which comprises four co-located shows: ATM 2019; CONNECT Middle East, India and Africa – a new route development forum, ILTM Arabia and a new consumer-led event – ATM Holiday Shopper. Arabian Travel Week will take place at the Dubai World Trade Centre.



**Danielle Curtis**  
Exhibition Director—ME  
Arabian Travel Market

“ATM Holiday Shopper on April 27 will showcase over 30 travel and hospitality exhibitors who will be offering the very best travel and tourism discounts and deals”

place at Dubai World Trade Centre on April 30 and May 1.

## Have all the emirates confirmed their participation?

Participating at this year's show will be the tourism boards from the UAE's seven emirates with major exhibits from Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah, Ajman and Fujairah as well as over 93 other

UAE exhibitors including Emirates, Emaar Hospitality Group and Dubai Airports Corporation. This year's edition is expected to bring together almost 40,000 travel professionals representing over 150 country pavilions showcasing over 2,800 products and destinations from around the world to more than 28,000 buyers and travel trade visitors.

## Are there any new countries or exhibitors this year?

ATM 2019 will welcome more than 100 new exhibitors including Expo 2020 Dubai, flynas, Belarus National Tourism Agency, Moscow Committee for Tourism and Montenegro National Tourism Organisation, South Africa Tourism Bureau and Zimbabwe Tourism Authority.

## This year has some interesting seminars lined up. Could you share more details?

Debuting this year is Arabia China Tourism Forum on April 28. With China set to account for a quarter of international tourism by 2030, an expert panel will discuss how destinations around the world can capitalise on this growth. Another debutant this year is ATM Hotel Industry Summit which will host expert panels to provide an insight on the latest hotel developments and innovative digital infrastructure shaping the future of the hospitality sector. This summit titled 'ATM Hotel Industry Summit: Opportunity knocks' will take place on April 30. 🌟



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ATM Holiday Shopper on April 27 will showcase over 30 travel and hospitality exhibitors from regional and international destinations who will be offering the very best travel and tourism discounts and deals exclusively for consumers attending the show. The inaugural CONNECT Middle East, India & Africa event will be the first and only networking forum in the Middle East. Co-located with ATM 2019, the new route development forum will be taking

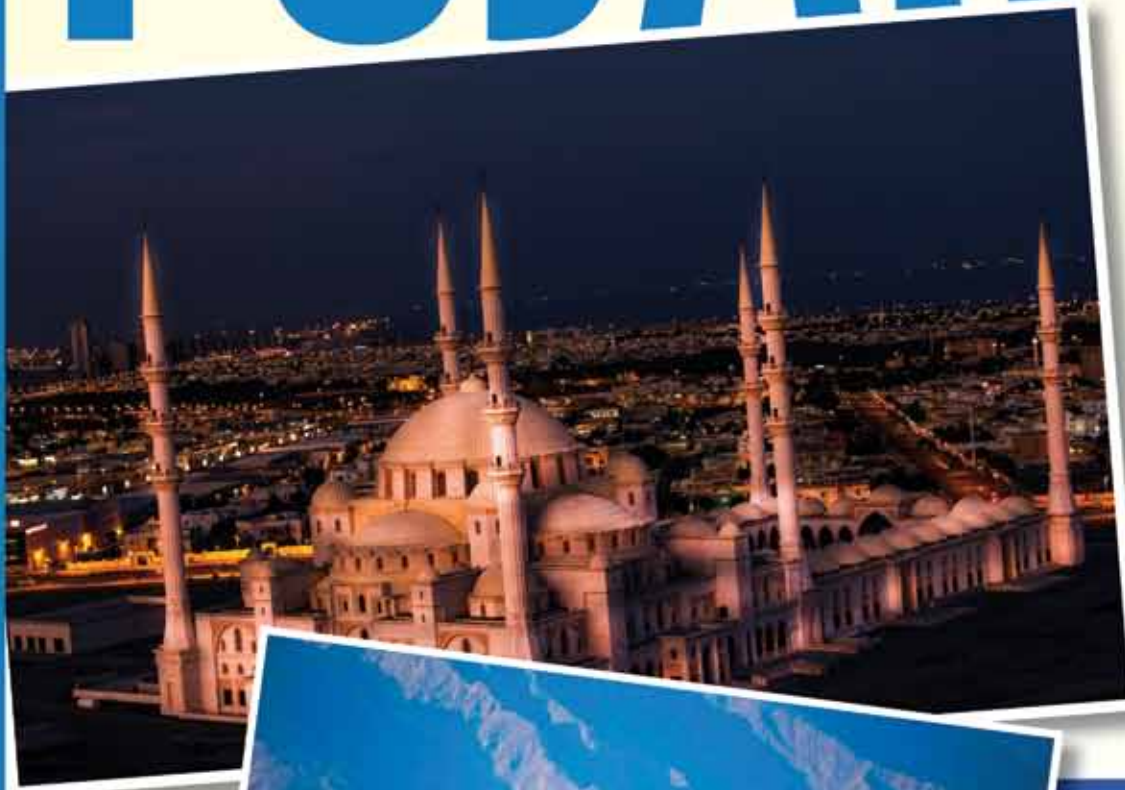
## Two Seasons supports the gift of kindness

Two Seasons Hotel & Apartments Dubai made a difference to the community through blood donation by collaborating with Dubai Health Authority. The mobile blood donation units were placed in front of the hotel. The entire team wholeheartedly participated in the initiative and contributed to the noble cause. Colleagues from different departments donated blood.

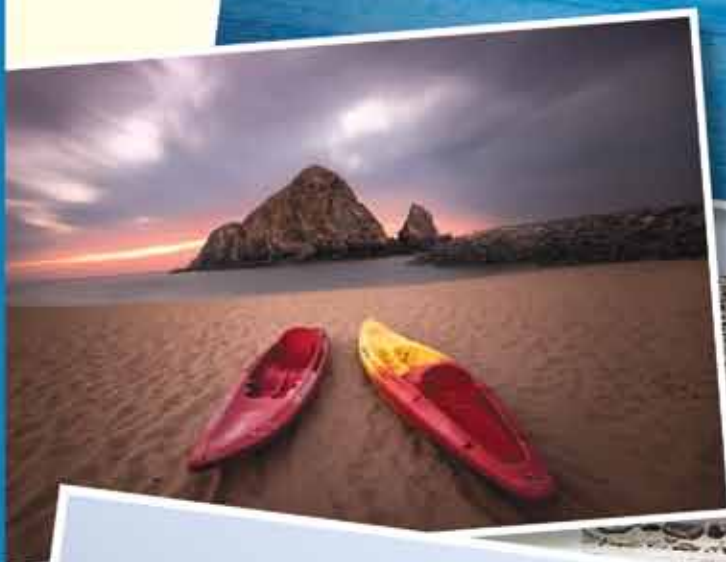




# Tourism in FUJAIRAH



Nestled between the Hajar Mountains and the Indian Ocean, the picturesque town of Fujairah is the perfect holiday destination for nature lovers. Indulge in countless activities, from water sports to flying lessons and spas in Fujairah. With business, tourism and infrastructure developments steaming ahead, the region's transformation into a twenty-first century city is certain.



