

# Celebrating their savoury seven!

**GOURMET REPORT**  
By MELISSA NAZARETH  
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**B**AHRAIN-BASED group of dosa demolishers Bahrain Masala Dosa Meetup are set to celebrate another year around the sun on Saturday, June 28, marking seven years of savouring the stuffed and spiced Indian crepe across eateries in the kingdom.

Fans of the dish will gather, this time at Divya Amudham in Segaya, to sample their version of the fermented rice and lentil creation, which emerged from the South Indian state of Karnataka in the 20th century but, overtime, has gained admiration from foodies around the world.

Recently, YouTube was abuzz with reels by Indian content creators, filming their creative takes of the trending 'Dosa, Idli, Sambar, Chutney, Chutney' jingle.

Prior to that, eight-Michelin star British celebrity chef and restaurateur Gordon Ramsey featured the 'spicy pancake' on his popular TV show *Gordon Ramsey's Home Cooking*.

For the uninitiated, Masala Dosa is a crispy crepe-like dish stuffed with spiced potatoes and typically served with coconut chutney and sambar – a lentil and vegetable stew.

Variations like Spring Dosa, stuffed with Chinese stir-fried noodles and spinach dosa, exhibiting a vibrant green, spinach-infused crepe, among others are also served at some local restaurants.

"As we celebrate this milestone, I want to thank each and every one of you who has been part of this journey – your presence, laughter, and stories have made this group truly special," said the group's coordinator Keyem Thomas, who is also a 'laughter ambassador', promoting the practice of laughter as a



GROWING: Keyem, sitting centre, with fellow dosa fans including from Kuwait, who plan to start their own group



Illustration by Rima Alhaddad

form of well-being.

"Back in June 2018, when Sushma Gupta, Neil Desai, and I first dreamed of creating a group that celebrates South Indian breakfast and meaningful conversations, we never imagined how far it would go. Today, we are a family of over 40 members from different walks of life – doctors, teachers, engineers, athletes, Toastmasters, and more – all brought together by our mutual appreciation for food and friendship,"

the 63-year-old from Zinj, who came to Bahrain in 1987, told *GulfWeekly*.

United by their love for the humble dish, the group has explored numerous restaurants, staging monthly gatherings since 2018, give or take an occasional pandemic shutdown, with old members leaving the kingdom and newbies signing up to take up their places for the culinary sessions.

"We were surprised to learn that this delicious dish has 600 varieties," Irish-English couple Shakti and Dominic McPolin, who have been part of the group for a year, said.

"This lovely bunch has given us the opportunity to try the breakfast dish in different restaurants in Bahrain. If dosa was available throughout the day, this would be our go-to." The group's motto, 'Meet, Greet, and Eat', continues to unite and guide the foodies.

"It's not just about breakfast – it's about connection, culture,



DOSA DUO: Dominic and Shakti during a recent meetup

and community. Each meetup is a reminder of the joy that simple things can bring when shared with the right people. Here's to many more years of crispy dosas, delicious sambars, and cherished mornings together," Keyem said.

The upcoming meetup on Saturday starts at 8am - all are welcome.

To RSVP, contact Keyem on 39867041.



IT'S A WOMAN'S WORLD  
WOTYA - Nominate now  
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INSPIRATIONAL: 16 of the winners from last year at the ceremony

**B**AHRAIN is set to witness the second edition of the prestigious Woman of the Year Awards (WOTYA), a platform honouring community trailblazers, nominations for which are open, writes **Melissa Nazareth**.

The glittering event will be staged by *Woman This Month* magazine in December, coinciding with Bahraini Women's Day, which is celebrated annually on December 1.

Porsche will be the title sponsor of WOTYA 2025, which recognises the achievements and contributions of women in Bahrain across sectors, including business, art, science, healthcare, and social good.

This year's awards will feature 17 honours across six main categories. A new category, 'Women in Orange Economy', has been introduced and features the Orange Economy Rising Star by UNIDO award.

Other categories are Woman in Business, Woman in Service, Woman in Sports, Woman in Social Service and Woman of Arabia Achievement Award.

The orange economy, also known as the creative economy, encompasses art, culture, media, design, technology and heritage industries.

*GulfWeekly's* sister paper, the *GDN*, previously reported on the launch of the Orange Economy year in the kingdom, which will entail a series of competitions, conferences, exhibitions and community engagement activities, staged by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation Investment and Technology Promotion Office (UNIDO-ITPO) in the kingdom, in collaboration with the RAK Art Foundation.

WOTYA 2025 was officially launched in March

at the Wyndham Grand Manama during which *Woman This Month* chairman George Middleton reaffirmed the platform's mission to elevate women's voices.

"When we let her shine bright, Bahrain shines even brighter," he said in his address.

The 2025 jury panel was also introduced at the event. It includes award-winning entrepreneur Huda Janahi, marketing professional and mental health advocate Nivedita Dhadphale, Standard Chartered Bank head of corporate affairs, brand and marketing Noora Al Nusuf, Maya La Chokolaterie, Maya Delices and SJ Investments founder and chief executive Sonya Janahi, ESMOD Dubai founder and chief executive Tamara Hostal, and journalist, writer and technology pioneer Ubaydli.

