



Issue 6

Qatar in Colour

June 2019

Culture in Practice

Communities of Qatar

Qatar-India Year of Culture

**The Government
Communications Office
of the State of Qatar**





Issue 6

FOREWORD

Page 07

Culture in practice

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
QATAR
THE DESERT ROSE OF QATAR

Page 10

QATAR PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA
A NATIONAL ORCHESTRA TO
BE PROUD OF

Page 14

#TRAILBLAZER: PHONE ART
QATAR
ART FOR THE INSTAGRAM
AGE

Page 18

#MYVISION: FAHAD AL
OBAIDLY
DOHA DESIGN

Page 22

FATMA AL SHEBANI
HOW TRADITION HAS
TAKEN CENTRE STAGE IN
CONTEMPORARY ART

Page 26

2

Communities in Qatar

QATAR INTERNATIONAL FOOD
FESTIVAL
VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE

Page 30

#TRAILBLAZER: KHALIFA AL
MISNAD
LIVING LIFE IN FULL COLOUR

Page 34

DOHA FASHION FRIDAYS
DRESS TO IMPRESS

Page 38

THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
QATAR WELCOMES THE WORLD

Page 40

TRICLUB DOHA
SPORTING GLORY

Page 44

3

Qatar-India Year of Culture

QATAR AND INDIA
CENTURIES OF CULTURAL
CONNECTIONS

Page 50

VINEET BHATIA
CULINARY HIGH-FLIER

Page 52

WARRIORS CRICKET CLUB
HIT FOR SIX: QATAR'S GROWING
CRICKET COMMUNITY

Page 56



VIEW EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEWS ON
QLIFE.COM

Foreword



| His Excellency Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed
Al Thani

I am excited to present to you the sixth edition of *Q Magazine*, which highlights the cultures and communities that make Qatar such a vibrant and diverse country.

In Qatar, there is no place that demonstrates our multicultural society more vividly than Doha's Corniche, or waterfront promenade, where locals and visitors can walk from landmark to landmark and discover how Qatar's traditions are reflected in a modern skyline.

The traditional ships, or dhows, bob up and down along the waterfront beside the iconic, newly-opened National Museum of Qatar, and the Museum of Islamic Art, which have helped Qatar be recognised as a global cultural hub.

Souq Waqif showcases our ancient culture, with spices, falconry, and pearls on display. As the sun goes down over the Arabian Gulf, the souq comes alive, with the people of Doha enjoying the vibrant city nights.

In this edition of *Q Magazine*, we see that as Qatar grows, our traditions are celebrated. Qatar's artists have built giant steel sculptures inspired by traditional Qatari dress, while kite surfers go into the water to connect with our familial pearl diving heritage. Our sporting communities thrive and events such as the Qatar International Food Festival are allowing our palate to grow.

The magazine looks at culture through a different lens and puts the spotlight on the people who have developed, supported, and celebrated the various communities of Doha. Because of these people and influences we have found that in Qatar today, there is not one definition of culture.

Finally, and in recognition of the Qatar-India Year of Culture, we dive into Qatar's strong and historic ties with India, setting out the personal stories that are behind the continuous trade of cuisine, sports, and culture between the two countries.

In addition to this beautiful new edition of *Q Magazine*, I would like to invite you to visit our online platform *Q Life.com*, which not only contains all *Q Magazine* stories, but also insightful documentaries that are based on the people and entities featured in the magazine. If you are looking to browse through some breath-taking pictures, please discover *Q Life* on Instagram (@qlife_com).

I am sure that this *Q Magazine* will give you the opportunity to get to know Qatar and our diverse society better, and I hope that we will be able to welcome you to our country soon, so you can further discover Qatar's cultural treasures.

Saif bin Ahmed Al Thani

Director of the Government Communications Office

1

Culture in practice

Blending tradition and modernity, Qatar believes its diverse communities and their unique cultures enrich the country and its people.

2019 has so far seen the celebration of two major cultural milestones: the 10th anniversary of the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra and the opening of the National Museum of Qatar. These major events demonstrate Qatar's commitment to honouring its history while simultaneously looking towards the future.

We welcome you to explore our past as you wander through the halls of the National Museum of Qatar, listen to traditional melodies composed by our internationally-recognised orchestra and dive into Qatar's vibrant art and fashion scene.