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هيئة الفجيرة للسياحة والآثار  
Fujairah Tourism & Antiquities Authority



# The world convenes in Dubai

Key exhibitors share their views on Arabian Travel Market as it kicks off at World Trade Centre in Dubai. The show has gained momentum in contributing to the emirate's tourism numbers.

TT Bureau



**Abdulla AlAbdulla**  
Chief Operating Officer  
Central Hotels

“ATM 2019 will be the perfect platform for us to showcase and promote our portfolio of hotels. In 2018, we successfully launched two five-star properties in Dubai - Royal Central Hotel The Palm and Canal Central Hotel Business Bay. We are all set to unveil this year another luxurious hotel in Dubai 'Central The Palm'.”



**Mahmoud Alzaibak**  
Director of Sales and Marketing  
Movenpick Apartments  
Downtown

“Our aim is to introduce the 'hometel' experience in the GCC market. We expect to gather insights about the changes in the tourism industry specifically focusing on understanding the main source market of Dubai and the shift in traveller's interest. This information will help us materialise new businesses and key partners.”



**Cesar B Mora**  
Director of Sales and Marketing  
Golden Tulip Al Jazira Hotel  
and Resort

“Property exposure, awareness to the local and international market and new business sources are the main focus at this year's ATM. We are looking forward to attract the travel and trade to come, stay and discover Golden Tulip Al Jazira Hotel & Resort as a 'new getaway destination in a destination'.”

“We are keen to consolidate and strengthen our relationship with travel agents, OTAs, tour operators, DMCs, wholesalers and other regional and international travel trade professionals. As an exciting vacation spot for Indians, the Gulf destinations are vying for attention with their range of experiential products.”



**Karan Anand**  
Head-Relationships  
Cox & Kings

“ATM is the ideal venue to announce our summer packages that are linked to popularising Dubai's growing range of attractions as a family, shopping and leisure destination. Our special focus is on the upcoming Dubai Summer Surprises (DSS), the region's summer entertainment and shopping fiesta.”



**Olwin Desouza**  
General Manager  
Ghaya Grand Hotel

“The Ritz-Carlton in Ras Al Khaimah has been operating the hotels since December 2016 and has attended the ATM every year since then. After repositioning our resorts in key markets like Germany, the UK, Switzerland and China, we are looking to expand our reach to promote our 'Where in the World...' campaign.”



**Ross Park**  
Director of Sales & Marketing  
The Ritz-Carlton Ras Al Khaimah,  
Al Wadi Desert & The Ritz-Carlton  
Ras Al Khaimah, Al Hamra Beach

## Marseilles' wealth of tourism products

With its rich 2600-year-old history, Marseilles is the second largest city in France. **Cyrille Saboya**, Manager—International Markets, Marseille Tourism Board, gives an account of the myriad tourism offerings the city has to offer to the Middle East travellers.

TT Bureau

### How significant is the Middle East market for Marseilles?

During our participation at Arabian Travel Market 2018 in Dubai, we witnessed many inquiries about our destination. Therefore, we worked towards creating various programmes to attract travellers from this region. Currently, we are working towards obtaining a direct flight between Dubai and Marseilles so that we can increase the visitor numbers from the region. Turkish Airlines is the only carrier that connects Dubai to Marseilles via Istanbul or Dubai via Paris to Marseilles on Air France.

### What attractions would you recommend for the Middle Eastern travellers?

Marseilles has a lot to offer to the discerning clientele from the Middle East. From fashion boutiques to football stadiums, fishing and yachting experiences to discovering chateaux and a great mix of cultural and heritage areas are just some of the many available attractions.

### What are the luxury experiences offered by Marseilles?

The Middle Eastern clientele will enjoy the many luxury activities Marseilles offers — from yachting, golfing, Formula 1 Grand Prix, to Marseilles designers, making your very own fragrances, gastronomic cuisine, luxurious wellness treatments, etc. We have an area where you can taste the olive oil

in a restaurant and witness the process of making food. For expats in the Middle East, wine tasting from Provence is quite popular.

### Could you share the concept of Rendez-vous en France?

With the partnership of Atout France, we organised a successful networking B2B event with over 950 tour operators and travel agents from 70 countries, and 800 plus sellers from around France in one platform in Marseilles. This provided us a very good opportunity to showcase the many tourist attractions which will enable us to venture into new source markets and the ability to cater to different types of travellers from around the globe.



**Cyrille Saboya**  
Manager—International Markets  
Marseille Tourism Board

### Which attractions did you plan for the agents to experience first-hand?

The Basilique Notre Dame de la Garde has a panoramic view as it is the highest point in Marseilles. This was followed

by lunch at a restaurant at the fishing harbour. The third was a stroll in Le Panier, the oldest district of France where you could visit some soap factories. A boat trip was also organised to the Iffcalle, national monument prison of the count of Monte Christo. Another tour was arranged to the Calanques National Park of Marseilles. We also proposed a tour to the stadium to understand the Olympics De Marseilles Games. The Orange Velodrome Stadium has everything which interests families as on one side is the stadium and a shopping mall on the other with designer boutiques. Next was the visit at Cite Radieuse by Le Corbusier which was classified as the UNESCO World Heritage Site.



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# Explore a magical destination in Rwanda

Known as one of the safest cities in the African region with visa-on-arrival for all nationalities, there is something appealing about Kigali. The Rwandan capital is by far the cleanest in the region with a strong commitment to eradicate the use of any plastic.



**K**igali is a thriving African city notable for its cleanliness and hospitality. The newest policy from Rwanda to allow all nationalities in the world to travel to the destination without a visa has witnessed a significant growth in numbers. This serves as a definite advantage especially in the Middle East where travellers plan last minute on a destination they wish to explore. Travelling hassle-free is one of the most advantageous ways to explore any country around the world, so this proactive approach by the tourism board has an edge over other countries.

## Spick-and-span environs

Abundant vegetation, lush greenery, chirping birds and blooming flowers and fruits are a sure sign of what the country has to offer its visitors. Rwanda is a model African city: clean, organised and beautiful. If you plan an excursion to Akagera National Park, do remember

that there are dustbins to discard your garbage. When you purchase an item from anywhere, you will receive a paper bag which is disposable and not harmful for the environment.

## Blessed with good weather

For the Middle Eastern travellers the weather is perfect all the way as it is cool in a way that is enjoyable. The intermittent rains really leave the surroundings fresh and provide absolute tranquility. The sun does shine despite the winter being almost over.

## For adrenaline junkies

Kigali is truly a haven for the adventurer. You can pump up your adrenaline at Fazenda Sengha by selecting an activity that can challenge you from clinging on a zip line, or strutting on top of a horse and learning the art of horse riding. You may be interested in trying your hand at archery which may look very easy at first before you discover that it is no easy feat to carry on. There is also quad bike riding and a whole list of activities for the adventurous traveller.

## A perfect safari

Akagera National Park is one of the largest parks with over 10 lakes around the whole area. The park

is known as the home of the big five — lion, elephant, rhinoceros, leopard and buffalo apart from other animals like zebra, hyena, crocodiles and even hippopotamus. A specific spot called 'Hippo's beach' is actually a lake that can be enjoyed by visitors. At the entrance to the park, trained guides present you with a very comprehensive guide about the do's and don'ts to keep in mind, before you embark on the adventurous expedition in the national park. As you go along the way, you will find black and blue flags hanging on trees. These are to keep away the harmful flies that may attack the flora around the park.