In order to be eligible for a nomination, you must be a current resident of Bahrain, except for the philanthropy sub-category. Those who wish to nominate someone for the awards can visit [womanthismonth.com](http://womanthismonth.com) for more details.

Last year's awards attracted more than 400 nominations, 51 per cent of which were Bahraini. The gala event, which was attended by around 500 people, honoured 19 women from among 50 finalists.

Pioneering artist and philanthropist Safeya Kanoo,



HONOURED: *Woman This Month* chairman and publisher George Middleton presenting the award to Ms Kanoo



ENTERTAINING: A performance from last year's ceremony

who passed away on June 18, was acknowledged with a lifetime achievement award.

Reminiscing a memorable interaction with the personality, Red House Marketing managing director Anne Middleton said: "When Safeya Kanoo comes to my mind, it's not the 'talented artist' or the 'Bahraini socialite' most people would remember her by, but the gracious, dignified and charitable lady that she was.

"I recall being asked by a friend, who was organising

a little fundraising get-together for a home for elderly women, if 'Madam Safeya' would give her time to attend. At short notice, I called her and despite her busy schedule and physical issues, she agreed not to mention also giving a generous donation."

Red House Marketing publishes *Woman This Month* and *Bahrain This Month*.

For more information, visit [womanoftheyearawards.com](http://womanoftheyearawards.com).



HAVING WALKED THE TALK AND LOST 41.5 KILOGRAMS OVER A YEAR AND A HALF, GULFWEEKLY'S COLUMNIST PREETY PRAVEEN EXAMINES THE CORRELATION BETWEEN FITNESS AND SELF-CARE, AND MENTAL HEALTH.

## Healthy mind, healthy body

**W**HEN most people think about physical fitness, they usually picture things like losing weight, building muscle, or staying in shape. But what often gets overlooked is just how powerful exercise can be for your mental health.

Moving your body — whether it's through running, yoga, swimming, or even a quick walk — does more than strengthen your muscles; it boosts your mood and clears your mind. That's because physical activity triggers the release of brain chemicals like serotonin and endorphins, which help you feel happier and more relaxed. It's one of the most natural and accessible ways to reduce stress, ease anxiety, and combat feelings of depression. In fact, studies have shown that regular movement can be as effective as medication for some people dealing with mild to moderate depression.

The good news? You don't need to commit hours each day to a gym routine. Even 30 minutes of activity a few times a week can make a big difference in how you feel emotionally and mentally. Exercise also plays a big role in improving your sleep. And let's be honest — when you sleep better, you function better. You're less irritable, more focused, and better equipped to handle life's daily pressures. Another bonus of staying active is the boost in self-confidence. Reaching small fitness goals or just sticking to a routine can give you a real sense of accomplishment, which is valuable especially during challenging times.

On top of that, physical activity often comes with social benefits. Whether you're joining a group class, playing a team sport, or simply walking with a friend, it opens the door to human connection—something that's incredibly important for emotional well-being. Often, the hardest part is getting

started, especially when you're feeling demotivated. But starting small — maybe with a morning stretch or a short walk — can help build momentum over time.

It's also important to let go of the idea that fitness has to look a certain way. It's not about six-pack abs or running ultra-marathons.



FLASHBACK: Preety's weight-loss journey featured in the *GDN*

It's about discovering what kind of movement feels good for you — the kind that leaves your mind calmer and your body more energised. Everyone's path is different, and that's completely okay. What matters most is finding a routine that supports both your body and your mental health.

So the next time you're feeling stressed, anxious, or mentally stuck, try going for a walk, dancing around your room, or stretching it out. You might be surprised at just how much better you feel afterward.

Physical activity is a great way to boost your mood and clear your mind. But rest, good nutrition, staying hydrated, and getting enough sleep are equally important. Be gentle with yourself on the tough days, and don't stress if you miss a workout or feel 'off'. Mental and physical health are closely connected, and building simple, consistent habits over time can make a big difference in how you feel both mentally and physically.

Preety Praveen is a psychologist and author.

Readers' responses — Page 6



# BEAUTIFYING BAHRAIN



GIFTED: Khalil



AESTHETIC: Khalil's art brought alive in a monument in Hidd

**M**EET Bahraini artist Khalil Al Shaikh, who has been embellishing ma'atams ('gathering spaces') across the kingdom for decades. He reminisced the chance beginning of his artistic journey, including his striking tile work typically found at these events, coinciding with Muharram, which begins tomorrow, June 27.

Muharram is the first month of the Islamic calendar, also known as the Hijri calendar.

Every year during Muharram, thousands of Bahrainis flock to stunning ma'atams around the country to admire them and their beauty. However, not many stop to think about the hands that put the tiles in place, or about the heart and soul that men and women put into the beautification process.

Among those men is veteran carpenter and tile



## ART REPORT

By NADER ADNAN  
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worker, 73-year-old Khalil, whose creations have been admired by many.

His portfolios spans Islamic artwork, woodwork, gypsum designs and tile work, which are exhibited at various locations in Bahrain, including Ma'atam Shabab Al Hamala, Ma'atam Mansour Bin Nayem in Muharraq, Ma'atam Al Khoder in Bani Jamra, Ma'atam Alasfoor in Sitra and Ma'atam Al Basri in Bilad Qadeem.

