

Gulf Weekly

The community newspaper at the heart of Bahrain

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LIMITLESS - FORMULA 1® GULF AIR SAHRAIN GRAND PRIX 2019

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SAFE CASH GONE

Police called in to investigate missing money from Brit Club



STUNNED members of The British Club of Bahrain are reeling from the alleged theft of a significant amount of cash from its safe – believed to be a five-figure sum – and police have been called in to investigate and lawyers appointed in an attempt to recover the missing money.

A member of staff has been 'suspended' as enquiries continue following an incident being uncovered on January 17 and in the after-shock David Endall resigned from his post as general manager 'due to health reasons' and returned to the UK on February 1.

The club's 10-strong committee and membership are still reeling and admit the whole affair has been 'a terrible shock'. Chris Woodrow, the club's chairman, told *Gulf Weekly*: "Yes, what is unfortunate, and bitterly disappointing, is that a sum of cash has gone missing from the British Club."

"As the club is always totally transparent to our membership, the executive committee has so far sent out two statements, keeping everyone as up-to-date as our attorneys will allow while

EXCLUSIVE
By STAN SZECOWKA
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there is a public prosecution / CID investigation ongoing."

The committee, however, has been instructed by its legal advisers not to be specific about the actual amount involved. A statement released to members on Monday read: "On 17th

January 2019, we identified that a sum of cash had gone missing from the club.

"The prime suspect, a member of staff, was quickly identified and immediately suspended. Both the police and our attorneys were notified the same day, the matter has subsequently been referred to Manama CID.

Turn to Page 4



STUNNED: Chairman Chris



RESIGNED: Former GM David

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EATING OUT
Brunch delights:
SEE PAGE 11



SPRING OF CULTURE
2019 line-up revealed:
SEE PAGES 12 & 13



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MARTIN GARRIX

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DISHY DATE: Chef Xbe and, below, working on a culinary creation and in the Bahrain kitchen

Romance and colourful fare

LOVE is in the air and there will be a special spring in the step of food lovers thrilled by the arrival of an Italian celebrity chef ... back in the kitchen in time for St Valentine's Day at his signature restaurant at the Hotel Bahrain Convention Centre & Spa.

Chef Giancarlo 'Xbe' Perbellini and his team will be serving special dishes for sweethearts and unveiling a new menu for the season featuring a fascinating fusion of Mediterranean and Arabic fare at La Pergola by Perbellini.

Having just flown in from Europe, he said: "I'm very excited to be back in Bahrain for a special dinner on St Valentine's Day. Don't miss it!"

Chef Xbe (pronounced Perbe) will be working in the kitchen and meeting diners tomorrow and on Friday too and he promises some colourful creations. "In Italy green is the colour of spring, for this reason we have chosen it as the main colour of our new menu," he revealed to GulfWeekly.

The latest dishes have been developed as a result of conversations with his team of chefs in Bahrain and from useful feedback gathered from

HOSPITALITY REPORT

By STAN SZECOWKA
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regular customers. "Bahrain is a new market for us, for we are trying to combine our traditional Italian cuisine with Arabian elements," he said.

One new example is the Chickpea Cream with Lobster, tangerine reduction and Burrata foam. "It's a simple dish that contains both Italian and Bahraini traditions," Chef Xbe added. "We want people to discover real Italian cuisine but at the same time we want to respect and understand the desires of local people."

"Dishes are being made with fresh seasonal and very popular ingredients such as peas and asparagus. The creamy texture of the peas, for example, combined with thyme and lemon, will be the base for barbecue cuttlefish and local shellfish."

"There will be a touch of 'hot and cold' which represents Italy - served with local fish and a spicy touch that Arabian countries strongly appreciate."

"We propose using asparagus in different textures too - raw, boiled and fried - and with Eggs gratiné au Parmigiano Reggiano and All-Spice Red Rice Chips, a match that Italians will appreciate very much. This dish reminds me of Italy, of

its colours and perfumes, and of the ancient taste of our traditional cuisine."

"Another not-to-be-missed dish will be a Risotto with Peas and Smoked Caprino Cheese Cream ... simple but with intense flavour. I don't want to reveal much more than that, but simply invite food-lovers to visit La Pergola by Perbellini, meet up with each other and discover the secrets of Italian cuisine."

"Look for the best in every dish you taste, appreciate every product and its uniqueness. Each one is going to leave you with a pleasant memory. Taste has no limits!"

With romance on the minds of most diners tomorrow, a passion for food and a love of family will be closer to Chef Perbe's heart as he will be so far from home.

"My act of love happens every Sunday when I cook for my family at home," he said. "I love staying with my three sons, spending time with them and sharing these moments together. I take care of them by cooking up some amazing food. Last week I cooked Risotto with Shrimps and we had so much fun together!"

For more details call 17713000, fbm@gulfhotehbahrain.com or info@gulfhotehbahrain.com
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● Eating Out: P11

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Putting Bahrain's supermarkets under the spotlight and searching for the best deals

Fall in love with sweet offers

ROMANCE is blossoming and nowhere more so than Lulu's hypermarkets across Bahrain marking St Valentine's Day with a special promotion to ensure shoppers fall in love with their sweet offers.

Large displays throughout the stores highlight a variety of discounts on gifts and treats so that loved ones can be treated to something meaningful on the special day tomorrow, as well as the chance to stock up on goodies for romantic weekends ahead.

Melt your partner's heart with a Thornton's box, Cadbury's Milk Tray or cut into a suitably-shaped celebratory Red Velvet Cake.

There's deals on perfumes, sprays and creams for those who care, as well as soft



cuddly toys, 'love you' cushions, and you could express your feelings with decorative flowers or bath-time rose-shaped soaps.

And, the saying goes, never sleep on a row, so instead, snuggle up under a king-size comforter in a set with bed sheets, pillow cases and cushions ... and crystal glass collectables can display feelings of love forever.

Lulu recently opened its

156th Lulu Hypermarket and the seventh in the kingdom at The Atrium Mall & Towers in Saar. *GulfWeekly* covered the opening of the first store in 2007 at Dana Mall in Sanabis. It wowed shoppers with the concept of competitively-priced food, electrical items, clothing, home-ware and more. It expanded its presence to Riffa, A'ali's Ramli Mall, Hidd, Juffair Mall and Galleria Mall, Zinj too.

Lulu Hypermarket

Al Kabeer four chicken/ beef burger
200gm (2+2) – BD1
US walnut/ kg – BD4.990
US almond/ kg – BD3.790
Supreme smoked turkey thigh/kg –
BD4.950
Bridel mozzarella cheese/ kg – BD2.790
New Zealand natural cheddar cheese/
kg – BD3.790

Carrefour Hypermarket

Qzeen jasmine rice 5kg– BD1
Abu Zahra sunflower oil 1.8ltr – BD1
Pepsi 2.25ltr+7Up orange/ Mountain Dew
1.25ltr – BD1
Sunfresh water 42x175ml – BD1
Al Osra sugar 2kgx2pcs– BD1

Jawad Supermarket

Americana garden peas 900gm (1+1) –
940fils
Ola white oats 2x600gm – BD1.450
Libby's p/apl slice 3x235gm – 975fils
Emborg sweet corn 450gm (1+1) –
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Libby's baked beans 220gm (5+1) –
BD1.200

Al Jazira Supermarket

Sweetzone rainbow gummy 960gm –
BD2.940
Biona milk chocolate almond organic
70gm – BD1.840
Organic coconut delight vegan 40gm –
630fils
Cemol milk chocolate 100gm– 790fils
Tunnock's dark caramel wafer– BD1.210

Expat club members stunned

From Page 1

"A criminal case was quickly filed in the Urgent Court by our attorneys, who are handling the matter with public prosecution with the support of both staff and the executive committee.

"Internal administrative investigations have also been carried out, in line with the laws of the Kingdom of Bahrain and official statements put on record.

"Our insurers have been notified and a claim filed.

"I have already met with all the senior club staff and all supervisors at this difficult time, to reassure and thank them, as always all of our loyal staff team are doing a great job.

"We have reviewed and put in place additional cash-handling procedure controls. Once there are further developments, that do not jeopardise the ongoing investigations, we will notify the membership accordingly."

It was also stated that the club remained in a 'very strong financial position', regardless, but the executive committee's aim was to recover as much



HAPPIER TIMES: Pensioners inside The British Club of Bahrain celebrating a recent British royal wedding

of the alleged stolen cash as possible and to call for the 'maximum custodial sentence' for anyone proved to be involved and found guilty in a court of law.

Chris, a project director, took over the hot-seat in December 2015 from Andrew Savage who was chairman for eight years. The British Club of

Bahrain's membership is more than 1,600 and in recent years it has invested heavily in upgrading facilities. It has received several

accolades over the years. The club was announced as 'The World's Best British Social Club' in 2010 by the judges of The Best of British Awards, run by *The*

Telegraph, a leading British publication and website.

The club, which opened in 1935, was described by its many fans as 'a social and recreational oasis ... a five-star family club catering for everyone from one to 91 ... a second home'.

Membership of the club is available for UK citizens, GCC nationals and nationals of other countries who don't have their own national clubs in Bahrain. The percentages of each of the categories are controlled in agreement with the Ministry for Labour & Social Development.

Applications for membership are subject to approval by the executive committee, which generally meets twice per month.

An annual family membership is BD260 and a single membership BD185. In an earlier statement, members were told that although the alleged theft was 'a very serious matter', it in no way affects the day-to-day operations of the club.

One member, who asked not to be named, said: "Everyone is talking about it – we're totally stunned."

PREPARATIONS are in full swing for the latest International Family Fair celebrating global culture at the British School of Bahrain (BSB) which will be staged in the spring for the first time ever.

The ninth edition of the popular community extravaganza will take place on Friday, March 8, and start with a magnificent flag-flying parade around the school's Hamala campus.

With 2,600 pupils on the school roll, the students represent around 60 different nations, and the event will once again display BSB's diversity in all its glory. Ellen van Manen, general coordinator for the International Family Fair and a parent representative for Y13 on the BSB Parent Community Committee (PCC), said: "We're really thrilled to be able to invite everyone to our first spring event. It's the same successful concept just held at a different time of year."

In the past, the fair has featured a festive theme as a result of a November or December timing but this year's event is particularly apt as spring is known as a time full of exciting possibilities and BSB now boasts new owners and a new man in charge.

"After all the changes in recent years there is now a real positive vibe and a true feeling of community once more," said Ellen who has been working closely with Amal Darwish, the school's public relations, marketing and business development officer, on the project, supported by more than 350 active PCC volunteers.

Nearly 200 sixth-formers are also helping with the organising, volunteering and co-ordinating and, of course, many will be participating alongside younger pupils in numerous performances set to entertain the crowds throughout the day.

A big stage will be set up on the school's AstroTurf sports fields and part of the entertainment programme planned with be teasing excerpts from the coming *Shrek*-inspired musical production directed by the BSB music and drama department in March.

There's a BDI entry fee to the fair and money raised will go towards the purchase of 'wish list' extras. For example, last year a kiln for the senior school art department was one of the items purchased. "These are 'cherry on the cake' items to enhance the well-being of our kids in this school," said Ellen. "Also, 10 per cent of all proceeds are donated to charity, worthy local causes."

Ellen, a mother-of-two, is married to project developer

All the fun of the fair!

COMMUNITY REPORT

By STAN SZECOWKA
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and renowned runner Ernst Jan. Their eldest son, Floris, 21, graduated from BSB and is now studying architecture at university, and their youngest son, Pim, 18, is a sixth-former.

Alongside all things British and Bahraini, visitors will also be able to enjoy a taste of Ellen's home country, The Netherlands, alongside country stalls highlighting the rich heritage of Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, China, Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, Sudan, India, Malaysia, Turkey, Lebanon, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Uruguay, Venezuela and Spain and others.

Students will also put on displays and performances dedicated to their homelands, alongside sporting activities and fun games.

A marketplace with local entrepreneurs will also show off the enormous talent for arts and crafts in the kingdom.

Since BSB came under the Inspired international schools umbrella, investments have already been made, including enhancing its drama and music rooms. Its pupils have recently recorded outstanding scholarly success in British curriculum examinations, as highlighted in *GulfWeekly*, but academic excellence is only part of the picture, said executive head Jeff Smith.

"The school tries to celebrate its whole rounded approach to education and part of that is where the whole community comes together," he explained.

"It gives us all a chance to appreciate the diversity we have within the school and, although I have seen it work in other places, this sounds like a much bigger event than I have previously experienced.

"It's good that students grow up understanding how they are also part of a much wider global community and one of the first ways they can appreciate that is by their interactions within our environment. It's one of the big advantages of an international school education, the pupils can learn so much



SPRING SPECIAL: Jeff and Ellen and, below, flashback to an earlier BSB International Fair

from each other.