One should take a full day's journey to explore the park and must be well equipped with food and water. In order to spot the Big Five, try spending a night in the park premises to get an opportunity to spot them at least once in your journey.

## Shop till you drop

The Rwandan capital has shopping malls and even areas where you will be able to buy various souvenirs. If you stay at Radisson Blu in the city, you will find a mall within 200 metres from where you can purchase any item that you require—from souvenirs, food, drinks, clothing to household requisites.







*Hotel Swimming Pool*

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A well-kept secret, the Golden Tulip Al Jazira Hotel & Resort is perfect for anyone looking for peace and comfort. Centrally located between the Cosmopolitan Dubai and the more traditional Abu Dhabi, it features bright and modern rooms each open onto a balcony. A unique offerings for families and groups who wish to experience their own beach bungalows can also enjoy the 2,3 or 4 bedroom chalets.



*Beachfront Chalet Swimming Pool*

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# Riyadh gets new *Radisson*

Modern comforts, warm colours and a welcoming ambience are synonymous with Radisson Blu Hotel & Residence, Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter in Saudi Arabia.

TT Bureau

Situated in lush, green surroundings, the stylish Radisson Blu Hotel & Residence, Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter creates an immediate impression with its stunning décor – not to mention the unique display of more than 1,000 original Saudi hand-crafted artworks as part of The Living Exhibition. The hotel features 110 rooms and suites that combine contemporary Italian interior design with touches of the Middle East. Each room provides modern facilities, including individual climate control, digital media players and a fully equipped kitchen.

**Tim Cordon**, Area Senior Vice President—Middle East and Africa, Radisson Hotel Group said, “We’re delighted to open our latest hotel in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in one of the most exclusive addresses in Riyadh. Tourism continues to be one of the key pillars of Vision 2030 with several positive initiatives being implemented to generate increased visitor demand. We’re pleased that our growth across Saudi Arabia is aligned with the Kingdom’s economic diversification strategy, and proud to be playing a leading role in the evolution of the country’s hospitality sector.”

For dining, the Larder Restaurant and Lounge serves both an international and Middle Eastern menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner while the Larder Lounge provides a welcoming space for teas, coffees and light bites. The outdoor Larder Terrace, set in tranquil gardens, is perfect for a relaxing social occasion. The hotel’s leisure facilities include an extensive health club that features a well-equipped gym, an indoor swimming pool, two treatment rooms and two steam rooms.

**Ferran Brufau**, General Manager, Radisson Blu Hotel & Residence, Riyadh Diplomatic

Quarter, said, “We’re confident our guests will be impressed by the contemporary hotel design and the unique ambience as soon as they enter the lobby. The hotel is sure to be a popular business destination with convenient access to the international embassies and many regional headquarters located in and around the Diplomatic Quarter. Our multinational team is excited and ready to deliver the renowned Yes I Can! service to our guests.”



## MICE Features

- ❖ The meeting facilities feature 125 sqm of room space, including four rooms equipped with the latest audio-visual equipment and Wi-Fi
- ❖ The hotel also features a Family Room, children’s Play Room, on-site parking and first-class security

# Fourth Hilton Garden Inn in Saudi

The new 133-key Hilton Garden Inn opened its doors in Saudi Arabia’s commercial centre in Jubail, Dammam. The hotel serves as a hospitality haven in the heart of Al Jubail, the industrial hub of Saudi Arabia.



TT Bureau

The hotel’s modern form is a new visual anchor for this emerging city. Set on the Jubail Corniche near Jubail Commercial Port, the property is conveniently located between King Fahd Airport in Dammam and the Royal Commission of Jubail and its Industrial City. “The completion of Hilton Garden Inn Al Jubail marks a key moment in this district’s transformation,” says **Ammar Al Assam**, Executive Director, Dewan Architects + Engineers. “The hotel’s contemporary architectural expression reflects the spirit of its surroundings – a growing and constantly evolving city,” he says.

Once a fishing village, Al Jubail today is the largest industrial city in the world and is also home to the Middle East’s

largest and world’s fourth largest petrochemical company Sabic. The location of Hilton Garden Inn Al Jubail makes it easily accessible to some of the key companies working on projects in the region including Sabic, Sadara, Tasnee, Petro Kemya, Maaden, Marafiq, King Fahd Industrial Port, Dow Chemicals, Exxon, Total, Schlumberger,

Saipem-Snamprogetti, Haliburton and Baker Hughes.

“We have already established a strong base in Saudi Arabia in which the firm has grown well in the last 12 years,” says Al Assam. “Many of our projects in the Kingdom serve as a benchmark for future developments in the region. We are now even more

“The completion of Hilton Garden Inn Al Jubail marks a key moment in this district’s transformation. The hotel’s contemporary architectural expression reflects the spirit of its surroundings – a growing and constantly evolving city”

**Ammar Al Assam**

Executive Director, Dewan Architects + Engineers

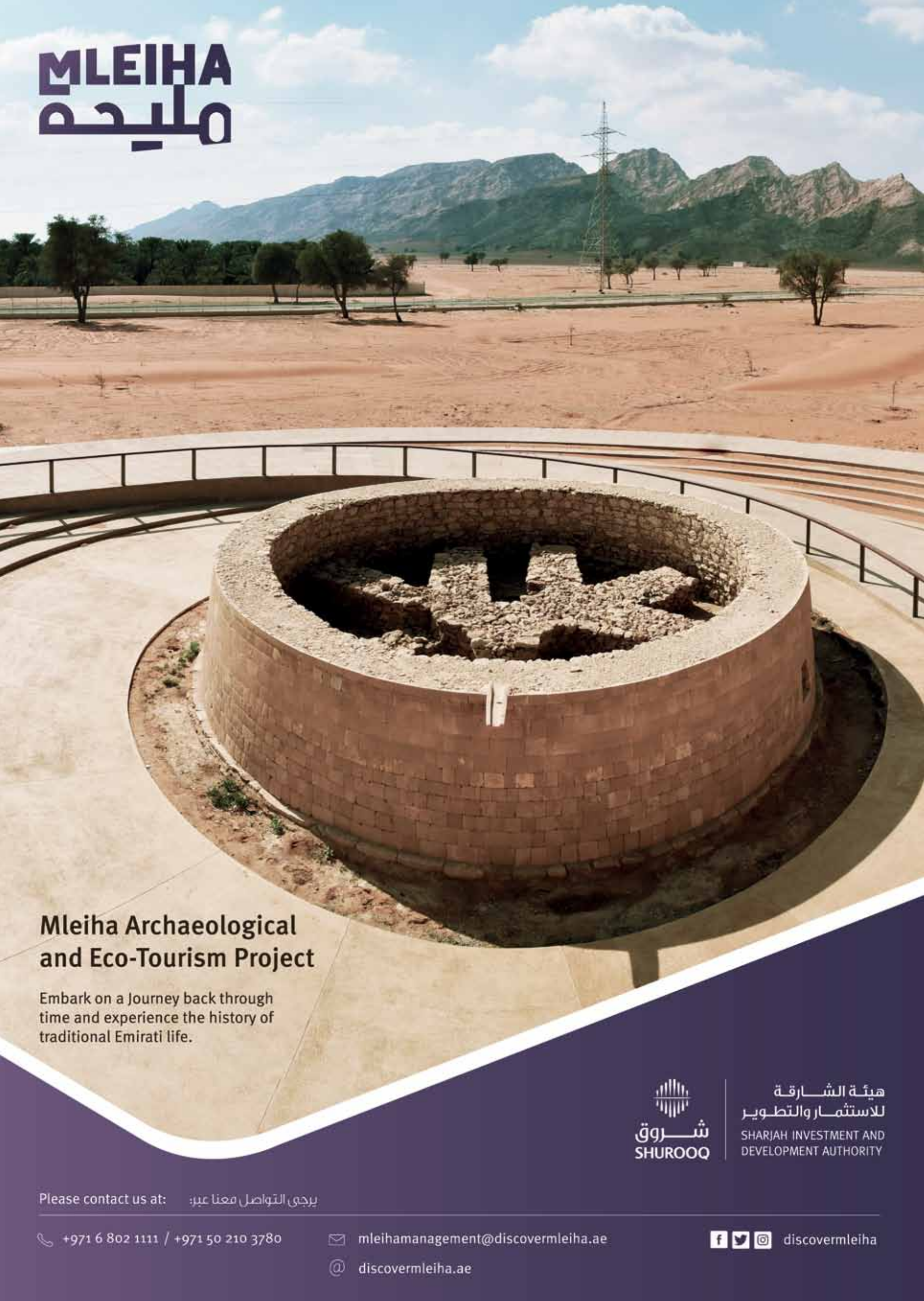
excited about Saudi Vision 2030 which we plan to be a part of as we further cement our foothold in the Kingdom as leading architects and engineers.”