He loves making works with the name of Allah on it; perhaps his pièce de résistance, is a glow in the dark piece with Allah's name as a centrepiece.

Khalil's tryst with art began during his school days. At 15 years old, he seemed like just your typical student with an interest in handicrafts. One

ARTY: Ma'atam Al Eslah



rainy day, his life changed when he took a detour on his way to school.

"My books got really wet because of the downpour," the Buhair resident said.

"Instead of going to school, I stopped by a carpentry workshop to dry off.

"I just stood there at the entrance of the shop, and the man asked me what I wanted.

"Without thinking, I told

him that I wanted to work for him and learn from him. He let me stay for the day.

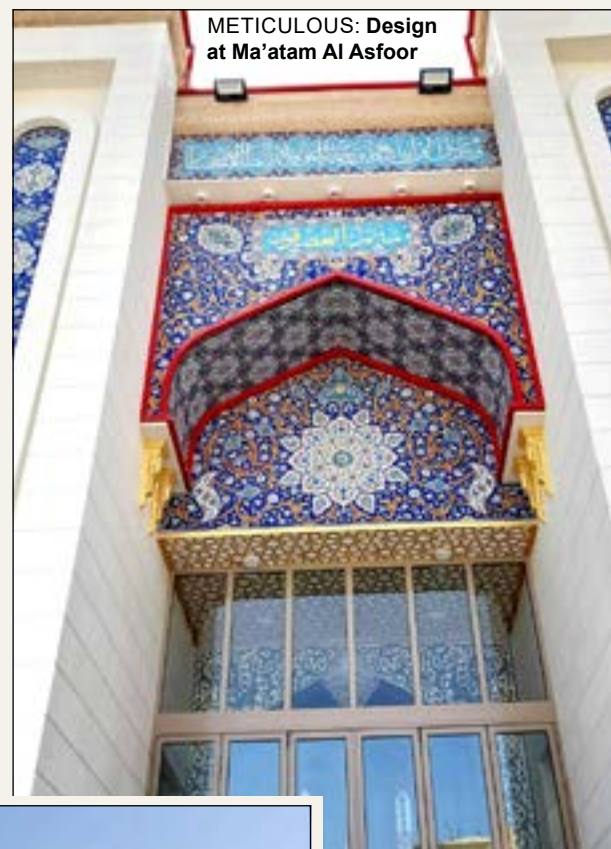
"I stood there admiring his work, and later, he just handed me the keys to the workshop and told me to open shop in the morning and clean up.

"From there, everything just happened to fall into place."

Khalil spent years honing his craft as a carpenter,



INTRICATE: A gypsum creation



METICULOUS: Design at Ma'atam Al Asfoor

than I did with carpentry, it felt so simple, so flexible and yet so elegant."

Khalil's handicraft gradually gained fame, designing artwork and pieces for the Bahrain National Museum, the Housing and Urban Planning Ministry, and, once he learned tilework, both indoor and outdoor décor for ma'atams.

He proudly states his work is '100 per cent Bahraini made'.

Even though he is still going strong, Khalil hopes to see a new generation of Bahrainis take up more handiwork.

"I will be more than happy to teach them," he said. Nobody knows our culture and tradition better than us Bahrainis.

"If you have the love of traditional handicraft and the desire to learn and grow and be creative, then I will take you in and teach you everything I know," he added.

eventually finding himself in workshops across the country. Although he loved woodwork, what really ended up capturing his curiosity and passion was working on traditional styles.

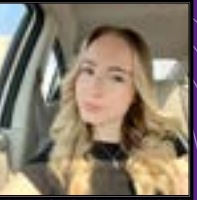
"I met a man named Ahmed Al Areifi in the late 70s, and he asked me to help him make indoor décor using gypsum for a shop," he said.

"I took to it much faster



# Leisure Scene

What's on guide by  
Julia Cassano



## BOLD FLAVOURS, GREAT VIBES



SCRUMPTIOUS: Desserts at the Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain corporate event

**T**HE Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain is set to host a series of stunning events that promise elegance, style, and unforgettable moments. Known for its impeccable service and luxurious settings, the hotel invites guests to experience beautifully curated gatherings.

Head down to Cantina Kahlo for a feast of bold, Mexican flavours and festive vibes. Savour an array of mouthwatering dishes, made with authentic ingredients, bursting with the vibrant tastes of Mexican cuisine.

It costs BD35 per person, inclusive of soft beverages and BD45 per person, with selected beverages.

It is available on Friday, from 1pm to 4pm.

■ Call 17586401 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com to reserve.

Treat yourself to an unforgettable evening with Plum's perfectly grilled Angus tomahawk steak, expertly paired

with a premium bottle of grape beverage. Experience this luxurious dining affair that is sure to delight your senses.

It costs BD69, on Tuesday from 7pm to 11pm.

■ Contact 17586414 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com to reserve.

Turn your Mondays into a Fajita Fiesta. Savour sizzling fajitas bursting with vibrant spices, paired perfectly with two handcrafted drinks.

Priced at BD29, it is available on Monday, from 7pm to 10pm.

■ Call 17586401 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com to reserve.

