

Good things come to those who try!

MUSIC REPORT
By MELISSA NAZARETH
melissa@gdnmedia.bh

EMERGING Bahraini musician Noora Al Moosa was one of four to get selected for the Berklee Abu Dhabi Performing Artists and Leadership programme last year, and since then has performed her first regional gig and worked on two new singles set for release after Ramadan.

Berklee Abu Dhabi scrutinises more than 100 applications and admits only four students every semester and Noora was elated to be amongst the chosen ones. She was also selected by Tamkeen - the body that has been empowering Bahraini talent in entrepreneurial and other ventures - that partly sponsored her course.

The self-taught artist has been active on the kingdom's music scene for a while now but she wanted to take things to the next level and the programme came about at the right time.

REGIONAL: Performing at the Art Scene Kuwait show.



PICTURE: Nusaybah Al Menaili

"On a trip to Ireland, I saw how artists carried themselves and navigated their work from all angles of music creation - performance to the business side of things - which broadened

my perspective," the former banking and finance consultant told *GulfWeekly*.

"On returning to Bahrain, I continued working in corporate sector and pursued music on the side,

but felt restless and so I started looking for artist development programmes and the rest just fell in place organically.

"I applied for a programme at Berklee Abu Dhabi and around the same time was shortlisted for Tamkeen's Global Ready Entrepreneur Programme."

Noora, aka Goodth_ngs, joined Berklee Abu Dhabi in September and met big names in the international music industry like Grammy-nominated Mayssa Karaa and Latin Grammy winner Gael Hedding who encouraged her to spread her wings and get out of her comfort zone.

In addition to music, she learned about the commercial side of things, which she highlights is very important in today's world.

"It's not enough if you make good music, you also need to be able to market it in the right way. I selected Berklee Abu Dhabi because they have a focus on the music industry in the region, which is fast growing as a hub for talents," the Bahraini-Filipino artist, whose work transcends genres, blending folk, rock, and indie pop to create her unique sound, added.

Following the completion of her three-month course, Noora attended the MDL Beast conference in Saudi Arabia. She also bagged a gig in Kuwait this year at an event organised by Art Scene Kuwait, a community initiative fostering arts, culture and other creative pursuits.

"I felt more cognisant especially after the Kuwait gig where I performed for the *Is This Thing On?* show, which was sold out! It was surreal presenting my work in front of more than 300 people.

"I also performed at The Nest by Al Riwaq Art Space this year," she said.

"Performances are therapeutic for me. There is no place I feel more at home, grounded and in tune with myself than when I'm performing on stage and creating music. It's where I feel I can connect with people and be seen authentically," the 26-year-old added.

Noora is excited to release two singles after Ramadan which are improvised versions of the tracks *Sugar Shout* and *Oras* - Tagalog for hours - from her album *Bedroom Recordings*.

"*Bedroom Recordings* are a collection of nine songs that I came up with in my bedroom, hence the name. They have a raw feel to them because that's how they were created. However, the singles will have more musical elements to it. I will be applying the learnings from my time at Berklee, which you will be able to listen on the tracks," the A'ali resident explained.

Noora held a guitar for the first time when she was about 20 but her tryst with music began as an eight-year-old in her living room.

"I was humming a tune and mum came running from the kitchen thinking it was coming from the TV. She was surprised to learn it was me and from then on, she and my aunts and uncles encouraged me to pursue my talent.

"I did karaoke and even listened to music, studying the different sounds. I developed my taste in music over the years, which has helped me in my musical career as well," Noora noted.

For more details, follow @goodth_ngs on Instagram.



CULTURAL TRIBUTE
New digital travel guide
SEE PAGE 2



SPARKING DEBATE
Movie with a message
SEE PAGE 3



LEISURE SCENE
Ramadan repasts
SEE PAGES 4-5



PULSE OF POP
Music, movies & more
SEE PAGE 6



TALENT: From left, Noora, artist Karan Patade, Mayssa, artist Arvind Mohan and mentor Shilpa Ananth

Steeped in history



CULTURE REPORT
By MELISSA NAZARETH
melissa@gdnmedia.bh

FORMER Bahrain resident and author of the popular book *Streetsmart Bahrain*, Melissa van Maasdyk, has announced the release of a new online travel guide.

In *The Steps of Shaikh Zayed* is the 56-year-old's swansong for the UAE, her home for the last decade, and she hopes it will offer visitors, especially from the kingdom, a unique interactive experience.