In line with Dewan Architects + Engineers’ ‘go green’ initiatives, Hilton Hotels recently announced its partnership with ‘Clean the World’, an organisation that collects used soaps from hotels, melts them down, sanitises them, and creates brand new bars of soap for

people in need. The eight-storey hotel, located on King Faisal Street East, offers 133 spacious guest rooms; a contemporary lobby overlooking the Arabian Gulf; modern meeting rooms (Najla and Dalal); the Panorama (ladies) lounge; a stunning rooftop swimming pool with views over the Gulf. Guests can enjoy fine dining, themed buffets and weekend brunches at The Garden Grille restaurant, while the Garden Café offers snacks and beverages. 🍷







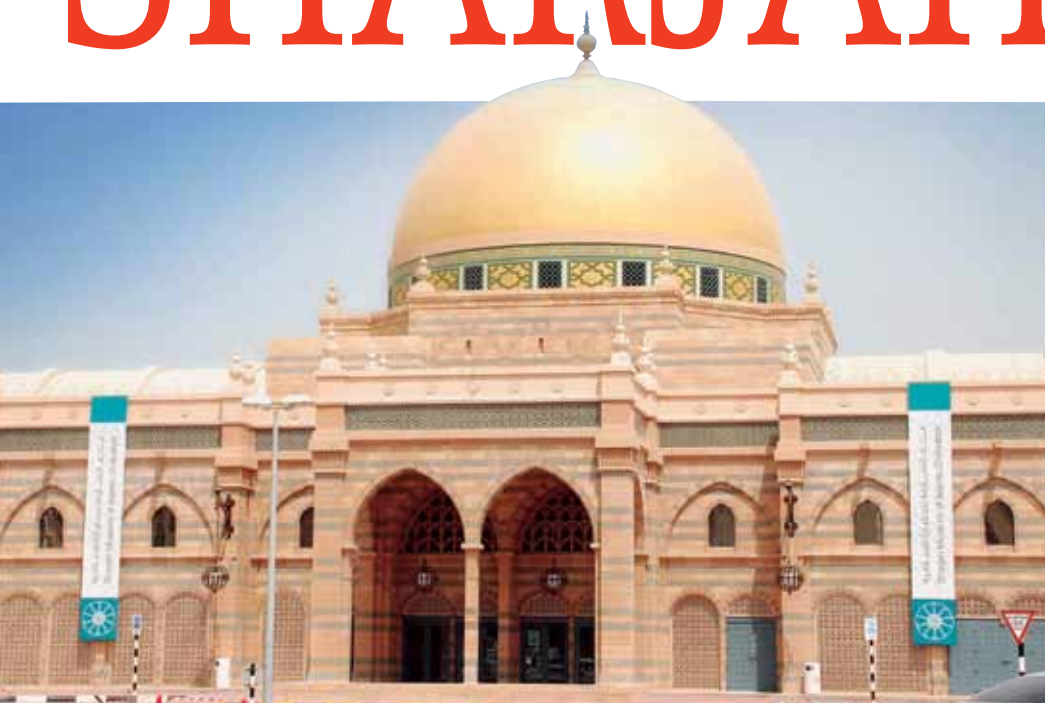
## Mleiha Archaeological and Eco-Tourism Project

Embark on a Journey back through  
time and experience the history of  
traditional Emirati life.



# Embark on a journey of cultural wonders in SHARJAH

Offering a selection of museums, art galleries and areas of natural beauty, the emirate of Sharjah has evolved as one of the most revered tourist destinations in the Middle East as visitors explore, experience and discover a unique Arabian lifestyle and Islamic culture.



Islamic Civilization Museum



Majlis Al Midfa



Mleiha



Bait Al Nabooda



Bait Al Nabooda

Sharjah is now firmly established as a regional hub of cultural excellence that brings together tourism and natural wealth and heritage to provide a special experience for visitors. In addition, the reputation of the area was recently enhanced after UNESCO named Sharjah 'World Book Capital 2019' in light of the emirate's brilliant promotion of reading to showcase knowledge as an effective tool to improve communication between people and organisations. Some iconic locations replete with history, nature and culture that fall into the esteemed category are:

## Heart of Sharjah

The largest historical preservation and restoration project in the region and a registered World Heritage site, Heart of Sharjah will be completed in 2025 and is set to become a thriving cultural destination. A combination of historical buildings and brand-new structures in line with traditional

architecture will bring together the emirate's rich heritage and modernity through hotels, restaurants, cafes, art galleries and markets.

## Heart of Sharjah Discovery Centre

Originally built in the middle of the 19th century, the Majlis Al Naboodah has undergone extensive refurbishment in light of new interest and a significant surge in the number of visitors to the Heart of Sharjah Discovery Centre. Restored to prominence by some of the region's most respected architects, the Discovery Centre offers a unique experience and special insight into Sharjah's past.

## Sharjah Centre for Astronomy and Space Sciences

The Sharjah Centre for Astronomy and Space Science boasts several attractions to enhance the experience of visitors, including a planetarium, astronomy exhibition, astronomical observatory and a cosmic park. The venue is sup-





Heart of Sharjah



## Natural History and Botanical Museum

The Natural History and Botanical Museum traces the history of local plant life that dates back to a million years ago – combining theory and practice to provide visitors with the most rewarding experience possible.