La Table Krug has reopened its doors, welcoming a new season of sensational flavours. Its exceptional a la carte menu, which features a selection of thoughtfully crafted dishes, will not disappoint.

It is available from Tuesday to Saturday, 7pm to 11pm.

■ For more information, call 17586452.

Choose the R...  
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or email Cater...  
ritzcarlton.com

### BRAIN-BUSTERS

**Q**UIZMASTER 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 is the full title of the fourth Bad Boy's movie?
- 2 Where would you find the Pensacola mountains?
- 3 Which 2006 post-apocalyptic novel from Max books is the follow-up to his 2003 book *The Zombie Survival Guide*?
- 4 Which American president was assassinated in the same year as the gunfight at the OK Corral?
- 5 What is a popular currency and the East wind in Ancient Greece?
- 6 In which 19th-

century novel would you find a girl named Weena who belongs to a hunted race of vegetarians known as Eloi?

7 What are the cubes of fried or toasted bread called?

- ANSWERS**
1. Bad Boys: Ride or Die
  2. Antarctica
  3. World War Z
  4. James Garfield
  5. Euros
  6. The Time Machine
  7. Crostons

### VARIETY: THE SPICE OF LIFE

**I**NTERCONTINENTAL Bahrain has curated a variety of culinary delights that will make for an unforgettable week.

Elevate your brunch experience at the Legendz SteakHouse Brunch Affair. The event features a range of food options, such as barbecue, mussels and seafood, and burrata and fresh cheese, along with refreshing beverages.

Available every Friday of this month, from noon to 4pm, the brunch promises guests a one-of-a-kind experience.

It costs BD28net inclusive of soft beverages, and BD38net with endless selected beverages. Children under six dine for free and those aged six to 12 can enjoy a 50 per cent discount.

Meanwhile, explore fresh marine treasures, ocean-inspired beverages and more at the Regency Tent's seafood night, The Hook, every Thursday. It costs BD24net with soft beverages and BD32, inclusive of unlimited selected beverages, from 6.30pm to 10.30pm.

■ For more information, call 36967701.



DIVERSE: A part of the seafood station at The Hook



### DINING WITH

BREATHTAKING: Views at Brasero Atlantico

**E**XPERIENCE a magical weekend, filled with delicious food and beverages, at the Sheraton Bahrain Hotel.

Set against the amazing Manama skyline, Brasero Atlántico Bahrain invites guests to indulge in a unique blend of Argentinian cuisine.

Talented chefs have masterfully prepared a selection of authentic dishes with traditional wood fire techniques, inspired by the rich heritage of the region.

Guests can savour beverages from a meticulously curated menu, where each sip pays homage to the South American country's vibrant culture.

Enjoy the lounge from 4pm to 2am and the restaurant from 7pm to 11pm.

■ For reservations, call 17517715, WhatsApp 38885482, or email reservations.brasero@sheraton.com



# Leisure Scene

Weekly Entertainment



**FIESTA: Sizzling fajitas**

itz-Carlton, Bahrain corporate dinner in a g. The hotel offers an age, specially curated with onal service and a refined impress.

information, call 17580000

ingConferenceService@

Foster collaboration and spark creativity with a skilfully planned team-building exercise. Gather your team together and experience this workshop that aims to provide a purpose-driven experience.

■ Call 17580000 or email [BAHRZCateringConferenceService@ritzcarlton.com](mailto:BAHRZCateringConferenceService@ritzcarlton.com) for bookings.



## WITH THE PERFECT VIEW

ántico

Get ready for a flavour-packed day at the Wild Brunch. Indulge in delicious food and sip on handcrafted beverages, while live entertainment electrifies the atmosphere. It costs BD36net per person for soft beverages and BD46net per person for selected beverages, on Friday from 12.30pm to 5pm.

Ladies can enjoy a special rate of BD23.

Indulge in a fabulous three-course special lunch menu at Wild, where each dish promises to take guests on the ultimate gastronomic adventure. Available from Sunday to Thursday, noon to 3pm, guests can relish flavours from around the globe.

It costs BD10.500net, inclusive of homemade iced tea.

■ For more information, WhatsApp 38885408.

Meanwhile, experience the delicious flavours of modern Persia

at the Golestan Persian Grill, where a delightful menu, featuring an array of authentic dishes, will make for an unforgettable experience.

It is open everyday for lunch from noon to 3pm and dinner from 7pm to 11pm, and on weekends from noon to 4pm and 7pm onwards.

■ For reservations, call 17533533 or WhatsApp 38885409.

Free yourself from stress and feel refreshed and radiant with a spa treatment.

Available throughout the month, from Sunday to Thursday, the package costs BD60 for 60 minutes of an express back-and-shoulder or a foot-and-leg massage with an express facial. A second package includes a body scrub with ginger, sugar and salt, as well as a relaxing full-body massage. It costs BD75 for 90 minutes.

■ For reservations, call 17517714 or WhatsApp 38885431.



**AESTHETIC: Beautiful sandwiches and bites at Bay View Lounge's tea experience**

## IT'S A TEA PARTY

**T**HE Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay invites guests to indulge in a world of flavour with its curated dining experiences this weekend.