Exploring Abu Dhabi's history and culture, the guide features virtual tours of 14 important landmarks and video interviews, including one with a special Bahrain touch, pinned on a map! It's entitled so because it interweaves the stories of the country and its founder, Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

"I always seem to wait until I leave a country to come out with a book," the writer and creative told *GulfWeekly* on a lighter note.

"I came out with the first edition of *Streetsmart Bahrain* in 2012, the year I left the island to move to Canada, and now this online guide, when I'm leaving Abu Dhabi for Portugal.

"While it starts out as a history lesson and profile of Shaikh Zayed, it can also be used as a guide to the UAE by people in Bahrain planning to visit the emirate.

"It all started when I discovered an online course on digital storytelling, which covered mobile documentary media production using iPhones and iPads, and Geographical Information System (GIS) story mapping on Google maps. For our course assignment, we were asked to geo-locate stories in our immediate communities, and I decided on creating this guide.

"Initially it was just a class project but the first few interviews I conducted were so fascinating that I decided to continue even after the course finished," added the yoga teacher.

The guide features interviews of people who knew Shaikh Zayed or worked for him, or are knowledgeable on the UAE's history. They were shot on her iPhone with the help of a small mobile microphone.

"My interview with German historian Frauke Heard-Bey



MEMORIES: Frauke, right, with His Majesty King Hamad and Shaikh Zayed, centre, during a meeting in the 70s.



AUTHOR: Melissa

sheds light on one of his greatest challenges as ruler, which came in the late 60s when Britain announced its intention to withdraw from the Gulf by 1971. This meant that Abu Dhabi, like Bahrain, would lose Britain's

military protection upon which the Gulf countries had come to rely. Shaikh Zayed, together with Dubai's ruler, Shaikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, decided that the answer to navigating the transition to independence was to merge the seven emirates, and so the United Arab Emirates was born in 1971.

"In the interview, Frauke also talks about the time she joined Shaikh Zayed for lunch on top of Jebel Hafeet in the company of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, who was then the Crown Prince, and the video features a wonderful photo of her shaking hands with King Hamad," the former Salmaniya resident added.

Furthermore, the guide features itineraries combining historical sites with some of Abu Dhabi's best leisure offerings, from beaching to desert-tripping, galleries to restaurants, along with some insights into Emirati cuisine and traditions, finishing off with a roadtripping guide to the rest of the UAE.

"This section includes my personal recommendations and draws on my experience as a lifestyle writer for various international magazines and *Streetsmart Bahrain*, which has four successful print editions.

"In 2018, *Streetsmart Bahrain* was gifted to selected guests at the F1 Grand Prix, and this was repeated the following year," said Melissa,

highlighting that she hopes the new guide will fulfil a similar role.

The creative lived in Bahrain for seven years with her husband and hopes to



DIGITAL: The guide interface as seen on a mobile device

make a return visit soon.

"I made trips to Bahrain many times while living in Abu Dhabi and will definitely be visiting again. I want to see the completed Pearling Path next time round and think I need another fix of the traditional suqs."

Storymap, the platform on which the guide is available, is accessible for free.

For more details, follow @bymelissa_vm on Instagram.

BRAIN-BUSTERS

Quizmaster and *Radio Bahrain* host Shannon Crockett, who has been entertaining people across the island with his brain-teasing quiz night sessions, has offered to put *GulfWeekly* readers' general knowledge to the test. Join in the fun every Thursday with Shannon's seven brain-busters.

1. What food do Muslims usually break their fast with during Ramadan?
2. In British parliament, "The Ayes have it" is a vote of yes, what word is used for No?
3. In which country were Hamsters first discovered?
4. What is the Latin word for 'elsewhere' which we use to mean that the person under suspicion was somewhere else when the crime was committed?
5. In which sport is 'laundry' a technical term?
6. What is the expression of



one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite?

7. Which country has the newest flag in the world?

- ANSWERS**
1. Dates
 2. Nay
 3. Syria
 4. Ah!b!
 5. Drag Racing
 6. Irony
 7. Honduras



CREATIVE: Melissa filming for the guide



MOVIE REPORT

By MELISSA NAZARETH
melissa@gdnmedia.bh

A GROUP of Bahrain-based creatives has bagged four out of seven awards at a film festival organised by a popular expatriate group in the kingdom.

Their five-minute silent movie, *Replica*, is set to be released this month and the team is hoping to create more meaningful art that will get people in Bahrain talking and thinking.

ARHA, an acronym with the initials of friends and local talents Ashitha Hariz, Ranju Ransh, Hariz Ekkachu, and Asar Ziya, bagged the honours for their creation at the award ceremony of Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam's (BKS) film festival, which took place earlier this month.