In addition to providing education regarding our dependence on plant life, the museum is a knowledge and entertainment hub with six different sections:

### Museum's Sections

- ❖ A Journey Through Sharjah – Features small displays of various habitats with local animals preserved by taxidermy and graphic displays to illustrate the difference between temperate climate and desert flora and fauna in Sharjah
- ❖ Desert Life – This area introduces the visitors to various desert organisms, both night and day animals. It also has a life-like model of the camel – one of the most famous animals in the emirate – and also has three aerial pictures that show the significant development of Sharjah from 1935 to 1994
- ❖ A Journey through Time – This hall is an exciting geological exhibit that elaborates on the story of life on earth since the beginning of time; holding a real-life meteor from outer space, fossils of raindrops, huge slabs of petrified wood, copper ore and the actual fossilised thighbone of a dinosaur
- ❖ The Living World – Showcases scientifically accurate classification of visual and microscopic organisms. It also explains the benefits and disadvantages of these organisms for the environment, humans and other living organisms
- ❖ The Living Sea – An interesting marine exhibit where exact replicas of sea creatures can be admired as though you are at the bottom of the sea
- ❖ Sharjah Botanical Museum – Explores the evolution of plant life through its interactive displays and educates visitors on the vital role that trees, bushes, grasses and fungi have on human life

ported by a state-of-the-art digital display system and can accommodate in excess of 200 visitors.

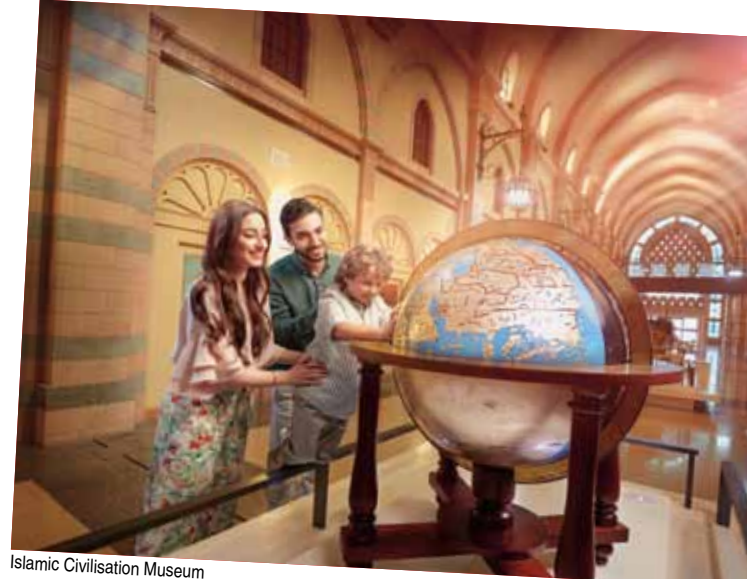
### Mleiha Archeological Centre

Constructed around the world-famous Umm Al-Nar tomb, the Mleiha Archaeological Centre focuses solely on Sharjah's ancient history. There are amazing artefacts and exhibits, interactive displays and guided tours of the surrounding archaeological area.

### Al Hefaiyah Mountain Conservation Centre

Al Hefaiyah Mountain Conservation Centre showcases the deep diversity of the region's mountain habitats and is dedicated to conserving delicate landscapes and endangered wildlife. The site hosts dozens of mountain species and provides unique and exclusive viewing opportunities to large landscaped enclosures and indoor nocturnal habitats.

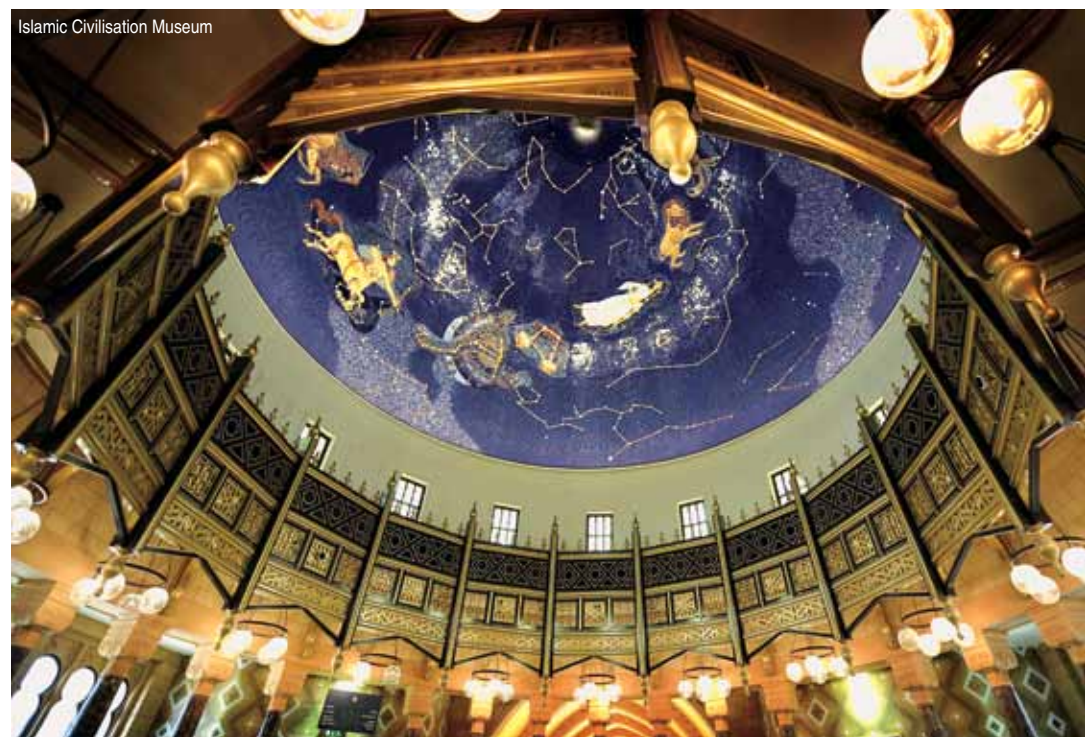
So, if you are a cultural fanatic, discover the city at leisure and at your own pace, to unravel a uniquely diverse destination.



Islamic Civilisation Museum



Sharjah Heritage Museum



Islamic Civilisation Museum



## Personality of the month

## Formidable strength at



**Sheikh Majid Al Mualla**, Divisional Senior Vice President—Commercial Operations, Emirates, is a leader par excellence in strengthening the commercial arm of the national carrier and ensuring it soars higher not only by profits but also by an unmatched humanitarian approach.

Shehara Rizly

“Leadership is action, not position” as quoted by Donald H McGannon is clearly exemplified by **Sheikh Majid Al Mualla**, Divisional Senior Vice President—Commercial Operations, Emirates, through the airline’s continuous growth, geographical expansion of operations, new business and sustained profitability. Al Mualla manages the commercial development and the long-term strategies of Emirates’ business across the Gulf, Middle East, Iran as well as West Asia. Besides, he is also the Chair of the Board of Directors at Hala China where his

“As an airline, we focused on a multitude of elements which included not only expansion but also innovation, product quality and service standards”

#### Keen eye for aviation

Al Mualla joined Emirates as a management trainee in 1996 after graduating from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in the United States. During his career, he has worked in senior managerial positions covering the UAE, West Asia and Indian Ocean. Today,

passengers across 158 destinations to and through Dubai, and supports a strong, efficient and competitive air transport ecosystem. We are an airline that has challenged the historical norms of the industry; we focused on a multitude of elements which included not only expansion but also innovation, product

across the region I oversee, who work day in and day out to ensure we maintain our competitive edge and continue delivering a world-class experience to our customers.” His commitment to the airline, travelling and leading the airline’s operations in different markets, and making a difference by growing their presence and market share, and helping to future proof the business through different



key responsibility is to foster current and future strategic partnerships to strengthen relationships between businesses, investors, entrepreneurs and travellers in both the UAE and China. As the Chair, he has led a number of initiatives to ensure that they make the traveller journey across every touchpoint in Dubai accessible. He shares, “We have taken steps to set up dedicated Mandarin Chinese services that can be accessed by all Chinese speakers visiting Dubai. The new service will provide tourist information about the city to Chinese visitors to help them make the most of their stay while in Dubai.”

leading a team of over 500 people across his regions of responsibility, he continues to look at ways to expand Emirates’ presence in emerging leisure and business destinations like the Maldives, India and Bangladesh.