Page 10

National Museum of Qatar: The desert rose of Qatar

Page 14

Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra: A national orchestra to be proud of

Page 18

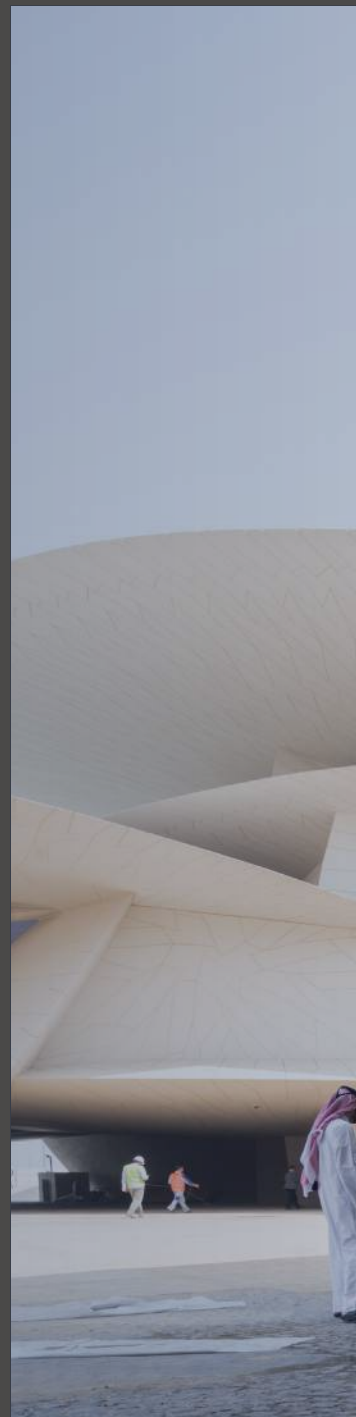
#Trailblazer Phone Art Qatar: Art for the Instagram age

Page 22

#MyVision Fahad Al Obaidly: Doha design

Page 26

Fatma Al Shebani: How tradition has taken centre stage in contemporary art



The opening of the National Museum of Qatar is a source of immense pride for our country, and an exceptional moment for engaging with people from around the world.

”

Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani,
Chair of Qatar Museums





| 114 water fountains feature in the NMoQ's park

National Museum of Qatar

The desert rose of Qatar

Artists, actors, and dignitaries gathered in Doha for the long-awaited opening of the stunning National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) in the spring of 2019.

The magnificent structure dominates the skyline, like a desert rose bursting from the surrounding landscape. At its heart sits the restored historic palace of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani.

Together, they are an image of modernity in perfect harmony with the past. The new NMoQ is a series of intersecting disks framed by the ancient arches of the old palace, enthralling architects and visitors alike.

Outside the architectural masterpieces designed by Jean Nouvel, fountains send dazzling jets of water soaring into the sunshine.

Inside, the museum takes the form of a long, winding path telling the story through evocative aromas, archaeological artefacts, commissioned artworks, monumentally-scaled art films, and more.

Together, the 11 permanent galleries take visitors on a journey from the formation of the Qatar peninsula millions of years ago to the nation's exciting and diverse present. Giving voice to its rich heritage and culture and expressing the aspirations of its people, the NMoQ will serve as a hub for discovery, creativity, and community engagement, educating a new generation and advancing Qatar's cultural vision on the global stage.

The spectacular structure embraces as its centrepiece the restored historic palace of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani (1880-1957), son of the founder of modern Qatar. This is a building that in former times was both the home of the royal family and seat of the government, and subsequently the site of Qatar's original national museum. The historic palace is now the culminating exhibit in the sweeping succession of gallery experiences.

