



VIRTUOZITY

THE FINEST THINGS IN LIFE

ISSUE 53 - DECEMBER/JANUARY 2019

ROAD TRIP

ON THE ROAD WITH DAVIDOFF

SNEAKERS, PIMPED

HOW CASUAL FOOTWEAR STEPPED INTO LUXURY

NIKKA'S PERFECT TIMING

JAPANESE WHISKY IN THE LIMELIGHT

A STAR IS BORN

LE HOYO RIO SECO LAUNCHES IN LEBANON



BRUCE WILLIS

Mellowing of a legend

PLUS: SOCIETY EVENTS | TRAVEL | FASHION | WATCHES | RESTAURANTS

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Excellence Exotic
Unique DELICATE Knowledge
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RESPECT Style MOMENTS Cherish Serenity
Welcome GREATNESS Light Flagship Innovation Wonderful
Relax Live PEACE TASTE
Power DESIGN

... when lighting a
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LA CASA DEL HABANO

CITY WALK DUBAI





Welcome

PUBLISHER

Brais Publishing House

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Natalie Glorney

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Natasha Lucic

CONTRIBUTORS

Bilal Shadani

Noel Ebdon

Tim Ansell

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Suhail Ali

FOR EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES

Email: editor@virtuozity.com

FOR ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

Email: publisher@virtuozity.com

*Tree ad, Level 5 Building,
President Elias Hraoui Avenue,
Tehwita, Beirut*

Email: virtuozity@treead.com

Tel: +961 1 611115

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2820-6509

Beirut - Lebanon

+9613 001970

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WE ARE INCREDIBLY EXCITED to announce that *Virtuozity* is the media partner for the Year of Zayed Concours event taking place this month. A new format of the Concours d'Elegance, designed specifically for the Dubai market, this exclusive event showcases the world's rarest classic cars and judges the very best classical and bespoke cars in the region.

In February, we will celebrate our 10th anniversary with issue 54. We are extremely proud to have reached such a milestone and would like to thank our partners Baqer Mohibi, the distributor of Habanos, as well as Davidoff, Swatch Group, Padron and Fuente, for the trust and support they have shown us over the years.

As the year comes to a close, I am reflecting on what has been an incredibly busy quarter. We have been fortunate to attend some of the cigar world's most exclusive events of the year, with the highlight being the worldwide launch of Le Hoyo Rio Seco in Beirut, which was a dazzling affair.

We organised an exclusive event in the sophisticated lounge of At.mosphere, Burj Khalifa to celebrate Davidoff's 50th anniversary and continued the Davidoff 50th celebrations with a superb evening of fine cigars and great food at the Davidoff Chef's Edition at Flair No.5 at Ritz-Carlton in DIFC. Turn to page 38 to discover more about the highlights of these special evenings.

American action man Bruce Willis is our cover story for this edition. A lover of cigars, this man took Hollywood by storm in the '80s and is now enjoying his fourth decade of making movies. As an actor, producer, singer and family man, we respect and salute that this incredibly successful gent makes time to enjoy a pastime we have such affection for. Read more about his fascinating life on page 32.

If you're dreaming of a festive celebration beachside, why not take a look at our feature on the new Anantara resort in Vietnam, a stunning hideaway in Southern Vietnam that simply took our breath away. There are plenty of other locations for holiday inspiration in our travel section from page 70.

We also bring you our curated selection of the latest restaurants and bars and report from the most exclusive and stylish events of the season. Finally, we take the Maserati Levante for a spin and experience the Infiniti G70's horsepower for this edition. Read Noel Ebdon's reviews of these astounding cars in The Binder segment.

Whatever your plans for the holidays, the *Virtuozity* team and I wish you a very happy festive season and a prosperous new year.

Very best wishes,

Patrick Brais

Publisher

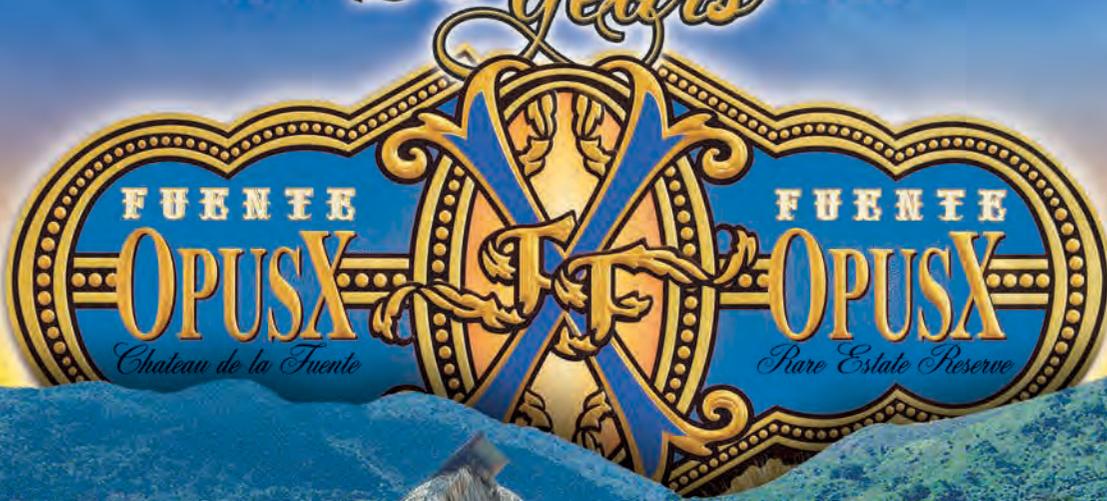
publisher@virtuozity.com

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Chateau de la Fuente

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in the world*

...we will never rush the hands of time...



ARTURO FUENTE

*The Reigning Family Of Premium Cigars
Since 1912*

Birthplace of a Dream

Contents

BOUTIQUE

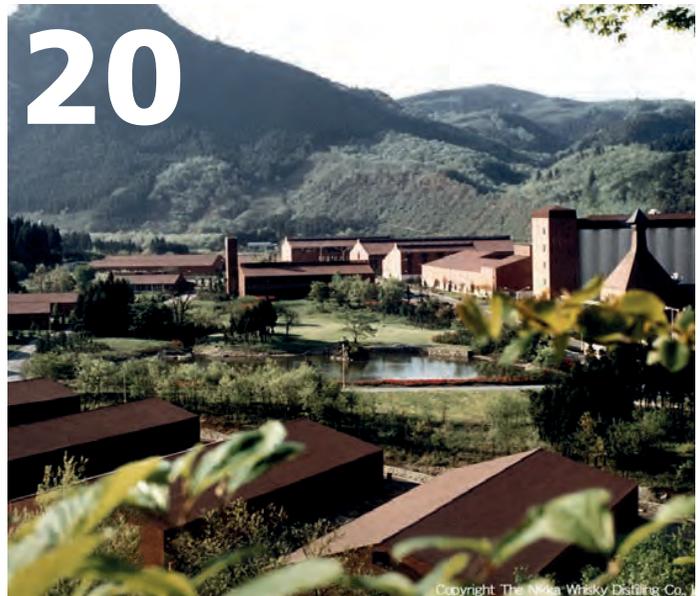
- 10 Best of the best**
The finest trinkets, gewgaws, accoutrements and finery that every man should own.

HANDMADE

- 20 In the Nikka time**
Why you need to be drinking this exceptional whisky from Japan.
- 24 Mid-century flights of fancy**
MB&F has created a watch whose curves are seriously lust-worthy.
- 28 Sneakers, pimped**
It's no news that sports shoes are now sartorial, but how did it happen? *Virtuozity* delves into the history of the most casual footwear.
- 32 Where there's Willis, there's a way**
Natalie Glorney profiles the actor and entrepreneur who is partial to a top-notch stogie.

THE HUMIDOR

- 40 In fine Fuente**
Collectors take note of this stunning collaboration between Stefano Ricci and Arturo Fuente.
- 42 Le Hoyo Rio Seco launches in Lebanon**
Hoyo de Monterrey welcomed 650 guests to a VIP global launch.
- 46 One for the road...**
The Davidoff anniversary roadshow makes a stop at Fidel Cigars in Beirut.
- 48 VIPs at Valuzio**
Davidoff's Lebanon roadshow continues in Dbayeh.
- 50 Presidential welcome**
S.T. Dupont's President hosts a cigar evening in Dubai.
- 54 The right At.mosphere**
Davidoff marks 50 years with a party at Burj Khalifa.
- 58 Club Limitada**
Members sample the new Chef's Edition 50th Anniversary cigar.
- 62 24 hours of elegance**
Belgrade hosted the eighth edition of the finest classic car and culture of excellence event.
- 66 La Casa del Habano**
The famous cigar boutique opens in Citywalk.



Davidoff

50

1968 - 2018

Davidoff



THE CHEFS EDITION

WHEN KITCHEN PIONEERS MEET CIGAR VISIONARIES

#davidoff50



THE RESULT OF THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN FIVE OF THE MOST INNOVATIVE CHEFS
FROM AROUND THE WORLD AND OUR MASTER BLENDEES IS A REVELATION.

IN FACT, IF ONLY CIGARS COULD EARN THEM, THE DAVIDOFF 50TH ANNIVERSARY CHEFS EDITION
WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY THREE STARS.

davidoff.com

Contents

THE BINDER

- 72 Travel notes**
Where to satisfy your wanderlust this winter.
- 76 Good morning, Vietnam**
Quy Nhon Villas is Anantara's latest all-villa resort.
- 78 It's Rwandaful**
A tea plantation is the setting for this stunning jungle escape by One & Only Resorts.
- 80 Find your Shangri-La**
The Qaryat al Beri offers an abundance of opportunities for relaxation and pleasure.
- 82 Arabian nights**
Jumeirah Al Naseem has become a food lover's destination, as well as a pinnacle of luxury in Dubai.
- 84 Tasting notes**
Food lovers, here's our round-up of top tables and dining highlights.
- 88 Motoring news**
Thinking of buying a new car? Here's a few of our most desired motors.
- 90 And then there was Genesis**
The luxury division of Hyundai is giving others a run for their money with the G70.
- 92 Big mission**
Ford continues to affirm its mastery of scale with the latest Expedition.
- 94 No horsing around**
The Maserati Levante puts the Italian car marque into the lead.
- 96 He'll be back**
Arnold Schwarzenegger loves acting, politics and a damn fine stogie.



Davidoff

50

1968 - 2018

Davidoff

GIFT SELECTION
9 PREMIUM CIGARS

HECHO A MANO

DISCOVER GIFTS FROM THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE WORLD

OUR GIFT TO THE WORLD OF THE CIGAR AFICIONADO ARE BLENDS WHICH DON'T
RECOGNISE HORIZONS ▪ BLENDS TO SURPRISE AND DELIGHT THOSE WHO
LOVE CIGARS ▪ THEY WILL BE OPENING UP A WHOLE NEW WORLD
OF TASTES WITH EVERY BOX THEY OPEN ▪

#davidoff50

Davidoff
CIGARS

TIME BEAUTIFULLY FILLED

Boutique

Virtuozity's lifestyle curators hand-pick the finest accessories, trinkets and indulgences with which to elevate your style and spirit

The chronograph that never sleeps

THE NEW DATOGRAPH UP/DOWN Lumen exudes style and functionality with a semi-transparent dial and luminous displays. The fourth in the Lumen model series by A. Lange & Söhne, this timepiece has a characteristic outside-date display in the framed double aperture. Its baseline is defined by the two subsidiary dials for the seconds and the precisely jumping minute counter.

The hour and minute hands are filled with a luminous compound that causes all displays to glow in the dark and the chronograph sweep seconds hand is fully coated with the compound. The seconds hand and minute counter in blued steel revolve above subsidiary dials that are also nocti-lucent. Composed of two separate display elements, the luminous outside date is designed to glow immediately after the midnight switching sequence. A special coating on the semi-transparent sapphire-crystal dial filters out most of the visible light, but not that part of the UV spectrum which is needed to charge the luminous pigments with light energy. The darker the surrounding, the more clearly the displays contrast against the dark background.

The sapphire-crystal case exposes the impressive beauty of the lavishly finished 454-part manually wound calibre L951.7. Lange's proprietary cam-poised balance wheel, paired with a freely oscillating Lange hairspring, beats at a frequency of 18,000 semi-oscillations per hour (2.5 hertz). In combination with the 300-marker minute scale, this allows time measurements with a resolution of one-fifth of a second. It is worn on a black alligator leather strap with a platinum prong buckle.

The DATOGRAPH UP/DOWN Lumen is limited to 200 pieces and is presented in a 41-millimetre platinum case.

alange-soehne.com



Shades of innovation

THE BALANCE BETWEEN TRADITION and innovation sets the tone for Brioni's Fall/Winter 2018 eyewear collection. Comfort, functionality and flawless quality come together to enhance the House's vision of masculine elegance with an eccentric twist that amplifies

the exclusive appeal of these classic yet extremely distinctive styles.

The House's ready-to-wear collection, centered around the reinterpretation of the essential pieces of a man's wardrobe, gives an edgy spin to timeless and iconic shapes. brioni.com



Limited-edition loafers by Berluti

TO CELEBRATE THE LAUNCH of its latest Dubai Mall boutique, Berluti unveils a limited-edition design of the Lorenzo loafer, with only 50 pieces available. The Dubai Mall exclusive style flaunts a unique embossed sole that reads Dubai Mall Limited Edition. berluti.com

Scent of sophistication

CUIR CELESTE IS INSPIRED by the vintage B3 bomber jacket worn by French photographer Mathieu César. EX NIHILO and perfumer Quentin Bisch have created a scent that evokes sophistication. It mixes leather and woody notes with ambrette, violet leaves, patchouli and musk. ex-nihilo-paris.com





Revised urban repertoire

INDIVIDUALITY AND FREEDOM ARE key to Valentino Men's Fall/Winter 2018 collection. With bursts of colour and hints of green and purple hues throughout the collection, each outfit creates a new ordinary. A revised urban repertoire sees the tracksuit as the new suit, the blouse as a base and the coat as a cover. A range of accessories are available to complement the new lines. valentino.com

A masculine reminder of mortality

BELL & ROSS' INFAMOUS Skull line is an iconic symbol of the Swiss watch company. The latest BR 01 Laughing Skull timepiece goes one step further with an extraordinary automaton movement which allows the mouth of the skull to move up and down as the watch is wound, giving it the illusion of laughter.

Paying tribute to the military personnel who use the skull symbol as a constant reminder of their own vulnerability, the diamond framed new timepiece conceals a powerful character. The skull's mandible is animated during winding. To create it, the brand developed the BR-CAL.206: a calibre entirely produced in-house by the manufacture that is also skull-shaped, so that the mechanism fits the case like a glove.

In another notable first for Bell & Ross, the Laughing Skull uses automata to bring the dial to life. These autonomous mechanisms, which feature an animated display, appeared in Europe in the 14th century at the same time as mechanical clocks. The sword-shaped hands are similar to those on the earlier Skull collections, but on this model they are skeletonized and coated in SuperLuminova.