Al Mualla relates, “Commercial aviation is one of the most dynamic industries in the world, and it’s constantly evolving. It’s also a sector that breaks down barriers between people and nations, moves goods, generates jobs and supports economies. I am proud to be part of an airline that helps connect

quality and service standards. We have a strong brand that helps to connect us to our customers and beyond, and I am inspired for what the future holds for our airline and the industry as a whole.”

#### Celebration of pride and passion

Understanding some of the most important humanitarian needs to better the lives of children by supporting various organisations is an innate trait in Al Mualla, hence the Emirates Airline Foundation is just one of the many supported organisations. He shares, “I am incredibly proud of the teams

commercial strategies are just a few of the many moments of distinction.

#### Recounting the success story

Emirates stands firm as the leader in the Middle Eastern skies. Al Mualla continues, “For Emirates, the formula to growth and success has been through its people, product, and Dubai – not only its geography but its appeal for both commerce and tourism. The Emirates business model is all about connecting Dubai to the world and connecting the world through Dubai with efficient air transport services.”





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Aspiring to veer off the beaten path? Venture out beyond the norm to the heart of where history meets adventure.

# Unlock the adventures of RAS AL KHAIMAH



## Fast Facts

❖ Jebel Jais at 1,934m is not only the highest peak in Ras Al Khaimah but in the entire UAE. A key feature of the mountains is the abundance of wadis and hiking and mountain bike trails

❖ The waters off the UAE's coast host over one third of the world's 80 species of whales and dolphins, around 700 species of fish and four reported species of turtles

Tucked away in the northernmost point of the United Arab Emirates, Ras Al Khaimah is known for its natural wonders and outstanding landscapes.

As home to the country's highest mountain Jebel Jais, Ras Al Khaimah is an adrenaline-fuelled destination. It's not until you stand on the edge of Jebel Jais that you really feel you're on the edge of the world. Jebel Jais plays host to three eco-friendly adventure-based projects — Jebel Jais Flight, Jebel Jais Via Ferrata and the Jebel Jais Viewing Deck Park. With more adventure tourism attractions such as Zipline Tour, Bull Maze, Climbing Tower, Survival Academy, hiking trails and luxury camp in the pipeline,

the destination is truly becoming the fastest growing adventure hub in the region.

Launched over a year ago, Jebel Jais Flight: The World's Longest Zipline is one of the destination's highest profile attractions with a strong following among adventure enthusiasts from around the world. At an incredible 2.83 km long - equivalent to over 28 soccer fields and spanning the chasm of Jebel Jais at over 1,680 metres above sea level, it is truly a bucket-list experience and an adventure of a lifetime.

A first in the region, Jebel Jais Via Ferrata is a protected climbing route secured by steel cables that offers a combination

of hiking, climbing and ziplining challenges to visitors (with tour guides). Soak in stunning 360-degree vistas of the spectacular Hajar Mountains formed over 70 million years ago and capture Instagrammable content with seven observation decks at Jebel Jais Viewing Deck Park. Gourmet refreshments are also available at the food truck outlets - Puro Express and Muse Café at the park. For an easier access to Jebel Jais and its adventure offerings, Jebel Jais Tours provides shuttle service from Ras Al Khaimah City, Al Hamra area and Al Marjan Island.

Travel back in time on a unique tour of the Suwaidi Pearls Farm founded by Abdulla Al Suwaidi, the grandson of one of the country's last

remaining pearl divers. Learn about the emirate's coveted pearling industry in the past and immerse yourself in a range of experiences including pearl diving, oyster opening experience, kayaking and a traditional lunch.

For a deeper insight into the emirate's fascinating history, culture and heritage, stop over at the National Museum of Ras Al Khaimah. A former fort, originally designed as a defensive structure, it is now filled with archaeological, historical and ethnographical objects, partly donated by members of the ruling Al Qasimi family and residents of Ras Al Khaimah. Discover a trip beyond the ordinary and let Ras Al Khaimah's inherent beauty capture your heart and soul.





# Committed to quality: Gray Line



With presence in over 700 locations, Gray Line UAE and Oman has been at the forefront in the two countries as the largest provider of sightseeing tours.

TT Bureau

At the helm of creating the best traveller experiences, Gray Line UAE and Oman is one of the largest providers of sightseeing tours as its existence dates back to over 100 years. "We have been nominated as the licensee of Grayline in UAE and Oman with a mission to develop daily tours in our areas. Therefore, we are essentially present in UAE and Oman with a worldwide presence in the market. Today, our daily tours can be obtained in multiple languages such as Spanish, Polish, German, French, Turkish, Korean and Russian," shared Elodie Azar, Deputy General Manager, Gray Line UAE and Oman.

The company offers the convenience of a big brand to clients

**"We have been nominated as the licensee of Grayline in UAE and Oman with a mission to develop daily tours in our areas. Therefore, we are essentially present in UAE and Oman with a worldwide presence in the market. Today, our daily tours can be obtained in multiple languages such as Spanish, Polish, German, French, Turkish, Korean and Russian"**

with a difference in being local specialists of its destination. She elaborated, "In other words, we are a 'local expert'. Our team is well established, with offices in Dubai and Abu Dhabi with a good strength of staff, branded buses and vehicles for seamless operations. We bring tourists, individuals and groups from all over the world to visit the UAE and Oman and explore our daily tours. Dubai, Abu Dhabi and

Muscat are the most frequented destinations."

Grayline in UAE and Oman primarily caters to the leisure clientele and is specialised in transportation and transfers with daily sightseeing tours, attractions and tickets tours. "As a sightseeing company, we are the only one known for excursions and tours. Our products are a full- or half-day tour with a story and content

throughout the trip to keep our guests entertained, said Azar.

Sharing her opinions about the future of the industry, Azar notices the shift towards technology with more structured offers. "Nowadays it is easy to book a ticket in two minutes and immediately have it on email on our phones than it was 20 years ago. Hotels and trips are also booked at the tip of our fingertips. Similarly, it will be even easier to book excursions in the next five to ten years than it is today. Things will be more and more instant, and clients will require everything at the earliest. So only professionals will survive!" she concluded.



**Elodie Azar**  
Deputy General Manager, Gray Line UAE and Oman

## Emerging technologies in travel

Once again, Sabre Corporation will sponsor the Travel Technology Theatre at Arabian Travel Market 2019. Experts will showcase latest technology in the travel and hospitality.