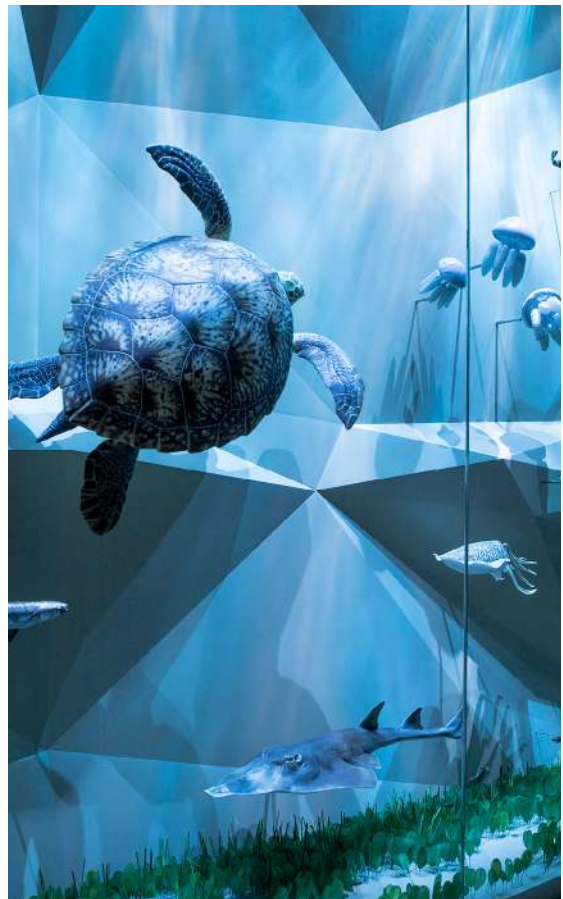
His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani officially inaugurated the immersive new museum at a ceremony attended by heads of state, dignitaries, and museum leaders from around the world.

Several well-known figures from different fields attended the opening, including British designer Victoria Beckham and supermodel Naomi Campbell, Portuguese football coach José Mourinho, US film director John Bailey,

Japanese contemporary artist Takashi Murakami, and many others. The ceremony was also attended by former President of the French Republic Nicolas Sarkozy, the Mayor of Rome Virginia Raggi, and personal representatives of His Highness the Amir.

Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums, says: "The opening of the National Museum of Qatar is a source of immense pride for our country, and an exceptional moment for engaging with people from around the world.

"The extraordinary schedule of inaugural activities we organised to celebrate the opening under the Qatar Creates umbrella drew together outstanding artists,





| *Qatar's wildlife exhibited at the NMoQ explores Qatar's natural past*

architects, thinkers, and cultural leaders from Qatar and the international community, vividly demonstrating how the National Museum of Qatar will always be a dynamic resource in its programmes as well as its exhibitions. Culture connects people, and with this new museum we believe we have created an exceptional platform for dialogue.”

Sheikha Amna bint Abdulaziz bin Jassim Al Thani, Director of the NMoQ, says: “After more than a decade of planning, we are deeply gratified to welcome the people of Qatar and our international visitors to this exciting museum.

“From the start, Qatar Museums and the National Museum team knew that we wanted to create a living experience for our people – a museum with a heart.

“We have created galleries full of movement, sound, and colour in order to engage our public fully, with their senses and emotions as well as their intellects, and have

assembled creative and authentic content that is so rich that people will discover something new with each visit. It is now time for the discoveries to begin.”

In designing the building that makes these experiences possible, Jean Nouvel drew inspiration from the desert rose, a flower-like formation that occurs naturally in the Gulf region when minerals crystallise in the crumbly soil just below the surface of a shallow salt basin.

Described by Nouvel as “the first architectural structure that nature itself creates,” the desert rose became the model for the museum’s complex structure of large interlocking disks of different diameters and curvatures – some vertical and constituting supports, others horizontal and resting on other disks – which surround the historic palace like a necklace.

A central court, the Baraha, sits within the ring of galleries and serves as a gathering space for outdoor cultural events. On the outside, the museum’s sand-



coloured concrete harmonises with the desert environment, so that the building appears to grow out of the ground. Inside, the structure of interlocking disks continues, creating an extraordinary variety of irregularly shaped volumes.

Jean Nouvel says: “To imagine a desert rose as a basis for design was a very advanced idea, even a utopian one. To construct a building with great curved disks, intersections, and cantilevered angles – the kind of shapes made by a desert rose – we had to meet enormous technical challenges.

“This building is at the cutting edge of technology, like Qatar itself. As a result, it is a total object: an experience that is at once

architectural, spatial, and sensory, with spaces inside that exist nowhere else.”

The museum is organised into three chapters – ‘Beginnings’, ‘Life in Qatar’, and ‘The Modern History of Qatar’ – taking visitors from the geological period long before the peninsula was inhabited, through to the present day. There is also space for temporary exhibitions.

Because Qatar continues to develop at such a rapid pace, the work of the NMoQ is far from finished, however. It will continue to document the history of a rising nation through new exhibits and exhibitions, playing a vital role in Qatar’s cultural memory for years to come.



| The restored palace of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani lies at the heart of the NMoQ

Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra

A national orchestra to be proud of

In its 10th anniversary year, Executive Director Kurt Meister talks about the creation and growth of the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra.