"A lot of it is about appreciation of the people around them and their differences and they can advance in their own lives with that mutual respect and understanding."

Mr Smith will be experiencing the BSB International Family Fair for the first time and said: "I'm very excited - I know it's the biggest social event of the year of the school community and, of course, the wider community too. Everyone is welcome.

"Obviously we are trialling this new timing for the event but I'm quite confident it will prove to be a good date to stage it."

The last event, although successful, suffered a real soaking as a result of a heavy winter downfall of rain but the weather next month is predicted to be ideal.

● **Date for the diary: Friday, March 8, 10am - 3pm. All welcome - BD1 entrance, British School of Bahrain's Hamala campus.**



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Sport reaches new heights

ONE of the kingdom's popular indoor active entertainment centres has launched an introductory climbing course to encourage people to take up the sport, to help them reach new heights with ease as well as find a fun new way to get fit, stay healthy and strong.

The 6,000sqft Adventure Hub, located at the Galleria Mall in Zinj, is offering family-friendly recreational activities with a full-size obstacle course, high ropes course, low ropes course, rock climbing wall, low climbing wall, fun walls, caving and a soft play area.

According to Alex Lisnyak, the centre's operations and development manager, climbing is one of the fastest growing global sports and is particularly popular in the US and throughout Europe.

He has noticed a rising interest in the region and believes that once rock climbing makes its debut in the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo with speed climbing, bouldering and lead climbing, more will jump on the height-scaling bandwagon.

"We are trying to build a climbing community here," explained Alex. "We have a lot of customers and families that climb on a regular basis because they enjoy the sport, it is great practice for the real thing and they can have a great time together."

"We started Adventure Hub to provide more active entertainment in Bahrain. Basically, to pull the children away from their video games, TV and electronic devices and to bring them into an active environment and let them have fun doing something different, rather than sitting on the couch. It will help develop their physical and mental abilities which I believe is so important for future generations."

"The difference with this location is that they can get active and fit, mixed with fun. It's what climbing is all about!"

"Also, as of 2020, climbing will be an Olympic sport and I think it will gain even more popularity as a result. That's when we came up with the idea to not just make climbing recreational or entertaining, but also to introduce it as a competitive sport."

The Introduction to Rock Climbing programme features six 90-minute lessons in which climbers aged 11 and older learn how to use different



SHOWING THE WAY: Alex is inspiring the new community of climbers with special courses at the Adventure Hub

equipment, climb and prepare themselves to tackle any situation.

Alex believes the Rocktopia Wall is a great introductory climbing facility. It provides five climbing routes of varying difficulties for beginners, intermediate level and advanced sport climbers.

Alex said: "It is made using a replication of one of the

real rocks of Bulgaria and the surface is made exactly like limestone. I believe this wall is an ideal introduction level for climbing."

"We have equipped it with anchor points, which are certified by the Arizona Rope Service Company, and brought real climbing equipment such as ropes, ascenders, descenders and harnesses."

"Then we will teach them how real climbing is done!"

"If someone wants to one day go climbing outdoors in Europe, for example, this class will give them the basic skills. It will give them a clear understanding of the different aspects of the sport, such as lead climbing and speed climbing."

"The individual will learn

basic techniques, body positioning and how to climb. Helpfully, I also have automatic belay systems, a device that takes up the slack as a climber ascends the climbing wall. When the climber reaches the top, or if they fall, the auto belay catches the climber and slowly lowers them to the ground."

Alex also describes rock

climbing as a 'challenging sport' that tests both physical and mental stamina. Experts suggest it can also reduce stress as well as test body and mind endurance, strength, agility and balance. It's considered one of the best total body workouts you can do and offers mega benefits.

"This is a great, new and certainly not boring way to keep fit," he added. "People are always searching for new ways to stay healthy and lose weight and the answer, in my opinion, is climbing. It's not just physical though; there are a lot of mental aspects to it too such as fighting with your fear of heights or even stipulating your route which can be even more important than your strength."

"Very often girls are better at climbing than boys because often boys will use their strength or even jump towards the next point. Women on the other hand, they will sit, think and then climb, if they can't figure out the route the first time. Most often than not, they will be even more successful."

● An introductory class is held twice daily during the week from 3pm to 4.30pm and from 5pm to 6.30pm. One class costs BD10 and to book all six lessons in advance, it is priced BD50. The hub is open every day from 10am-11pm, with a variety of other packages on offer. For more details, call 77103355 and follow on Facebook and Instagram @adventurehubme



The last time reporter Mai Al Khattib-Camille scaled a wall was in 2013 in the car park of Al A'ali Shopping Complex during the the Min-

istry of Culture's 2013 Season of Sport, alongside more than 300 of Bahrain's adrenaline junkies and sport fanatics. It was a thrilling

experience, she said at the time, and told Editor Stan she would definitely do it again ... and six years later she got her chance.

I DIDN'T think twice. I rushed home, changed into my workout gear and got ready to face that climb with strength, agility and, hopefully, some grace.

I'm a bit of a clutz and was worried I'd end up tangling myself up with the climbing rope or worse.

As an instructor got me into a harness, Alex explained how there are two people involved in this climbing adventure - the climber and the belayer, the person entrusted to hold the rope.

Alex then reminded me to take my

time, think about the moves I'll be making to reach the top and, should I get scared or want to come down, simply shout 'Take'.

That term is used when the climber wants the belayer to take their weight on the rope and lower him or her down to the ground slowly.

After taking a deep breath, I turned to the beginner route, prayed a little and set off on my way. It started off slow and steady with me gripping onto the blue and white coloured footholds ... but then I hit my own personal wall.

I was stuck half way up, not sure whether to scream 'TAKE' or continue the climb. My palms were sweaty, my arms were beginning to shake and I couldn't tell if was from fear or achiness.

I felt like I was in a video game assessing all my options. I started to climb again and showed photographer Honey Sharma I was no quitter as I made it to the top.

The adrenaline was insane and I was more than willing to scale the wall again. I think I've found a new hobby.



FinTechFocus

Editor Stan Szczewka takes a look at the world of financial technology and beyond ...

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BANKING interaction could reach a whole new dimension thanks to a big-eyed, head-shaking, cute and helpful robot created by a talented and imaginative bright young Bahraini intern.

Shaima Almeer was given the green light to take the project forward and her working prototype has impressed bosses at Bahrain Islamic Bank (BisB) and amazed visitors at a recent technology exhibition.

The banking industry is making giant strides by introducing FinTech elements into everyday activities and artificial intelligence looks set to be another step towards attracting tech-savvy clientele and making financial services more user-friendly and fun.

The Bahrain Polytechnic student, who celebrates her 23rd birthday today, lives with her parents in East Riffa. She named her creation BisB AI-Agent. "Artificial intelligence has been a fascinating concept of science fiction for decades, but it was never as popular as it is today," said Shaima.

"I undoubtedly point in the direction that AI will herald a transformational change in the banking industry, for it can dramatically save costs! However, it all depends on the customer's level of comfort with AI.

"In my perspective, AI is just a powerful business tool that supports companies into producing a finer customer experience. Also, it may become an essential tool, not just a 'nice to have', but a 'must have' technology.

"I love FinTech because it supports young generations to take initiatives into developing and accelerating their ideas. Moreover, it is known for its innovation labs, accelerated programmes and educational opportunities."

As part of her senior project at polytechnic, she was required to collaborate with one of the industries in the kingdom to identify and investigate a current challenge and to come up with an effective ICT solution.

She had been a trainee at BisB for almost a year, on-and-off, and with the guidance of Osama AlNasr, head of ICT, took on her project internship with the award-winning bank.

She came up with her innovative concept and proposed its development with her industry mentors, Abdulsalam Alsaadi and

Intern's bot brilliance



INTO THE FUTURE: The BisB AI-Agent, inset, Shaima, below, from left, Hasan and Mahmood

Asma Alsayed. "After pitching my idea, both the mentors directly signed off my proposal and I was ready to go with the project," she said. "I utilised several programming languages to develop an artificial intelligence system to be deployed on the robot.

"The system enabled BisB customers to view the latest and trending services, view video-graphical tutorials on how to perform certain tasks, view the maps of different branches via QR codes and rate their experience.

"I also configured six different touch sensors with five speech dialogues enabling customer physical interaction. Also, I integrated a user-defined voice, where customers were able to communicate with the robot via a speech manager and speech recognition.

"The following implementations were hosted on Amazon Web Services, providing a highly available, redundant, decoupled and secure cloud infrastructure, to better serve BisB customers.

"Sanbot was not like a normal banking machine, for she does

not execute fund transactions but rather she provides an innovative, digitalised and entertaining means for BisB customers to learn more about services and offers.

"Sanbot is her default name, given by her manufacturer. However, for the current project, I named her 'BisB AI-Agent'. I specifically chose this name as it summarised the entire concept of the project."

The presentation took place at Bahrain Polytechnic as part of a recent information and communication technology exhibition. This exhibition occurs every semester allowing students to showcase their projects.

"Visitors and Bahrain Polytechnic management were astonished and excited

to learn more about what the BisB AI-Agent was able to do," said Shaima, who posted it interacting people on social media to much acclaim and generating thousands of views.

"BisB AI-Agent gained mass attention from the public, for she is the first of her kind in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The project is still in its testing phase. The bank would like to investigate and study customer reaction towards having such a kind of advanced technology at hand."

BisB recently emerged a winner as the 'Fastest Growing Islamic Bank in Bahrain' at the 13th Islamic Business & Finance Awards held in Dubai, much to the delight of CEO Hassan Jarrar. This marked the third win for the bank which

has previously been recognised for its role in pioneering the kingdom's Islamic finance industry and contributing to the country's digital evolution securing both 'Best Online Bank Bahrain' by *Global Business Outlook*, and 'Most Innovative Islamic Bank' by *International Finance Magazine*.

Mahmood Qannati, BisB's head of marketing, brand & corporate communication, told *FinTech Focus*: "We first met Shaima Almeer as a bright young Bahraini student from Bahrain Polytechnic University when she interned at the bank.

"Given her contagious enthusiasm and positivity, we gave her the challenge of working on an artificial intelligence robotics application, which ultimately aimed to simplify banking services for our customers.

"The bank's strategy is to continue to expand and embrace the digital mind-set. With customers in mind, the bank is continually deploying state-of-the-art digital platforms and innovative product and service offerings.

"In the past few years, our main focus at BisB has been to deliver more innovative products and services for our customers, to simplify their lives by enabling them to conduct faster hassle-free banking transactions. Therefore, one of our key strategies in the past few years has been paving the way for the industry's digital transformation and contribute to elevating the standards of banking in the kingdom.

"This inspired us to launch an in-house Innovation Lab, to instil a fresh work environment that encourages our staff to 'think outside the box' and brainstorm new ideas. We equipped the lab with various new technologies to test pilot our new products and services and Sanbot was the perfect addition: an intelligent robot!

"Today, we are looking to invest in other advanced technologies, including chat-bots, to further simplify our

banking services and improve customer experience."

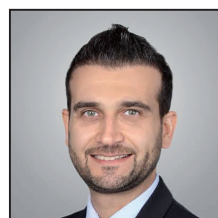
The bank is also keen to 'support and develop' young Bahraini talent. True to form, it has invested in workshops and has also launched a Summer Training Programme for undergraduate students for them to gain knowledge about the inner workings and its various departments.

It has also gone beyond traditional work experience too by sponsoring students' trips to underdeveloped countries to increase their cross-cultural awareness. These exchange programmes 'are truly an excellent way to develop young minds in a holistic manner', said Mahmood, adding that new projects for the young were in the pipeline.

Meanwhile, Shaima remains keen to develop her skills further and make a name for herself in the sector as banking really is in her blood. Both her parents Shawqi Almeer and Samira Alsaman used to work in banks. "I would like to thank them for always being my Number One motivators," she said. "I would also like to thank my grandparents for their continuous prayers and support. Ali Shahbaz, my academic supervisor, also had a huge impact on the success of my project."

As for BisB, it recognises talent when it sees it. "As a general rule of thumb, we give priority to our interns when looking to fill in any internal vacancies, as they are already familiarised with the bank and how we function. We have no doubts on Shaima's future success, in the short five months she has worked with us, she left a great first impression, and has truly excelled in her role and overall job performance," added Mahmood.

● Watch the bot in action by placing your smartphone over the QR Code.





OGN
OIL & GAS NEWS

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Today (February 13)

Every Wednesday is 'Wings and Wisdom' night at Big Texas Barbeque & Waffle House inside Best Western Plus - The Olive Hotel. It's a quiz night with an added bonus of BD10 for 'all-you-can-eat' chicken wings. Call 17360063 for details.