The 46mm case is decorated with a "Clous de Paris" finish. This type of guilloché pattern requires highly specialised machining. Produced in a limited edition of just 500 pieces, this model will appeal particularly to collectors of Haute Horlogerie watches.

bellross.com



Bags of style

DUNHILL PRESENTS A COLLECTION of bags for gentlemen in its sophisticated contemporary AW18 collection. Developed under the creative direction of Mark Weston, each item oozes luxury and style. dunhill.com



A partnership of design excellence

THE OTTANSEI TOURBILLON IS THE latest creation born of an ardent partnership between luxury Swiss watchmaker Bovet and Pininfarina, the Italian automotive design company. The exceptional timepiece boasts three dimensional decoration in the main plate and can be wound in half the usual time without increasing the torque of the winding mechanism, thanks to the spherical differential halves.

The tourbillon's architecture and design increase both the piece's accuracy and transparency, since its attachments are practically invisible.

Bovet is offering an exceptional edition of this timepiece in platinum, limited to just 10 of the 86 movements manufactured.

bovet.com





Aesop's flagship store opening

AESOP'S INAUGURAL SIGNATURE STORE in the UAE is now open in The Dubai Mall. The store design exploits curvilinear forms and a utilitarian spatial arrangement to effect an understated yet ultramodern appeal. Three small zones have been created with the most intimate of these spaces being an alcove at the rear of the

store, offering a secluded space for consultations. With the new store opening, Aesop introduces the Dubai Gift Kit, an exclusive travel-size kit including products for hair, body and oral care, presented in an elegant black microfibre amenity case.

aesop.com

Moser creates a watch exclusively for Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons



PAYING TRIBUTE TO ITS long-standing partnership with Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons, H. Moser & Cie. has redesigned its Endeavour Flying Hours to feature a planetary display. The cosmic green dial evokes the Northern Lights, illuminating a steel case. The limited edition features unique Hindi hour and minute numerals. The dial has planetary gears mounted on star wheels. In the centre, the main disc displays the minutes on a 240° sector; three smaller discs bearing the hour numerals are arranged around it. Each disc rotates on its own axis, revealing the hour in a display inspired by the original planetary systems. To enhance the mechanism's legibility, the current hour numeral appears in white. seddiqi.com

Nature's fragrance

BOTTEGA VENETA'S IMMENSELY POPULAR Parco Palladiano range has three new additions with the introduction of X Olivo, XI Castagno and XII Quercia. Collectively known as the Centenarian Woods fragrances, the scents pay tribute to three of nature's most enduring species: the Olive, the Oak, and the Chestnut tree. The three strikingly different compositions explore the personalities of each venerable tree, and represent the continued Bottega Veneta tradition of the

Art of Collaboration with world-renowned perfumers Amandine Marie, Alexis Dadier, Sophie Labbé, and Quentin Bisch. Olivo is a woody green composition that is strong and charismatic, Castagno has a soft and woody aroma with green and balsamic notes, while Quercia represents the intense energy of the oak tree with a rare oak note.

bottegabeneta.com



Feminine beauty redefined

Christophe Claret refines the ladies Margot timepiece with a velvet touch and dark blue mother of pearl dial set with diamonds. Three pear-shaped diamonds indicating 3, 6 and 9 o'clock adorn the Margot Velours and 12 petals in titanium and satin-brushed white lacquer embrace a natural pink sapphire pistil, swept over by a pair of blue-tipped stainless steel hands delicately rounded by hand. The strap appears clothed in velvet-touch blue alligator leather. The winding crown is cleverly concealed on the back of the top lugs, while the centre of the inter-horn space is adorned with three rows of four diamonds. christopheclaret.com



Timeless classics

Santoni represent timeless elegance again with its latest line. The collection highlights the values of the Italian luxury house; craftsmanship, a quest for enduring elegance and style that goes beyond fashion. Tradition fuels progress, without nostalgia. The colour palette of black, brown and green is classic and timeless. Materials are exquisite to the touch, with soft suede, elk, deer, micro print calf and reptile prints.

santonishoes.com



Travel on trend

LIFE ON THE GO becomes easy and stylish with Montblanc's latest selection of travel accessories. With spacious and well-organised interiors, intuitive features and innovative fabrics, Montblanc travel essentials combine luxury with practicality, perfect for those who are unwilling to compromise on style. montblanc.com

A very British kind of partnership



TWO OF BRITAIN'S MOST revered brands have collaborated to produce a limited edition, strikingly beautiful luxury car. Aston Martin, the renowned automobile company, and Hackett London, the iconic British menswear brand, have created the limited edition Hackett Aston Martin Q Rapide S.

The Q Rapide S by Hackett combines sensational sports car performance with the essence of Hackett's key brand values in one compelling form and is one of the highest specs ever built by Aston Martin. The specification has been designed exclusively by Hackett Chairman, Jeremy Hackett in collaboration with Chief Creative Officer of Aston Martin, Marek Reichman and includes the brand's unique character in a blend of sumptuous luxury, refinement and convenience. The car's Mako Blue exterior, Union Jack Aston Martin wings

and 3D minted polo player side badges embody Hackett's identifying values.

Interior details reflect Hackett's tailoring expertise with the seats and car accessories covered with a Prince of Wales check supplied by renowned cloth mill Fox Brothers and Co. Inside the glove box, door pockets, cup holders and sun visor is a blue and white striped material, similar to that of a traditional suit lining. With no attention to detail spared, Hackett's blue colourway is highlighted through the carpets and the head rests.

With every car purchase, Hackett are creating a bespoke suit that mirrors the car interiors; a Prince of Wales check cloth from Fox Brothers and Co. with a blue and white stripe lining. An exclusive luxury accessories range will also launch in line with the car. Key pieces include a large holdall, small 24 hour holdall, travel

umbrella, cufflinks, car blankets and made-to-measure driving gloves.

astonmartin.com; hackett.com



Smartphones are getting smarter



HUAWEI'S MATE 20 PRO has a timely launch date just in time for the festive period. This smart phone captures wider angles with its 40MP Leica ultra-wide angle lens. Reverse charging capabilities ensure you can enjoy longer battery life, a technological first, and the camera also features a 'macrography' option with a super macro feature to capture even the tiniest details. The HiVision feature allows you to point your camera at an object and instantly get more information about it, from recognising prominent landmarks to store shopping, it's sure to be a useful addition. Available at Huawei stores, retail stores and online.

huawei.com

The essence of Italian masculinity

UOMO SIGNATURE IS THE latest fragrance from Italian luxury goods brand Salvatore Ferragamo. The third fragrance from the UOMO collection reaffirms the strong personality of an audacious and ambitious man in unmistakably timeless style. The scent opens with the freshness of Italian citrus evoking the wild Calabrian lands, while grapefruit and mandarin essences are roused by the dynamism of pink pepper. The heart of the fragrance is woody, shaped by sophisticated cypress and the fierceness of cardamom and cinnamon. Deep and dark notes of Tonka bean, coffee, patchouli and leather blend to create the essence of Italian masculinity. Presented in a sophisticated matte black finish, the new scent is available now.



ferragamo.com

Carbon takes centre stage at TAG Heuer

TAG HEUER'S CARRERA LINE boasts three new models, created with the rare, lightweight material carbon. These three new carbon timepieces blend fashion with function and underscore TAG Heuer's superior status in the world of avant-garde watchmaking. The Carrera Carbon Tourbillon Phantom is named after the deep black colour of the mechanical components at its heart. Fitted with an in-house Calibre Heuer 02T movement, this 45mm tourbillon has a dark and daring appearance with black gold-plated and black PVD-covered parts, and a black opaline dial. The titanium case is coated in black PVD and the fixed bezel is made of carbon, as are the lugs. Presented on a matt black leather strap with a rubber inner lining, the TAG Heuer Carrera Carbon Heuer 02T Phantom is limited to only 500 pieces.



tagheuer.com

Winter warmers

THE SILHOUETTE IS SHARP yet soft in Ermenegildo Zegna's winter pieces collection. Geometric necklines and the carved yet curved lapels characterise the upper part of the body. The new 'one 1/2 breasted' construction is halfway between single and double breasted, and is used for jackets as well as coats. Traditional categories are mixed up and reshuffled. The duvet takes the form of a wool anorak, knitwear doubles as outerwear, while



matching blousons and trousers are a rapid substitute for the suit.

ermenegildozegna.com



Flying high

Horological Machine N°9 'Flow' is the newest machine from MB&F and is inspired by the dynamic profiles of automotive and aviation mid-century design. Reminiscent of a jet engine, a highly complex titanium case in alternating polished and satin finishes encloses an equally complex manual winding movement, developed fully in house. Independent twin balance wheels beat at a leisurely 2.5Hz (18,000bph) on each flank of Horological Machine N°9, visible under elongated domes of sapphire crystal. A third pane of sapphire crystal on the central body reveals the gearbox of the HM9 engine: a planetary differential that averages the output of both balance wheels to provide one stable reading of the time.



HANDMADE

Bespoke, crafted, rare



Journey of distinction

A profound appreciation for nuances of style and taste honed during a life of immersive travel is the foundation for **Didier Ghorbanzadeh's** mastery of whisky. **Nikka's** brand ambassador talks to **Patrick Brais** about the Japanese whisky preferred by the world's most discerning connoisseurs

It's fitting that the brand manager for Nikka bears such international credentials; its founder was himself an inveterate voyager.

"I NEVER WANTED TO just visit places, I always wanted to live there," says Didier Ghorbanzadeh. Born in France, the Nikka brand manager grew up between France and the United States. A transatlantic childhood sowed the early seeds of a desire to explore myriad cultures and when an opportunity to teach English in Japan presented itself, he jumped at the chance.

"I was placed in a city just north of Tokyo, called Takasaki, in the centre of Japan. They call it the countryside of Japan, but 300,000 people live there; a small city."

It was here that his baptism into the world of Japanese wine and spirits began. From entry-level blends, Ghorbanzadeh was introduced to more exclusive single malts and began purchasing them himself when his teacher's salary would permit this pleasurable indulgence.

"When I came back to France, I undertook a Masters in Wine study, travelling all around the world to visit vineyards. I worked in the wine business in New York and Germany and then went back to France and was hired as a Nikka Whiskey Brand Manager by La Maison Du Whiskey, one of France's biggest specialists in the distribution of rare whisky."

It's rather fitting that the brand manager for Nikka bears such international credentials; the brand's founder was himself an inveterate voyager. Masataka Taketsuru travelled to Scotland from Japan in 1918 to learn the business of distilling whisky first-hand. Taketsuru became the first Japanese man to learn how to make whisky. He enrolled at the University of Glasgow, took chemistry courses and then apprenticed at three Scotch distilleries. The young and passionate man was fortunate to learn first-hand from craftsmen and have practical training in master blending. Two notebooks filled with every detail later became Japan's very first guide to whisky production.

Taketsuru worked with Suntory for a decade before striking out on his own,



La Maison Du Whisky is a major supplier of Nikka Whisky around the world. Below: The Nikka distillery in Japan's Miyagikyo.

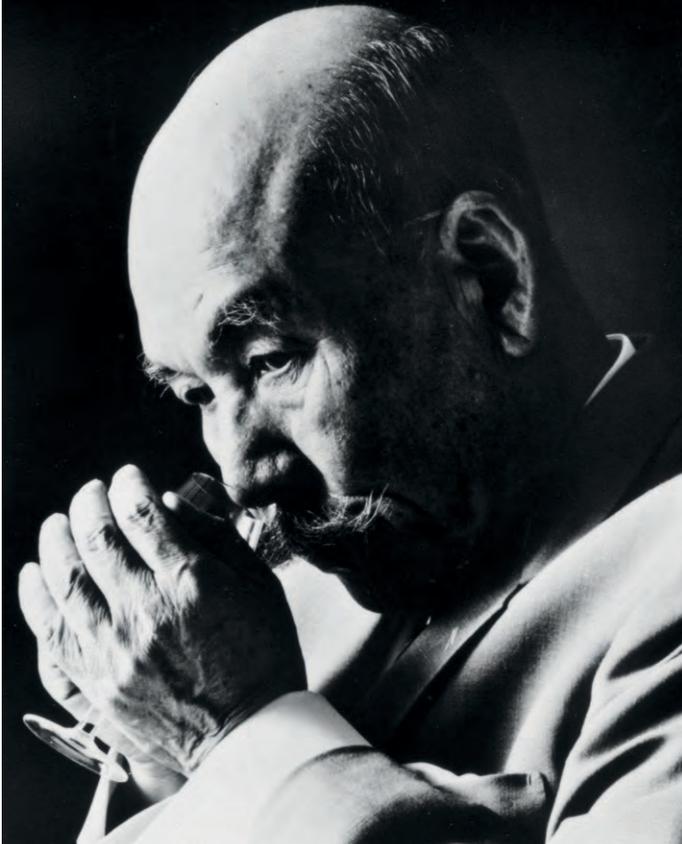
In 2002 a Japanese whisky won a Best of the Best, the first time that a non-Scottish whisky had won the prize.



opening his first distillery in Yoichi in 1934, whose climate somewhat mirrored that of Scotland, making it, in Masataka's eyes, a likely candidate for successful whisky production. A second distillery, Miyagikyo, followed in 1969; both are located in the north of Japan and remain the two most northernmost distilleries in the country.

"Nikka became La Maison Du Whisky's biggest brand since we started with it in 2001, at a time when many people didn't really know about Japanese whisky outside of Japan. In 2002 a Japanese whisky won a Best of the Best, the first time that a non-Scottish whisky had won the prize. The world took notice."

Nikka's portfolio includes Yoichi Single Malt, a smoky, peaty whisky that delivers a hint of smokiness originating from the traditional direct coal-fired distillation as well as a briny hint delivered by the sea breeze during the aging process. The single malt produced at Miyagikyo is more elegantly



fruity, with a strong Sherry cask influence. Nikka also produces a range of blended malts, and one of these has regularly been ranked best in the world, most recently at the World Whisky Awards 2018.

"It is a significant achievement that Taketsuru Pure Malt 17 years old has been awarded the World Best Blended Malt for the fourth time," says Nikka Whisky's chief blender, Tadashi Sakuma. "This is also the eighth award won by Taketsuru, our signature brand which was named after the founder. We feel energised to keep on progressing and providing connoisseurs around the world with more excitement."

While its whisky credentials are safely assured, Nikka has also steadily been asserting itself as a pre-eminent producer of other spirits, recently entering the premium gin and vodka market (if in Dubai, you may even find its gin amongst the global selection hand-curated aboard the QE2).

"Nikka always made gin and vodka for their local market, using a more industrial still. It was called Wilkinson's," says Ghorbanzadeh. "They use the coffee stills that they used for the whisky, using the continuous distillation system usually seen in single malts. These column stills

were imported in the 1960s from Scotland and so they are old and not as efficient as the new ones that make almost tasteless vodka, these keep a bit of the character. It's actually quite interesting to compare the coffee grain and coffee malt because they're both made in the same still, with the same ageing but the only difference is the raw material."