A total of 22 entries were put to the test by a stellar panel of judges, featuring renowned figures in the South Indian film industry. It included reputed director and Film Employees Federation of Kerala Directors' Union general secretary G S Vjayan, accomplished cinematographer and director Vipin Mohan, and the multi-talented director, art director and member of Kerala State Film Awards Committee Roy P Thomas.

Replica won awards for the Best Actor and Best Director, which were received by Ranju; Best Editor by Hariz; and the Best Film.

Celebrated industry talent and chief guest Sibi Malayil, who has directed more than 40 films in the span of his illustrious career and won numerous awards including the famed Filmfare for the South Indian film industry, presented the coveted trophy to the winners.

The silent movie transcends language barriers and will strike a chord with a wide audience. It showcases how society views physical appearance and revolves around a supremely gifted artist who cannot reach his



INTENSE: Ranju bringing his character to life



STAR: The film's poster featuring Anupama

full potential due to a skin condition for which he keeps getting judged. He then decides to 'mask' his illness in order to succeed.

East Riffa resident Ranju,

who also plays the artist, tugs at hearts with his tear-jerking performance while doing a splendid job of orchestrating the film's other characters. The disgust of a muse, the



TALENTED: Ayra displaying her acting prowess on screen

hesitation of an employer, the pain of rejection and self-loathing are some of the emotions that he brings to life in his directorial venture.

"I wrote the script and discussed it with my friends who were super excited and we decided to work on it," 34-year-old Ranju told *GulfWeekly*.

"I had already decided to cast Anil Issac as the owner of a shop, and Anupama Binu and Ayra Baby as the clients. When I approached them, they agreed and we went ahead.

"The movie was shot within a day at the Indian Institute for Performing Arts (IIPA). We are very thankful to them, especially IIPA founder Ambili Kuttan, Asha teacher, and the Bavahara team, who helped.

"The most highlighted part in the film was makeup and we got what we expected, thanks to the magic of Sreejin Cheenical.

"As a silent film, music plays an important role and Biju Rajan has done a wonderful job along with vocal support from Arun

Kallingal."

ARHA is committed to producing thought-provoking films that have the potential to spark debate and discussion.

The BKS film festival was the first competition that they entered together. In the past, they have produced music videos and covers by artists based in Bahrain and Kerala, India. These are available on the Harchka Media channel on *YouTube* and have a fan-following of their own.

"We are so happy with this milestone and hope to create more meaningful art," Ranju added.

"We have finished working on a 30-minute anthology film *Dice Death*, which is currently in the editing phase and will be released soon," the creative and full-time sales executive noted.

Those who wish to watch *Replica* can subscribe to the Ransh Creations channel on *YouTube* where the film will be available for viewing this month.



ACCOLADE: Ranju receiving the award from Sibi at the award ceremony



VICTORY: Hariz receiving the award from Sibi

Leisure Scene

What's on guide by
Julia Cassano



GLOBAL CUISINE ON RITZ-CARLTON MENU



OPULENT: Masaya Pavilion by stc

FOR the ultimate Ramadan celebration, visit The Ritz-Carlton Bahrain's Masaya Pavilion by stc.

An array of culinary delights including Turkish doner, Arabic ouzi, German doner kebab, Moroccan tajine, Italian pasta, Mexican quesadilla, amongst many other Arabic and international specialities, will have your taste buds dancing with joy.

Each dish has been specially curated to offer guests the diverse flavours of local and international cuisine, creating a feast for the senses.

The iftar, from sunset to 8pm, costs BD35 and ghabga, from 9pm to 2am, costs BD38.

Children aged four to 12 receive a 50 per cent discount and those under three dine for

free. A special rate is given for groups of 30 and above.

Meanwhile, guests can discover the true flavours of India at La Med's The Great Indian Iftar Thali. A variety of aromatic dishes are served on a traditional thali platter. Dig into tender tandoori meats and fragrant rice dishes. All dishes are paired with a refreshing glass of lassi.

It costs BD24 per person, including one glass of lassi, from Tuesday to Sunday, sunset to 8pm.

For a one-of-a-kind Easter, choose the Ritz Gourmet Lounge. A lavish spread of colourful Easter eggs, each specially crafted with unique designs, will get you in the joyous spirit, from March 30 to 31, 8am to 11pm.

For more information or bookings, call 17586425 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com.



COLOURFUL: Dishes at La Med's The Great Indian Iftar Thali

FAMED FEAST AT FOUR SEASONS

THE Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay has lined up a spectacular feast at its iconic Ramadan Tent.