The Swiss-Belhotel Seef Bahrain is hosting a Mediterranean Lunch every day except Friday and Saturday, from 12.30pm-3pm at Swiss-Café. Priced BD6net per person, BD3net for children aged six to 12, and free for those under six. For details, call 66310000.

Le Meridien City Centre Bahrain hosts a stylish yet rustic BBQ Experience on the terrace of Baharat Restaurant from 7pm-11pm, showcasing succulent ribs and Wagyu prime rib steak. There is also live music from Deux Sons. The BBQ buffet is BD18net including soft drinks and water, or BD24net including selected beverages. Call 17171000 for details.

The Sheraton Hotel Bahrain hosts an evening of live music at An Nada Lounge by Filipino band Strings & Harmony every day except Saturday. This takes place from 8.30pm-12.30am during weekdays and from 8.30pm-1.30am during weekends. Call 17533533 for details.

Enjoy a selection of delicious cakes crafted by skilled culinary hands all day at Furn Bakery, located in the Westin City Centre Bahrain. Call 17171441 for details.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's famous steak night starts from 7pm at La Mosaïque Restaurant priced BD18net, with the 1kg steak-eating challenge too. For details, contact 17531122.

Spend time with friends and family in an Afternoon Tea experience at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's Lobby Lounge and Ritz Gourmet Lounge. Indulge in new items on the menu and enjoy the piano entertainment on Fridays and Saturdays. Afternoon Tea is served from 3pm to 5pm priced BD21+++ per set. For details, contact 17586499 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com

Treat your special someone to a romantic dinner by the sea at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain. This is staged daily at the sea breeze area and private island from sunset to 10pm. Priced BD350 per couple at the sea breeze area and BD500 per couple at the private island.

For details, contact 17586499 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com

Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's spa provides a refreshing wellness package, complete with a full-body massage followed by Vitamin-C scrub to help protect your skin. Priced BD90 for 90 minutes. This package is available until Sunday.

For details, contact 17586808 or e-mail rc.bahrz.spa@ritzcarlton.com

Celebrate your birthday at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's Gourmet Lounge where celebratory Afternoon Tea, lunch, dinner menus and an inclusive birthday cake are provided. The special menu is available for a minimum-of-two and maximum of 10 guests. This offer is ongoing until Sunday.

For details and reservations, contact 17586499.

The Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay's poolside Italian restaurant, Vento, is offering a wide selection of pizzas from wood-fired ovens and artisan pastas. Available on weekdays from 11.30am to 11pm, and weekends from 11.30am to 12pm.

For reservations, contact 17115500.

The Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is offering family spa-bonding sessions. Its 'Relaxed Us' offer aids muscle tension, releases stress and promotes wellbeing, 45 minutes for BD80. The 'Beautiful Us' offer is designed to cleanse, gently exfoliate and hydrate skin with a 100 per cent chemical-free product range from Australia and the UK, 45 minutes for BD85. The 'Glowing Us' offer is a special indulgent full-body treatment, 45 minutes for BD85.

For reservations, contact 17115500.

Reef Resort's lobby café Chocolaterie is offering an array of signature teas, coffees, pastries, and delectable hand-made chocolates. The ideal venue for morning coffee or afternoon tea. Every day from 4pm-6pm. Net price of BD4.

For details, call 13110110.

Reef Resort's Tokyo Reef restaurant features a specially-created set menu that is offered on weekdays (Saturday-Wednesday, closed on Mondays) and guests can watch as the chef prepares sushi and sashimi before their eyes. The promotion is BD15+++ per person.

For details, call 13110110.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's band the Eye Candles will

entertain every evening, except Saturday, at Harvesters.

The outlet is also dishing up a new Camel Burger and staging a Beast Burger Challenge which, if finished in the stipulated time, offers the meal for free, a T-shirt and wall of fame celebrity status. It runs daily from 11am to 9pm and is priced BD8.410. For details, contact 17531122.

Tomorrow (February 14)

Big Texas Barbeque & Waffle House hosts Thursday Night Lights from 7pm-9pm. This event showcases local and international musicians in Bahrain. Don't miss American country legend Rusty Golden performing live every Thursday through to Sunday. Call 17360063 for details.

There will be a Seafood Night at Ramada Hotel & Suites Amwaj Islands, every Thursday from 7pm-11pm. BD12+++ for adults, BD6+++ for children aged six to 12, children below six dine for free. For details, contact 16000099 or email dining@ramada-manama-amwaj.com

Elite Resort & Spa hosts a sea & grill buffet dinner every Thursday and Friday from 7pm to 11pm at Al Naseem & La Brasserie priced BD12+++ per person. For details, contact 17131333.

Friday (February 15)

Check out The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's new Pearl of Arabia-themed night from 7pm at La Mosaïque Restaurant, priced BD13net, with a special beverages package available too. A Friday date has been added to the regular Saturday session by public demand. For details, contact 17531122.

Big Texas Barbeque & Waffle House presents its 'Small Town Throw Down' brunch – the only five-hour brunch in the kingdom – from 11am-4pm. It features a buffet and specific table orders. There's also karaoke. Call 17360063 for details.



Bahrain's Sweetest Brunch takes place every Friday from 12.30pm-3.30pm at Le Meridien City Centre Bahrain's Baharat restaurant. Enjoy the award-winning sweet and savoury

experience for BD26net including soft drinks and water, or BD38net including selected beverages. Live music from duo Deux Sons accompanies the fare. Book for 10 people or more and receive 20 per cent discount. For details, call 17171144.

Enjoy a lavish dining experience at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's restaurants by indulging in a culinary extravaganza at La Med, Italian classics at Primavera, exotic Indian fares at Nirvana and prime steaks and seafood at Plums. This will be held today from 12.30pm to 3.30pm, priced BD35 per person with soft drinks and BD39 per person with selected beverages. For more details, contact 17586499 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com

At the Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa's China Garden Restaurant, Chef Ding and his culinary brigade will be offering pan-seared Chinese delicacies. For details, contact 17713000 or email info@gulfhotehbahrain.com

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's La Mosaïque Restaurant is hosting an International Theme Night Buffet every Friday, from 7pm onwards, priced BD13net. For details, contact 17531122.

A buffet is served every Friday from 12.30pm-4pm at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's La Med Restaurant, combined with drinks of your choice. Soft drinks priced BD30+++ , special beverages priced BD35+++ . For details, contact 17586499.

Eat and party at the Reef Resort's Pool Delight with an unlimited seafood BBQ buffet accompanied by the chill out music from the Beat's Zone band. Every Friday from 7pm. For details, call 13110110.

The Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is hosting Friday Brunch at CUT by Wolfgang Puck Steakhouse from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. Priced BD26+++ per person including soft beverages, BD26+++ per person including extensive beverage package for ladies, and BD36+++ per person including extensive beverage package.



Also at the hotel's CUT by Wolfgang Puck Steakhouse, a Bistro-inspired lunch is being hosted every day from 12pm to 3pm. For details and reservations, contact 17115044.

Elite Crystal Hotel has a Friday Pool Party brunch at Waikiki from 1pm-8pm with entertainment from DJ Santi, DJ Smiley and DJ Goose. It's free entrance for women with one welcome drink, BD10net for men with one complimentary beverage and BD25net inclusive of unlimited selected beverages and grills. For details, contact 66666360 or 17360360.

Saturday (February 16)

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's Pearl of Arabia-themed night takes place from 7pm at La Mosaïque Restaurant, priced BD13net, with a special beverages package available too. For details, contact 17531122.

Spice up your weekly brunch with a culinary journey around Mexico at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's Cantina Kahlo Restaurant. This will be held today from noon to 4pm. Priced BD35 per person with selected beverages and BD20 per person with soft beverages. For more details, contact 17586499 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com

A Kid's Special Movie Time takes place at Ramee Grand Hotel & Spa, Seef's second floor Banquet Hall every Saturday between 3pm to 5pm. Entry costs BD2, snacks included. For more details, contact 36693693 or 36479898.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's Waves Seafood Restaurant is hosting a three-course business lunch, from Saturday-Thursday, 12pm to 4pm. The lunch is priced

BD8net. For details, contact 17531122.

Experience spa treatments at the Crowne Plaza Bahrain's bFit Health Club. It is providing facials, body scrubs and combined packages to help guests relax and rejuvenate, while massage therapy focuses on alleviating stress and encouraging well-being. For more details and bookings, contact 17525812.

The Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa is offering 'Art of Cooking' classes for those with busy lifestyles who have a passion for food. Classes feature demonstrations, from the building blocks of culinary practice to mouth-watering menus, led by professional chefs. Priced BD18net, including lunch. Seats are limited, book now. For details, contact 17713000 or email info@gulfhotehbahrain.com

Families can enjoy a buffet meal at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain's La Med Restaurant every Saturday from noon to 3.30pm. Soft drinks are priced BD15+++ . For details, contact 17586499.

Enjoy an authentic Italian buffet at Ramada Hotel & Suites Amwaj Islands every Saturday, from 7pm-11pm. BD10net for adults, BD5net for children aged six to 12, children below six dine for free. For details, contact 16000099 or email at dining@ramada-manama-amwaj.com

Soak up the stunning views from the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay's 50th floor and feast on Asian delights like Korean Fried Chicken Bao Buns, Wok Fried Shrimp Dumplings and Brisket Wontons at the re Asian Cuisine by Wolfgang Puck's Saturday Brunch. The price is

BD19+++ and BD37+++ with selected beverages.
For reservations, contact 17115046.

The Bahrain Bay Kitchen at the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is staging a Saturday Brunch from 12.30pm-3.30pm offering a wide selection of Arabic favourites such as Lamb Ouzi and cold mezzeh, priced BD16+++ including soft beverages.
For details, contact 17115000.

Sunday (February 17)

Ramada Hotel & Suites Amwaj Islands is hosting a

Ladies Breakfast for the price of BD4net, every Sunday until Thursday from 7am-11am.
For details, contact 16000099 or email dining@ramada-manama-amwaj.com

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain holds an Italian Night at La Mosaïque Restaurant from 7pm featuring pasta, pizza and more priced BD13net for the food only and there is a separate beverage package.
For details, contact 17531122.

Monday (February 18)

Check out The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's new One Night

in Bangkok-themed night from 7pm at La Mosaïque Restaurant, priced BD13net, with a special beverages package available too.
For details, contact 17531122.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's Harvesters Back to School-themed party starts at 9pm. Entry is free.
For details, contact 17531122.

Tuesday (February 19)

Every Tuesday, Big Texas Barbeque & Waffle House inside Best Western Plus - The Olive Hotel hosts an authentic Tex-Mex cuisine

with Latin entertainment from 5pm-midnight. Each week there are various food and beverage specials to keep things fresh.
Call 17360063 for more details.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain has a Catch of The Day Seafood Night starting at 7pm and priced BD18net (food only with beverage package available) at La Mosaïque restaurant.
For details, contact 17531122.

The Crowne Plaza Bahrain's bFit Health Club is offering swimming classes every Monday and Wednesday. Classes for children aged

eight to 11 are from 4pm-4.45pm, classes for children aged five to seven are from 5pm-5.45pm, and adult classes are from 6pm-6.45pm. The classes are priced BD40 per month for bFit Crowne Plaza Bahrain members, and BD50 per month (eight sessions) for non-members.
For bookings, contact 17531122.

Ladies Night at the Gulf Hotel Bahrain Convention & Spa every Tuesday, where women receive a 50 per cent discount for the hotel's lounges, spas and restaurants, excluding Raosi by Vineet.

For details, contact 17713000 or email info@gulfhotelbahrain.com



POPULAR Konkani singer Prajoto D'sa from Mangalore will perform live at the Indian Club Auditorium on Friday, starting at 6pm.
The versatile singer is known as the voice behind hundreds of

popular Konkani, Tulu, Kannada and Hindi songs.
Bahrain Konkans, in association with the Indian Club Bahrain, have organised the show which will also feature a number of Indian expat

singers and dancers.
Proceeds from the event will be donated to needy female students of the Konkani region of India, said the organisers.
For more details call 36646740, 39799329 or 39274009.

CHINESE NEW YEAR

THE Wok Station is welcoming Chinese New Year with its 12 Noodle Fest. The 12 new types of noodles signify the 12-cycle of animals, which appear in the Chinese zodiac related to their yearly calendar. Each of the 12 noodles is paired with fresh exotic vegetables/seafood/meat and comes with an exotic mix of spices and flavours. Each noodle dish is priced separately and starts from BD2.900.