So much so, that its Nikka Coffee Vodka was awarded the top trophy at the International Spirits Challenge 2018; it's nice to imagine industry feathers were as ruffled then as they have been in decades past when Chinese wines beat the French in blind taste tests, or when Japanese whiskies first came to Western attention and the rule book was ripped up. The truth is however, that Nikka has become a connoisseurs' brand to be reckoned with, whispered on the lips of the world's most sophisticated aesthetes of taste and style, men whose world travels have imparted to them a curated appreciation for only the very best.

Masataka's legacy, following his death in 1979, continues to delight palates not just in Japan but around the world, with a collection of award-winning

single malts, blends as well as its high-end gin and vodka. With global sales of whisky continuing to do a brisk trade, Ghorbanzadeh is keen to bring the Nikka message to a new generation of consumers – while reminding the older one that Nikka offers a richer whisky experience that puts it squarely in the category of premium – so much so that demand threatens to overtake Nikka's ability to supply. And that's not because Nikka – Japan's second biggest distiller - doesn't make much whisky. Rather, as with any crafted item in the high luxury sphere, a product that takes time may not always be able to keep up with global demand.

"There's a current shortage of Japanese aged whisky, which is in part due to the Japanese whisky market dipping in the 1980s and production slowing. Because of the shortage of whisky, everything is under allocation, so supply is limited," notes Ghorbanzadeh.

Those aged bottles are more desirable than ever and with Japanese whisky continuing to garner awards around the world, it may behave whisky aficionados to waste not a moment in securing their own rare and exclusive bottle.



HANDMADE



GO WITH THE FLOW

The golden age of aviation finds a futuristic horological expression in the Horological Machine No.9 'Flow', writes Bilal Shadani

THE WRIGHT BROTHERS WERE the dreamers that led mankind into the age of aviation, a time where man would no longer be restrained by the forces of gravity and his ill-suited form for high altitude flight. Indeed, man would now be able to traverse the clouds freely and with greater ease with each successive generation. At first restricted to the old style bi-planes of yesteryear, aerodynamic design began to take focus on aesthetics, coming from the boxy, carriage-like shapes of previous decades and melting into something more streamlined. No more would the focus be on showing the mechanical functioning of automotive machines, but instead be on the sleek, self-contained shell housing its parts and the ways it could be expressed.

It would only make sense that this same sense of discovery would translate into men's accessories, and what better accessory epitomizes the purity of aerodynamic experimentation than the latest horological machine No. 9 'Flow' unveiled by venerated horological creators, MB&F?

But what is the MB&F 'Flow', exactly? A spaceship? A futuristic race car? Perhaps a jet plane? Depending on your viewpoint, it could be just one or even all of them. As explained by Maximilian Büsser himself, "when the first sketches were shown, our production partners all agreed: it is impossible to achieve."

The HM9 'Flow' can be best described as a synthesis of the aerodynamic fluidity of the 40s' and 50s', a time when aesthetics was the real source of design.

The result of three years of development, the HM9 engine was created entirely in-house, with the accumulated experience that came with MB&F's 13 years in existence (as of 2018) and previous 14 different movements.

Employing the use of a vertical time display, it allows the wearer consult the time without having to raise their hand, though of particular innovation is how the HM9 specifically necessitated the invention of an original three-dimensional gasket for water resistance which runs along the whole case, including the dial frame. Why make it easy



The elegant curves of this time-keeper are beautifully emphasized by the large alternating widths of satin finish and slim bands of mirror polish finish.

when you can do complicated? Max admits that one out of two cases is rejected to meet the drastic criteria required of his creations. But what a case it is!

Reflecting the imagination of its creator, once the HM9 is in hand, all angles must be examined in close detail. The Streamliner inspiration is plain to see. The profiled fuselage of a plane cannot be missed. The two nacelles on the side force the image of a space rocket or a spaceship in the viewer's mind. The sleek lines of a race car with a central cockpit are also noticeable. The vertical dial inserted in its jet reactor provides the final touch depending on the edition selected - the Air Edition comes with a typical pilot's watch dial (with a triangle at 12 o'clock and propeller-shaped hands) powered by a dark NAC-coated movement while the

Road Edition features a rose gold-plated movement and a dial reminiscent of vintage dashboard speedometers.

Because, after all, the essence of aerodynamic design is always choice, choice, choice!

The elegant curves of this time-keeper are beautifully emphasized by the large alternating widths of satin finish and slim bands of mirror polish finish. The light reflects on the case intensifying the angles and creating a movement of extraordinary fluidity. The loupe effect enables admiration of the delicate finishing of the wheels, the plates, and the bridges closely. It also adds to the roundness of this horological spaceship. At the back of the fuselage, the crown is deeply fluted providing ease of use as well as an aesthetic coherence to the whole.



HANDMADE



No fewer than five sapphire crystals offer multiple views of the movement inside.



"This is the first creation where I was adamant I would not let the engineering modify the original concept."

Its three-piece construction features no fewer than five sapphire crystals, offering multiple views of the movement inside. Two satin-finished air scoops are mounted alongside the pods containing the oscillating balance wheels operating at 18,000 vibrations per hour, with the scoops evoking the raised vents that allow continuous airflow to high-performance motor engines. These are held under mirror-polished curved bridges reminiscent of earlier MB&F Legacy Machines.

In the centre, a differential averages the rate of the two balance wheels. In order to display the time vertically, data is transmitted to the hands through a conical wheel which can be seen at the back of

the central sapphire cockpit. A single barrel offers 45 hours of power reserve to this manually wound caliber.

Overall, the movement comprises 301 parts, which are all finished with the greatest attention to detail, as is the MB&F creed.

This new MB&F horological creation - though imposing with its 57mm x 47mm x 23mm dimensions - is surprisingly wearable thanks to the lightness of titanium and the curvaceous case, worn on a hand-stitched calf leather strap secured with a titanium folding buckle.

Looking back on their creations, it isn't a coincidence that the HM9 creation is inspired by the different forms of automotive

transport, as most of their creations have drawn inspiration from automation in some form or another. The HM4 Thunderbolt, sporting two large gauges and the same pilot's watch dial as the Air edition of the MH9, is described by MB&F as "the perfect pilot's watch". HM8, the Can-Am, takes its inspiration from the Canadian-American Challenge Cup lasting between the mid 60's to early 80's; the frame found on some cars in the Can-Am meant to protect the driver in case the car rolls over is referenced by the MB&F HM8 Can-Am's titanium "roll bars." The HM6 Alien Nation, a variant of the HM6 Space Pirate, adds small, specially crafted extra-terrestrial beings to the insides of the machine to immediately evoke the image of a spaceship being piloted through the cosmos and landing upon the wrist of its lucky owner.

Speaking about the challenge of creating something as distinct as the HM9, Max said "This is the first creation where I was adamant I would not let the engineering modify the original concept. We therefore had to work even more than usual over the three years of R&D engineering to get this Machine to life. HM9 took four years to come to life but actually it took twelve years. If we had not previously cut our teeth four years on developing and perfecting the double flying balance wheel movement on the Legacy Machine 2 and eight years of creating insane cases like the HM4 Thunderbolt and HM6 Space Pirate, including working on what was deemed impossible shapes in sapphire, there would be no HM9 today."

There is no doubt of the HM9 being another masterful creation of Max and his esteemed friends that make up the MB&F brand, and this will not be the final stop for them. If anything, looking back on their history of unique and imaginative creations, their designs will only become more and more inspired as time goes on. When asked what the future held, Max said "The problem has never been the ideas, the problem is finding the time, means and talent to transform the ideas into reality."

Limited to 33 pieces of the 'Air' and 'Road' editions, these machines are sure to serve as inspirations in the next ideation of MB&F's creative line.

Interest in conspicuous consumption and fitness in the 1970s suggested the time was right for a sneaker renaissance.



SNEAKY BUSINESS

How did sneakers become synonymous with high fashion? Bilal Shadani looks into the serious world of casual footwear



At Berluti, as elsewhere, sneakers now occupy a place in every collection.

THE HUMBLE SNEAKER (or 'kicks' for the American wearer) has a pedigree of being the universal footwear of the consummate athlete and hip-hop artist. Especially favoured by the basketball and tennis communities, this footwear would not usually be considered a hallmark of high-end fashion due to its simple, utilitarian styling.

And yet, Versace are debuting their SS19 Chain Reaction Sneaker for a price tag between \$995 and \$1,350 in 2019. This forthcoming iteration of the Versace sneaker line finds black leather and blue suede coming together, paired with complementary bright-coloured accents. A translucent frame is used, while the sneaker is of course still highlighted by the signature chain link outsole. Zegna, Corneliani, Dunhill and Berluti, brands synonymous with sartorialism, classical attire and suits, all feature sneakers as part of their collections.

Obviously, there's more to the humble sneaker than meets the eye; its history goes back to as far as World War I and it still holds a steadfast place in many a closet, now more than ever. Menswear in the past ten years has undergone perhaps one of its most seismic shifts since we stopped wearing wigs and powdering our faces. The clear delineation between formal and informal no longer really exists in most places. It is perfectly normal to see men going to work wearing a suit teamed with t-shirt and sneakers.

Debuting in the 1800s, sneakers (or 'plimsolls' as they were known) were actually a luxury item. The high price of rubber and the lack of free time for the working masses meant that only the truly wealthy were able to afford them as leisure wear.

After the devastation of World War I, the governments of the world realised how unprepared their populations were for war, sparking a large scale push for physical fitness. As people rushed to the gym, opportunistic industrialists started

mass-producing sneakers - once a symbol of the Victorian elite - bringing down prices and democratizing this symbol of society's crème-de-la-crème.

To set themselves apart, the Converse Rubber Shoe Company drafted basketball player Chuck Taylor to improve their basketball shoe - the All-Star - in 1921. While no Michael Jordan, his endorsement brought an almost tacit promise of the athletic potential of sneakers to the masses, ushering in the era of celebrity shoe endorsement.

By the end of WWII, the sneaker had lost what remained of its Victorian luxury associations. Everyone from school children to labourers wore them for comfort, not status. Yet an interest in conspicuous consumption and personal fitness fads in the 1970's suggested the time was right for a sneaker renaissance. Consequently, newcomer Nike created the ideal shoe for the Me Generation: the Nike Cortez.

Designed in a number of bright colours with the iconic Nike swish, the shoe was designed for anyone who wished to stand out at the clubs as well as the running track, proving that this style of footwear was about more than just functionality.

Traditional sneaker companies weren't the only ones capitalizing on the public's growing penchant for sneakers. In 1984, Gucci released an Italian-made tennis shoe with the brand's signature green and red stripes on the heel, and "Gucci" printed on the tongue, becoming the first luxury brand to enter the sneaker market.

Others swiftly followed and today a sneaker made by Dunhill, Valentino or Bally is, to the style-aware man, as covetable as Nike or Adidas sneakers were to him in his youth. He has matured, but his desire to look good and be comfortable has stayed with him.

But the real turning point in sneaker fashion began with the sponsorship of an iconic basketball superstar of the 80s and '90s: Michael Jordan.

Zegna's runways include a high fashion sneaker in each collection and are a focus for the brand once known for its classical suits.



Only a rookie at the time (admittedly, one with an Olympic gold medal to his name), Nike signed Jordan for a five-year endorsement deal in 1984. With that contract came an exclusive new shoe for him to wear and promote: The Air Jordan.

The red-and-black sneakers (made to match Jordan's Chicago Bulls uniform) were initially banned by NBA commissioner David Stern, who'd mandated that shoes worn on the court had to be majority white. Jordan famously wore them anyway, with Nike paying the \$5000 fine after each game. Such was

the demand and popularity for the shoes that it created a spate of 'shoe-jackings' – where owners were robbed of their Air Jordans at gunpoint.

This shoe's public release in 1985 is widely considered the catalyst for modern Sneakerhead culture -- a community of sneaker collectors and admirers who follow new releases with a dedication usually reserved for classic cars or Swiss watches.

The entrance of the Air Jordan into the public consciousness meant that celebrities were beginning to take notice

as well. No one embodied early hip-hop aesthetic as fully as rapper-DJ trio Run-DMC, whose signature look of rope chains, Adidas tracksuits and shell-toe Adidas Superstars became an iconic look. His release of 1986's "My Adidas" - a tribute to a favourite shoe and refutation of hip-hop stereotypes - led to an endorsement deal with the brand; the Superstar sneaker became a graphic, visual signifier of street wear, bringing sneakers to the forefront of urban fashion. It would also make Run-DMC the first of what would be many musicians to ink deals with sneaker brands.

However, sneakers were still not truly high end fashion. At least, not until Prada began the trend for high-end designer sneakers. Originally intended as a yachting shoe (it was designed for the Luna Rossa sailing team to wear in the America's Cup), the streamlined Prada PS0906 openly prioritized aesthetics over athletics, released to the public in 1996. The design had actively showed signs of moving away from its athletic purpose and more towards a sense of fashionable expression, becoming the de-facto shoe wear for art aficionados of the time.

Despite having been the pioneers of high end sneakers, it was not Prada but Adidas that broke new ground when they teamed up with designers Yohji Yamamoto and Jeremy Scott in 2002; each designer was to reinterpret two of the brand's earlier styles in a bid to bring together sneaker culture and high fashion in a way which was unheard of. The results: shoes that retained the functionality and shape of the originals, but still rang true to the designers' distinctive aesthetics: Yamamoto's architectural, forward-looking design sense, and Scott's humour and outlandishness (his Forum was covered in dollar bills with his own face in place of George Washington's).

It was the 2000s that bore witness to the transformation of business attire. With the dot-com boom, emerging start-up culture and growing entrepreneurship among hip-hop stars and elite athletes, a generation of men who challenged conventional notions of success, and the associated sartorial codes took shape. In stark contrast to the suit and tie norms,



Top: These Santoni sneakers are amongst the Italian footwear brand's most popular seller. Below: Paint splatters are now high fashion rather than a sign of manual labour, thanks to Valentino.



It is perfectly normal to see men going to work wearing a suit teamed with t-shirt and sneakers.

traditional fashion houses like Lanvin met them half-way, imbuing the sneaker with their established elegance and craftsmanship, becoming the bespoke item of fashion for dot-com figureheads like Sundhar Pichai (CEO of Google), Kevin Systrom (CEO of Instagram) and Satya Nadella (CEO of Microsoft).

Systrom has even said "I can wear the patent-leather-toe ones with jeans and they look cool, but I can also just throw on a clean, black pair with a suit; they look great and dress it down."

The understated simplicity of their designs coupled with the technology sectors casual dress ideology meant that sneakers were now a part of workplace

accepted uniform code.

Sneakers were now no longer a workplace fashion faux-pas.

Consummate fashion leader Louis Vuitton brought the luxury sneaker game to another level when they joined forces with rapper and street style icon Kanye West. Instead of creating their own sneaker and hiring West to star in the campaign, the Parisian fashion house opted instead to collaborate with him on three distinct pairs. The collection sold out almost instantly, even though pairs went for upwards of \$1000.

In 2011, footwear designer Christian Louboutin - renowned the world over for his red-soled high heels - released his first men's collection. The jewel of his new

collection: the studded Roller-Boat sneaker, a reinterpretation of his earlier Rollerboy loafer, complete with red rubber sole. An immediate hit, the shoes not only redefined masculinity but also reinforced the sneakers presence in the fashion arena.