From gourmet international cuisine to locally inspired dishes, the hotel's award-winning restaurants promise an unforgettable culinary journey in a luxurious setting.

Enjoy Bahrain's most extravagant tea experience at Bay View Lounge. Dig into savoury and sweet delicacies, classic tea sandwiches, freshly baked scones and more, all served on the beautiful terrace.

It is available everyday, from noon to 9pm.

It costs BD22 for regular tea and BD26 for royal tea, inclusive of sparkling apple juice.

Take your Friday plans up a notch with Bahrain Bay Kitchen's award-winning Friday Brunch. Enjoy an array of cuisines from around the world, accompanied by vibrant live entertainment.

Young guests can look forward to their own dedicated buffet and engaging entertainment.

It will take place tomorrow, from 1pm to 4pm. It costs BD35 inclusive of soft beverages and BD48 with a selected beverage package.



**SMALL BITES: Delicious tapas at Bay View Lounge**

Children under six years dine with the hotel's compliments, while children aged six to 12 enjoy 50 per cent savings.

Don't miss out on an authentic tapas experience at Bay View Lounge, where tastes and flavours will transport you to the Mediterranean.

Perfect for sharing, casual dining or pre-dinner bites, the selection promises not just an epic dining event, but an all-round gastronomic adventure.

Enjoy the experience with dishes such as patatas bravas, chicken croquettes with spicy tomato mayo, calamari and grilled octopus with creamy

potato and paprika oil.

It is available until August 2, from 11.30am to midnight.

Prices start from BD7.

Seafood enthusiasts can enjoy amazing Lebanese cuisine, served on the shores of Bahrain Bay, at Byblos.

Delight in refreshing crab and smoked salmon salad, scallop and risotto, while enjoying a beautiful ambience.

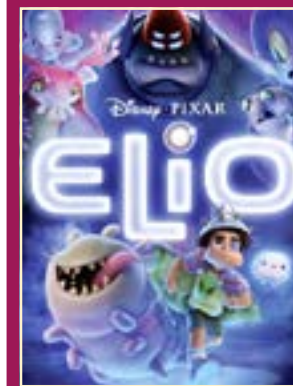
Available until June 30, from Tuesday to Sunday, 6pm to midnight, the offer costs BD52 for two people.

■ For more information, call 17115500 or 17115046.



**MOVIE TIME**

**H** EAD down to CINECO Seef to watch the latest English-language films being shown this weekend.



**ELIO (PG)**

Elio, a space fanatic with an active imagination, finds himself on a cosmic misadventure where he must form new bonds with alien lifeforms, navigate a crisis of intergalactic proportions and somehow discover who he is truly meant to be.

Actors: Yonas Kibreab, Zoe Saldaña, Brad Garrett

Timings: 10.30am, 12.15pm, 2.30pm, 4.45pm, 7pm, 9.15pm, 11.30pm

**28 YEARS LATER (18+)**

A group of survivors of the rage virus live on a small island. When one of the group leaves the island on a mission into the mainland, he discovers secrets, wonders and horrors that have mutated not only the infected but other survivors.

Actors: Jodie Comer, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Jack O'Connell

Timings: 11am, 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 9pm, 11.30pm

**SLEEPING DOGS (15+)**

In this gripping crime thriller, Russel Crowe stars as Roy Freeman, an ex-homicide detective with a fractured memory, forced to revisit a case he cannot remember. As a man's life hangs in the balance on death row, Freeman must piece together the brutal evidence from a decade-old murder investigation.

Actors: Russell Crowe, Karen Gillan, Marton Csokas

Timings: 12.15pm, 2.30pm, 4.45pm, 7pm, 9.15pm, 11.30pm

**DANGEROUS ANIMALS (18+)**

When Zephyr, a savvy and free-spirited surfer, is abducted by a shark-obsessed serial killer and held captive on his boat, she must figure out how to escape before he carries out a ritualistic feeding to the sharks below.

Actors: Jai Courtney, Hassie Harrison, Josh Heuston

Timings: 12.30pm, 4.45pm, 9pm

■ Check out GDNOnline's list of the best movies to watch this weekend - today - on Instagram.



# Pulse of Pop

AROUND THE WORLD IN MUSIC, TV, BOOKS AND MORE - BY RIMA ALHADDAD

ENGAGING: A scene from the film



## ROBOT GONE ROGUE

**SCI-FI horror film *M3GAN 2.0* is out now in theatres.**

It follows Gemma (Allison Williams), a roboticist at a high-tech toy company, who developed M3GAN (played by Amie Donald and voiced by Jenna Davis), a child-sized humanoid robot doll powered by artificial intelligence (AI) and designed to be an ultimate companion for children.

The prototype is 'paired' with Cady, Gemma's eight year-old niece, to cheer her up after she lost her parents in a car accident, but things take a turn after Cady develops an unhealthy emotional attachment to the AI

companion. M3GAN begins to operate independently and targets anything she deems a threat to Cady, resulting in an uncontrolled killing spree.

The sequel is set two years after M3GAN went rogue, leading to her being trapped in a harmless robotic doll by her creator. However, a defence contractor steals M3GAN's technology to create military robot AMELIA (autonomous military engagement logistics and infiltration Android), who attempts an AI takeover.