The Noodle Fest will be available from until March 5 at the Galleria Mall in Zinj. Restaurant timings are noon-11pm.
For reservations, call 77570570.

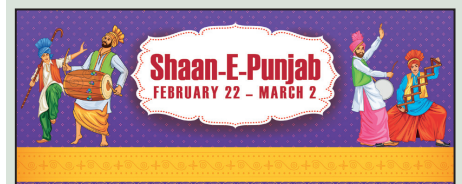
A BRAZILIAN Carnival will be staged at the Via Brasil restaurant in Wyndham Garden Manama in Juffair with live entertainment from resident band First Class, from Friday to February 20.

The event includes an 'all you can eat' buffet and soft drinks at BD19.900net and a selected beverages package at BD26net available from 7pm until midnight.

For more details, call 66393054 or email banquetsales@wyndhamgardenmanama.com



ENJOY the festive delicacies of Punjab at the Wyndham Garden Manama in Juffair's Jashan Asian restaurant from February 22 to March 2. An authentic set menu costs BD8+++ with unlimited soft drinks and BD4+++ for children aged six to 12. Lunch will be served from noon to 3pm and dinner from 7pm-11.45pm.



IN THE heart of Bab Al-Bahrain, in its front outdoor market space, a weekly activity takes place at 5pm every Thursday. Organised by the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, it includes various elements such as music, handicrafts, heritage, arts and food. The event is open to the public for free, and different aspects of culture will be focused on each week so that it is never the same.

VALENTINE'S LISTINGS

ENJOY a romantic St Valentine's evening at the beach at the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay. What could be more romantic than roses, chocolates, fizz and a stunning beachside location with the waves lapping the shore and a gentle breeze? A private butler will serve a four-course Mediterranean dinner with influences from Italy at The Beach. It also includes a complimentary day pass at the Four Seasons Beach & Spa for two, as well as a 20 per cent discount for any treatment.
The cost is BD194net per couple including selected beverages and BD145net per couple inclusive of non-alcoholic beverages.

For reservations, call 17115500.
Enjoy St Valentine's Afternoon Tea at Bay View Lounge, featuring layers of delicious savoury and sweet



snacks. The price is BD17 net per person, or BD31.500 per couple.

This runs until Saturday, from Noon-9pm.

CELEBRATE St Valentine's Day in style at The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain with a variety of special offers and promotions.

You can dine under the stars as La Plage welcomes guests to a unique St Valentine's experience under the breath-

taking views of the night sky and the glittering Arabian Gulf.

A cabana package is priced at BD200 per couple which includes a five-course menu by Chef Nikos and a bottle of select beverage.

A number of the hotel's outlets are hosting special menus for February 14:
• Cantina Kahlo has a four-course set menu dinner for BD28 per person or BD39 per couple.
• Primavera has a four-course

set menu dinner for BD32 per person.

• Nirvana has a five-course set menu dinner for BD25 per person.
• Plums has a four-course set menu dinner for BD36 per person.
• The Lobby Lounge is hosting St Valentine-themed Afternoon Tea for BD21 per set.
• The Ritz Gourmet Lounge is presenting a selection of bite-sized cookies, colourful candies, decadent chocolates and individually-wrapped heart cakes that are sure to delight adults and kids alike. A special 'Love Me Tender' red heart-shaped cake created by Executive Pastry Chef Jonathon Challenor and inspired by Elvis Presley will be the highlight this year. The specialty cake is priced at B20.

REEF Resort & Spa's pastry chef Ahmed has created a

series of delectable cakes and treats to celebrate the month of love. They are available at the Chocolaterie.

There is also a number of dining options for Thursday, including a romantic dinner for two by the pool and special offers on rooms starting at BD100.

ELITE Resort & Spa is hosting a St Valentine's night at Al Naseem & La Brasserie. From 8.30pm onwards, there will be a violin performance, fortune teller, raffle draw and a visit by Cupid.

The cost is BD25++ per couple inclusive of a five-course set menu and two selected beverages.
Meanwhile, at the hotel's Shift 7 outlet, enjoy a candlelit dinner from 8.30pm. The cost is BD35++ per couple.

AT THE Elite Crystal hotel,

the Waikiki outlet is hosting a St Valentine's night stand-up comedy night with a live band from 7pm-11pm. There will be a lavish buffet for BD10+++ , with special offers on selected beverages.

AT THE Wyndham Garden Manama in Juffair enjoy a special candlelit dinner date at Jashan restaurant. For BD30++ per couple, receive a five-course meal by the poolside, a bottle of sparkling beverage and enjoy live entertainment. It takes place from 7pm-11.45pm.

For reservations, call 66316666.

THE Crowne Plaza Bahrain is hosting a 'Celebration of Love' St Valentine's Day dinner from 7pm-11pm. It features a four-course meal, entertainment and sparkling beverages. The price is BD28net.

Dragon roars on for festival

SHOPPING destination Dragon City – which attracted a staggering eight million shoppers last year – marked the Chinese New Year by staging a glitzy Dragon Gala 2019 with music, dance and dinner at the Convention Centre at the Gulf Hotel.

The mall's senior management and colleagues were joined by VIPs including Chinese ambassador An Wa'er and members of the media for the celebration which also marked the retail attraction's third anniversary.

Patrick Zheng, chairman of operators Chinamex, told the audience that Dragon City was considered 'an essential part' of the Belt and Road Initiative, a development strategy adopted by the Chinese government involving infrastructure, development and investments aimed at extending and boosting economic, commercial and social bonds with countries across Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa.

"Today, we can proudly say that Dragon City is taking steady steps towards cementing its position as the main and largest wholesale and retail trading centre in the kingdom," he said.

"This comes as we successfully continue to attract more customers, achieving a footfall rate of eight million shoppers last year, with a remarkable increase of 15 per cent in comparison with 2017.

"Dragon City maintained a 99.9 per cent leasing rate, which reflects the interest and



DANCE ROUTINE: Children entertain the audience, below from left, chairman Patrick, dancers, the prize draw and inside the mall

RETAIL REPORT
By STAN SZECOWKA
editor@gulfweekly.com



trust of traders in our mall and their acknowledgment of the important position we occupy in the local and regional market.

"We look forward to further cementing our role as a humble member of this tremendously vibrant, inviting and diverse community in Bahrain."

Patrick added that the mall owners and tenants would

continue with their active community service initiatives which in recent years has included supporting the Royal Charity Organisation, Bahrain for All and Ayadi Relief, amongst other good causes.

Thursday evening's celebrations included a prize draw, performances by musicians, dancers and singers of all ages from the Chinese expat community, plus a show of martial arts prowess, alongside an Asian-inspired spread of

food dished up by the hotel's award-winning team of chefs.

The island's own slice of China in Diyar Al Muharraq is spread over a total land area of 115,000sqm with a built up area of 56,000sqm. Dragon City is the first major 'Chinatown' in the kingdom, infused with Chinese architectural and cultural aspects and offers Chinese products to local consumers, trade customers and a growing number of tourists.

The \$100 million development is home to more than 780 commercial units and Patrick revealed that the mall was this year looking at 'increasing the variety of products' available.

To keep in the spirit of the festivities the mall will be serving Chinese tea tomorrow and Friday between 6pm and 9pm at the Central Court and a special Chinese stand in the centre has been set up for visitors to take and post selfies.

● Check out the celebrations by placing your smartphone over the QR Code.

● Celebrity chef visits China Garden restaurant: Page 18



Eating Out

The places to dine in Bahrain plus culinary tips for the food connoisseur

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GOURMET REPORT
By KRISTIAN HARRISON
kristian@gulfweekly.com

THE Friday Brunch at the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay's Bahrain Bay Kitchen is renowned for its upbeat atmosphere and exciting fare, and has decided to spruce up its selections over the coming months with a number of special varieties.

With a Spring Fair theme coming soon on March 1, followed by a St Patrick's Day special with Irish delights on the menu on March 15 as a lead up to the occasion two days later, the venue is not afraid to switch things around and offer new twists to its winning formula.

Last week, to celebrate Chinese New Year, there were interactive live cooking stations featuring dim sum and Peking duck, whilst each table was adorned with a 'Prosperity Salad' to wish good fortune for the months ahead.

The sparkling venue was lit up with hanging Chinese lanterns and other traditional décor as the packed outlet smiled with festive cheer.

Considering the sheer amount of fare on offer, can you blame anyone for having the time of their lives?

The problem I always have with brunch is not knowing quite where to delve in. Do I start with the fantastic array of crunchy and crispy salads on display, or do I plough straight into the delicious carvery?

I decided for a bit of both, plumping for the Australian wagyu beef whilst piling my plate high with veggies for a rounded meal. I was almost swayed by the extensive bread selection, but I have learnt over the years to give

Special times of year



TASTY DISHES: Creative sushi and, below, Chef Mohammed and Chef Kim and more of the brunch fare

this particular corner of the room a wide berth, lest it fills your stomach up way too fast!

The carvery was superb, with tender slices of beef, lamb and chicken with a plethora of sauces and gravy options. That was one delight I definitely came back for!

I did pass the fresh fish section and its elaborate display of Singapore chilli

crab, supposedly one of the star attractions of this brunch, although as I follow a 'seafood and avoid it' philosophy, I left it to my friends to tell me that the taste was equally exquisite and took their word for it.

Of course, with the focus on Chinese New Year, I just had to check out the Chinese live cooking stations, and I piled my plate high with Crispy Duck Pancakes, Soy

Chicken, BBQ Spare Ribs and my personal favourite, Sichuan Chicken.

There was a variety of sauces and spices to supplement the taste, and I went for a big dollop of Hoisin Sauce, which will forever be my most-loved part of the cuisine.

I of course had to make room for desserts, always one of the best aspects of brunch. These were simply fantastic

too. My personal favourite was the crème brulee, with an amazing crispy surface hiding the creamy goodness underneath.

I also heaped honey cakes, crispy chocolate cakes, Tiramisu, mousses and ice cream on my plate. I barely had room for the selection of pastries, but I had to try. Had to, for the purposes of informing the public of course!

The Friday Brunch at the Four Seasons has positioned itself as one of the most popular in the kingdom thanks to the care of the hotel's Executive Chef Hyung Gyu Kim, and the craft of Executive Sous Chef Mohammed Nazlan.

Of course, the atmosphere wouldn't nearly be as great without the smiling, welcoming team who were always on hand to bring refreshments, clean plates and offer genuine warmth to their guests. It makes a difference, guys, so thank you!

On the way out, stopping at the chocolate fountain for a final helping of sweet goodness and to stomp my feet to the wonderful live duo performing hits both modern and classic, I promised myself I would soon have to come back for seconds.

The Friday Brunch takes place from 1pm-4pm and the price is BD30.300net inclusive of soft drinks, and BD42.400net inclusive of selected beverages. For reservations, call 1711 5500.

Check out Kristian's YouTube video interview with the chefs by placing your smartphone over the QR Code.





Khalid Al Shaikh

Line-up for Spring

ROCK, pop and rhythm & blues icon Steve Winwood will be taking to the stage in the kingdom next month as part of the annual Spring of Culture Festival.

The two-time Grammy Award-winning singer and musician, who was a key member of The Spencer Davis Group, Traffic, Blind Faith and Go, will be entertaining fans at Bahrain Bay on March 28 with hit songs such as *Valerie*, *Higher Love* and *Roll With It*.

The veteran Brit, ranked by *Rolling Stone* magazine as amongst its 100 Greatest Singers of All Time, is one of many international and regional performers and companies set to appear this coming season.

Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, president of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA), revealed the festival's line-up during a press conference held at the Al-Hidaya Al-Khalifiya School in Muharraq, a site celebrating its centenary.

Shaikha Mai told *GulfWeekly*: "Bahrain is a destination for big names."

The Spring of Culture initiative started 14 years ago and continues to grow in popularity in cooperation between the Culture Authority, the Economic Development Board (EDB) and the Shaikh Ebrahim bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Centre for Culture and Research (SECCR). It also receives support from Albareh Art Gallery and La Fontaine Centre for Contemporary Art.

"I want people to especially enjoy the first event, *Scheherazade* which is a Russian ballet inspired by the *Tales of 1,001 Nights*, at the Bahrain National Theatre on February 25, because it's a special day – Arab Tourism Day," Shaikha Mai added.

Other acts on the schedule include American hit maker Jason Derulo, Arabic singers Majid Al Muhandis and Sherine Abdel-Wahab, Bahraini icon Khalid Al Shaikh and Italian sounds by the Hathor Plectrum Quartet and tenor Aldo Gallone.

Organisers say the Spring of Culture Festival will cater to various tastes, interests and age groups and underscore the kingdom's position as a leading regional and global cultural hub.