This is not to say that sneakers have only continued to grow more outrageous and eye-catching as time passes; the popularity of the understated Yeezy 750 Boost, designed by Kanye West for Adidas, embodies a concerted return to the restrained elegance of classic menswear. But for every sneaker that embraces tradition, there are many others flouting it in increasingly extreme ways. Perhaps no shoe represents this schism more aptly than the baroque platform Christian Dior creative director Raf Simons released with Adidas. As both sneakers were released in 2015, the growing choice in both style and functionality remains at the very core of what makes sneakers such an enduring part of any wardrobe.

In 2018, luxury brands are looking to gain a stronger foothold in the so-called "sneakerisation" market, with competition remaining fierce against sports brands. A pair of Nike's black leather Air Jordan 5 Retro premium sneakers sell for more than \$470, compared to a pair of Gucci's ACE made with the GG logo canvas which cost \$520. It certainly helps that sneakers do not adhere to a seasonal cycle, explaining the almost non-stop stream of releases.

The power of celebrity endorsement is not to be underestimated either, seeing as how rappers are becoming fashion's new royalty. Sneaker collaborations include artists like 2 Chainz partnering with Italian fashion house Versace on the "Chain Reaction" shoes. Also, Pharrell worked with French powerhouse Chanel to create the Hu Race Trail sneaker. More and more fashion brands are beginning to realize that it is acceptable to wear a pair of sneakers with a tailored suit

Elizabeth Semmelhack, who curated a show on sneaker culture at the Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto in 2015, said the trend represents part of a larger movement toward men's self-expression. "Sneakers are enfranchising men into the fashion system without posing a threat to their individuality."



Bruce Willis

— Hollywood's finest action man

When you think of the archetypal male superhero, Bruce Willis is the actor who came to define the category. Yet the all-American paladin with a penchant for tight situations reveals a softer side, writes Natalie Glorney.



THE TIME-HONOURED PASTIME OF cigar smoking has been enjoyed by some of the world's most prolific and influential figures throughout history. So it is no surprise that a handful of Hollywood A-listers are famed for not just acting, but for their love of cigars too. Often seen frequenting cigar nights in his hometown, Bruce Willis is one of these aficionados, hanging out at friend Arnold Schwarzenegger's weekly cigar dinners as far back as the mid-90s.

Willis is a Hollywood icon, first gaining attention in *Moonlighting*, but it is his portrayal of John McClane in the *Die Hard* franchise that catapulted him to worldwide movie star status. Widely regarded as an action hero, many are unaware that Willis is also a producer and singer, with three albums to his name and having produced seven television series' and movies.

"I've always had confidence. Before I was famous, that confidence got me into trouble. After I got famous, it just got me into more trouble."

Born in Germany in 1955, Willis moved to the United States in 1957 with his German mother and American father. He found a love of acting at a young age and enrolled in a drama course before moving to New York in the '80s where he worked as a bartender while pursuing his acting dreams. His big break came in 1985 when he landed the role of David Addison in *Moonlighting*, starring opposite Cybill Shepherd. The show was a success, landing him a Best Actor Emmy and a Golden Globe.

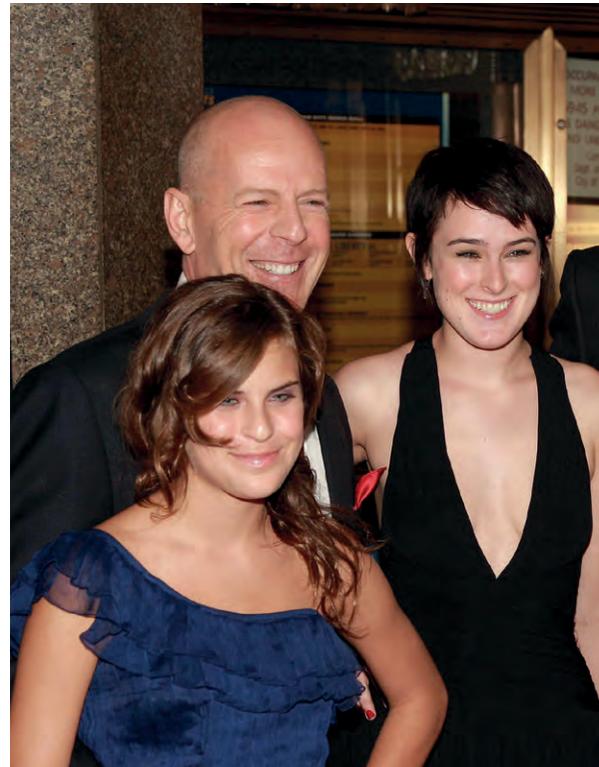
It was his imitable role as John McClane in 1988 film *Die Hard* though that was a turning point. The first film in the trilogy grossed \$US138 million worldwide and firmly established him as a reputed action star. The success of the film continued, with the trilogy amassing US\$700 million worldwide.

A family man, Bruce married first wife Demi Moore in 1987. Three children and 13 years later, they divorced but famously



Willis is adept at mastering the perfect blend whether that be in his family life or in pursuit of his hobbies.

“I’m much more proud of being a father than being an actor.”
- Bruce Willis on parenthood.

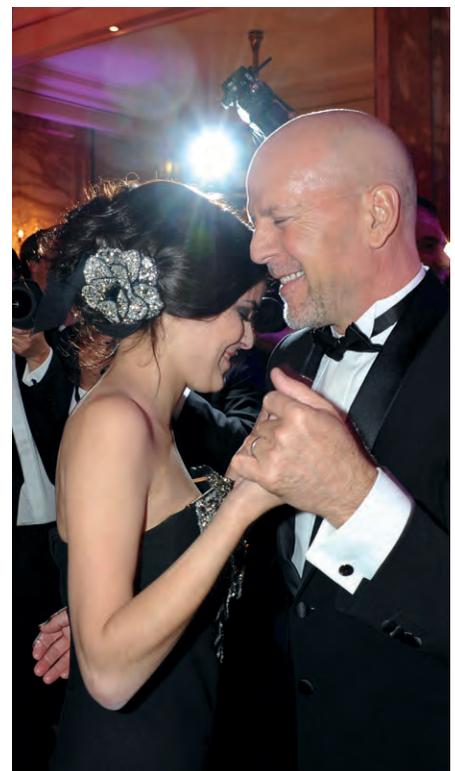




remain close friends, with Willis even attending Moore's third marriage to fellow actor Ashton Kutcher. In 2009 he met second wife Emma Heming, with whom he has two further children.

"I'm much more proud of being a father than being an actor," says the man with a reputation for being an action hero.

His career went from strength to strength in the 1990s with myriad film and TV successes. He starred as Butch Coolidge in Quentin Tarantino's acclaimed *Pulp Fiction* and played the lead role in *12 Monkeys*, *The Fifth Element*, *Armageddon* and *The Sixth Sense*. He also starred in long running TV series *Friends* as the father of Ross' girlfriend, for which he won an Emmy. In 2000, he worked with Director M. Night Shyamalan on *Unbreakable*. Willis received acclaim from peers for his role as David Dunn, with director Tarantino quoted as saying





he considers it amongst Willis' most outstanding work.

Throughout the '00s, film offers kept coming and Willis continued to star in action films including *Sin City*, *Red* and *The Expendables 2*. In 2013, he reprised his beloved character in the *Die Hard* franchise for the fifth time in *A Good Day to Die Hard*.

"I have a warm spot in my heart for *Die Hard*... it's just the sheer novelty of being able to play the same character over 25 years and still be asked back is fun."

Just when we thought we'd seen all we could, Willis decided that a stint on the

stage was his next move and he made his Broadway debut in William Goldman's adaptation of Stephen King's novel *Misery* in 2015, starring alongside Laurie Metcalf.

It seems the dynamism of Bruce Willis is unstoppable. Now, at the age of 63, he continues to be cast in major blockbuster films, with two new films expected for release in 2019. Superhero thriller *Glass* is a sequel to Shyamalan's *Split* and *Unbreakable*, in which Willis starred alongside Samuel L Jackson.

Glass see Willis reprise his role as Dunn, a security guard with superhuman abilities. He will star alongside James McAvoy,

Samuel L Jackson and Sarah Paulson. *Motherless Brooklyn*, directed by Ed Norton, is also set for release in 2019. The film stars Willis as Frank Minna, the mentor and only friend of a lonely private detective.

"Everybody, no matter how old you are, is around 24 or 25 in their heart."

With films featuring Willis grossing up to US\$3 billion in the North American box offices, a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (2006) and several accolades to his name, there is no doubt that this formidable man has no intention of slowing down any time soon, and we certainly hope he doesn't.



A man of many faces, Willis has gone beyond the genre that gave him his fame to portray myriad characters on stage and screen.



Smokin' hot style

Master cigar makers Arturo Fuente and Italian style house Stefano Ricci have entered into a partnership to produce a highly limited series of cigar accessories, along with a rare cigar. The Fuente Opus X Stefano Ricci is a symphony to the pleasure of slowness, and comes with seriously covetable accessories such as cigar cutters and this luxurious crocodile leather ashtray, an arresting way to assert your power and style.



THE HUMIDOR

The very best from the world of cigars



A match made in heaven

Arturo Fuente and Italian luxury lifestyle brand Stefano Ricci present a series of exclusive accessories



Hand-finished to the highest standards, each item becomes instantly covetable.



AN EXCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN Arturo Fuente and Italian luxury lifestyle brand Stefano Ricci sees a new line of limited-edition cigars and cigar accessories released. Cigar enthusiasts worldwide will be longing to acquire a slice of the new collection, with the jewel in the crown being the limited Fuente OpusX humidor.

The opulent humidor has an elegant briar-root wood finishing with Australian mother of pearl inlay details and black lacquered finish. This unique humidor also comes equipped with 100 mahogany spills for soft flame lighting, the Stefano Ricci jet flame cigar lighter and cigar cutter. But there's more, a porcelain cigar ashtray and accompanying cigar holder is also included



within an exterior push-pull drawer lined with black velvet. The precious contents are secured with a specially designed combination lock.

And what's a humidor without a cigar to place inside? The limited-edition Fuente Fuente OpusX Stefano Ricci cigar has also been released, exclusively available only to those who purchase an OpusX by Stefano Ricci travel humidor. A straight-sided parejo, measuring 7 inches with a 52 ring gauge, the cigar is adorned with a distinct secondary band with the Stefano Ricci crest.

This partnership is the perfect pairing for Fuente, the brand who consistently rates among the best cigar manufacturers in the world. The iconic Florence-based fashion house is synonymous with luxury and outstanding quality. The Stefano Ricci cigar ashtrays have been created in a special range of materials and shapes, from precious engraved crystal in the iconic paisley pattern and the engraved symbol of the house (the flying royal eagle), to delicate porcelain that has been painted by hand in gold or platinum.

stefanoricci.com

Cigar enthusiasts will be longing to acquire the new collection, with the jewel in the crown being the Fuente Fuente OpusX humidor.

LE HOYO DE RÍO SECO WORLD LAUNCH

La Guava Resort welcomes guests to a glittering gala evening



MORE THAN 650 GUESTS converged at La Guava Resort in Beirut, lending their presence to the much-anticipated global launch of Le Hoyo Rio Seco. Resplendent in Hoyo livery, the venue opened its doors to guests upon presentation of a mobile digital pass, something of a first within the cigar industry and a feature that lent proceedings a frisson of exclusivity.

Upon arrival, guests were welcomed through an archway decorated with banners and illuminated with dramatic laser lights; a chilled flute of Laurent-Perrier was presented to them as they made their entrance.

The first cigars of the evening, the Hoyo De Monterrey Epicure Especial, Epicure No.2 and Petit Robusto were savoured, with attendees gathering around the pool area for cocktails as the history of Cuban cigar cultivation and Hoyo De Monterrey played out on large outdoor screens.



The first cigars of the evening, the Hoyo De Monterrey Epicure Especial, Epicure No.2 and Petit Robusto were savoured...

Strains of violin music by Lebanese virtuoso Hanine coaxed raw emotion from the crowd, an exquisite performance that lent the evening a magical air.

As floating lanterns danced on the surface of the water, illuminating the brand's logo, Mohamad Zeidan of Phoenicia Group gave the opening address, welcoming guests. Leopoldo Cintra Gonzalez and Luis Sanchez Harguindey of Habanos SA conveyed their warmest welcome before the Le Hoyo Rio Seco was finally revealed by Walid Saleh. He recounted the story of Le Hoyo Rio Seco and the innovative launching of the cigar,





before guests watched in astonishment as fireworks spelled out the name of the cigar against the inky black sky.

The Le Hoyo Rio Seco cigar is the latest in the Le Hoyo series, which has been a traditional part of the Hoyo de Monterrey brand. In the past, the Le Hoyo range consisted primarily of narrow gauge cigars until, in 2014, the Le Hoyo line was expanded to include thicker gauge cigars.

As flying sky lanterns lit up the night sky, remote-controlled drones carried cigar boxes through the air, while boats sped through the water delivering boxes of Le Hoyo Rio Seco to delighted guests.

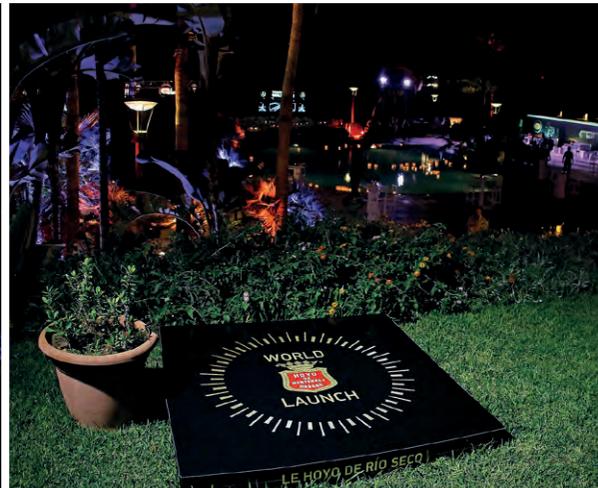
A fine dinner was then served, with live cooking stations and a buffet of international cuisine amongst the delectable offerings. As guests feasted, the strains of exuberant live Cuban music filled the air.

Among the guests of the night were the Habanos World Challenge participants, who earlier that day had competed for a chance to represent Lebanon in the Habanos World Challenge in Havana in 2019. The winner was announced by Leopoldo Cintra, Mohamed Zeidan and Walid Saleh, who revealed the winning team Tio Tanios, comprising Kassem Chmaysani and Elie Habib. They are destined to represent Lebanon in Cuba at the event.

The evening drew to a close with music once again from Hanine, the Chehade brothers and the Cuban band, with guests gifted a special lighter made by Siglo for Le Hoyo Rio Seco cigar, a once-in-a-lifetime gift to commemorate a once-in-a-lifetime evening.



As flying sky lanterns lit up the night sky, remote-controlled drones carried cigar boxes through the air, while boats sped through the water delivering boxes of Le Hoyo Rio Seco to guests.