Executive chef Leonardo Di Clemente has specially crafted a mouthwatering spread of local and international cuisines that are sure to satisfy all your cravings.

The vibrant and colourful array of food includes dishes such as lamb ouzi, machboos, halwa, fattah, Egyptian koshari, falafel and shawarma, to name a few.

Guests can also visit the cooking stations offering a range of creations, including Japanese, Moroccan, Mexican, Italian, Peruvian and more.

Iftar costs BD36 per person, inclusive of still or sparkling water, soft drinks, chilled juices, Arabic coffee and Moroccan tea, and BD19 for children aged six to 12.

Ghabga costs BD39 per person, inclusive of Ramadan juices and BD20 for children aged six to 12. Children below six can dine for free at both iftar and Ghabga.

Guests can also opt for the 'Premium Experience', which features exclusive service and the opportunity to relish the best selections of mezze and mains. Visitors can enjoy a full table-waited service with elegant tableware and curated set menus.

The elevated experience is



TASTY: Dishes at the hotel's Premium Experience

available everyday from 9pm to 2am. Price depends on the set menu, starting from BD55 per person, and tables can be booked for a minimum of four guests.

Meanwhile, to ease your stress during the holy month, head down to The Spa at the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain

Bay. Visitors can experience the ultimate relaxation while enjoying a 30 per cent flat discount on all treatments. The offer is available during Ramadan from 7pm until midnight.

For more information or bookings, call 17115046 or 17115070.

EXCEPTIONAL CELEBRATION

FOR an exceptional Ramadan celebration inspired by the mystical Alf Leila wa Leila (One Thousand and One Nights) theme, enter the Royal Golf Club.

Taking place by the club's luxurious pool, the special event offers guests and visitors a stunning ambience and a truly memorable experience with family and friends.

An array of mouth-watering dishes – from traditional Arabian delights to

international delicacies, will ease your appetite and leave you wanting more. Wonderful live Arabic music will fill the air, adding to the already festive and vibrant atmosphere.

Don't miss out on this extraordinary opportunity to celebrate Ramadan in style.

Iftar will be held from sunset to 8.30pm and ghabga from 9.30pm to 1am. Both events cost BD15 net per person.

For bookings, call 39007546.

A PRIZED DINING EXPERIENCE

GATHER your friends and family for an enchanting iftar and ghabga at Hilton Bahrain's Arabian Nights.

The night unlike any other features a lavish buffet, live cooking stations and fun entertainment.

Plus, guests have the opportunity to win exciting prizes too.

Iftar and ghabga cost BD22 for adults. Children below five years dine for free while those aged six to 12 pay BD11. Iftar will be held from sunset until 8pm and ghabga from 10pm to 1am on weekdays and 10pm to 2am on weekends.

Ladies can enjoy a 50 per cent discount on ghabga every Monday.

For more information or bookings, call 33692013.



DECADENT: Tasty desserts at Hilton Bahrain



CHARM: Ramadan tent at the Royal Golf Club



Two of a kind!



MUSIC REPORT
By NAMAN ARORA
naman@gdnmedia.bh

TWO of Bahrain's singing talents struck a chord with musical judges from around the world, as they took top prizes in their age category during a recent international singing competition in Malta.

Eleven-year-olds Amyra Anand and Serena Khan, both Year 6 students at St Christopher's School, competed at the recent Golden Voice Malta competition against more than 200 competitors from 29 countries, including five from Bahrain.

"It was a tough competition," Amyra told *GulfWeekly*.

"Everyone was incredible and I am so happy that I won in my category. I would like to thank my vocal coach Natallia Estanom from Belcanto Vocal Studio for being the best mentor anyone could ask for, as well as all my teachers from St Christopher's School for supporting me through my musical journey."

The Golden Voice International Vocal Contest was first organised in Malta in 2016 and encourages young people to improve their vocal skills and learn about different cultures through a global experience.

YOUNG STAR:
Serena serenades the audience



Amyra, a Bahrain-based Canadian national of Indian origin, won first place in the Movie Musical category with her rendition of *Into the Unknown* from the animated classic *Frozen II*.

She has also showcased her talent on various platforms including the St Christopher's Music Festival, and aspires to compete at

EuroVision one day.

During her upcoming vacation, she is set to attend summer school in the UK focused on musical theatre.

"Amyra's singing journey began at the age of four under the guidance of Natallia, a professional vocal coach with over 20 years of experience," her parents Akshay and Anisha Anand

added.

"Since then, she has blossomed into a remarkable young vocalist, with Natallia instilling in her not just technical prowess but also a profound love for music and singing.