The new threat convinces Gemma to resurrect M3GAN with advanced upgrades to fight AMELIA.

In an interview, producer James Wan stated that the first film's success and the current quick advancements of AI were motivators to continue the franchise.

"It just felt like a relevant story for us to keep going, to keep continuing with it. And, obviously, M3GAN kind of gives us a fun vehicle to hang all these set pieces off and let her make social commentaries on our behalf in this fun, sassy way that could be enjoyable in a film," James said.

He added that the second film will not focus on the horror genre as much as the first, explaining that director Gerard Johnstone wanted to follow a different path with the new instalment.

## SIBLING SPAT

**ADULT fiction novel *The Accidental Favorite* by Fran Littlewood has hit the shelves.**

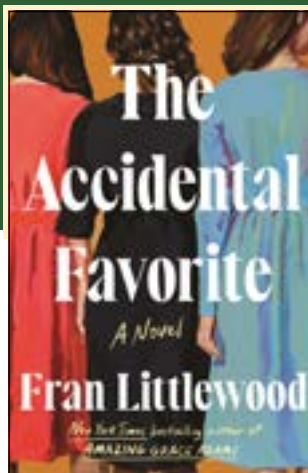
The story follows parents Vivienne and Patrick Fisher who have done an excellent job raising their daughters Alex, Nancy and Eva, who grew up to be women with stable and impressive careers, caring partners and sweet children.

However, during a weeklong celebration of Vivienne's 70th birthday in the English countryside, a freak accident causes Patrick to inadvertently reveal that he has a favourite daughter.

This causes decades-old, unresolved sibling rivalries to unmask, and reopens still tender wounds.

Prior to starting her career as an author, Fran worked as a business journalist, but eventually realised that it was not the right path for her, and the new publication marks her second novel since *The Amazing Grace Adams* (2023).

"When I tell you that I once had to phone my mum from



my desk at a pretty prestigious publication to ask her how to figure out a percentage sum, you'll understand that, emphatically, fiction writing suits me better," Fran said in an interview.

"I had to get my creative kicks crafting colourful intros to features about, say, pensions regulations for small businesses.

"I paused journalism when my three kids were small, and realised that writing fiction was all I wanted to do. I didn't want to regret never having tried — even if I didn't manage to get published, I could live with that. So, I signed up for a Creative Writing MA. There wasn't really a plan B, so very much 'phew!' that things turned out the way they have so far," she added.



FACE-OFF: The new season's poster

**THE third and final season of South Korean dystopian survival thriller television series *Squid Game* releases on Netflix tomorrow, June 27.**

Tackling themes of class disparity and capitalism, the show follows a set of contestants in deep financial hardship, who risk their lives to play a series of deadly children's games for the chance to win 45.6 billion won (around \$31 million).

The new season shows main protagonist Seong Gi-hun (Lee Jung-jae) and fellow players fight for survival in even deadlier games with dire consequences, aiming to defeat the Front Man (Lee Byung-hun) and end the deadly competition once and for all.

"The new season will focus on what Gi-hun can and will do after all his efforts fail," said director Hwang Dong-hyuk, calling back to season two, in which the main character attempted to rally his fellow competitors against the architects of the game until the Front Man, disguised as Player 001, crushed the uprising.

"Gi-hun is overwhelmed with a profound sense of defeat and remorse. In season three, we'll see how he returns to the game arena and faces the challenges ahead," he added.

## I AM WORTH IT!

*GulfWeekly's readers share their views on the topic 'how poor body image has a negative impact on mental health', creatively articulating how they overcame (or not!) the crippling pressure to 'look right'.*

Growing up, I looked in the mirror and saw no flaws. I engaged with my personality confidently; knowing I was skinny never bothered me.

But your first critics are often school bullies. Their harsh comments can kill your self-worth and societal pressure can affect your mental health, even later in life. Rather than taking criticism as a blow, I sought to learn from it. My self-worth mattered most.

Today, 'beauty' has become an obsession — botox, fillers, toned bodies... While using cosmetic advancements isn't wrong, overdoing them is and certainly shouldn't define one's accomplishment. I have tried to create a healthy relationship with my body.

Seek no external validation, but an 'innate' one from within, a habitual practice which makes me glow.

- Anju Kapoor

"Which dress, Grace?" her childhood bestie Shilpa asked, holding up two identical ones.

"The white one, of course," Grace said smiling.

"Just imagine it against the blue Maldivian waters."

Shilpa raised an eyebrow. "White shows everything. Black is safer," she paused, "for your body type."

Grace hesitated. "Black for the summer?"

"And get longer shorts," Shilpa added. "Your thighs are distracting."

Grace forced a laugh and quietly paid for the black dress.

"I think I'll head home," she said. "I feel a headache coming on. Not up for a full day out."

Shilpa scoffed. "God, you're so sensitive."

Grace got into the Uber and rode away in silence, watching the once sparkling blue of the Maldivian waters fade to dull gray in her mind.