The soaring chords cut through the air like a lone bird breaking the desert dawn. This is Qatar Airways' signature music, created by Qatari composer Dana Al Fardan and played by the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra. It is instantly recognisable to any traveller.

The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra has more than one string to its bow, however. Founded by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation – of which the orchestra is a member – the orchestra plays an eclectic mix of classical and Arab music, and modern show-stoppers.

Kurt Meister, Executive Director of the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, has played a major role in completing the extraordinary task of constructing a world-class orchestra from scratch.

Originally from Germany, Meister was a member, and subsequently manager, of the Bavarian State Opera for

21 years in total, and also worked as the general manager of the Bavarian Symphony Orchestra. He was brought out of retirement to form the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra.

“It was an incredible challenge,” he explained. “It was June 2007, Doha was not known for any orchestra, and yet I had to convince international musicians to come here. But now, if you ask these musicians, they think of Doha as their home.”

The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra brings together musicians from 28 nationalities, including 14 Arab members. Kurt filtered through an extraordinary 3,200 applications to find the 101 best musicians among them and conducted up to eight auditions simultaneously. It was a huge undertaking, as he only had seven months to set everything up.

“At first, I was nervous we wouldn't get the applications,”



| *The 101 members of the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra playing at their 10th anniversary performance*

says Kurt. “But they flooded in. The auditions are now blind, with musicians playing behind the curtain, which means they are selected by the orchestra on musical ability alone.”

The auditions demanded a gruelling international schedule, taking place in London, Madrid, Paris, Moscow, Cairo, Zurich and Vienna. Once completed, the selected musicians came to Doha with their families. Of the original orchestra, 80 per cent of those musicians are still in place to this day.

The orchestra has also developed its own distinctive style. Within the space of a few weeks, it performs everything from video-game music to a classical repertoire including the works of Haydn and Berlioz, and Arabic compositions.

For his part, Kurt has embraced Arabic music, including the rababa - the oldest Arabic instrument, dating from

the eighth century, and made from a coconut shell with one string.

The orchestra goes on tour often, most recently to Russia and China. “It is important for an orchestra to be on tours” says Kurt. “This is how Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra can, in terms of its artistic level, be compared to the best orchestras around the world”. In 2016, it played a sold-out tour featuring Rachmaninoff’s piano concerto and Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 5 in London’s Royal Albert Hall at the BBC Proms Festival.

So how has the orchestra matured since its formation? As Kurt explains, during the philharmonic’s 10th anniversary concert, it performed the same programme, including a composition by Maurice Ravel’s Boléro, as it did during its inaugural concert.

“But this time, the orchestra performed without a conductor. That has never happened. You could see

“I am so proud of everything we have achieved. There is an extraordinary cultural diversity in Doha now.”



the self-confidence of the orchestra. The drama was extraordinary.” All members of the orchestra are soloists, which demands the highest artistic level.

Unknown to Kurt during the 10th anniversary performance, which was broadcast live on television, the skin of the soloist’s drum was damaged. On the final bar, the skin broke.

“If it had happened three minutes earlier, we would have had to stop the concert,” says Kurt. “For my own blood pressure, I am so glad that I didn’t know at the time that that was happening.”

Her Highness Sheikha Moza was there for the orchestra’s first performance, and also for its 10th anniversary concert, allowing the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra to showcase what it has achieved over the past decade.

Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra continues to balance its repertoire between Arab and Western music. It has achieved new heights by collaborating with local artists

such as Wael Binali, Hamad Al Naama, Nasser Nasseb, and Dana Al Fardan. In the case of the latter, a project called ‘The Beginning’ was recorded and filmed at the Hamad International Airport runway with a Qatar Airways A380 in the background.

The orchestra has also conducted two airplane flash-mobs – when going on tour, it performs the music live on the plane its musicians are travelling on, to the surprise of other passengers.

The musicians are a happy family of different nationalities. As they perform together, their closeness is apparent because of one reason: music. They have shared a momentous and highly successful musical journey. And Kurt says there have been noticeable changes in Qatar’s cultural scene since the orchestra’s establishment.

“At the beginning, there were less cultural events,” he says. “Now you have galleries, jazz clubs, different types of music. For each taste, you can find something. We have people of every age in our audience.