The latest season of the festival comes as part of BACA's year-long celebrations of Bahrain's



ENTERTAINMENT
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
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achievements under the slogan 'From Jubilee to Another' - A Year of Celebrations.

The festival, which runs for more than two months, is a continuation of the nation's journey of cultural achievements and meeting of civilisations, with a full-fledged and diverse schedule of literary, musical, artistic and theatrical activities.

Shaikha Mai was joined at the conference by EDB CEO Khalid Al-Rumaihi, as well as several diplomats and ambassadors, festival sponsors, cultural personalities and members of the media.

Expressing his appreciation for the efforts of the public and private sector supporters, Khalid said: "The rise in sponsorship of the Spring of Culture festival year after year reflects the keenness of all stakeholders to establish Bahrain as a regional and global cultural centre."

"Over its past editions, the two-month festival has consolidated its reputation as an important cultural gathering that brings events and personalities from all over the world to Bahrain and enriches the local cultural movement."

He stressed that EDB's

continued support for the festival aligns with the board's strategic plans to diversify Bahrain's economy and stimulate its non-oil sectors.

He added that the country is working relentlessly to leverage its competitive advantages, including its cultural heritage, to become a favourite destination for foreign tourists, boost the contribution of tourism to its GDP, and increase its ability to attract foreign direct investments and create jobs.

Gold Sponsors of the 2019 Spring of Culture include GFH Financial Group, National Bank of Bahrain, Tamkeen and Batelco, while Silver Sponsors include ALBA, Bahrain Airport Company, Bahrain Duty Free, Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait, and Huawei, and supported by Gulf Air.

Also, special thanks were passed on to the embassies of Italy, Japan, South Korea, France, Germany and Egypt who are taking part in the programme.

As is in every year, the Spring of Cultural programme of activities that will be hosted by a broad range of local cultural, historical and architectural landmarks will commence on Arab Tourism Day, as highlighted earlier, an occasion which was adopted

when Manama was the Capital of Arab Tourism in 2013 to mark the birthday of the famed Arab traveller Ibn Battuta.

Exhibitions

This year's festival season features numerous art exhibitions, starting with the 45th Bahrain Fine Arts Exhibition which takes place at the Arena Tent at the Ritz Carlton Bahrain Hotel in Manama and highlights the works of various Bahraini and expat artists in the kingdom until March 30. The Bahrain National Museum, meanwhile, will host three exhibitions: *Design Crossroads: The Jewellery of Saudi Arabia*, the *Golden Jubilee Celebration of Bahraini Diplomacy* and the *Bahrain National Museum: A 30th Anniversary Retrospective* which will conclude on April 3 and 13 and May 15, respectively.

The Memory of the Place – Bin Matar House will host the exhibition *CERN* in Bahrain, a showcase that runs until May 8 of the wonderful world of physics and secrets of the universe.

From Tuesday to March 9, Albareh Art Gallery will host the fine arts exhibition *Nostalgia* highlighting the glass creations of artist Jamal Al-Yousif that reflect the



Hathor Plectrum Quartet



Arcis Saxophon Quartet



Hot Potato Band



Majid Al Muhandis

g of Culture 2019



STEPPING OUT: Scheherazade Ballet



'subconscious warmth that one feels from nostalgia'.

Pathways by the artist Rasmi Al-Khafaji, from March 12 – 31, features monochromatic water colours.

From March 3-30, The Art Centre will host *Noor*, an exhibition by artist Marwa Rashid Al Khalifa that takes the public on a journey of her paintings, photography and light installations.

The La Fontaine Centre presents the Turkish exhibition *Spark!* from March 16-April 15 which displays the works of Ali Abayoglu, an artist who transforms objects into charming and vibrant artworks using mundane materials.

The Bahrain National Theatre will host an exhibition of its own from March 7 – May 5 that allows audiences to witness the beauty of traditional Korean costume known as the Hanbok.

Studio 244, a joint initiative between the Supreme Council for the Environment and BACA, will transform Arad Bay Protected Area and Park into an open space for multiple activities.

● Music, song and shows

After the Russian ballet *Scheherazade*, the Bahrain National Theatre will also host a musical evening *Alongside*

You honouring the journey of Bahraini icon Khalid Al Shaikh, featuring the Bahrain Music Band and led by maestro Khalifa Zaiman, as well as a performance of Don Giovanni and the music of maestro Rene Jacobs performed by the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra.

Bahraini folk music will be featured from February 28 when the Mohammed Bin Fares Hall for Fan Al-Sout in Muharraq will host the Mohammed Bin Fares Band in weekly evening concerts every Thursday.

Dar Al-Riffa will also highlight the area's local heritage on March 2, 16, 30 and April 13 and 27, while Dar Al-Muharraq will celebrate the various chants of the unique fjiri musical genre on March 9 and 23 and April 6 and 20.

The Cultural Hall will also host a multicultural series of live performances, including a taste of quintessential Italian sounds by the Hather Plectrum Quartet and tenor Aldo Gallone on March 14, while the Miyabi Ensemble showcases Japan's signature Taiko drums and other traditional instruments such as the shinobue in two concerts on March 3 and 4. All performances will take place at 8pm.

In addition, the venue will host a journey through the traditions of Azeri, Kurdish, Syrian and Armenian music by the Haidouti Orkestar on March 7. Then on March 14, Germany's Arcis Saxophon Quartet pays tribute to the great masters of music, followed by Ahmed Effat will pay homage to Abdel Halim Hafez on 21 March accompanied by the Arabic Music Ensemble.

The Cultural Hall concert series continues with American pianist Steven Lin on March 22 and his virtuoso performance of classic works of masters such as Beethoven, Liszt and Schumann.

On March 29, Scott Booth presents his unique style of complex rhythms on the six-string guitar. Finally, on April 2, audience will be treated to an audio-visual feast by Korean fusion band QUEEN's unique blend of traditional and contemporary elements.

The festival also features a series of concerts organised

by the EDB that will be held at purpose-built open air theatre in Bahrain Bay headlined by several Bahraini, Arab and international artists.

The line-up includes Majid Al Muhandis and Sherine Abdel-Wahab on March 14, Playing for Change Band concert on March 16, *Mr Adam* performed by Almaty Symphony Orchestra on both March 22 and 23, Steve Winwood, as highlighted earlier on March 28 and, finally, *SARAT LIVE* performed by hip-hop Khaleeji duo Daffy and Flipperachi, featuring DJ Outlaw and Saudi rapper Lil Eazy on April 12.

The Bahrain Fort also has a share in this year's festival by hosting an interactive sound and light display every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday to shed light on the history of ancient site from the Dilmun civilisation to today.

La Fontaine Centre will also host a music and dance show of its own entitled Tango Dancing on March 15.

● Literary, intellectual, and cultural lectures

The Shaikh Ebrahim bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Centre for Culture and Research will lead numerous literary and intellectual events of the festival such as lectures by Jihad Al-Zein on the transformations of Arab political culture on February 26 and Algerian TV host Fadilah Farouk highlighting women's issues on April 15.

At Bab Al-Bahrain, BACA will continue its weekly Thursday events at 5pm, staging a variety of family-friendly activities.

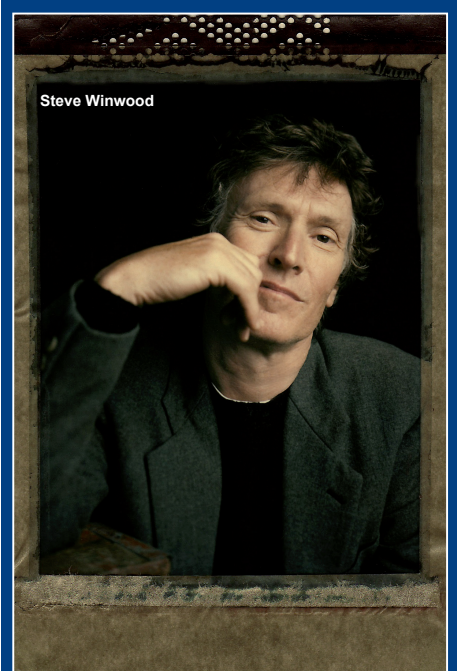
On March 16, a walkathon will explore the landmarks along the Pearling Path, Bahrain's second UNESCO World Heritage Site, followed by a tour on April 20 of long-used fisheries locations in which participants will learn how to make traditional traps from readily available natural materials around the Bahrain Fort.

● Street theatre shows

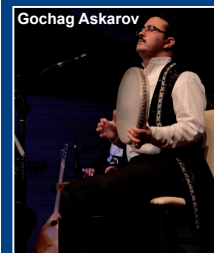
Free shows will be performed by international entertainers in different venues around the kingdom. The calendar includes the Hot Potato Band from Australia, Sully M1 from the Netherlands and The Great Wolynski from Argentina.

Full details of these workshops and all festival events are available on the festival

For more details, visit www.springofculture.org.



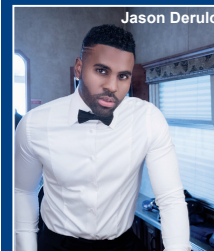
Steve Winwood



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Property Weekly

A guide to the best properties home and abroad – edited by Mai Al Khatib Camille email: mai.alkhatib@gulfweekly.com

Furnished home by the sea

A colourful four bedroom villa is available for rent in Durrat Al Bahrain boasting a private swimming pool and the chance to enjoy beach life in Bahrain at its best.

The fully-furnished home, which has a built-up area of 550sqm and a plot area of 800sqm, features spacious interiors and a beautifully laid out backyard with artificial greenery surrounding a private pool as well as a pool house.

There is a large open-plan reception area upon entering the home as well as a kitchen on the ground floor. Behind it is an additional small working kitchen, a maid's room and a

driver's room. There is also a large living room and a majlis (lounge) as well as a guest bedroom with an ensuite bathroom and wardrobe. There is also a guest closet.

There are three large bedrooms on the first floor including the master bedroom suite featuring a sun terrace, a separate dressing room and a bathroom. There is also a sizable living room and a family bathroom.

There is a shaded car port large enough for two cars and plenty of room for visitors to park in front of the property.

The development also houses a supermarket, playgrounds for children, walkways, basketball courts and restaurants.



FACTS AT A GLANCE

Location: Durrat Al Bahrain

Reference number: V1796

Rental Price: BD1,200 exclusive

Living room: 2

Bedrooms: 4

Bathrooms: 4

Additional information: There is a private swimming pool.

For further information on this and other homes call Star Real Estate 17298210.



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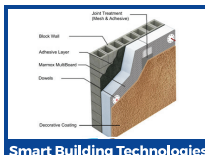
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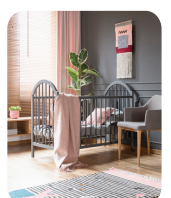


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Interiors Weekly

Your guide to the best in-store deals of the week

THIS year is full of funky, eye-catching furniture and decorating trends and designers believe it's all about being bold and multi-functional.

Ever consider painting the ceiling of a room? Keep this look in mind when wanting to make a space feel more intimate and cosy. Colours have been used for decades to express emotions and set the mood for different businesses too.

For example, spas tend to go with calming and soothing colours such as blue and home-owners tend to paint their kitchens yellow because it's believed to brighten up a person's frame of mind and help increase energy.

Now imagine the effect a splash of colour on a ceiling can do?

For those that would like to dabble, remember to either continue to the ceiling with a base colour or make a strong

Soothing style



statement by using an accent colour.

And, why not make colours bolder and brighter? Pair a bold shade with a calmer or more neutral hue to make a statement. After all, the Pantone's Colour of the Year for 2019 is 'Living Coral'. It is a nurturing hue that appears in every day natural surroundings.

Another tip is to add lots of greenery to the humble

abode. This trend will never get old and still provides a relaxed ambience to a lot of homeowners. This is especially ideal for those usually rooted in the shelter of their living rooms or study areas.

Bring the outdoors in by adding giant flora and potted plants to a room such as a dragon tree, an Aloe Vera plant, a rubber tree or palm tree. Also, keep the vibe of your homework space cool

and earthy with a large plant flanking the side of your desk.

Also, the 'less is more' movement continues with people purchasing items that can be cleverly used in different ways such as the 'murphy bed', also known as a pull-down or fold-down bed. It is hinged at one end to store vertically against the wall or inside a closet or cabinet. According to some experts, this kind of bed is making a big comeback this season and is a great addition for people living in smaller apartments.

Multi-functional furniture is great for people lacking space and storage room. An ottoman, for example, can double up as a coffee table, a stool and a storage unit.

This method can also help

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singles keep their home tidy because everything can have a place and a purpose.

Don't forget to stick to a style and incorporate small touches of it into a room rather than trying to copy the look in its entirety. For example, beach lovers can

add bowls full of shells and candles in jars full of sand to coffee tables and shelves and decorate with nautical hues.