- Veronica Selvarajan



Growing up, I was always called 'fat' or a 'tomboy' because of my 'broad shoulders' and 'hefty build'. God! How I hated those words. It is hard to remember if those comments led to me having a poor body image in the first place or if they only aggravated an existing insecurity. Either way, it affected me enough to starve myself - I would stuff food in my pocket and eat in the girl's washroom. Even mentally, I felt 'lesser than'; I was not even morbidly obese, just a few kilos overweight. This insecurity continued well into my 20s, when I did not think I could be attractive enough to a man - a hard thing to process at that age. However, watching videos of 'fat' but super stylish women on social media changed my perspective. I learned that all sizes could look beautiful. In fact, this mental shift helped me shed my extra kilos — with empathy. It took me 38 years to love myself - better late than never.

- Melissa Nazareth, *GulfWeekly* Editor



# MotoringWeekly

The top motoring and motorsport news

# Tarmac theatrics

**T**RY to imagine combining the visual spectacle of *Top Gun: Maverick*, a *Gladiator*-level musical score, the effortless charm of Brad Pitt, the racing passion of Lewis Hamilton, with the backing of Warner Brothers and Apple and a production with unparalleled access to every corner of F1. The end result is a visual masterpiece that manages to find a way of appealing to both an F1 newbie and the most seasoned of motorsport fans.

The film focuses on the struggling Apex Grand Prix team and its ambition to get back to the top of the sport. Pitt plays Sonny Hayes, an ex-driver whose career was ended by a racing incident back in 1993. He is brought out of retirement by Apex GP team boss (Javier Bardem) to revive fortunes at the team and perhaps teach a lesson or two to young teammate Joshua Pearce (Damson Idris).

For the regular F1 fan, the combination of the film's authenticity, together with the visual spectacle will not disappoint. Indeed, staying true to the sport was a key factor for the involvement of Lewis Hamilton as a producer and the endorsement of F1 and the FIA for the film. During filming,

Brad Pitt and Damson Idris learned to drive real cars, at real F1 venues, driving at speeds of up to 300km per hour. The cars themselves are F2 cars, modified by Mercedes to blend in seamlessly with the real F1 grid. The scenes you see at race weekend from Silverstone through to Abu Dhabi have all been shot during the actual race weekends, to the extent that during the filming periods, F1 effectively had 11 teams running. Even the smaller touches nod to the real life feeling of F1, with no better example than the cameo of Guenther Steiner and his inevitable fruity language. Add to that the familiar voices of David Croft and Martin Brundle on commentary to support narrative direction and explanations of the action for newer fans, with appearances from the entire 2023 grid (drivers and cars) and numerous other familiar faces from the world of F1, there is plenty for fans to get their teeth into. And that's before taking in the visual treat of the racing shots. Given the

amount of filming that was undertaken outside of races, the movie was able to capture new and unique camera shots which go well beyond what fans are used to on broadcast. F1 has always been an impressive visual feast on any normal race weekend, but the film takes the viewing pleasure and immersive experience to a whole new level. Add to that the musical genius of a score by Hans Zimmer and it's hard to not become totally spellbound by the action.

There is also plenty in there for new or even non-F1 fans. Whilst the authenticity necessitates the use of a fair amount of F1 jargon, the commentary, radio chatter and scripting do an excellent job to guide the viewer through the technical details. Brad Pitt is unsurprisingly cool, perhaps best described as a combination of an American version of James Hunt, with

## A visual masterpiece for new and seasoned fans: Review of *F1 The Movie*, brought to you by Bahrain International Circuit

By LAURENCE JONES



DRAMA: A scene from the movie



the driving style that would make Max Verstappen look timid in comparison. Idris as his teammate provides a cheeky young English vibe that sits well alongside Pitt's more roguish humour, whilst Javier Bardem as team boss Ruben adds significant weight to carry the story along, supported by the Irish

charm and cutting insight of Kerry Condon as the team's technical director.

Whilst the film does walk the careful line of trying to appeal the widest audience possible (and rightly so), there will be the inevitable clamour from the hardcore F1 crowd that the film has oversimplified the sport,

or that certain small details don't match real life (such as the team headquarters of Apex being filmed at McLaren). Others may say that the storyline isn't the most sophisticated of journeys. To claim any of that would miss the entire point of the film. If you want proper, true-to-life F1, watch

## F1 THE MOVIE

**DIRECTOR:** Joseph Kosinski

**CAST:** Brad Pitt, Damson Idris, Kerry Condon, Tobias Menzies, Javier Bardem

**GENRE:** Sport/Drama

**RATING:** 4.5 popcorns out of 5

RACER: Brad on the film's promotional poster

the Senna documentary (or just watch an F1 race), and if you want a weaving complex narrative, take on one of Brad Pitt's earlier efforts in *Seven*. This is unashamedly Hollywood; a true summer entertainment blockbuster and a visual masterpiece celebrating the pinnacle of motorsport. The efforts to remain true to life to F1 do more than enough to give this film credibility.

Most of all, the movie will undoubtedly bring in a new audience to F1, in the same way that *Formula 1: Drive to Survive* continues to achieve. Not only will it help the sport in its expansion efforts, given that anyone watching this around the world, young or old, cannot fail to be mesmerised by the spectacle of the sport. Given what Warner Brothers and Apple have put into the film for production, and the supporting efforts to promote this film, there is no doubt that this is another landmark moment for F1.