**Sabre**

TT Bureau

Conducting seminar programmes at Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2019, Sabre will host the first show of Travel Tech Theatre on the theme 'Glimpse into the Future: How Emerging Technology is Simplifying the Travel Experience'. **Ben Vinod**, Senior Vice President and Chief Scientist, Sabre Corporation, will be speaking about how emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning and customer segmentation can be used to personalise the customer experience and how new industry and behavioural trends are transforming the travel sector. Vinod will also talk about the evolution in travel distribution and how NDC is transforming the travel experience.



**Ben Vinod**



**Robin Boudsocq**



**Andrew Sims**



**Abdul-Razzaq Iyer**



**Zaeem Gama**

Next on the agenda will be 'Virtual Payments for a Seamless Traveller Experience' on April 29 with speakers **Robin Boudsocq**, Strategic Products—Sales, Sabre EMEA and **Andrew Sims**, CEO, NEC Payments. As technology is playing a significant role in boosting companies' efficien-

cies, payment methods are no exception. Traditional payment methods such as credit cards, BTAs, cash and accounts payable, carry fraud risks. Boudsocq and Sims will talk about how the increased availability and acceptance of consumer technology have created the need for

corporates to adapt and respond to customers' expectations.

Business travel in the Middle East is going through many transformations driven by high investments in the travel and technology infrastructure. **Abdul-Razzaq Iyer**, Vice Presi-

dent, Sabre Travel Network—Middle East will speak to **Zaeem Gama**, CEO, Kanoo Travel, about the dynamics of the business travel sector, challenges and opportunities in the Middle East and how business travel can be smarter to elevate the business traveller's experience.

"The rise of new technologies and trends are creating more opportunities for all players in the industry and we are here to support our customers and the market to learn about everything new in the travel industry whilst leveraging on these opportunities," said Iyer.

Sabre is also highlighting the evolution of distribution and how NDC is changing the landscape of travel.



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# New waterfront leisure hub



Within the framework of the public-private partnership, Al Barakah International Investment (BII) and Abu Dhabi Municipality, continues the progress of their joint waterfront development, Al Qana. Open to visitors in Q4 2020, the project will offer a modern lifestyle experience in Abu Dhabi.

TT Bureau

Al Qana is developing seven key districts spanning over 2.4 km of scenic and picturesque waterfront walkways. The project offers a unique collection of attractions from waterside eateries, cinema experiences, the Middle East's largest aquarium, yacht marina, first-of-its-kind wellness hub, first to the UAE VR park, kids' action zone, outdoor skatepark and landscaped community spaces that are aimed at

encouraging social interaction. Al Qana is located on the historic natural Khor Al Maqta, the waterway bordering the mainland in close proximity to Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque. Adjacent to the neighbouring five-star hotels, the development is in a prime location for both residents and tourists.

**Moataz Mashal**, Managing Director, BII said, "This new landmark destination will play

a key role in supporting the government to realise its vision of enhancing Abu Dhabi's status as one of the world's most popular destinations for business, leisure, lifestyle and entertainment. Al Qana will offer a new lifestyle for residents through exciting dining destinations, whilst also being an attractive place for tourists to visit, in close proximity to many of the most famous landmarks in the capital."

Over 50 per cent of Al Qana's leasable area is being assigned to entertainment. To underline the significant steps taken towards the completion of the project, Al Qana has brought on board a key partner, The National Aquarium of Abu Dhabi, which will be the largest of its kind in the Middle East.

**Stuart Gissing**, General Manager, Al Qana said, "Our distinctive district's concept

and ideal location are already attracting major regional and international concepts, including food and beverage, leisure and entertainment brands looking to become part of the city's next waterfront lifestyle hub. Since the launch of the project, our team of experts have been working closely with the authorities and our partners to ensure a unique mix of complementary commercial services and facilities."

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# Marriott enjoys strategic location

Marriott Executive Apartments - Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter welcomes guests with cacti, vines, desert flora and date palm trees to create a soothing ambience.

TT Bureau

Featuring 80 spacious rooms and 140 fully equipped apartments, Marriott Executive Apartments is the first five-star full-serviced hotel at Riyadh Diplomatic Quarter. Situated at the Diplomatic Quarter in Riyadh, Marriott International along with Dur Hospitality unveiled Marriott Executive Apartments. The complex is strategically located in the heart of one of the most sought-after areas in the city with easy access to key embassies and major corporate headquarters. The deluxe rooms feature modern décor and ample work space, allowing guests to stay connected with in-room technology including high speed Wi-Fi and bedside USB outlets. Guests



**Alex Kyriakidis**  
President and Managing Director—  
Middle East & Africa, Marriott International

staying in one of the six Premium Suites or the Presidential Suite can enrich their experience at M Club Lounge offering an international buffet and local

specialties throughout the day. With state-of-the-art business facilities and innovative spaces that seamlessly blend work and play, the hotel caters to the needs of both business and leisure travellers.

"We are delighted to enhance our footprint in Saudi Arabia with the opening of two strategically important hotels that not only complement each other but also deliver very distinct brand experiences. Saudi Arabia continues to be one of our key markets and we are proud to further strengthen our partnership with Dur Hospitality," said **Alex Kyriakidis**, President and Managing Director—Middle East & Africa, Marriott International.

**"We are delighted to enhance our footprint in Saudi Arabia with the opening of two strategically important hotels that not only complement each other but also deliver very distinct brand experiences"**

Meeting the highest standards for energy and environmental (LEED) gold certification requirements, the hotel amplifies useful daylight via a complex reflection process. It can decrease its illumination needs during the day. Plentiful shaded areas and the building's structure allow for natural ventilation, thereby reducing the need for air conditioning and

additional cooling. The hotel is inspired by the scenic Wadi Hanifa, a desert oasis running through Riyadh. The low-rise hotel resembles the smooth, dry canyon walls that make for a dramatic arrival experience. Once you step inside, the waterways guide the way into the heart of the building, ushering guests through the arrival court into the palm dotted oasis.

# Golden Tulip attracts corporates

Golden Tulip Al Jazira Hotel & Resort has been enjoying a mix of business both from leisure clientele as well as private and public sector companies over the past year.

TT Bureau

With some interesting options for leisure and business activities on offer, Golden Tulip Al Jazira Hotel & Resort is connected to the Arabian Gulf and to the beach resort by a channel. The many features of the hotel personify a lively ambience in modern rooms where each opens onto a balcony furnished with a table and chairs. Category-wise, there are many to select from 80 standard rooms along with four units of one-bedroom suites and 30 beachfront chalets. Out of the standard rooms, 40 of them are equipped with king-size beds whilst another 40 are twin-bedded to cater to various market needs. In the chalets, there are 10 units of two-bedroom chalets, nine units of three-bedroom



**Rifat Sabet**  
General Manager  
Golden Tulip Al Jazira Hotel & Resort

chalets and 10 units of four-bedroom chalets.

**Rifat Sabet**, General Manager, Golden Tulip Al Jazira Hotel & Resort shared, "Our guests can

enjoy recreational facilities including the swimming pool, gym and cycling as well as have great choices of dining options including an international restaurant and poolside snack bar. The Bounty Bar and Vintage Bar serves cold drinks which one can enjoy while watching a sports game on a flat screen TV. Guests travelling by car can enjoy the resort's free private parking."

The hotel has also attracted many corporates, informed Sabet, opting to reserve the property for their team building activities or outings with

friends and family. "There are four meeting rooms which can accommodate from eight persons up to 120 persons and one outdoor garden area that can accommodate up to 1,500 guests. So, we have been enjoying a mix of business both from leisure clientele as well as private and public sector companies over the past year," said Sabet.