One for the road...

The Davidoff Roadshow makes a stop at Fidel Cigars in Beirut



THE POPULAR DAVIDOFF ROADSHOW got under way in Lebanon recently with an evening of connoisseurship and conviviality thanks to the team at Fidel Cigars who welcomed connoisseurs for a splendid evening of flavours, aromas and taste. Guests were invited to sample the Yamasa 6 x 60, a beautifully constructed cigar that starts with a strong kick and draw and is particularly well balanced. This particular Yamasa sits emphatically in the 'medium to full bodied' range and is a cigar rich in flavours, earthiness and a hint of spice. With a trace of cocoa, it is a cigar to be considered with a solid, aged single malt and so Fidel Cigars obliged most handsomely, ensuring that the predominantly Lebanese crowd enjoyed the flavour of the Yamasa 6 x 60 in the finest possible way. Incidentally, the size of the Yamasa and the big ring size represent something of a trend amongst smokers nowadays; Fidel's always a good spot to be updated on what's new.





With a trace of cocoa, the Yamasa 6 x 60 is a cigar that is best considered with a solid, aged single malt.



Davidoff's Lebanon Roadshow

The Davidoff Roadshow continues in Dbayeh



DAVIDOFF HOSTED ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL event in Lebanon recently at premium gentleman's boutique Valuzio in Dbayeh. Cigar aficionados gathered to sample Davidoff's Millennium blend, a toro of six inches in length with a ring gauge of 50. This refined vitola is one of the most sought after cigars due to its intensity of aromas that releases flavours of roasted coffee and caramel.





Cigar aficionados gathered to sample Davidoff's Millennium blend, a toro of six inches in length with a ring gauge of 50.



S.T. Dupont President hosts cigar evening in Dubai

Alain Crevet returns to the Emirates for an intimate evening of fine drinks and perfectly crafted Dalmore cocktails to celebrate the opening of a new S.T. Dupont boutique in The Dubai Mall



S.T. DUPONT, THE FRENCH manufacturer of lighters, cigarettes, handbags, fragrances and other luxury accessories, opened a new store in The Dubai Mall recently. A guest list of local VIPs and media were invited to the store to experience the brand's crafting heritage first-hand with custom engraving on their S.T. Dupont items. Alain Crevet, the brand's CEO & President, officially opened the store and later hosted the guests in The Library at The Address Boulevard to continue the celebrations. Guests were treated to a selection of beverages and cigars, while viewing the brand's latest accessories.

st-dupont.com



Alain Crevet, the brand's CEO & President, officially opened the store and later hosted the guests in The Library at The Address Boulevard.







A guest list of local VIPs and media were invited to the store to experience the brand's crafting heritage first-hand.



Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Davidoff brand

Guests enjoyed Dubai's finest view at At.mosphere Burj Khalifa, as the Davidoff 50th Anniversary celebrations continued apace, with an evening devoted to life's most pleasurable pursuits



DUBAI'S CIGAR ENTHUSIASTS GATHERED in the intimate surrounds of At.mosphere Lounge, Burj Khalifa recently to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Davidoff brand. Sponsored by Next Generation Equity, the evening began with an indulgent tasting of Perle Noir French caviar, paired with a glass of Champagne. A challenge ensued as guests were treated to a blind tasting of a double figurado 17cm with a ring gauge of 50, paired with a single malt. Put to the test, those in the know were able to identify Davidoff as the cigar brand that was sampled, and one



The evening started with an indulgent tasting of Perle Noir French caviar, perfectly paired with a glass of Champagne.

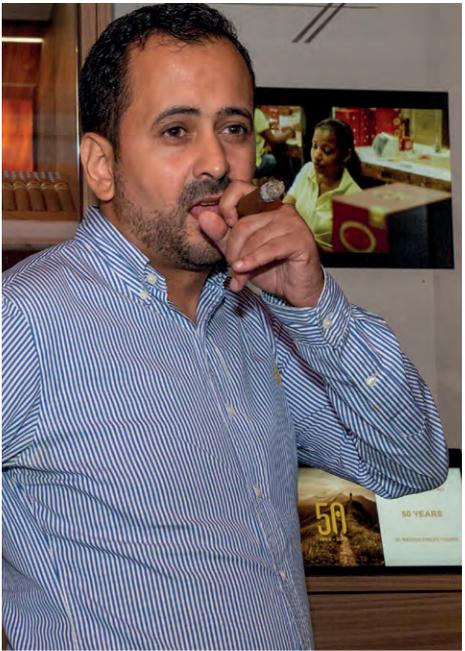




guest immediately identified the Macallan 18 year old single malt whisky. The cigar of the evening was a particularly special one, the Davidoff Diademas Finas Limited Edition 50th Anniversary 2018. With a complex mix of heady aromas, the cigar's chocolate brown Habano Ecuador wrapper is intensely smooth and s. It was an entertaining and enjoyable evening in an impressive location.
davidoff.com



The cigar of the evening was a particularly special one, the Davidoff Diademas Finas Limited Edition 50th Anniversary 2018.



Davidoff's Chefs Edition at The Ritz Carlton, Dubai

Inspired by the work of renowned chefs, a new limited-edition Davidoff cigar debuted at an exclusive evening dedicated to the art of dining and flavour



CLUB LIMITADA MEMBERS WERE invited to an exclusive event in November to celebrate Davidoff's 50th anniversary. To mark the occasion, the Swiss brand has created a cigar inspired by five internationally acclaimed chefs, named the Chefs Edition 50th Anniversary. With the outdoor bar and lounge Flair No.5 of Ritz-Carlton DIFC as the setting, guests enjoyed a pairing of the cigar with Balvenie single malt 12,17 and 21 years old whisky, accompanied by a selection of canapes inspired by the cigar's blend.



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24 Hours of Elegance in Belgrade

A three-day celebration of luxury and excellence in craftsmanship unfurled in the Serbian capital





STYLE AND GLAMOUR WERE abundant at this year's 24 Hours of Elegance event, once again held in Serbia's capital Belgrade. Presented by Chivas and Audi, the three day celebration of luxurious and prestigious manufacturing and craftsmanship attracts devotees of the finest things in life.

Several events ran across the three day event, with the Chivas Concours d'Elegance 2018, an exhibition of rare and exclusive classic cars, forming part

A highlight was the launch of the Audi Q8, the latest offering from the German manufacturer.

of the Belgrade Waterfront Classic Car Show 2018 this year. One of the highlights was the launch of the Audi Q8, the latest offering from the German manufacturer that represents the height of automotive design and technology.

On the Concours field, impressive cars were evaluated by a jury of automotive experts, presided by Ton Roks of Octane magazine, with the support of Tiddo Bresters of Fiva. The coveted Chivas Best of Show was awarded to the unique 1956





Alfa Romeo Giulietta SV Speciale Molteni, from the world-renowned Lopresto collection. Best of Class prizes were awarded to outstanding classic cars and a special award was presented by DeGorsi Luxury Consulting to Juan de Tamenne for their global motoring initiative Peace&Culture rally.

Another event that proved popular was hosted by Chivas' International Brand Ambassador who took VIP guests for a tasting of the Chivas Regal range in the Royal Library. During the evening guests were treated to The Icon, the

The extravagant three-day celebration culminated in a Chivas party held in the Sky Lounge of Belgrade's Hilton Hotel.

pinnacle of the Chivas Range, presented in a hand-blown crystal decanter. Later in the evening, guests enjoyed a live performance of the 24 Hours of Elegance Big Band and a charity auction at the Royal Palace.

Italian fashion and style was certainly represented at the Masters of Excellence exhibition at the White Palace. Presented by Arbiter magazine and in partnership with G.H. MUMM champagne, the theme of Italian elegance ran through the evening's proceedings. Antonio Panico, one of the most famous tailors in the world whose impeccable Neapolitan style is appreciated by fashionistas globally, was exhibiting his collection, and Bo Yang, CEO of luxury shirt maker Marol from Bologna was in attendance. Complementing the selection of master craftsmen were shoemakers Ducal from Florence, while exclusive cloth makers Drago showed their latest precious



fabrics. Handmade sunglasses from TBD Eyewear and bespoke travel bags by Uglys Handmade from Naples were just some of the luxurious accessories to peruse.

The extravagant three-day celebration culminated in a Chivas party held in the Sky Lounge of Belgrade's Hilton hotel, where Chivas partnered with Gloria magazine to create a magical evening of memories on the rooftop.

Created and chaired by Alex Djordjevic of the DeGorsi luxury consultancy and co-chaired by Lady Cris Egger, VIPs and luxury connoisseurs from across Europe attended, with special guest HH Princess Olga Romanoff, of the Russian Imperial family, in attendance this year.



La Casa del Habano opens in City Walk

Cigar lovers delighted as renowned boutique welcomes guests to its elegant new home



BAQER MOHEBI ENTERPRISES, THE sole distributors of Habanos in the UAE and Oman has launched its fifth cigar outlet, La Casa del Habano in City Walk, Dubai. The Cuban cigar franchise offers refined aromas, unique taste and exceptional quality of exclusive Habanos collection for cigar connoisseurs.

Mohamed Mohebi cut the ribbon in the presence of Jose Maria, the vice president of Habano and Walid Saleh, CEO of Phoenicia trading.

The celebration continued with a cake cutting, followed by a reception cocktail where connoisseurs and customers of Baqer Mohebi were treated to hand-made cigars. A Cuban torcedore performed live cigar rolling for guests, who were connoisseurs from all over the Emirates.

La Casa del Habano is a destination for cigar connoisseurs, who come to spend time with like-minded associates, exploring Cuban cigar development and relaxing over a Habano. The new location offers a distinctive experience for cigar aficionados, with a wide selection of cigars to suit individual preferences; expert staff are on hand to offer their guidance and make suggestions.

The Middle East is witnessing rapid growth in the Cuban cigar industry and the expansion of established global brands such as La Casa del Habano reflects the growing market demands. With franchises operating in the UAE and Oman and plans to increase the number of stores, La Casa del Habano seeks to provide high quality products in an exceptional setting.





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Driven to excel

Genesis is a luxury sedan brand flying under the Hyundai banner.

Its latest model, the G70 arrives making a singularly bold statement, delivering automotive refinement and performance that's a cut above.

A benchmark-breaking integration of athletic styling, performance and smart technology, the G70 is designed to not only anticipate driver needs and expectations, but define them.



THE BINDER

Life's finest pleasures

Experiential stays at One&Only Palmilla, Mexico



THE ONE&ONLY PALMILLA on Mexico's stunning Baja Peninsula has composed a collection of diverse and engaging experiences that ensure guests take in all that the stunning Baja Peninsula offers.

Set alongside the Sea of Cortez, One&Only Palmilla boasts extraordinary views of the Los Cabos landscape and beachfront access to one of the few swimmable beaches in the region.

Discover the rugged landscape of Baja California Sur on a journey into the heart of the UNESCO biosphere reserve, known as 'Sierra de la Laguna.' Led by an experienced professional guide, the Jeep

Adventure will uncover a different side to the region, encountering deep canyons, impressive scenery and lush flora and fauna which provide the backdrop to this varied landscape.

The Sea of Cortez, also known as the Gulf of California, is the youngest sea on earth (at a mere five thousand years old), and one of the most desirable destinations for wildlife spotting and fishing. From January to March, grey whales migrating from Alaska during the winter months to the warm waters of the Baja Peninsula, are spotted in Los Cabos and many sightings taking place right from One&Only

Palmilla's grounds. For guests who prefer not to keep lookout, hotel staff conveniently blow a conch shell whenever a whale is spotted.

For those who prefer calmer and more intimate experiences, guests can learn about the techniques and flavours of Mexican cuisine as they prepare a delicious seafood meal in a cooking class led by Chef Larbi and his team at the celebrated restaurant, Agua by Larbi. Alternatively, an indulgent wellness ritual, created exclusively for the resort, draws inspiration from the indigenous Mayan tribe of Sonora.

oneandonlypalmilla.com



UAE's first eco-retreat by Mantis

PAVING THE WAY FOR eco-tourism in the region, Kingfisher Lodge by Mantis offers a gateway to a unique world of conservation, with access to a pristine ecosystem. Situated in Alqurm wa Lehhfaiiah, a protected area of Kalba in Sharjah, every aspect of the lodge has been carefully thought out to be as environmentally friendly as possible. The luxurious tents were created with eco-friendly materials that feature no harmful chemicals. Solar panels feature

throughout the property, ensuring the UAE's climate is used to its potential. The rooms, although luxurious, comprise only biodegradable containers. With no plastic items, bottles are switched for glass and bags for paper. Even in the restaurants, chefs use organic produce from the local area. Housing a unique ecosystem, some of the region's oldest Mangrove tree forests are located in Alqurm wa Lehhfaiiah. Offering a habitat where nature thrives, visitors can

spot rare species of birds including the Arabian Collared Kingfisher and turtles. The forests also help to stabilise the neighbouring coastline by reducing erosion caused by tides, waves and storms. The surrounding areas also feature an artificial lake where its high algae concentration creates photosynthesis which provides food for marine species alongside swamps, salt marshes and mudflats.
sharjahcollection.ae/kingfisher-lodge

It's an all-inclusive first in the UAE's capital

ABU DHABI'S FIRST ALL-INCLUSIVE resort, Rixos Saadiyat Island, is inspired by the palaces of the Ottoman Empire. Ten restaurants and bars provide international flavours, all of which are included in the all-inclusive experience. Highlights include Turkish cuisine at Turquoise, seafood dining and coastal views at Mermaid and Italian classics at L'Olivo. A variety of food carts are

placed around the resort, as well as a series of beach bars, tea and shisha lounges. For those looking for a more exclusive experience, the Club House restaurant is reserved for villa guests. The resort's 12 three and four-bedroom villas offer either shared or private pools, direct access to the beach and dedicated butler service
rixossaadiyat island.com





50 shades of green...

IF RELAXATION IS THE order of the day this festive period, jet off to the idyllic shores of the Maldives, where every permutation of blue and green conspires to induce a soporific sense of calm. Anantara Hotels and Resorts has created a superlative schedule of events across three stunning resorts, Anantara Dhigu, Anantara Veli and Naladhu Private Island. With a world-class culinary programme, exciting kids' activities, a visit from Santa and New Year's Eve parties with spectacular fireworks shows, it's the ultimate destination for endless island fun. Santa will be visiting the lagoon, leading jet-ski excursions and fun diving expeditions. Children over eight years will love the underwater present hunt, searching for surprises left by Santa.

The culinary offering is impressive with romantic fine-dining experiences, fun family feasts, a lavish food and wine fair that spans three resorts, and beautiful regional flavours.

On New Year's Eve, each resort will be transformed with a different festive theme. Anantara Dhigu will take inspiration from Alice in Wonderland, Anantara Veli will feature a masquerade theme with an adults only ball and Naladhu Private Island celebrates the New Year with a sophisticated Caviar & Pearls motif. If the party season leaves you feeling tired, why not swap that jaded feeling for a vista of jade colours, instead?

www.anantara.com

Honeymoon haven at One&Only Le Saint G eran

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE a more romantic place to spend the first days of married life than the stunning One&Only Le Saint G eran, nestled on a pristine private peninsula at the Northern tip of Mauritius. Bejewelled with swaying palms and carpeted in white sand, this slice of paradise is the perfect place to fall celebrate love.