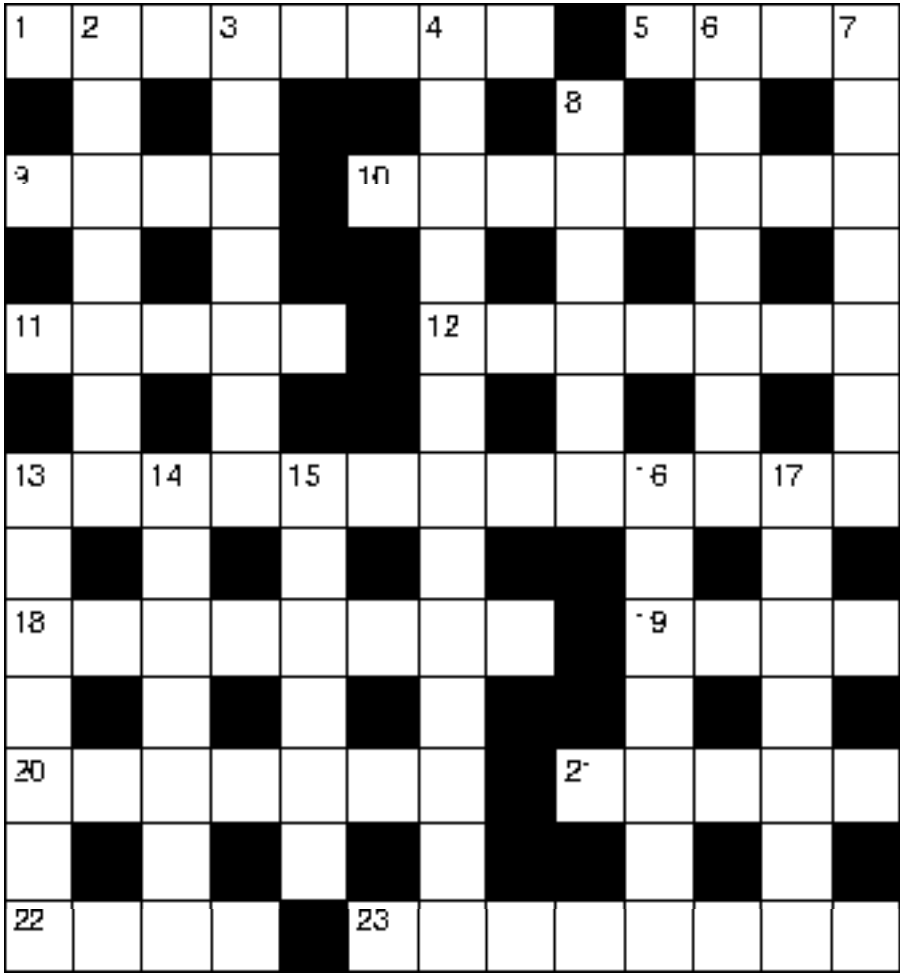
● *F1 The Movie* releases in Bahrain today, June 26. It's well worth a trip to the big screen.

# Time Out



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## crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

**ACROSS**

- 1. Captive (8)
- 5. Legend (4)
- 9. Blemish (4)
- 10. Endorsed (8)
- 11. Inflexible (5)
- 12. Curt (7)
- 13. Concentration (13)
- 18. Kingdom (8)
- 19. At that time (4)
- 20. Free (7)
- 21. Abuse (5)
- 22. Whirlpool (4)
- 23. Banner (8)

**DOWN**

- 2. Disturbance (7)
- 3. Fawning (7)
- 4. Institution (13)
- 6. Ancient (7)
- 7. Speech (7)
- 8. Decrease (6)
- 13. Duck (7)
- 14. Matted (7)
- 15. Regular (6)
- 16. Provoked (7)
- 17. Asylum (7)

### who, what, where, when

WHO ... was the first Bourbon King of France?  
WHAT ... element is represented by the symbol Rb?  
WHERE ... is the forest setting of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*?  
WHEN ... was Benjamin Franklin elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly?  
WHO ... wrote the classic gothic novel *Vathek*?  
WHAT ... is nitrous oxide more familiarly known as?  
WHERE ... is the Vinson Massif the highest mountain?  
WHEN ... did Oswald become king of Northumbria?

### just so

end end  
end end

WE'VE SPENT

bidbidbidbid  
fruit

LAUGH

## 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

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

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

darn tough sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

### Last Week's Leisure Solutions

**CROSSWORD BREAK:**

**Across:** 1 Death; 4 Pretend; 8 Soprano; 9 Amiss; 10 Open; 11 Allusion; 13 Brow; 14 Stun; 16 Rearmost; 17 True; 20 Brawn; 21 Enhance; 22 Entreat; 23 Sweet.

**Down:** 1 Dishonourable; 2 Ample; 3 Heal; 4 Poorly; 5 Evacuate; 6 Edition; 7 Disengagement; 12 Commence; 13 Blatant; 15 Ascent; 18 Range; 19 Thus.

**JUST SO:** The queen mother, World wide web, A mixed blessing, An open question

**WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN:** Ernest Hemingway; Chile; Belgium; 1970; Baudelaire; A fish; Ecuador; October.

Darn Tough Sudoku

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

Your work pad space ...