“Our chamber music concerts at Qatar National Library and the Museum of Islamic Art have different kinds of audiences to the people we welcome at our regular symphony concerts. I am so proud of what the orchestra has achieved, and that there is an extraordinary cultural diversity in Doha now.”

A HISTORY IN NUMBERS

In

2007

Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, *established* Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra.

Since then,

2,400

musicians from around the world have auditioned for one of the...

101

prestigious positions available in the orchestra.

2008

One year later, in , the Orchestra played its *inaugural* concert.

Internationally, the orchestra has given

31

concerts so far in...

8

countries around the world.



#Trailblazer: Phone Art Qatar

Art for the Instagram age

First there was old-fashioned photographic film.
Then came digital cameras. Now, Phone Art Qatar is pioneering
a new form of photography.

“It felt like we were discovering a hidden garden. There was a nostalgic feeling to the old neighbourhood streets.”

Latifa Al Darwish,
Co-founder of Phone Art Qatar



Phone Art Qatar aims to introduce mobile phone photography as a contemporary art medium.

To encourage people to get involved, it holds “photowalks” that document the changing face of Qatar and explore the country’s hidden gems.

Photographer and co-founder Latifa Al Darwish says: “Qatar is growing so rapidly. It is nice to discover hidden locations that get lost, and old areas. It is good to photograph them while we still have the chance.”

The walks are held on Saturdays, and the movement has now become international, with a Phone Art group established in Yemen and many other locations. Phone Art Qatar has 6,000 followers on Instagram, with followers posting photos on the platform and tagging





its Instagram handle for a chance to get featured on the page.

It also collaborates with Msheireb Museums, Qatar Foundation, and the Sheraton Grand Doha Hotel.

Latifa says: “We started two years ago and our community is growing. More than 500 people are now involved, and our members are going places. Seeing people’s different perspectives opens your mind.”

Her favourite walk was around the Al Wakrah Souq area. “It felt like we were discovering a hidden garden,” she says. “There was a nostalgic feel to the old neighbourhood streets. I had an emotional and personal connection as it reminded me of my childhood in the area. We went into abandoned houses and found old photos and old posters, relics of previous lives.

“We photographed the architecture of the 70s and 80s, documenting the designs and patterns, the layouts and old trees.

“Afterwards, someone contacted us on social media and said: ‘That was my grandfather’s house’. It is wonderful to make those connections.”

She adds: “Through photowalks, I’ve gotten to meet the photography community, as well as some very talented people who didn’t know they had this eye for photography. It is good to learn from each other.”

What is her advice for budding photographers? “Just take photos. You learn mainly from practicing. We want people to feel empowered to be able to produce art through an accessible medium.”

Follow @pa.qatar on Instagram to discover the hidden gems of Qatar and learn more about Photo Art Qatar’s photowalks.