Other top tips to keep in mind or play around with feature floral patterns, copper accents artisanal fixtures and velvet furnishings.

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- Identifies potential process improvements in the fraud processes
- Maintains effective working relationships across the team and departments as necessary
- Contacts customers to validate authenticity of clients' accounts
- Communicates with external groups for group needs
- Compiles and create reports to clearly outline department's progress

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- Bachelor's degree in Banking and Finance, Business Administration or similar.
- Ideally the candidate will have a minimum of 12 months experience in risk management, fraud investigation however fresh graduates will also be considered.
- Knowledge of card processing, payment fraud prevention/detection techniques, On-line Fraud Management is an advantage.
- Detail oriented individuals with excellent research, organizational, and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously and work within tight deadlines.
- Strong organizational, communication, presentation, and interpersonal skills.
- Excellent PC and technical proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Strong analytic and problem-solving skills.
- Interviewing and Interrogation skills.
- Exceptional customer service skills to include diffusing upset customers.

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Applications will only be considered if you have the relevant experience and your skill set match those required and stipulated within the advert text

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Fashion Weekly

Keeping you in on the latest trends and what they wore in the past

Dazzling designs displayed

STUDENTS hoping to make their mark in the highly-competitive world of fashion design have taken their first step under the spotlight with a dazzling display of their work on the runway as part of Bahrain International Design Week (BIDW).

Top models from Matty B Models Modelling and Fashion Agency glided down the catwalk at The Avenues, Bahrain to present the outfits to a packed crowd of onlookers last Thursday evening.

Dressed in sequined, embroidered, bedazzled and classic-cut jalabiyas, abayas and suits they showed how the students and alumnae from the Royal University for Women's (RUW) College of Art & Design could cut the mustard.

The student designers had spent the past semester sketching, planning, illustrating, pattern-making and stitching a series of traditional and modern designs under the guidance of Dean Dr Shweta Kalra Kinra, head of design Dr Nessreen Elmelegy and Noora Albinfalah, an alumna and teaching assistant at the college.

They were approached by BIDW organisers to participate in the week-long design exhibition and Noor Fahad Alfadhel, Yara AlKhan, Lana Ziyad Aladdin, Noair Aldafer, Nouf Alkhan, Bayan Turki, Amal Rafie Alsamahiji, Areej Alshaikh, AlJouhara Alzamel, Hatoun Alghazzawi and Reem Almannai took up the challenge. Noora, also a former alumna, showcased her designs as well.

RUW's Dr Mona Suri, the academic vice president and



FASHION
By MAI AL KHATIB-CAMILLE
mai.alkhatib@gulfweekly.com

associate professor, was delighted and said: "I'm so proud of the students as they have produced beautiful designs. It was a great chance for them to exhibit their works, learn more about what people want and the inner workings of preparing for a fashion show."

"This kind of exposure is great for them. Many of our students are already entrepreneurs with businesses in Bahrain and our programme helps them develop their businesses further."

Matty Benson, founder and chief executive officer of the modelling agency, also managed the show and the choreography, as well as some complimentary social media promotions, and said the show also gave seven of his models a chance to 'elevate their status and expand their portfolios'.

"We have an amazingly diverse range of models and I believe that their differences is what makes them beautiful," he said.

"Being an ex-model myself, I became increasingly frustrated with how some agencies typically work. They often suggest runway models need to be a certain height or weight but that is not right and not the world we now live in."

"People that buy clothes are not all tall and skinny and I proved that point by placing models at the show who were all under 170cm tall. I felt the time was right to take action and create something aligned to the world we live in."

The participating design students, such as 20-year-old Nouf from Saar, were delighted to watch their creations adorned by Matty's leading ladies.

Nouf's jalabiyas and abayas were inspired by Libyan culture while her suits were based on flouncy, airy and light designs. She said: "I was so excited and also a little bit nervous to see my work coming down the runway."

"I love drawing, art in general and fashion, so this programme was perfect for me. My dream is to one day become a top designer. This week was a great opportunity for people to see our work."

Fellow Third Year student, Noor, 23, from Askar, also enjoyed the occasion. She said: "I've wanted to be a fashion designer ever since I was a child. I used to help design clothes with my mum at her tailoring shop in Riffa. I learned how to draw and design more than cutting fabric and measurements but now I'm good at that too thanks to the university."

Mature student Noair, 49, a Saudi national who now lives in Hamad Town, took up the course to enhance her tailoring and designing skills and hopes one day to open up a clothes shop. She said: "I'm initially a designer that loves to stitch. I wanted to hone and develop my skills and learn the basics of tailoring and how to design fashionable items."

Other designs on display during the runway show included Batool Dadabhai's fusion collection called Affinity and wedding outfits by fashion designer Fatima Muhanna.

BIDW, organised by All In One Services Co, GALLURE Co, Twiser Management Company and 1A Services, concluded on Saturday and also featured a marketplace, a series of workshops and lectures during the week.



Photographer: Honey Sharma



Film Weekly



Movie-loving Kristian Harrison checks out the big screen releases on show in a cinema near you



No cold shoulder

LIKE a fine wine, Liam Neeson is getting better with age. He's played a variety of roles in the past, all the way from Jedi Master through to concentration camp detainee-liberating factory owner, but it wasn't until 2008's *Taken* that he solidified his reputation as a bonafide badass.

Following *Taken*, Neeson appeared in film after film as a put-upon dad or aging veteran destroying henchmen and vengefully murdering the wicked.

Although currently embattled in a racism row, he might have missed out of a red carpet opening but the actor remains one of my favourites and a trip to the cinema to catch his latest release was always going to be a must.

There's no cold shoulder from me.

At first glance, Hans Petter Moland's *Cold Pursuit* – a remake of his own 2014 Norwegian film *In Order of Disappearance* – appears to be yet another rollicking and shallow Neeson revenge thriller.

The plot certainly apes familiar talking points; when Nels Coxman's son is killed by a vengeful drug dealer, Coxman, a regular citizen who drives the snowplough in his tiny Colorado ski resort township, begins stalking and killing the men responsible. Luckily for Coxman, the drug dealers are sloppy enough that they can easily be located and murdered by a sexagenarian snowplough driver.

But after the first few murders (and Coxman is aggressively methodical), *Cold Pursuit* slows down, mellows, scatters its focus and becomes something far more interesting than

COLD PURSUIT

STARRING: Liam Neeson, Tom Bateman, Tom Jackson

DIRECTOR: Hans Petter Moland

GENRE: Action

RATING: PG-15+

RUNTIME: 118 Mins

a typical knockoff. Coxman's role is eventually reduced to that of a supporting player in a larger gang war between the fast-talking city gangster Viking (Tom Bateman) and the local Ute tribe led by White Bull (Tom Jackson).

Additionally, we spend a lot of time with a local cop (Emmy Rossum), Coxman's ailing older brother Wingman (William Forsythe), an assassin named Eskimo (Arnold Pinnock) and a host of other criminals and scumbags, each with a nickname more amusing than the last. Laura Dern is mixed in as well, but she has maybe three scenes as Nels' wife before vanishing entirely.

Coxman's quest for vengeance will indeed draw to a close, but because of Moland's mature insistence on taking long, long plot rest stops, *Cold Pursuit* quickly becomes a languid, exhausted and contemplative character study.

It focuses on the human cost of Coxman's quest, and, by extension, most vengeance-based action films. When *Cold Pursuit* dispenses of one of its many creeps, it laments the loss of each one sacrificed on the altar of familiar genre grind. Each time a character dies, their death is accompanied by a brief memorial card,

honouring their passing. The world of action thrillers, *Cold Pursuit* argues, can be just as sad as it is exciting.

That's not to say that *Cold Pursuit* doesn't also possess a wicked sense of humour. The over-the-top characters, and Coxman's shocking ease of blood vengeance, are both sources of dark, sardonic laughter. There is a great deal of quirk at play here, a quality perhaps more openly enjoyed by those who grew up in the pulp-orientated films of the Nineties.

Action aficionados may be frustrated by *Cold Pursuit*, especially after the action-packed first act, because those first few kills are undeniably awesome. But this is not a *Taken*-like shoot-'em-up. It's a weary contemplation of old men and their waning roles in criminal spheres.

With *Cold Pursuit*, Moland, and perhaps Neeson as well, appear to be closing the book on a certain type of revenge thriller that has been Neeson's stock in trade for the last 11 years. We've had a lot of fun, but *Cold Pursuit* argues that it's OK to mourn the passing of a genre now.

Ultimately, *Cold Pursuit* is partly a great action thriller, and Liam Neeson is still kicking plenty of butt, but the film is mostly an intriguing, relaxing, totally tucked-out character study of old men running out of the energy required to run a criminal enterprise. As thrillers go, this one is more adult than your average.

● **Now showing in:** Cinopolis Atrium Mall Saar, Cineco, Novo, Mukta and VOX.

KRISTIAN'S VERDICT
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The Prodigy

DIRECTOR: Nicholas McCarthy

CAST: Taylor Schilling, Brittany Allen, Jackson Robert Scott

PLOT: Taylor Schilling stars in *The Prodigy* as Sarah, a mother whose young son Miles' disturbing behavior signals that an evil, possibly supernatural force has overtaken him. Fearing for her family's safety, Sarah must choose between her maternal instinct to love and protect Miles and a desperate need to investigate what or who is causing his dark turn.

SHOWING IN: City Centre, Seef II, Saar, Wadi Al Sail, Oasis Mall Juffair



The Debt Collector

DIRECTOR: Jesse V. Johnson

CAST: Scott Adkins, Louis Mandylor, Vladimir Kulich

PLOT: A classically-trained martial artist goes to work as a debt collector for the mob. The job seems easy enough, until one "client" pulls him into a situation deeper than could ever be expected.

SHOWING IN: City Centre, Seef II, Saar, Wadi Al Sail, Oasis Mall Juffair



At Eternity's Gate

DIRECTOR: Julian Schnabel

CAST: Willem Dafoe, Rupert Friend, Oscar Isaac

PLOT: During a self-imposed exile in Arles and Auvers-sur-Oise, France, Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh develops his unique, colorful style of painting. While grappling with religion, mental illness and a tumultuous friendship with French artist Paul Gauguin, van Gogh begins to focus on his relationship with eternity rather than the pain his art causes him in the present.

SHOWING IN: Seef II



imdb movie charts

Current Position	Title	Weekend Takings	Gross to date
1	The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part	\$34M	\$34M
2	What Men Want	\$19M	\$19M
3	Cold Pursuit	\$11M	\$11M
4	The Upside	\$7M	\$86M
5	Glass	\$6M	\$98M
6	The Prodigy	\$6M	\$6M
7	Green Book	\$4M	\$61M
8	Aquaman	\$3M	\$328M
9	Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse	\$3M	\$180M
10	Miss Bala	\$3M	\$12M

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Chinese New Year



CELEBRATED Master Chef Lu Yao, who has cooked for Chinese President Xi Jinping, presented his special culinary creations to Chinese ambassador An Wa'er, VIPs and members of the media during his visit to The China Garden restaurant at the Gulf Hotel Bahrain, Convention & Spa.

He was flown in to celebrate the start of Chinese New Year and work with the chefs at the award-winning restaurant last week before conducting a special cooking class for Asian food lovers last Saturday.

● More Chinese New Year celebrations: Pages 10 & 11



SocialScene

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Prize winner



SHOPPER Ahlam Abdulraheem Al Kooheji was the lucky winner of a stunning Lexus LX570s – Sports Line 2019, the grand prize in a promotion staged as part of City Centre Bahrain's celebration marking its 10th anniversary. Visitors who spent BD30 shopping at the Majid Al Futtaim mall during the festive event had the opportunity to win the luxury car. The keys were handed over by Duaij Khalifa Al Rumaihi, City Centre Bahrain's senior mall manager.

Free plants



LULU Hypermarket celebrated National Environment Day in association with Supreme Council for Environment in Bahrain with a blooming bright idea called 'free plants for kids'.

Children who visited the stores around Bahrain received a free plant for them to nurture and grow them and around 2,500 plants were distributed to the nature-loving public.

Pupils from the Indian School and Multinational School were among those who took part in the initiative which was supported by bwallet and Johnson's Baby products

"We wanted to use this opportunity to sow the seeds of environmental love in them," said Juzer Rupawala, director, Lulu Group International.



Firm foundations

A DELEGATION from the Al Mabarrah Al Khalifa Foundation, a non-profit foundation that aims to make a social impact in the education field by empowering young Bahrainis, recently visited GPIC.