Guests who frequent the property have identified certain travel agents and tour operators that

are able to provide them good deals. In terms of excursions, guests are at liberty to select the travel agent or tour operator or DMC of his/her choice.

Sabet added, "We currently look to increase our market segment for corporate accounts, airlines, Asian and Western group bookings and millennial business travellers in the UAE for 2019 and 2020. About 30 per cent of our business mix is contributed by travel agencies and tour operators and we usually grant them the best discounted rate with certain incentives."







# Networking takes centre stage

As the most influential networking platform in Europe, ITB Berlin year after year attracts new markets and country pavilions along with a showcase of destinations and myriad tourism offerings. Almost 160,000 visitors with over 10,000 exhibitors attended the event this year over three days of valuable business meetings.





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## Vida Downtown

### ► Dubai

Emaar Hospitality Group appointed seasoned strategic and result-driven leader, **Nicolas Chammaa** as the General Manager of Vida Downtown. Overseeing all aspects of the hotel, Chammaa will be responsible for the day-to-day operations in driving the hotel's strategic growth. He has almost two decades of experience in the hotel business, including well-known properties in Bahrain, Oman, UAE, and the Philippines. He graduated from Notre Dame University with a Bachelor's degree in Hospitality Management and Tourism.



## Mövenpick Hotel Jumeirah Beach

### ► Dubai

Mövenpick Hotel Jumeirah Beach has designated **Amery Burleigh** as its General Manager. She is responsible for overseeing the entire hotel management and operations whilst setting strategic plans to continue achieving the hotel's revenue, operating and environmental goals. Burleigh joins the hotel after serving for six years as General Manager of Sofitel Gold Coast Broadbeach, Australia where she was the first female appointed GM for the Sofitel Brand in Australia. She brings over 20 years of international hospitality experience from USA, Australia and Middle East.



## Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group

### ► Riyadh

Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group announced the promotion of **Aiman Roujouleh** as Vice President—Sales, Middle East and Turkey, to support the expansion of the group in the Middle East region. As part of his new position, Roujouleh will continue to oversee the two RSO offices in Riyadh and Dubai.



## Swiss-Belinn

### ► Muscat

Swiss-Belhotel International has appointed **Paul Uglesic** as General Manager of Swiss-Belinn, Muscat. Uglesic has 10 years of experience in the hospitality industry having worked with some of the world's leading brands. He started his career with Radisson Blu Resort & Spa in Croatia in 2009. In 2015, he moved to Dubai taking up the role of Executive Assistant Manager at Radisson Blu Hotel Dubai Deira Creek and performed a task force role as the acting General Manager at Radisson Blu Hotel in Dubai Downtown. His most recent assignment was at the Park Inn by Radisson Dubai Motor City as the opening General Manager.



## Swiss-Belresidences Juffair

### ► Juffair

Swiss-Belhotel International has appointed **Khalil Srou** as Hotel Manager of Swiss-Belresidences Juffair. Srou brings superb international hospitality experience spanning more than 27 years in Australia and the Middle East. Khalil began his career in Australia in 1992 at the Mercure Hotel Ultimo in Sydney and held several managerial positions at the property in a span of five years.



Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group welcomes **Kenan Ozkan** as Regional Director of Sales of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait. Ozkan has previously worked at Mandarin Oriental, Bodrum, where he successfully raised the profile of the resort across the Middle East region. Prior to working with Mandarin Oriental, he held key sales positions at The St Regis Istanbul, followed by his long stint with Four Seasons where he worked his way up the ladder. His wide network of clients will be one of the Middle East Regional Sales Office's strongest assets in ensuring a big impact in positioning Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group as one of the leading luxury brands in the Middle East.



## Avani Central Busan Hotel

### ► Busan

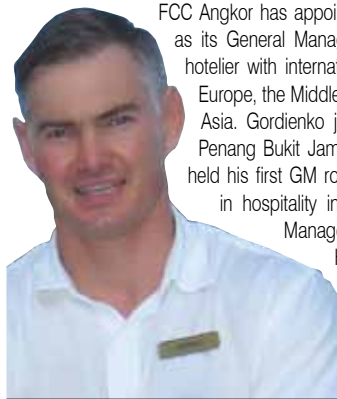
Avani Central Busan Hotel has appointed **Tyson Bae** as its Cluster General Manager, where he will also lead the upcoming Avani Busan Resort opening in 2020. Bae brings with him two decades of hospitality experience, having started his career in Seoul before venturing to the USA, Singapore and China. He was also the Chairman of Rooms Operations for the Shanghai Business Council, Marriott International, as well as Board Member of the Asia-Pacific Rooms Advisory Board for Marriott International Headquarters. In 2012, Tyson led the pre-opening of the Marriott Hotel Pudong East, Shanghai, as the Director of Rooms Operations.



## FCC Angkor - Managed by Avani Hotels & Resorts

### ► Cambodia

FCC Angkor has appointed **Dennis Gordienko** as its General Manager. He is a passionate hotelier with international experience across Europe, the Middle East, Indian Ocean and Asia. Gordienko joins Avani from Vistana Penang Bukit Jambul, Malaysia, where he held his first GM role. He began his career in hospitality in 2008 as a Restaurant Manager for Copthorne Tara Hotel in London, UK. He then moved to his native Ukraine in 2009.



## Waldorf Astoria DIFC

### ► Dubai

**Victor Chalfoun** is the new General Manager of Waldorf Astoria Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC). Bringing 18 years of hospitality experience to the first Waldorf Astoria city hotel in the UAE, Chalfoun's commitment to delivering the true Waldorf service will be experienced by the hotel's guests. Chalfoun, with his vast experience in hospitality, honed his managerial skills during his tenure with Conrad Pezula in South Africa.



# Etihad Dreamliner to Johannesburg, Lagos & Milan

■ Etihad Airways will introduce the Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner this summer on its scheduled services from Abu Dhabi to Johannesburg effective August 1, Lagos effective August 2 and Milan effective September 1, replacing the Airbus A330s currently operating the routes. All three destinations will feature Etihad Airways' next-generation Business and Economy cabins, configured with 299 seats - 28 Business Studios and 271 Economy Smart Seats. Etihad Airways extensive global network to and from Abu Dhabi will see more 787 Dreamliners introduced on key destinations as the airline takes delivery of more of the type.



The Dreamliner will be deployed on the daily Johannesburg route from August 1, with flight EY 604 leaving Abu Dhabi at 10.05 am and landing in the South African city at 4.30 pm. Return flight EY 603 will depart from Johannesburg at 8.05 pm and arrive in the UAE capital at 6 am the next day. Etihad will operate the Boeing jet to Lagos from August 2, on the four-time weekly route (Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday). Flight EY 673 departs from Abu Dhabi at 2.35 am and lands in Lagos at 7.10 am, with return flight EY 674 departing Lagos at 8.30 am and arriving in the UAE capital at 7.10 pm.

On Etihad's daily route to Milan, the Boeing 787 will be effective from September 1, with flight EY 81 departing from the UAE capital at 2.20 am and landing in the Italian city at 6.50 am. The return flight EY 88 will leave from Milan at 10.40 am and arrive in Abu Dhabi at 6.55 pm.



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