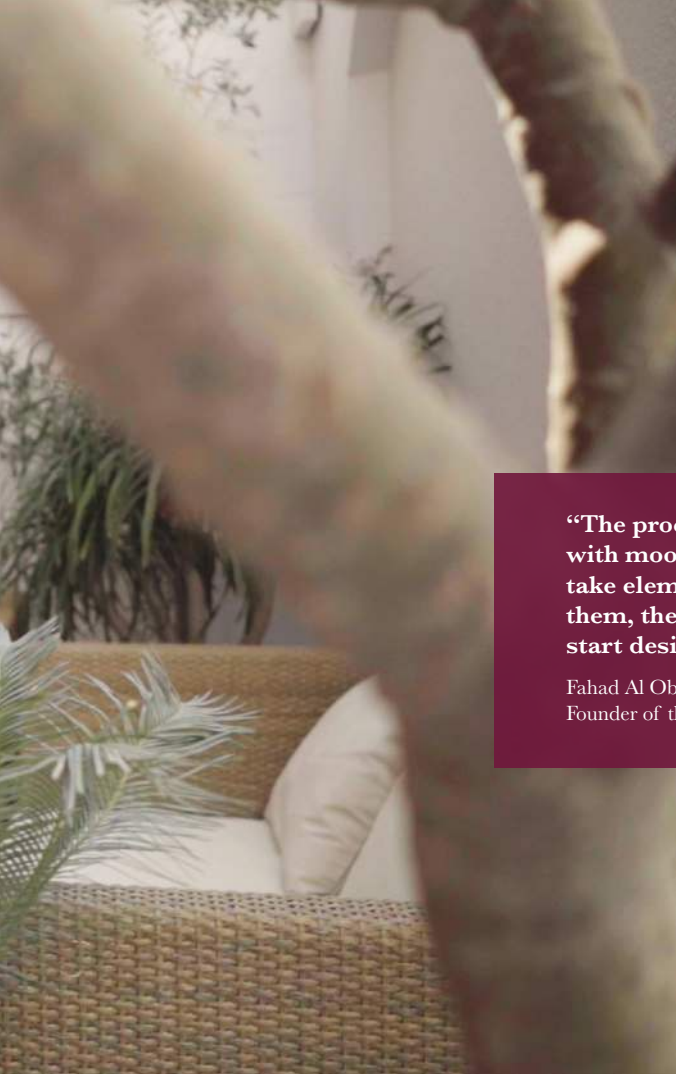


| Fahad Al Obaidly visualises his next piece

#MyVision: Fahad Al Obaidly

Doha design

Fahad Al Obaidly is a fashion designer, artist, and creative. He explains the language of creativity and his mission to promote design in Qatar.



“The process starts in my head, with mood boards and photos. I take elements I like and sketch them, then I select the fabrics and start designing.”

Fahad Al Obaidly,
Founder of the Qatar Fashion Society

To Fahad Al Obaidly, the delicate shimmer of silk forever evokes his mother.

The artist, designer, and film-maker paints a vivid picture of a mesmerising woman seen through the eyes of a small child. “The inspiration behind what I do is my mother,” he says. “She would watch old Hollywood movies on the black and white TV, observe their clothes closely and sketch them, to then recreate the designs for herself.

“She idolised those screen stars, their confidence. She loved layers, and she wanted to express her femininity

through her clothes. She loved silk because of how it made her feel as a woman. Fashion brought the femininity she had maybe lost through being a mother and career woman.”

These early lessons were the start of an extraordinary journey for Fahad. This journey has taken him through the fashion of the Ottomans, to the couture workshops of Milan, and the streets of Paris – and back to Qatar.

He explains: “I’ve always been interested in textiles. Early on, I did a project on Ottoman culture and how it informs Western design. I knew immediately this was what I wanted to do in life.

“My grandma told me: ‘Don’t do something because you can do it, but because you need to do it. That need will fuel you.’”

Fahad – whose three sisters are all artists – spent six years in Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia, and Turkey, then Paris and Milan, where he studied.

“In Milan they allowed me to go backstage and into the studios,” he says. “I learnt fine tailoring skills. No



| *Fahad Al Obaidly demonstrating his creative process*

one can compete with the Italians. It was a wonderful foundation.”

He returned to Qatar to design. “I specialise in menswear,” he says. “There are lots of men designing for women, but in this region, no one designs for men.

“I want to make pieces that are part of your skin, soul, and identity. In Qatar we love quality, with minimal designs made from high-end fabrics – and the finish needs to be perfect. Cashmere gives us that feeling.”

A residency at Doha Fire Station and a course in

storytelling at the Doha Film Institute have both helped him to develop his skills.

“Clothing is all about storytelling,” he says. “Every day when you open your wardrobe, you choose how people perceive you. You see it is a random act, but actually it is not. You choose clothes that represent the voice you want that day.

“Why am I dressing up? Who do I want to impress? Who am I? Your clothes give you cultural identity and status.”

He road-tests his designs in Doha’s coffee shops. “Qataris

love coffee shops,” he says, “so that is where I do market research. I am a human mannequin, wearing my designs. People come and talk to me about them, and I find out what they like and what they don’t.”

“Fashion is always changing, but I keep my eye on my customers. I have never challenged people’s right to be traditional.”

Fahad founded the Qatar Fashion Society and runs a fashion incubator. “Designers come with their ideas, we help them to work out a business plan,” he says.



He has curated 11 art exhibits, and now has over ten years’ experience in fashion entrepreneurship, which he is keen to pass on.

He supports applicants of Fashion Trust Arabia, founded by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, which took place in Spring 2019 at Msheireb Museums and Doha Fire Station in the presence of world-renowned designers including Victoria Beckham.

Fahad explains: “Qatar is the biggest consumer in the luxury segment in fashion and now we want to produce here.”

Some 22 students graduate annually in fashion from Virginia Commonwealth University School of Arts in Qatar. These students need support upon leaving university, he explains. “While the school provides the know-how and design theory, when it comes to the business side of fashion, students are not equipped.