"Her training regimen has been consistent since she began in 2020, and throughout her journey, Natallia has been more than a vocal coach to Amyra; she has been a mentor, guide, and unwavering support, nurturing her talent and fostering her growth as a vocalist."

She is already preparing to showcase her talent on stage once again, this time at her school's junior musical production of *Annie*.

Meanwhile, her classmate Serena secured second place overall in her age category, having performed two songs - *Good Morning Baltimore* from the movie *Hairspray* and the pop song *The Climb* by Miley Cyrus.

"Thank you to all my friends and teachers who encouraged me as I got accepted to Malta, especially (St Christopher's School junior musical production director) Mr John Goodwin," Serena added. "Going to Malta was a whole different journey. The competition was very tough but all the people were nice and friendly and cheered for each other when we went on stage."



HAPPY: From left, Akshay, Anisha, Amyra and Natallia



TALENT: Amyra performing on stage

SOOTHING:
Live musical performances during the Ramadan in Bahrain campaign



SHOWCASING THE BEST OF BAHRAIN

ARANGE of activities are being held at various locations across the country as part of 'Ramadan in Bahrain'.

The events are aimed at allowing visitors and tourists to immerse themselves in the vibrant culture of the season through live performances, bazaars, seating areas, food and beverage vendors and more.

● Today (March 28), guests can check out Heritage Village in Arad for the last day of the Gergaoun Festival. Traditional music, folk dances, crafts, delicious food and more will make for an unforgettable night with friends and family. The event will go on from 8pm to 11pm.

● Gather your loved ones and soak in the festive atmosphere outside the Bahrain National Theatre, which is hosting Manama Nights. The festival includes food vendors, a mini-market featuring local businesses, live music and more.

● Head down to The Avenues Bahrain this weekend (today, tomorrow and Saturday) for a delightful evening of traditional games and food, live music, and henna from 8pm until midnight.

● Tonight, District 1

in Janabiya will witness an array of musical performances and events from 9pm. Children's activities including face painting, balloon artistry and performances by clowns.

● Meanwhile, Budaiya Botanical Garden's Roast Camp will make for an exceptional coffee experience, surrounded by stunning scenery from 6pm to 2am.

● Marassi Galleria is organising Ramadan-themed activities such as Arabic calligraphy and face painting. Oud players will also be performing at the festivities taking place everyday, from 9pm to midnight, until April 9.

● Visitors can experience the magic of Musagaf Evenings and relish in live performances today and tomorrow, from 9.30pm to 11.30pm at Manama Suq as well.

● Al Liwan will host a music-filled evening everyday, from 9pm to 11.45pm until April 8.

● To experience the tradition of the iftar cannon, head down to Arad Fort, Abu Subh Shore, Riffa Fort and Qal'at Al Bahrain (Bahrain Fort) until April 9.

The festivities are being organised by the Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority.

Pulse of Pop

AROUND THE WORLD IN MUSIC, TV, BOOKS AND MORE - BY NAMAN ARORA

UNVEILED: The album cover



THE Queen of Pop has set her eyes on the kingdom of country music and is galloping in tomorrow with her first album in the genre.

Beyoncé's foray into country music with her eighth studio album *Act II: Cowboy Carter* has ignited a wildfire of anticipation, with its single *Texas Hold 'Em* skyrocketing to the top of the *Billboard Global 200*, after debuting at the top of the *Hot Country Songs* chart.

"I feel honoured to be the first black woman with the number one single on the hot country songs chart," the 42-year-old American singer-songwriter said in a statement.

"My hope is that years from now, the mention of an artist's race, as it relates to releasing genres of music, will be irrelevant.

"This album has been over five years in the making. It was born out of an experience that I

had years ago, where I did not feel welcomed... and it was very clear that I wasn't.

"But, because of that experience, I did a deeper dive into the history of country music and studied our rich musical archive."

The album, which will be released tomorrow, transcends a mere artistic shift; it's a potent cultural statement, a masterfully executed genre-bend that promises to redefine the landscape of country music.

The album's title itself serves as a powerful opening salvo. *Cowboy Carter* directly confronts the traditionally whitewashed image of the American cowboy, reminding audiences of the often-overlooked or erased contributions of Black cowboys to the Wild West narrative.

The lead single, *Texas Hold 'em*, with Beyoncé's subtly twangy vocals

dominating the charts, emphatically demonstrated her ability to conquer any genre she chooses.

At its core, this remains a quintessential Beyoncé album. Her signature fusion of pop, R&B, and soul seamlessly interweaves with the country instrumentation, creating a sound that's both refreshingly familiar and undeniably groundbreaking.