An exclusive package for newlyweds or anniversary celebrants includes a 30% room discount, breakfast and complimentary dinner. A bottle of champagne, daily baskets of fruit, a romantic bathing ceremony and a complimentary lunch is also offered to those staying five or more nights. What's not to love?

oneandonlyresorts.com



A cultural trip on the Amalfi Coast

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR a cultural getaway, consider Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria, in Sorrento, overlooking the Gulf of Naples. The hotel's gates open onto the main square which glistens with fairy lights and Christmas trees during the festive season. Concerts are held, and artisanal shops and stalls line the winding streets of the old town. Built on the ruins of the Emperor Augustus' villa, with sweeping views out to Vesuvius, the hotel is set among five acres of citrus gardens and within striking distance of five UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

exvitt.it



A restful night's sleep in Milan



TRAVELLING ACROSS TIME ZONES can play havoc with sleep patterns. Next time you're visiting Milan, splash out on a stay at the Mandarin Oriental, where spa therapists have devised the solution to a perfect night's sleep. The Oriental Sleeping Ritual massage is designed to increase emotional wellbeing, by working on acupressure points that generate calm, regulate excess energy and slow breathing. Gentle background music helps

create a sense of inner peace and happiness, while a herbal infusion will also aid sleep. Guests are provided with an aromatic pillow mister, to be used on bed sheets and pillows to aid sleep, ensuring a fully refreshed feeling come morning.

Available year-round, the Bedtime Rituals & Sleeping Therapy package is priced from EUR 900 per room per night.

mandarinoriental.com/milan

New luxury in the heart of glorious Vietnam

Anantara Quy Nhon opens its doors



LOCATED IN A SECLUDED bay in south central Vietnam, Quy Nhon is best known to adventurous travellers for its incredibly wide beaches and emerald waters, as well as being rich in cultural attractions. With plenty to offer families, couples and groups, the capital city of Binh Dinh province is now home to a luxurious new home away from home to entice even the most discerning traveller.

Quy Nhon Villas, Anantara's latest all-villa resort, provides the perfect surrounds for a luxurious beachside holiday, with private pools, in-room butler services and unique spa treatments. Concealed by hectares of landscaped tropical gardens, the resort manages to seamlessly blend into the natural environment with locally-sourced materials, traditional craftsmanship and regional influences

discretely incorporated into its contemporary design.

Anantara Quy Nhon boasts a collection of one and two bedroom ocean-facing villas with sleek timber and granite sundecks, oversized bathtubs, private lap pools and extended low overhanging roofs. What sets this resort apart though is the focus on personalised experiences, with in-room butler services and a range of customisable luxury amenities including a preferred room scent, Anantara's signature soap collection and an in-villa wine cellar stocked with fine vintages and a delicatessen.

Dining is opulent with a focus on celebrating the abundant local seafood and regional flavours. Notably, at signature restaurant Sea.Fire.Salt, Anantara's Salt Guru elevates the dining

experience with expert advice. An excellent in-villa dining concept aims to recreate a restaurant experience with gourmet breakfast in bed, fully catered poolside barbecues and a luxury Vietnamese street food concept. Anantara's signature Dining by Design offers 'castaway' island picnics and fishing trawler expeditions followed by five-star dining.

Anantara's exclusive Balance Wellness concept, an inspirational range of wellness experiences, is a must do for the schedule. The Masters of Wellness visiting practitioner calendar allows guests to book private sessions with alternative therapists who are trusted experts in holistic healing. The Spa is a destination in itself, perched high on the hillside overlooking a serene bay, with nature-inspired treatment suites



that boast double massage beds and oversized bathtubs for nourishing coconut milk soaks.

It's not just about overindulgence here though. There are several guest experiences that really showcase this undiscovered part of Vietnam and a visit here would not be complete without a visit to the relics of the ancient kingdom of Champa, an enduring power that lasted over 1500 years in Southern Vietnam. The Champa Towers sit within the city limits in a pretty park. Steep steps lead up to the temples, which retain some of the ornate brickwork and remnants of the granite statuary that once graced its summit. A guided Quy Nhon Explorer tour is the best way to see the sights, with a traditional hat weaving workshop, a home-cooked meal with a local family who will serve traditional Binh Dinh dishes, a visit to the Champa Towers and a hands-on rice paper making workshop.

Whether for adventure or for pure relaxation in idyllic surroundings, a stay at this new all-villa resort will leave you feeling refreshed, energised and enlightened.

anantara.com/en/quy-nhon



What sets this resort apart though is the focus on personalised experience.



Captivating
experiences in
the mountainous
landscapes of
Rwanda

Rwanda has shaken off its dark past and as the ninth safest country in the world, is facing the future with optimism and deep pride in its stunning natural beauty

HIDDEN ON THE EDGE of the vast and ancient Nyungwe rainforest in the dramatic mountains of Rwanda's southwest, lies a stunning new nature resort that offers a rare opportunity to explore this remote and authentically wild location. Set within the lush green expanse of a working tea plantation, alongside one of the largest and best-preserved rainforests in Africa, One&Only Nyungwe House is immersed in wild beauty and surrounded by awe-inspiring jungle views. One&Only has designed the 23 guest rooms and suites to fit within the natural surroundings, using local African craftsmanship inspired by Rwanda and offering a contemporary look and feel. Log burners in each room and suite burn fragrant eucalyptus, and expansive private decks offer breath-taking views over the sweeping African terrain or viewing galleries of the lush rainforest and awe-inspiring wildlife.

There are adventures around every corner here from a canopy treetop walk at the very top of the rainforest to learning spear throwing, one of Africa's ancient traditions. Work up a sweat in the fresh mountain air at Nature's Bootcamp, where a guide leads guests on foot along a Jurassic track surrounding the tea plantation and through a motivating workout. For budding astronomers, the nocturnal spotlighting and stargazing is not to be missed, with stunning observations of planets and constellations from the resort's elevated decks or the forest.

Being one of the oldest mountainous ecosystems, Nyungwe Forest has 13 species of primates, including the chimpanzee population and the primate experiences here are the highlight of a visit. To discover the Colobus monkey, an early rise is needed as a guide takes guests to one of the very few places in Africa where this species, as well as L'Hoest's monkeys can be spotted. Chimpanzee trekking through the ancient forest is a fun, yet incredibly fast-paced experience along wild paths and lush forests. Spotting these shy primates is difficult but if lucky enough to observe one, keeping up with the speed at which they move is challenging but a privilege, and an awe-inspiring experience.

If that's not enough, take a helicopter ride over the panoramic African landscapes or hike on the sparkling quartz Karamba Trail



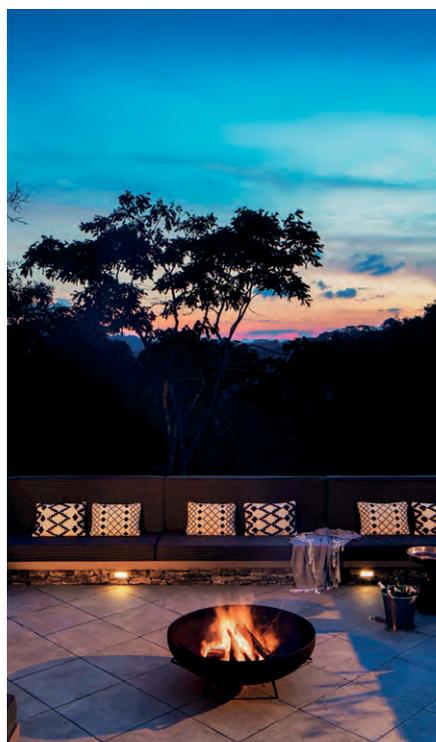
that leads from the resort deep into the jungle. Conservation and support for local communities is genuinely considered by the team and guests can get involved too. At Umuganda, a nationwide initiative in Rwanda, guests can spend the last Saturday morning of every month working in the community, from developing infrastructure to environmental protection.

This ultra-luxury resort celebrates the remote jungle environment from sunrise breakfasts, treehouse yoga, indigenous spa therapies to evening cocktails by a fire pit. Guests can enjoy an introduction to the African kitchen garden and experience the natural flavours of Nyungwe with farm-to-table cuisine that favours organic, seasonal ingredients. For those wanting to learn more about the plantations on the estate, tea picking followed by a tasting is offered.

If adventure and wonder are what you are looking for in your next escape, then look no further than this exclusive window in to Africa's fascinating wildlife, nature and culture. To create once in a lifetime moments, there really is nowhere else like it on earth.

oneandonlyresorts.com

Nyungwe Forest has 13 species of primates, including the chimpanzee population.





Escape

the city

***Virtuozity* heads to the UAE's capital to sample peace and tranquility right in the heart of the city at the stunning Shangri-La, Qaryat Al Beri**

ONE OF THE UNIQUE things about the city of Abu Dhabi is that you always seem to be surrounded by water. Whichever way you turn you seem to be by a body of water of some sort. So, just when you think you've managed to get orientated, you get completely thrown again. This is all of course caused by Abu Dhabi's many waterways and inlets that criss-cross the main island.

One side effect of this stunning geography is that there's a lot of available

beachfront, something the hotel industry has been quick to discover. One of the best located waterfront properties is the Shangri-La, Qaryat Al Beri. Conveniently located in-between the Maqta and Musaffah bridges, it's close enough you could almost skim a stone across the 250 metres of perfectly flat water of the Khor Al Maqta to the main Abu Dhabi island.

The hotel itself certainly has the Shangri-La design stamp on it. Anyone who's stayed

at their previous properties will feel right at home from the moment they enter the lobby through to the sumptuous rooms.

Each of the 213 rooms has been designed to reflect the Arabic heritage of the region. Bright colour schemes and arched doorways abound, as well as small touches in tucked away corners to be discovered at your leisure.

Rooms range in size from a very generous 'Deluxe' room, through a



series of suites and views, right up to the Presidential Suite. There's also a collection of 600 sqm family villas and the very grand Samar Celebration villa, which is perfect for anyone who likes to entertain in style. The four-bedroom family villas each come with a private pool and personalised butler service, for that little extra pampering.

The main pool is dominated by the infinity view over the waterway, straight to the Grand Mosque. Quite a nice spot for a bit of r'n'r, especially whilst the kids paddle in the small kids pool off to the right. There's a pool bar for refreshments,



as well as a terrace of shisha and snacks. Basically, everything you need for a lazy day in the sun.

On either side there's a private beach with plenty of sun loungers for guests to use. You can also take a swim there as well, although the pool is the best option for convenience and access to all the amenities.

Dining is well covered with contemporary French restaurant, Bord Eau, while Hoi An serves modern and traditional Vietnamese food, Chinese fine dining at Shang Palace and Sofra BLD, which covers a fusion of Arabic and Asian cuisine, and serves as the main breakfast area each morning.

The only oddity at the hotel is the lack of a good nightspot. Apart from the pool bar, the only real place for evening drinks is the Al Hanah bar that forms part of the lobby. There's nothing wrong with it at all, in fact the décor is quite fabulous. But whilst the service there is excellent, for such a large hotel you'd expect a wider selection of places to whet your whistle late into the evening.

For the health conscious there's a health club offering exactly what you'd expect at this level of hotel, but there's also the opportunity to indulge in a range of relaxing spa sessions at CHI, The Spa. The treatments are allegedly based on ancient healing philosophies, so perfect for some serious pampering.

If that's not enough, the hotel is joined to The Souq, a small shopping complex, built around the old Arabic souq style. Guests can be serenely whisked between the hotel and shops via a series of waterways on a faux-traditional Abra boat, albeit with an electric motor. It's a little Disneyland, but it's very popular with tourists and especially kids, so worth the ride.

The souq itself is nicely stocked with small boutiques and restaurants, so should be on the list of things to do when staying at the hotel. That's if you can tear yourself away from the hotel's comfortable sun loungers, of course.

The main focus of the Shangri-La is to allow guests to simply relax and enjoy some downtime, away from the hustle and bustle of the city only a stone's throw away. It's a perfect oasis of calm neatly living side by side with the high-speed pace of modernity.

With beautifully furnished rooms, an array of delectable restaurants and ample ways to induce a sense of deep relaxation (right down to a stretch of private beach with views of Abu Dhabi's famous Grand Mosque) the Shangri-La, Qaryat Al Beri is a real delight for lovers of all things luxury.

Who'd have thought Shangri-La was to be found in Al Maqta, just by the Musaffah Bridge?

shangri-la.com



Prime position

Virtuozity checks into the stunningly located Jumeirah Al Naseem to check everything is up to the brand's normal high standards.
BY NOEL EBDON

QUITE HOW THERE WAS enough space to build another hotel on around the sprawling Madinat Jumeirah Resort complex is a total mystery. Clearly there was, and what a use of space by the UAE's home-grown hotel brand.

Nestled between the Mina Al Salam hotel, the Madinat, Wild Wadi water park and Dubai's Burj Al Arab, the new Jumeirah Al Naseem, somehow manages to have its very own identity, despite having so many eclectic neighbours.

The entrance is shared with the Mina Al Salam, with guests peeling off and up a steep slope to the spacious valet drop off. Already it feels like you've left the rest of the complex far behind with the hotel very much surrounding you and blocking out any unwanted distractions.