The company's president Dr Abdulrahman Jawahery welcomed its chairperson Sheikha Zain bint Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa and her colleagues, hoping the visit will help forge closer cooperation between the two sides.



Family Day



MOTORCITY recently hosted an Isuzu Family Day at Adhari Park. The event was attended by the dealership's executives and members of staff, as well as Isuzu Motors Middle East management. The event is held annually to appreciate customer loyalty and Motorcity GM commercial division, Arun Kumaar, welcomed the guests who were treated to a VIP all-access park rides pass and meals.

On display were the Isuzu D Max and MUX, some of the most popular models from the Japanese commercial vehicle and engine manufacturing company.

Charitable endeavours

LOCAL charities received a boost this week from the proceeds of the annual Christmas carols event at the British Embassy. Cheques were received by representatives of Conserving Bounties, a non-profit organisation that specialises in using excess food to provide meals for the needy, and the Migrant Workers Protection Society, Bahrain, which helps to ensure that expatriate workers are given their basic human rights.

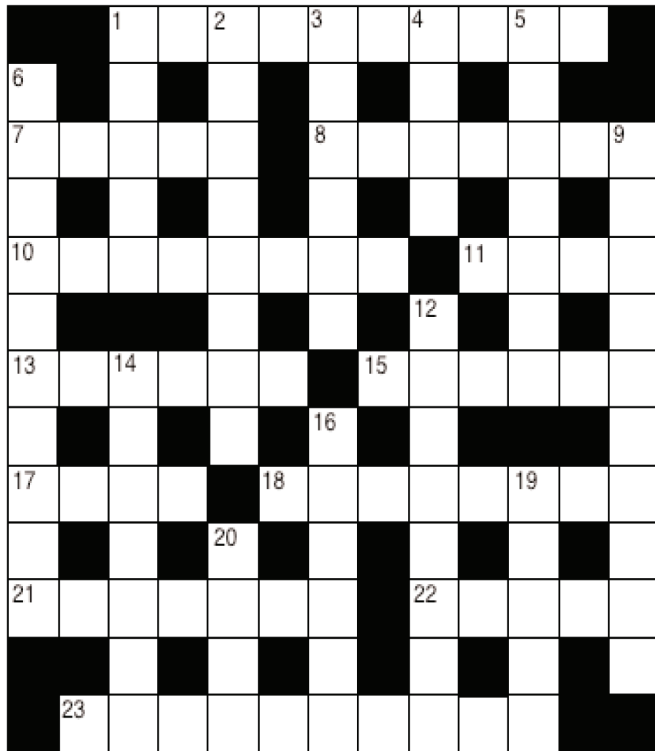


Time Out



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crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

1. Combine (10)
7. Wash (5)
8. Put back (7)
10. Pedestrian (8)
11. Dominion (4)
13. Contaminate (6)
15. Strip (6)
17. Simple (4)
18. Reconciler (8)
21. Axis (7)
22. Motionless (5)
23. Reliance (10)

DOWN

1. Combine (10)
7. Wash (5)
8. Put back (7)
10. Pedestrian (8)
11. Dominion (4)
13. Contaminate (6)
15. Strip (6)
17. Simple (4)
18. Reconciler (8)
21. Axis (7)
22. Motionless (5)
23. Reliance (10)

who, what, where, when

WHO ... in Greek mythology slew the Calydonian Boar?

WHAT ... part of the body did a piece of armour called a poleyn protect?

WHERE ... in the Americas is the state of Tamaulipas?

WHEN ... did the French film director Marcel Pagnol die?

WHO ... was the UN official who won the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize?

WHAT ... is a maxixe?

WHERE ... was Manuel Luis Quezon y Molina the President from 1935-44?

WHEN ... was the jazz saxophonist Sonny Rollins born?

just so

GABRIEL

pay @xtion

DAKED

bock

darn tough sudoku

So you think you're good enough at Sudoku to crack this baby? Remember, we were the first in the Gulf to bring you this bit of Japanese mayhem...so we don't kid around

Last week's sudoku

9	2	1	4	5	6	8	7	3
8	6	7	9	2	3	4	5	1
3	4	5	7	1	8	6	9	2
4	7	9	8	6	1	2	3	5
1	8	2	5	3	9	7	4	6
6	5	3	2	7	4	1	8	9
2	3	4	1	8	5	9	6	7
7	9	6	3	4	2	5	1	8
5	1	8	6	9	7	3	2	4

3	5	8	6	7	1	4	9	2
7	4	1	9	8	2	3	6	5
6	2	9	4	3	5	7	1	8
9	1	7	3	5	6	8	2	4
4	6	5	7	2	8	1	3	9
8	3	2	1	4	9	5	7	6
5	8	3	2	9	7	6	4	1
1	9	4	5	6	3	2	8	7
2	7	6	8	1	4	9	5	3

darn tough sudoku

3	7	4	6	1	2	5	9	8
9	1	6	7	8	5	2	4	3
5	2	8	9	3	4	1	7	6
2	4	5	1	7	8	6	3	9
7	8	9	2	6	3	4	5	1
1	6	3	4	5	9	8	2	7
6	5	7	3	2	1	9	8	4
8	9	1	5	4	7	3	6	2
4	3	2	8	9	6	7	1	5

Sudoku

3	4				6		2	8
8				5	4		1	
		5				6		
9		3	4	6			7	5
		6			7	1		
7	8			3	2			
		4			5			
	3		1	7			4	6
2	9		6				5	1

Sudoku

	8		4		6		9	
							7	
9	4	5				2		3
5			2		7			1
6		8				9		7
1			6	3	9			8
3		6				5		9
				6				
	2		1		3		8	

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

Across: 6 Journey; 7 Frail; 9 Get; 10 Beleaguer; 12 Merchandise; 15 Insincerity; 17 Repellent; 19 Vie; 21 Agree; 22 Verdict.

Down: 1 Sober; 2 Try; 3 Cede; 4 Frigidity; 5 Disease; 8 Repair; 11 Perimeter; 13 Cockle; 14 Inveigh; 16 Since; 18 Need; 20 Odd.

JUST SO: Number 10 Downing street, Behind the times, Tea for two, Blood is thicker than water

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN:

Jeannette Charles; Denis Menchov; El Salvador; 1995; Malcolm Tucker; The Cheerful Insanity of Giles, Giles & Fripp; Australia; 899.

Darn Tough Sudoku

				3					2
		5				2	7		9
								1	8
			6			4			
3	4	9					5	6	1
				9			4		
9		4							
2				5	1			7	
1						9			



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THEY say '3' is a lucky number and I do hope it will bring me luck as I am transferring to my third Four Seasons property as its new director of public relations and communications.

I joined the Four Seasons family more than seven years ago in Budapest and after two years I had the honour to move to the Gulf to join the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay.

Needless to say, with all your support, love and friendship we managed to 'tell stories' that established the well-deserved reputation of this landmark hotel.

With all your media support, we dined, celebrated and cheered together for many great launches in one of our seven restaurants including our chic Wolfgang Puck



outlets, and lately we all got excited about our major milestone: the launch of the brand-new Four Seasons beach.

Nearly five meaningful years spent on this beautiful island (and so much sweating during the Bahraini summer!) still I am so glad that I managed not to give up on this exotic part of the world, and I decided to take up on the challenge and transfer to the ultra-modern sanctuary at the edge of the Arabian Gulf: Four Seasons

Hotel Abu Dhabi at Al Maryah Island.

With 14 years of experience in the field of corporate communications and having been living in many countries around the world, I will always cherish what this incredible island destination has given to me: meaningful friendships that will last a lifetime.

Bahrain and its people: you will always be in my heart!

Veronika Szabo,
Formerly director of
public relations and



communications,
Four Seasons Hotel
Bahrain Bay.

● **Editor's note:** A farewell reception was held last week for Veronika attended by GM Richard Raab, senior executives and other colleagues. Leaving gifts included a pair of gold earrings and a signed, framed image of the property with personal messages of good luck.

THANKS a million for the lovely report about the



You don't know me; I know you, I know what's being said about you. I'm the 'whisperer'. I am socially mobile: Arab, Brit, Indian, Pakistani, American and the rest, they all invite me and share their world with me. Not much gets past me but if you think it may have done, email me on ...

...editor@gulfweekly.com

THE Whisperer felt the British expat mum who was trying to help her son via a long-distance phone call find his missing wallet. Imagine the scenario, spending two hours trying to calm down a distraught teenager and helping him to methodically eliminate each room.

He looked in the fridge, wardrobes, cupboards, under the mattress, all the drawers, upstairs, downstairs and then back to the games room which

he said he had already checked several times.

Mum urged him to calm down and sit in his chair. He immediately screamed: "FOUND IT!"

The wallet was stuck there all along. The house, however, is now totally trashed. It was jokingly suggested that perhaps a maid service could be called to sort out the mess. He said 'good idea, mum ... I'm off out now, talk later'.

Don't you just love 'em?

recent Laughter Yoga festival and sessions in Bahrain. As you rightly pointed out the aim is to help boost morale, decrease stress and strengthen people's immune systems. As a result of last week's article we have also attracted a few new people interested in joining in.

Kayem Thomez, Zinj.
● **Editor's note:** The Laughter Club meets at the KCA, in Segaiya monthly. The next laughter yoga session will be staged on Saturday at Khadija Plaza 2 from 4.30pm to 5.30pm. For more information, email keyem21@gmail.com or call 39867041.



RUNNING with the fashion theme, I cannot help but notice an increasing incidence of reports in the news of fashion companies causing controversy over releases that prove distasteful to many.

Recently responsible for some couture controversy is Gucci. The luxury brand made headlines when it was forced to take down a jumper after many pointed out that it resembled a black face.

A black balaclava knit jumper, which was being sold as part of the Autumn / Winter 2018 season, covered the lower half of the face and featured a red cut-out around the mouth.

Youth Talk

By
Sarah Belal



Gucci has now removed the jumper from sale and apologised after the brand faced a huge backlash on social media from people who said the design was 'completely unacceptable' and offensive.

This is not the first time this sort of thing has happened, and certain brands appear to be guilty of repeatedly being in the spotlight for fashion fiascos. What gives?

Zara is one brand I'm hinting at – from allegedly

not paying workers in third-party factories and, it is claimed, plagiarising the works of an independent artist, to attempting to sell children's shirts that looked a lot like concentration camp uniforms. This Spanish retailer appears to be notorious for its questionable sales strategies.

Also, only last year, H&M also came under fire for a certain sweater, and November saw Italian brand Dolce and Gabbana cancel a show in Shanghai, China after releasing an advertisement which many considered as derogatory with racist elements.

One would think that such

big names in the fashion industry would be more vigilant with what they put out, so why does this happen so often?



Perhaps an explanation is that when it comes to fast fashion, clothes undergo such rapid production and sales cycles that mistakes,

like the above, are easy to miss, as one expert puts it. But that's certainly only one side of the coin. A Twitter comment cited a lack of diversity as a major reason, for if screening committees allowed for more diverse representation, such bloopers wouldn't go unnoticed before release.

Freedom of expression is important when it comes to creative works, and so that stretches to fashion as well, but perhaps plastering just about anything on a T-shirt, or crossing the line in a desperate effort for something cool, unique and never seen before isn't the wisest route to take.

It was well worth the wait

AFTER taking the Mahindra XUV500 for an extensive spin around the island, it's easy to see why motorists in India go crazy for the marque and why the sub-continent's natives in the kingdom have been championing at the bit for it to arrive on sale here.

The Indian carmaker has finally started to export its vehicles to the kingdom, as highlighted last week in *GulfWeekly*, after striking an exclusive partnership with dealers Mohammed Jalal & Sons following more than 20 years of negotiations.

And, as one of the first journalists in the kingdom to take the new Mahindra XUV500 out, it proved to be a fine piece of engineering, with a sleek chassis that has both family friendly curves and sporty edges for the favoured faster look.

There are no shortcomings here, with high quality materials the order of the day.

This translates to the interior too, and no more so than the finely-stitched leather seats. Having sustained a severe hip injury the night before during a football match, a comfortable chair to settle into was exactly what I needed.

Aside from this, panelling on the doors and sturdy dashboard buttons create a feeling of luxury, although the 'old style' gear stick could perhaps have been afforded a modern update and been less fiddly.

Although it doesn't look like the biggest SUV you've ever seen from the outside, once



NEW ARRIVAL: The new Mahindra XUV500

TEST DRIVE
By KRISTIAN HARRISON
kristian@gulfweekly.com

you're sat in the car there is an abundance of room for passengers in the back, and the car has the capacity for seven seats with fold-out seats in the boot.

On the road, its size does make you feel considerably safe should something untoward happen.