"I have a few surprises on the album, and have collaborated with brilliant artists who I deeply respect," she added, in the statement posted to her website.

"I hope that you can hear my heart and soul, and all the love and passion that I poured into every detail and every sound."

Whispers of collaborations with contemporary powerhouses like The Chicks and legendary country artists have sent a

wave of excitement through the music world.

The album transcends the realm of catchy melodies and innovative soundscapes as it delves into the rich but often under-acknowledged history of Black American artists in country music.

From trailblazers like Darius McCrary and DeFord Bailey to modern-day voices like Kane Brown and Mickey Guyton, Black artists have consistently enriched the genre, even in the face of industry resistance. Beyoncé's album stands as a powerful act of reclamation, highlighting these contributions and paving the way for a more inclusive future in country music.

"I focused on this album as a continuation of *Renaissance*," Beyoncé added, referring to her seventh studio album.

"I hope this music is an experience where you can close your eyes, start from the beginning and never stop."

Act II: Cowboy Carter will be available on all major music platforms starting tomorrow, March 29.



Beyoncé

VICTORY AGAINST THE ODDS

ACCCLAIMED actor Bill Nighy is taking the field in the upcoming Netflix sports drama *The Beautiful Game*, arriving tomorrow, March 29.

Directed by Thea Sharrock, the film goes beyond the typical underdog story, as Bill portrays Mal, coach of England's homeless football team.

These players, each battling hardship, prepare for the Homeless World Cup in Rome, an annual association football tournament which advocates the end of homelessness through the sport of association football.

The film centres on Vinny (Micheal Ward), a talented but troubled striker, whose inclusion brings hope but also potential conflict and Mal must guide them on and off the pitch.

"This isn't just about football," the director said in an interview.

"It's about finding purpose, belonging, and a second

chance."

The movie tackles homelessness, highlighting the struggles and resilience of those facing societal neglect. The film celebrates the power of camaraderie forged through shared hardship.

Early buzz praises Bill's performance and Michael's portrayal of Vinny's inner turmoil.

The film is expected to resonate beyond sports fans with themes of overcoming adversity, teamwork, and community.

"*The Beautiful Game* is a film about succeeding against the odds," producer Graham Broadbent added.

"Our film shows the joy, drama and excitement of this real life tournament and the enormous potential of people left behind by society."



HUMAN ENCOUNTERS

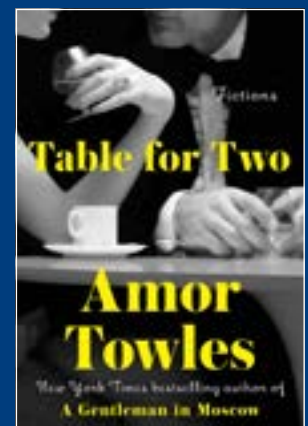
AMERICAN novelist Amor Towles is back with his highly anticipated collection of short stories hitting shelves on Tuesday, April 2.

Table for Two comprises six short stories and a novella reflecting a recurring theme of pivotal moments in the lives of characters often unfold during intimate encounters, symbolised by a shared table.

The short stories explore diverse settings and characters. Early buzz suggests a return to the world of Amor's debut novel, *The Rules of Civility*, with a story featuring returning character Evelyn Ross.

Another story reportedly takes readers to the heart of Golden Age Hollywood.

Critics who have received early access praise his ability to



capture the essence of human connection, from chance encounters to life-altering conversations.

This release marks a departure from Towles' recent full-length novels and has already garnered significant attention from several publications, including *The New York Times Book Review*, *Podcast*, *Reader's Digest*, and *TIME Magazine*, with its blend of established themes and fresh storytelling approaches.

MotoringWeekly

The top motoring and motorsport news

Braveheart

CARLOS SAINZ SHEDS LIGHT ON HIS JOURNEY FROM HOSPITAL TO HERO



SPANIARD Carlos Sainz has shed light on how he went from hospital to hero, winning an Australian Grand Prix the Ferrari driver had feared he might miss after emergency appendix surgery two weeks earlier.

The 29-year-old won in Melbourne on Sunday after Red Bull's triple world champion Max Verstappen suffered his first mechanical retirement in two years.

The victory meant Sainz, also a winner in Singapore last September, remains the only driver outside Red Bull to triumph since 2022 - some feat for a man still without a seat for 2025.

The Spaniard, who hands over to seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton at the end of the year, missed the Saudi Grand Prix in Jeddah on March 9 after surgery a day earlier.