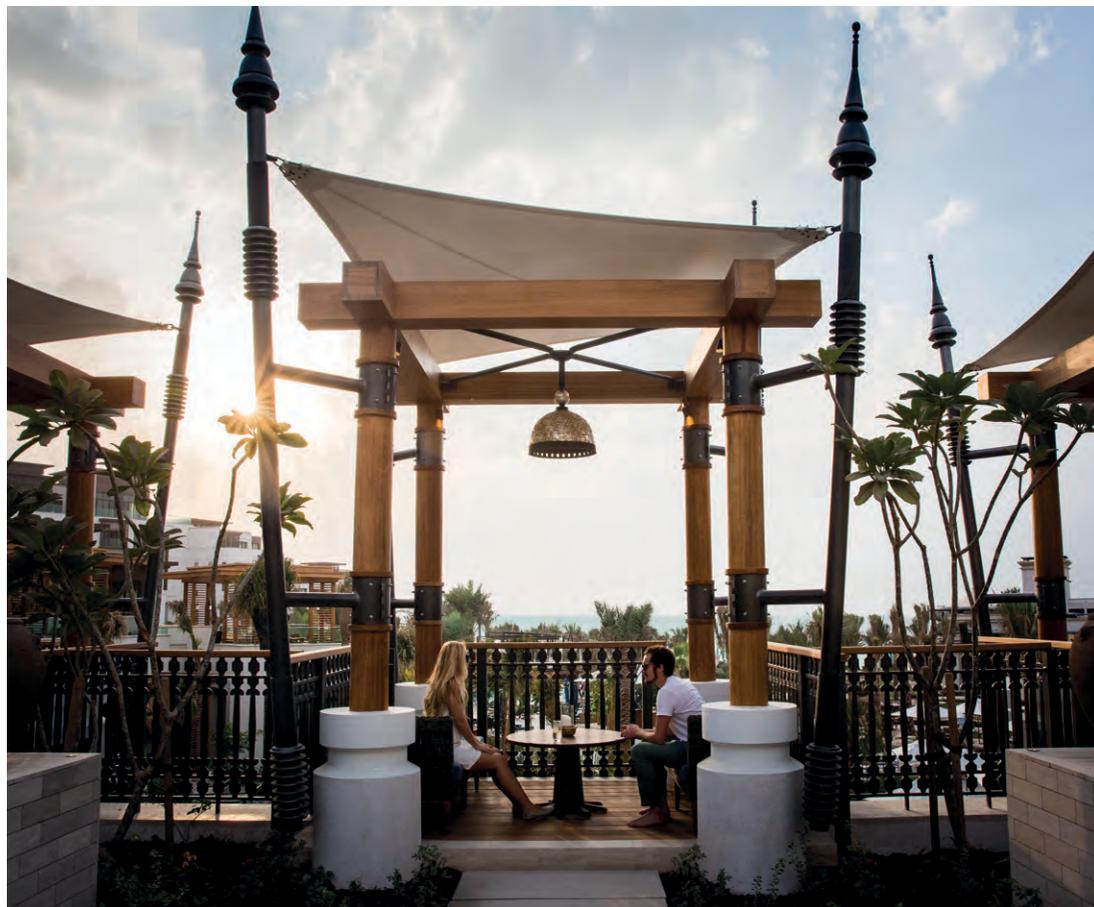
Stepping into the sumptuous lobby, the cool, white interior very much reminds you of the Fairmont's crisp, clean feel, but this clearly has Jumeirah Group's luxury stamp on it. The whole design is luxurious, without overdoing it. Subtlety is the key here.

According to Jumeirah Group, the interior was inspired by 'sand dunes, sea breeze and Dubai's heritage of pearl diving and Bedouin traditions', but there's certainly a touch of African lodge in that mix as well, with earthy palates and plenty of natural light.

Across the hotel the many levels of outdoor space give the impression of constantly changing gradients, despite the totally flat landscape of the UAE's coastline. Of course, one of the main advantages of the hotel's location is the imposing presence of the Burj Al Arab. It dominates the skyline, wherever you are in the hotel, providing a stunning juxtaposition to the bright blue sea of the Arabian Gulf.

When it comes to rooms, there are myriad choices for guests to choose from. Three or four types? Try again. Five? Nope. The hotel boasts nine different room styles and that's before you include the Presidential and Royal Suites.

You can choose from the 51 square metre Resort Deluxe, Ocean Deluxe and Ocean Terrace, the 60 square metre Resort Superior and Ocean Club Superior



rooms, the 126 square metre Family and Gulf Ocean Suites, or the sumptuous 135 square metre Ocean Terrace and Ocean Suites.

Each of the rooms feature king-sized beds, open-plan bathrooms and a balcony either overlooking the hotel gardens or fabulous beach. But for the high-rollers, there's the 300 square metre Presidential Suite or the 500 square metre Royal Suite.

The beach area is perfectly kept, plus there's a stream of buggies available to whisk you off to any of the other connected Jumeirah resorts, so guests get the best of all the outlets.

If you're feeling energetic there's also one of the largest gyms you are likely to find in a hotel any time soon. In fact, it's a fitness club in itself, with an indoor sprint area, weight room, and more cardio equipment than you'll see at a fitness convention.

For culinary delights, the hotel doesn't disappoint. There's the Al Mandhar lobby lounge, serving Moroccan fare with Parisian influences. For something more formal, you can choose between Rockfish, a fusion of Mediterranean with Arabic flavours, the Polynesian Sugarmash, or the varied menu of The Palmery, which also serves as the hotel's main breakfast area.

If you fancy eating with the sound of waves lapping against the shore, then uber-cool Summersalt is the place for you. Saving the best for last, Ambar is probably the best located bar in the whole of Dubai. Serving modern Arabian mezze dishes, this rooftop bar overlooks the hotel's gardens, the Burj Al Arab and the Arabian Gulf beyond. Jumeirah Al Naseem could so easily be overshadowed by its exalted company, but yet it shines through as a real gem. jumeirah.com

The interior was inspired by sand dunes, sea breeze and Dubai's heritage.

Quintessentially British dining aboard the QE2



ONCE RESERVED FOR THE rich and famous, the historical QE2 was a recognised style icon in the 1960s. Now docked in Dubai as a hotel and nightspot for tourists and residents seeking an unique experience, the QE2 has been lovingly restored to her former glory and the restaurants are testament to this. Once frequented by members of the royal family, The Queen's Grill is a culinary experience worthy of a spot on Dubai's gastro bucket list.

An authentic British restaurant that has been restored to offer its former quintessential design features, a new menu cleverly replicates the Queen's Grill's menu from the year the QE2 first sailed. Sourced almost entirely from the UK with ingredients flown in, guests can experience delicacies such as sous vide of Dover sole, milk-fed lambs loin and butter roasted halibut. Designed by Chef de Cuisine, Rama Samy (a former member of the QE2's culinary team), his traditional

approach to gastronomy is complemented by British Sous Chef, Murry Lane's modern cooking style.

Vintage fabrics and antique furnishings are complemented by soulful jazz music and ambient lighting to recapture the true essence of the restaurant. Open daily for dinner, this unique spot for a trip into the past is sure impress even the most discerning gourmand with its abundance of vintage charm.

qe2.com/dining

Fantastic Fridays at Morimoto

FRIDAYS ARE SET TO become more of a treat with the launch of Morimoto Dubai's Brunch menu. The contemporary Japanese menu infused with Western ingredients is a unique and popular offering in Dubai. With a seasonal and ever-changing selection of traditional and innovative raw fish preparations, expect signature cuisine served at the table and by chefs at the open kitchen and sushi bar live stations.

Located on the 23rd and 24th floor of Renaissance Downtown Hotel, Dubai, the Morimoto Brunch is available every Friday from 12:30pm to 4pm, and offers three packages.

morimotodubai.com



Italian festivities

FOR THOSE WANTING TO add some decadence to the festive period, The Bulgari Resort in Dubai has it set. A festive afternoon tea is available on 24th and 25th December with an exquisite selection of the finest Italian pastries and savouries. Celebrate Natale's Eve with elegance and style at an exceptional Italian dinner in Il Ristorante – Niko Romito on 24th December. A special six-course set menu includes unique dishes including marinated sea bream and caviar, lobster and chickpea cream and beef tenderloin paired with white truffle. On Christmas Day, the restaurant offers a traditional festive-inspired Natale brunch with an open buffet of favourite Italian dishes, premium festive ingredients and traditional sweets. With children's festive entertainment, it's the ideal venue to celebrate in style.

bulgarihotels.com/en_US/dubai



Flame-fired fare in London's latest hotspot

IN THE HEART OF Mayfair sits new live-fire grill restaurant Gridiron by British chef, Richard H. Turner. Set within the COMO Metropolitan London hotel on Old Park Lane, it offers sizzling flame-fired dishes using ethically sourced ingredients. The hearty menu celebrates seasonal ingredients with meat, native fish and beautiful vegetables given equal attention. Fire-cooked specialities include grilled squid with roast cod and girolles, lemon and parsley, fire-baked pumpkin, Barnsley Hillside hogget chop, and rare-breed Sirloin on the bone.

Old world wines dominate Gridiron by COMO's wine list, curated by Fiona Beckett with Gridiron's smoky flavours in mind. Max and Noel Venning, brothers and award-winning mixologists, have created light and refreshing cocktails to complement the depth of flavours. comohotels.com

Festive luxury at home

MAKE LIFE EASIER OVER the festive period and receive five-star restaurant service in the comfort of your own home. The Ritz-Carlton, Dubai are offering the services of their team who will be on hand to set-up, prepare and serve a memorable Christmas feast and whisk it all away afterwards, so you are free to enjoy time

with family and friends. A chef, hostess, waiter and steward will come equipped with hotel crockery, cutlery and even table décor. Welcome beverages and a traditional festive meal is included for up to 12 people. Bookings are from 21 to 26 December and start from AED5,950. ritzcarlton.com/dubai

Greek flavours at Gaia in DIFC

GREEK-MEDITERRANEAN CONCEPT, GAIA, IS the newest restaurant to open in the trendy DIFC district of Dubai. With chefs Izu Ani and Orestis at the helm, the modern taverna serves authentic Greek cuisine with a contemporary approach. The chefs

combine their skills to incorporate the core elements of Greek cuisine and translate it into Dubai's dining landscape.

Find Gaia at Building 4, DIFC; it is open daily for lunch and dinner.

gaia-dubai.com



The chefs combine their skills to incorporate the core elements of Greek cuisine.

Record-breaking truffle at Roberto's



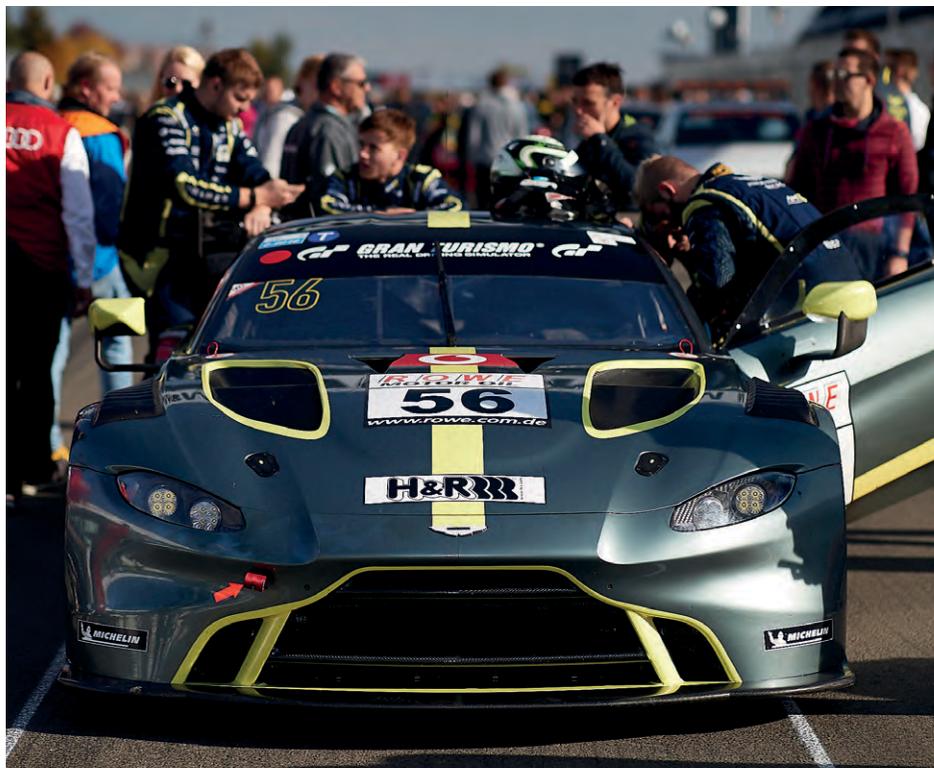
ROBERTO'S DUBAI IMPORTED THE largest fresh white truffle to have ever entered the UAE recently. At 1,005 grams, the highly prized truffle is a record-breaking achievement for both Roberto's and the UAE.

The impressive 1005 gem was found on November 4, 2018, on the Tuscan Hills (near Sienna) in Italy by two truffle dogs. Identified as a Tuber Magnatum Pico truffle, it is one of the rarest types found worldwide and is of an approximate value of USD \$51,000 (AED187,000). Group Executive Chef of Roberto's, Francesco Guarracino worked closely with Massimo Vidoni (also known as 'The Truffle Man' and founder of Italtouch) to bring the special ingredient over to the UAE. The Roberto's team has been using the special truffle in dishes from its white truffle menu.

robertos.ae

The ultimate advantage

Aston Martin GT3s to take on Abu Dhabi 12 Hours



THREE RACE TEAMS WILL take on the Abu Dhabi 12 Hour race at Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi in the new Aston Martin Vantage GT3. Oman Racing with TF Sport will spearhead the Aston Martin challenge in the PRO class, with three-time Le Mans class winner Darren Turner and team regular Jonny Adam alongside Oman's Ahmad Al Harthy. Alongside TF Sport will be R-Motorsport, who enjoyed

a win and a record three consecutive poles in its debut season in the Blancpain Endurance Series with the V12 Vantage GT3. The team will run with regular drivers Jake Dennis and Marvin Kirchhöfer, with a third driver yet to be confirmed. The eighth edition of the Gulf 12 Hours, which comprises two six-hour races, takes place on 15 December from 0900 local time. gulf12hours.com

Window shopping for a new car?

One-off Land Rover Defender hits the 'Designer Street'

A UNIQUE LAND ROVER Defender Works V8 is now on permanent display in the new 'Designer Street' room at Selfridges' flagship department store in London, having been inserted through a first-floor window and reassembled on the menswear floor.

Created as a one-off vehicle, the Selfridges Edition is based on the iconic Defender Works V8 – 70th Edition and features a number of bespoke elements, including Bronze Green paint, a branded hood in trademark Selfridges yellow, retro-style seats with custom stitching, and unique Selfridges badging.

Having been craned into the store's first floor as a kit of parts, a team of five Land Rover Classic workers constructed the Defender in full view of the shopping public in just over four days.

More than 930 hours of expert craftsmanship have gone into creating this unique vehicle, which started life as a 2016 Defender 110 2.2 TDCi Pick Up at Jaguar Land Classic Works in Coventry almost five months ago.

This year Land Rover is celebrating its 70th anniversary while Selfridges will celebrate 110 years of trading next year.

landrover.com



Jaguar goes rallying

Jaguar to celebrate 70 years of sports car heritage



WHEN YOU THINK OF rally cars, AWD drive four-door saloons and hot hatches spring to mind. What doesn't spring to mind is the Jaguar F-TYPE, especially with no roof.

But that hasn't stopped Jaguar developing two F-TYPE Convertible rally cars, with design cues from the F-TYPE Chequered Flag Limited Edition. The cars have been built to continue the brand's celebration of 70 years of sports car

heritage, which started with the stunning 1948 XK 120.

The one-off F-TYPE rally cars also pay homage to the legendary Jaguar XK 120 registered 'NUB 120' which, in the early 1950s in the hands of Ian Appleyard, completed three consecutive Alpine Rallies without incurring a single penalty point, and won the RAC and Tulip. Both of the rally-specification F-TYPE

Convertibles are powered by Jaguar's 296 bhp 2.0-litre four-cylinder petrol engine. With modifications overseen by Jaguar Design and Engineering, both cars were built to FIA specification, with upgraded brakes and suspension fitted alongside a protective rollcage, race-seats with six-point harness, bonnet-mounted light pod and fire extinguisher.

"I was fascinated to see how we could take our modern day sports car to a similar character," said Ian Callum, Jaguar Director of Design.