Despite looking like it would handle like a whale, the XUV500 is surprisingly

smooth. It has a small turning circle, perfect for the tight streets of Hooraa around the *GulfWeekly* offices, and has good traction around corners.

The steering has some give in it, which I always prefer to those loose vehicles which you can drive with your little finger. The engine doesn't pull up any trees, but it's enough to get the beast purring and moving along.

The six-speed transmission runs smoothly, too, and I particularly liked the design

interface behind the steering wheel which showed you speed and gear information prominently within a glass bubble.

Driving the car is only half of the event these days with the amount of infotainment features available in the modern vehicle, and the XUV500 is no different. I must have spent a good half-an-hour in the Khamis showroom's car park having a fiddle with the various options, which included

plotting a course to the office with the navigation system, plugging my iPod into the music system with my USB, then adjusting the wide variety of sound options to get the best out of the beefy speakers.

Using the touch screen, which also features Bluetooth, AUX, AM/FM radio and in-car call networking, I was able to bring some life to the roads with some bass-fuelled beats.

Overall, the Mahindra XUV500 is a fine SUV

indeed, and should go a long way to satiating the appetite of the Indian community who have been hungry for one of their favourite marques to arrive for a while. It's certainly impressed me, having never sampled Indian engineering before. Two thumbs up!

● The Mahindra XUV500 starts at BD7,200. For more information or to arrange a test drive, call 17730802 or 17252606, or visit the Mohammed Jalal & Sons showroom in Khamis.



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Motor Sport

Bahrain International Circuit – the home of motorsport in the Middle East

BAHRAIN International Circuit is set to host the first round of the 2019 season of Ferrari Challenge Europe, one of the most admired one-make car race series.

The event will run from tomorrow until Sunday and is expected to attract scores of Prancing Horse enthusiasts from across the Middle East and Europe.

The championship, boasting a legacy dating back to 1993, has attracted to date more than 1,000 drivers globally, as well as featuring many memorable races and thrilling performances.

“The Ferrari Challenge takes place at some of the world’s most famous, state-of-the-art racing tracks and Bahrain International Circuit is certainly fit to be the first to feature in this season’s calendar,” said Giorgio Turri, GM at Ferrari Middle East.

The series of activities during the four action-packed Ferrari Racing Days will also include the F1 Clienti and XX Programmes events that follow a separate calendar, occasionally overlapping with the dates of one of the three continental series of the Ferrari Challenge.

These global initiatives provide Ferraristas with a platform to race in their single-seaters or XX Programmes laboratory cars on challenging tracks.

The Ferrari Challenge is divided into three continental series – Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific.

The European 2019 season, however, heads to the Middle East and commences at the BIC before moving to Valencia, Spielberg, Le Mans, Nürburgring, Imola and the Finali Mondiali in Mugello.

The series is sanctioned by

Ferrari BIC stampede



ON TRACK: The Prancing Horse racers taking a corner and, below, more of the marque's famed machines compete



the International Automobile Federation (FIA) and features four categories suited for different levels of driving, including Trofeo Pirelli,

Trofeo Pirelli Am, Coppa Shell and Coppa Shell Am. Antonello Coletta, head of Ferrari Attività Sportive GT, said: “We’re expecting

another highly-competitive Ferrari Challenge season with hard-fought races and packed head-to-head duels, which contributes to the growing

popularity of this series.

“The European series is broadcasted in more than 90 countries and continues to gain popularity amongst

petrol-heads and Ferrari enthusiasts in the Middle East, making the BIC the perfect host for this season’s opening round”.

The series features the most powerful car in its history, the 488 Challenge. The car has been specially tailored for track thanks to 670hp generated by the V8 3.9-litre engine derived from the 488 GTB, winner of the International Engine of the Year Award in 2016.

Compared to the production 488 GTB engine, the Challenge’s powertrain, in its architecture is exactly the road car engine but features specific engine mapping, optimised for racing performance, and shorter gear ratios providing up to an 11.6 per cent increase in acceleration out of turns compared to its predecessor, the naturally-aspirated 458 Challenge EVO.

The most noticeable changes to the 488 Challenge compared to the production car are related to the aerodynamics. In order to achieve the technical objective of increasing the car’s aero efficiency while respecting the main design elements, the engineers worked closely with the Ferrari Styling Centre.

The front radiator layout was reworked, inverting the rake so that they are now inclined towards the rear. This solution improves the air flow over the radiators in racing conditions whilst, at the same time, reducing drag. The new layout required new vents at the bottom of the bumper ahead of the wheels.

A MARVELLOUS motor sport event started in 2005 as a weekend getaway for a group of friends passionate about automobile racing continues to grow in popularity.

More than 60 cars and hundreds of motorsport fans from the region flocked to Bahrain International circuit last weekend to attend the 14th annual GulfRun.

The two-day event, held over Thursday and Friday, witnessed plenty of on-track

Weekend of action for regional fanatics

activities as supercars roared around the famous Formula One circuit in four different track configurations, including the Inner, Outer, Endurance and Grand Prix circuits.

There was also racing along the quarter-mile drag strip, part of the US-based National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Worldwide Network.

“The goal is to promote racing and training in a professional environment,



while educating drivers on proper racing techniques,” one of the organisers explained. “There were track-certified marshals monitoring the event at all times to ensure that it was safe and secure, and it continues to be a great social event tool!”

This year’s GulfRun showcased several top-of-the-line sports cars



from major marques and competitors were placed in their respective class

according to each car’s capability, power, weight and tyre type.



READY FOR ACTION: The 2019 Haas and, below, Magnussen, Grosjean, Storey and Steiner

Race on to unveil new cars

THE Formula One bandwagon is starting to roll its wheels as the first team has revealed its challenger for 2019 ahead of pre-season testing, which starts next week in Barcelona.

Haas have offered a first look at F1 2019 by revealing a striking black and gold livery for the new season.

The dramatic colour change for the American-owned team comes on the back of a title sponsorship deal with Rich Energy, a British energy drinks company and the firm has targetted challenging Red Bull 'on and off track'.

The new look was unveiled at an event in London, and the VF-19 will be seen for the first time at winter testing which takes place at the Circuit de Catalunya from Monday to February 21.

"This is the time of the season when you hope you've got designs right and you can be competitive straight away," said Gene Haas, the team's founder and chairman.

"The new car looks distinctive, not only in terms of its colour scheme, but also with the new regulations in play. Hopefully, those design changes brought in for 2019 will improve the racing on-



track and, more importantly, give us a shot at making more of an impact at each grand prix."

Haas are one of only two teams to retain their driver line-up from last season, with Romain Grosjean and Kevin Magnussen in tandem for the third campaign in a row.

The team, based in the quaint English town of Banbury in Oxfordshire, enjoyed their best-ever F1 season last year, just missing out on fourth after a close battle with Renault, and have improved in every campaign since joining the sport in 2016.

William Storey, the chief executive of Rich Energy, grabbed headlines at the launch by saying: "We're looking forward to taking Red Bull on both on and off the track", with his company competing in the same energy drinks market as the global brand.

"Formula 1 is a wonderful platform for us and we're with the best run team in my opinion and, equally importantly, lovely people,"

said Storey. "We're delighted to work with Haas and we want to do it on a very long-term basis."

"Red Bull is a brilliantly-run business, Dietrich Mateschitz is a very clever guy and created a category in 1987, but we feel we have a better product and a better brand. We feel we have a really good opportunity to beat them, off the track."

Haas revealed their new livery on last year's car, though it was fitted with a new-for-2019 front wing. A number of changes will be seen on cars as they continue to roll out this week.

The new front wing is 200mm wider, but has also been simplified in order to reduce turbulence. That should mean the cars can race closer together, thus increasing the chances of overtaking.

The FIA, the sport's governing body, are also hoping for a low 'outwash' potential - meaning less air is

directed outside the wheels. If that's the case, the car behind will be able to get more grip to go through corners faster.

A simplified front brake duct will work in tandem with the front wing, and the surface available for aerodynamic exploitation has been reduced. The change encourages designers to use the ducts for cooling, rather than aerodynamic gain.

The banning of 'blown axles', featured on the Ferrari and Red Bull cars from last year, will further smooth the airflow.

Finally, the taller, wider and

simpler rear wings should generate more downforce at the back of the cars and improve airflow, allowing drivers to slipstream the cars in front more effectively.

The rear wings can also now be fitted with a higher flap, which could increase the strength and power of DRS by 25 per cent.

Fans will be eagerly anticipating the launches of the 'big teams', with Mercedes and Red Bull to show off their new mean machines today, McLaren tomorrow and Ferrari on Friday.



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TOP OF THE LEAGUE FOR LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL SPORT

February 13 - 19, 2019

THE Arabian Celts ladies are celebrating the sweet taste of success after claiming their first championship, a decade on from their formation.

The women secured a stunning victory in Al Ain last weekend to be crowned the Middle East League Intermediate Champions of Gaelic football, one of the most popular sports in Ireland and growing as a multi-national expat favourite.

The league standings are based on aggregated points accrued from finishing positions in four regional tournaments, and the Arabian Celts have more than earned their spot having won three and finished runners-up in the other.

Alana McConalogue, chairperson of the Arabian Celts, was beaming with pride at the club's achievements.

She said: "This is my seventh season playing for the Celts, and it's amazing to think how far we've come. I remember when I first joined, we only had six girls turn up to a training session."

"Fast-forward to 2019, and we have on average 30 girls during each session, and have as many as 50 regulars coming."

"We won our first tournament at the end of last season, and we used that as an important foundation to build confidence on. We knew we had a chance coming into this season, but when we won the first two tournaments of the season, including our home games in November, we really started to believe."

The Celts then narrowly lost by two points to arch-rivals Sharjah in the final of the Muscat tournament, leaving it all to play for in Al Ain.

There, the two teams met in the semi-finals, with the winner guaranteed to finish

GAELIC GIRLS GLORY



TEAM SPIRIT: The victorious championship-winning Arabian Celts

GAELIC FOOTBALL
By KRISTIAN HARRISON
kristian@gulfweekly.com

top spot in the league and win promotion to the Middle East League Seniors. After a gruelling battle, the Arabian Celts emerged narrow victors by two points.

To add a cherry on top, with the pressure off and the team playing without shackles or nerves, they hammered Abu Dhabi A in the final to put an emphatic stamp on their achievement.

Gaelic football is usually played between two teams of 15 players on a rectangular grass pitch, although the ladies in the Middle East play nine-a-side with a squad of 12. The objective of the sport is to score by kicking or punching the ball into the other team's goals (three points) or between two

upright posts above the goals and over a crossbar 2.5 metres (8.2 ft) above the ground (one point).

McConalogue, who works as a personal trainer and strength and conditioning coach, credits the remarkable rise of the sport and the increase in the team's quality to the fantastic work of coach Anthony Friel and his support staff, and also the friendliness of the group.

She explained: "The Celts as a club has always been looked at as inclusive. So not only do young Irish girls who come to Bahrain for work see us and want to join, but so do players of other nationalities, such as British and American."

"We cater to all levels of skill, whether you've been playing since you were a girl in Ireland or are an adult and have just picked up a ball

for the first time. We have a number of social events and everyone just enjoys playing."

"I truly think Gaelic football as a sport attracts players because you use both your hands and your feet, so it offers a little more than perhaps volleyball or netball. I think it really strikes a chord with people looking for something a little different."

The team trains on Sunday and Tuesday evenings, as well as Friday mornings. They will play in a one-off Cup at the beginning of March before the league adjourns for the summer, although the ladies will continue to train amongst themselves and play inter-team matches and compete in mixed events with the men during that period.

One of the Arabian Celts' star players, Deena Rahman, who is also a member of the



Bahrain women's national football team and owner of Tekkers Football Academy, is one such player who discovered the sport recently, but quickly fell in love with it.

"After the summer, I went to a training session purely for fitness reasons and I was unsure if I could commit long-term," Rahman said. "An hour later, I had thoroughly enjoyed the session and I was determined to fit it into my schedule."

"Coming from a football background, the transition to Gaelic with the skills is easier than if you were a netball or basketball player, for example. I loved it straight away and saw it as a new project that I wanted to master, with so many elements of the game to think about."

"I like to try and be as good

as I can at what I do in a sports sense. I really enjoyed that challenge, and I think the Celts in general as a club is utterly fantastic. I've never felt so much warmth and friendliness within a group before, and it boosted my confidence to keep going."

"When it came to the league, we never envisaged we could win it, but we built skill and confidence over time and we've become a fantastic team. Now that we're promoted to the Senior League, the quality of opponents will be tougher but we're happy with that, we want to come out of our comfort zone and challenge ourselves with no expectations."

● Readers interested in finding out more, message The Arabian Celts on Facebook.

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