"As soon as I got my appendix removed, I went on the Internet and started talking with professionals and said, 'OK, what helps to speed up recovery?'," he told reporters.

"I started doing all the sort of things that you can do to speed up recovery, the wounds, the scar tissue, what you can help to be faster on that, talking to other athletes, talking to other doctors in Spain, internationally.

"And then I put together a plan with my team. The reason athletes recover faster is because you can dedicate 24 hours per day for seven days to recovery. And that's exactly what I did."

Sainz watched British teenager Oliver Bearman step into his car in Jeddah and drive it to seventh place on an extraordinary F1 debut, and then he got to work.

He had twice daily hour-long sessions in the hyperbaric chamber, breathing pure oxygen at higher pressure, and used an electromagnetic INDIBA machine for tissue repair.

Sainz programmed his time spent in bed, walking and eating "the kind of food that you have to recover."

If he felt stiff and tired by the end of the race at Albert Park, the result exceeded all expectations.

"Nine days ago, when I was about to catch the flight to come to Australia, I was still in bed. I could barely use my abdominal (muscles) to move. And I was like, this is not going to happen," he said.

"But I took the flight, and suddenly when I landed in Australia, the feeling was a lot better.

"And every 24 hours, I was making a lot more progress than the first seven days, which is actually what all the doctors and professional people told me. Don't worry, because the second week, every day is going to improve a lot more than the first week."

The Spaniard was the first driver since Austrian Gerhard Berger in 1997 to win his first race back from a medical absence.

McLaren's Lando Norris, third on Sunday and Sainz's former team mate, said it was typical of the man.

"I'm sure you have plenty of drivers who probably wouldn't have tried as hard and dedicated so much of their time and effort to trying to recover and get back in the race car," he added.

Ferrari revel in putting Red Bull under pressure

THOUSANDS of red-clad Ferrari fans descended on Lygon Street in Melbourne to party in the Italian restaurant strip until the wee hours of Monday after Carlos Sainz's unlikely win in the Australian Grand Prix.

The Italian Formula One team will hope the celebrations continue at Suzuka in two weeks after Albert Park breathed new life into the championship.

Sainz and team mate Charles Leclerc's 1-2 in Australia trimmed Red Bull's lead to four points in both the drivers' and constructors'

title races, a major momentum shift following Max Verstappen's Middle East dominance.

Ferrari had the fortune of Verstappen flaming out with a brake problem at Albert Park which ended Red Bull's two-year run of avoiding DNFs (non-finishes) on race-day.

Ferrari nonetheless leave Melbourne delighted by the pace of their SF-24 car after being trounced by Red Bull in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

"This weekend is good evidence that when we are putting everything together, and I'm not sure that we'll be able to do it every single

weekend, we can put (Red Bull) a little bit under pressure," said team boss Frederic Vasseur.

"It's when they are under pressure that they will also have more mistakes. We have to continue in this direction."

With triple world champion Verstappen topping the podium ahead of team mate Sergio Perez in the season's first two races, Red Bull were blindsided by setup struggles from the get-go in Melbourne.

Red Bull team boss Christian Horner said Red Bull had not got to grips with conditions while Ferrari, clearly, had.

"I think the nature of the surface (was a factor), as well. I think that the tyre graining here in particular was something that Ferrari looked in control of," he said. "Certainly from Friday their long runs looked good."

Perez, who finished fifth after the floor of his car suffered damage, said Ferrari, "absolutely" had the pace to beat Verstappen had the Dutchman gone the distance.

Ferrari may not know where they sit until their next proper duel against Verstappen, and will be eager to hit back at the Japanese Grand Prix.

Mercedes, by contrast, can have

little doubt of their place in the pecking order, with Melbourne confirming their also-ran status.

With no championship points at Albert Park and their first double DNF since 2018, the Silver Arrows have slumped to fourth in the championship, 71 points behind leading Red Bull.

The free-fall may continue as the team battles to understand the fluky performance of their overhauled W15 car. "We haven't swallowed a dumb pill since 2021. It's just we don't understand some of the behaviours of the car," said team boss Toto Wolff.