The rally F-TYPEs also feature upgrades to the brakes, suspension and drivetrain. The rally cars' livery takes design inspiration from the new F-TYPE Chequered Flag Limited Edition, which features a range of subtle exterior visual enhancements, including unique 20-inch Gloss Black wheels with a Diamond Turned finish and a Black Contrast roof on the Coupé. Inside, the luxurious Ebony Windsor Leather interior features performance seats with embossed chequered flag headrests.

jaguar.co.uk

Rolls-Royce debuts 'Spirit of Ecstasy' Fabergé egg

TWO OF THE WORLD'S MOST well-known luxury brands, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars and Fabergé have joined forces to create one unique 'Spirit of Ecstasy' Fabergé Egg. The design, conceived by Rolls-Royce Designers Stefan Monro and Alex Innes and rendered by Fabergé Lead Designer Liisa Talgren, has been brought to life by Fabergé workmaster Paul Jones.

The Egg, which stands at 160mm and weighs just 400g, rests on an engine-turned, hand-engraved, purple enamel guilloché base of 18 karat white gold. Upon operating the movement, the boughs open to present

the hand-sculpted Spirit of Ecstasy in frosted rock crystal. The rose gold vanes, embellished with nearly 10 carats of round white diamonds, resolve into swathes of natural amethyst weighing over 390 carats.

The 'Spirit of Ecstasy' Fabergé Egg was premiered at the House of Rolls-Royce in Goodwood, West Sussex, England. The Egg will then be on public display in Fabergé's London window this Christmastime. After that the Egg is destined for the residence of its new owner, who is a renowned collector of both brands.

faberge.com, rolls-royce.com





Get away from the norm

In the words of classic comedians Monty Python, 'and now for something completely different'. Virtuozity tries out the left-field Genesis G70 sports saloon

WHEN IT COMES TO sports saloons, there is such a wide choice of cars available, it can be almost impossible to pick one out from the muddled crowd. So just to muddy the waters even further, there is life beyond the popular British and German offerings.

The Japanese also having models in this cram packed segment, but so do the Koreans. Hyundai may not be the first name that pops into your head when thinking of a sports saloon, but it's premium brand Genesis certainly should. The Genesis G70 slides very neatly into the fray, taking on the BMW 3-Series, Mercedes C Class, Audi A4 and Jaguar XE

But should the European masters be worried by the Eastern interloper? In a word, yes. The Genesis G70 is the brand's first real attempt at a performance saloon,





The Genesis is extremely comfortable, giving a very gratifying driving experience.

and they've certainly attacked this highly competitive market with guns blazing.

Firstly, the G70 is rear-wheel-drive, so that's the first box ticked. You can also spec it with all-wheel-drive if you wish. Secondly, it's also pretty rapid, with the 2.0 litre model hitting 100 km/h in just 6.1 seconds and the 3.3 litre V6 model doing it in around 5.0 seconds flat.

All this power is fed to the road via an eight-speed automatic transmission, which also has a number of performance options as standard. Add to this accurate electrically assisted steering (albeit lacking a bit of feel) and excellent suspension that allows a smooth ride, but little mid-corner roll. That's a difficult balance for any manufacturer to get right, but Genesis seems to have hit the bullseye on their very first try.

On the outside the G70 is a little anonymous. That's not to say it's not a pretty car, but it's certainly not shouting its presence from the roof tops. At the front the shield-shaped grille starts off some elegant sweeping lines that end in a tight rear end, that is neat and well-thought out.

Inside, the trim has a premium feel, with a huge range of available features, including quilted leather, a 15-speaker audio system, and an easy to use touchscreen display. The Genesis is extremely comfortable, giving a very gratifying driving experience. The rear is

a little cramped compared to some of the opposition, but that shouldn't put you off unless you regularly carry basketball players long distances.

For the driver there's a wide range of driver-assist features, including adaptive cruise control, automated emergency braking, and blind-spot monitoring with rear cross-traffic alert.

The biggest question is will people consider a Genesis over the established premium performance manufacturers? In short, Genesis needs to do some stronger marketing to cover the lack of a history that the others trade so heavily on.





Brave new world

Virtuozity drives the new Ford Expedition Platinum, to see if the famous American brand can keep pace as car buyers shift their purchasing priorities

IF YOU LIKE YOUR cars big your only choice is to head to the US. American Car manufacturers are the past masters in large SUVs, with a leaning towards comfort and practicality, rather than luxury and performance. Or are they?

As globalization takes hold and buyers move from saloons to SUVs in droves, the big American brands have shifted gears, heading up in the luxury segments, to counter the European's vice-like grip on performance luxury SUVs.

Yes, you can still buy a Ford Expedition with cloth seats and a lower option level, for use as a daily school run wagon or a weekend off-roader, but you can also buy the Platinum Edition, which is perhaps one of the most surprising vehicles you are ever likely to drive.

Why? Well, for starters, it's bloody fast. The Ford 3.5 litre V6 Ecoboost engine is a real gem. In the Platinum it comes in its highest state of tune, pushing out 400 horsepower and 650 Nm of torque. When you plant your foot on the accelerator, the 2.5 tonne car takes off like a firecracker. To say it's quite a surprise would be a bit of an understatement.

It also handles quite well, thanks to multilink independent suspension, continuously controlled damping and a supple ride that the Europeans can only dream of. Even the brakes are good, albeit without much feel or feedback (but then it is an SUV).

Of course, it's a huge SUV, so if you push it too hard physics will start to take over, so the key to the big Ford is to get

your braking done early, slow through the corners and use that epic engine to power out the other side. That's if you want to drive it like that. The Expedition is more about luxurious cruising, than blasting around.

The engine is bolted to a ten-speed transmission (yes, ten gears), which can seem a little OTT when you first get behind the wheel. However, that crazy number of cogs actually means that the Ford always has a gear to suit, and it's pretty accurate when picking them, so you don't find it hunting for gears.

You can also manually reduce the number of gears, so off-road driving should in theory be made a lot easier. On that subject, the Expedition would make an excellent camper, as there's enough

The Platinum Edition is fully loaded, fast, agile and luxurious.

room for half the family to sleep inside. No need for an expensive tent or caravan.

As well as the very long list of standard items on the Expedition, the Platinum gets auto deployable running boards, power boot, LED fog lamps, a 360-degree, split view rear camera, memory heated and cooled seats, memory steering wheel, memory pedals (just in case you can't get that power steering wheel just right), stop/start, auto high beam, lane assist, lane alert, pre-collision assist, and pedestrian detection.

Add to that three rows of extremely comfortable seats, with both second and third rows automatically folding in the Platinum, and you have pretty much all your bases covered. Even the materials used for the interior are vastly improved over American cars of old.

With the third row of seats folded away the boot is gigantic; perfect for trips to Ikea or three months' worth of groceries. There's even a small boot with all the seats in place. The Expedition is a truly flexible vehicle.

The Ford Expedition Platinum isn't going to scare the Range Rover or Mercedes GL sales team, as it falls short on performance, trim and on-road handling, but then that's not the market this is aimed at. The Ford is half the price of those cars and isn't pretending to be in the premium luxury segment.

What Ford have done is take a tried and tested platform that people clearly love and give it a premium feel. And as the technology gap in infotainment narrows even further, buying those premium SUVs becomes harder and harder to justify.

The Platinum Edition is fully loaded, fast, agile and luxurious. That's pretty much most people's wish list for an SUV. The only thing beyond that is a bit more speed, a bit more luxury and badge snobbery. If you hate money, buy the

luxury brands. If you like to get a lot for your money, then the big Ford is pretty much spot on.

In short Ford has this one well and truly spot on.

ford.com



Higher ground



Maserati heads up in the world with its stunning Levante. *Virtuozity* investigates if Italian sports car cool translates into the world of the SUV
BY TIM ANSELL

JUST THE NAME MASERATI can bring a tingle to any car lover's spine. More a connoisseur's choice than Ferrari, less shouty than Lamborghini, and certainly more interesting than any of the German offerings, Maserati has that certain something many manufacturers can only wish for.

From Grand Prix racing through to luxury grand tourers, the trident logo of

the famous brand has certainly graced an eclectic mix of machinery, topping off an interesting history with its current line-up of coupes and saloons.

But with the brand growing steadily under the controlling hand of the mighty Fiat Group it's time to look at new markets. And with the motoring world leaning more and more towards the SUV body style, stepping into the 4x4 market was the next logical step.

But Maserati clearly decided that the most important word in Sport Utility Vehicle was Sport. With its Ferrari built 3.0 litre V6 engine available in two variants (350hp or 430hp), torque vectoring all wheel drive and a limited slip rear differential, the Levante is certainly no shopping mall slouch.

Owning a SUV makes a lot of sense for growing families and Maserati want



you to know you can do so yet still keep a good looking, sporty Italian car on your drive. Why walk to the shops for two litres of milk when you can sprint there with three litres of power under your foot? Want to add a dash of style – and a lot of dash - to your school runs? Then this makes perfect sense.

The car sports none too subtle grille and chromed triple wing vents, as well as a charismatic interior styling which ensures you know you've 'bought Italian'. The sumptuous leather seats even feature silk inserts on the Grand Lusso model. Decent rear leg room and an effective rear A/C means rear seat passengers will also be more than comfortable. Some of the infotainment settings are less than logical, but perhaps that's the Italian quirkiness starting to come out.

On the road, the torque vectoring and LSD work really well, whilst the air suspension allows the Levante to be raised or lowered for better off road / on road performance. On the downside, the Lane Keeping Assist needs further refinement and the Grand Lusso's standard ride is too soft, but sharpens up nicely in Sports 1 mode.

And if you like to drown out your kids' squabbles with an Italian exhaust note, drop the Levante into Sports mode. The sound is glorious.

Clearly, the SUV market is quickly becoming one of the most important, even for the premium luxury manufacturers. Thankfully, Maserati have managed to keep their brand essence in the car, whilst adding height and an extra set of driven wheels.

Make no mistake, this is still very much a Maserati, but it's also a very nice SUV as well.

maserati.com

Owning a SUV
makes a lot of
sense for growing
families.

Rolling with the punches

Laughing in the face of surgeries, it seems that nothing will terminate Arnold Schwarzenegger's passion for a fine smoke

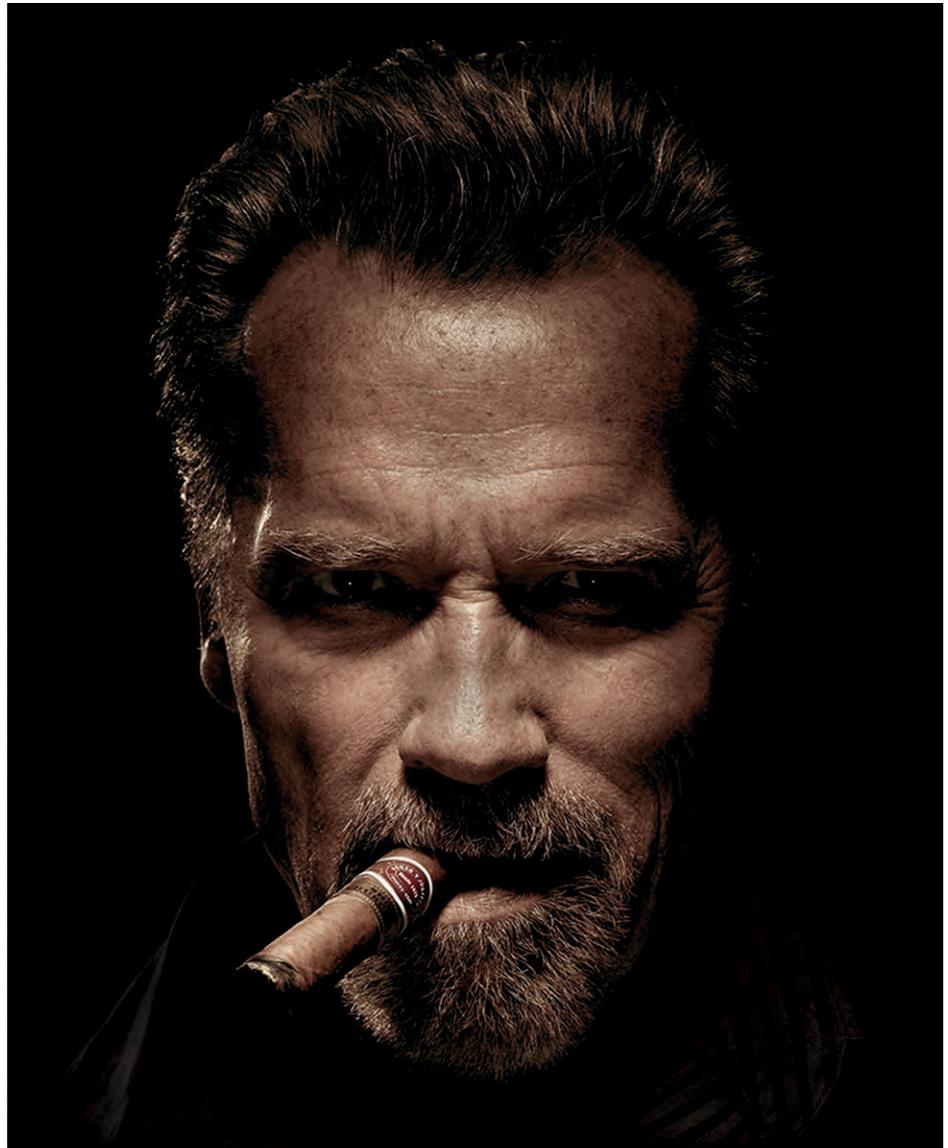
NOTHING IS MORE PRECIOUS to muscly action man and politician Arnold Schwarzenegger than his cigars.

He appeared on the Jimmy Fallon show in 2016, instructing viewers not to embarrass themselves the same way that Fallon had when he had attended one of the actor's private cigar evenings. "Don't lick the cigar. This does not make the tobacco burn slower. You are embarrassing yourself if you lick a cigar. And don't cough, that makes you look like an amateur."

Schwarzenegger once told a journalist that his interview would be measured in the time it took him to smoke a cigar, and even today, despite several health scares, Arnold Schwarzenegger's commitment to the fine pursuit of smoking cigars remains strong.

"Some things you just can't give up, like stogies and breathing," says Sylvester Stallone, a 'diehard' cigar smoker himself and friend of the muscly actor and former governor of California. As governor, he famously created a smoking tent in his governor's mansion.

"I erected a tent in the middle of this atrium where we could smoke famous Cuban cigars. We had Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives coming down for meetings and this is



where we got most of our work done, by smoking cigars, taking our jackets off, ripping our ties off and having something in common which was the cigar."

Arnie's penchant for stogies reflects his Hollywood status and he is known for choosing some of the rarest and most exclusive cigars, including highly limited creations made by Arturo Fuente. He also

confesses to a fondness for Cohibas and Punch cigars.

"I like to smoke Romeo y Julietas, and Hoyo de Monterrey is a great cigar. Milton Berle came over to my house for my 40th birthday and he brought over a box of Hoyo de Monterrey Double Coronas and gave me one. It was a spectacular smoke."

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