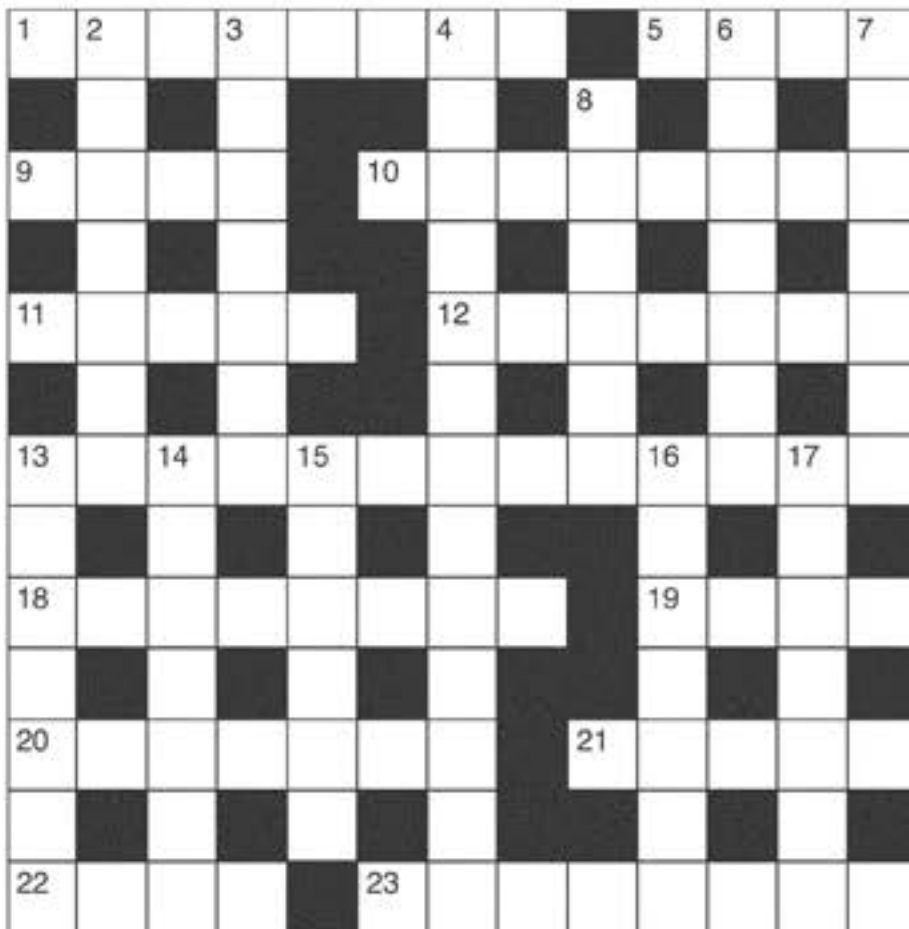
Time Out



Hilal Computers

Maximizing performance and efficiency
Dell service provider
Tel: 1729 3749 ext 2220

crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

1. Penitent (8)
5. Customs (4)
9. Motor-cab (4)
10. Estrange (8)
11. Less (5)
12. Reviling (7)
13. On purpose (13)
18. Surprised (8)
19. Cheek (4)
20. Attain (7)
21. Odd (5)
22. Weary (4)
23. Amaze (8)

DOWN

2. Speech (7)
3. Offering (7)
4. Garrulity (13)
6. Type of dog (7)
7. Landscape (7)
8. Come back (6)
13. Moment (7)
14. Tutor (7)
15. Lower (6)
16. Postpone (7)
17. Unruly (7)

who, what, where, when

WHO ... was the US Secretary of Defence 1981-87?
WHAT ... city in Macedonia was formerly called Monastir?
WHERE ... in Africa is the city of Welkom?
WHEN ... was the magazine *The New Yorker* founded?
WHO ... wrote the novels *Lipstick Jungle* and *Trading Up*?
WHAT ... animal believes itself to be a racehorse in the film *Racing Stripes*?
WHERE ... were Joan Enrie Vives Sicilia and Nicolas Sarkozy the joint heads of state?
WHEN ... was British Amphibious Air Lines Ltd founded?

just so

event wise

VALUOR

12" BEST

£ TIPTREE TIPTREE TIPTREE

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

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

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

darn tough sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

Across: 1 Switch; 4 Advent; 9 Disrespectful; 10 Spindle; 11 Ruche; 12 Happy; 14 Ambit; 18 Agile; 19 Bugbear; 21 Confectionery; 22 Dilute; 23 Lesser.

Down: 1 Sadism; 2 Inspirational; 3 Creed; 5 Decorum; 6 Effectiveness; 7 Teller; 8 Spree; 13 Pretext; 15 Rancid; 16 Abate; 17 Prayer; 20 Globe.

JUST SO: A finger in every pie, The great gatsby, Pile on the agony, Thumbs down.

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN:

Howie Mandel; Socks; Owensboro, Kentucky; 2008; Anthony Cox; Kinder Scout; Bahrain; 2002.

Darn Tough Sudoku

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