“We help them by matching them with production houses, public relations agencies, retailers, and department stores.”

Personally, Fahad wants to continue promoting design in Qatar. His latest collection is inspired by the architecture of Doha. “The stripes represent Qatar National Library,” he says. “Driving around Qatar and taking photos inspires me and makes me proud.

“The process starts in my head, with mood boards and photos. I take elements I like and sketch them, then I select the fabrics and start designing.”

Pointing to a rail of beautiful, unique pieces, he says: “There is always a message, sometimes it is hidden between the lines. Is it the white taking over the blue, or is it the other way around?”

It has been a long road, and Fahad of course credits his mother with his success. “She was a powerful goddess mother,” he says. “Now, she says to me: you are my success story.”

Fatma Al Shebani

How tradition has taken centre stage in contemporary art

Challenging, reverential and pioneering in equal measure, Fatma Al Shebani uses traditional Qatari motifs to create art in a modern setting.

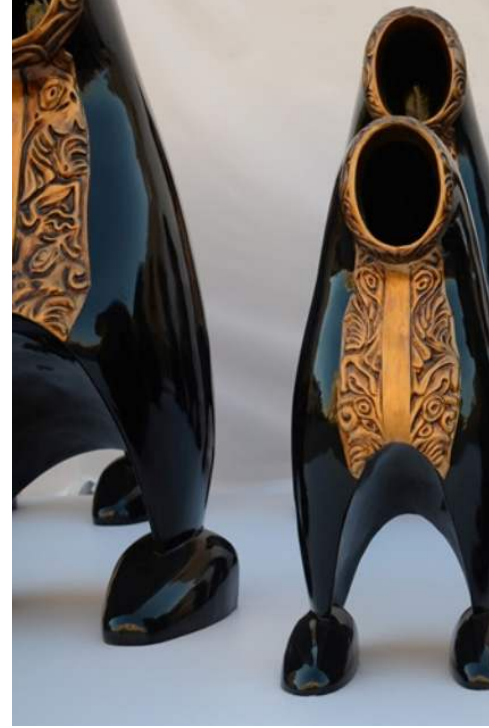
Can you tell us about your journey as an artist?

I like to believe that art chose me. Ever since I was a little girl, I had big questions about the nature of the world, wondering what God has created. I grew up watching this world in deep silence with a big appetite for the amazing colours that life has to offer.

At university, I turned my dreams and visions into physical sculptures and paintings. I have run exhibitions across the Arab world, and internationally from London to New York to Paris.



| Batoula by Fatma Al Shebani



What has been your proudest moment since your career began?

Painting graffiti on the West Bank wall, along with my solo exhibition in Bethlehem in 2013. I interacted with the people living in Palestine, and hope that I have changed the way others think – and even perhaps encouraged other artists to follow in my footsteps.

Another proud moment was when my first sculptures were erected in public squares in Qatar.

Much of your art integrates traditional Qatari culture into a modern setting. Why is this important?

I am a rebel when it comes to art, innovation and creating new things. Most of my artwork has come from traditional concepts because I believe that through this kind of artwork, the younger generations in Qatar will still be able to visualise the culture of the past. Even now that we are living in the modern age, I hope it can still be preserved and valued.



| Boutnag by Fatma Al Shebani

What does your Batoula art piece mean to you?

In Arabic history, the Islamic mask for married women, the Batoula, is considered an important part of any woman's dress. It was a signal differentiating young girls and older women.

Growing up, I adored older ladies and it was always a pleasure to take a peek under their Batoula to see their faces filled with love and motherhood. I remembered the purple pigment the Batoula leaves behind on the



| Close-up of 'The Mother' by Fatma Al Shebani

forehead, which is said to protect the skin from ultraviolet light.

The Batoula sculpture was created while I was revisiting memories of my childhood, the simpler life and the beautiful faces I have seen covered by a mask that holds behind it many stories – especially love stories.

Recently, you also created the installation titled "The Mother". What does it mean?

"The Mother" is a conceptual artwork inspired by our homeland. The artwork is influenced by the look and feel of the tree, where obstacles may hinder its growth and prosperity, but despite its small size, it stands tall and shades those underneath.

When you inherit the seed of glory, you inherit too the storms, earthquakes and volcanoes that come along with them, but the storms leave behind fertile land that promises a better future.

Audiences can interact with "The Mother" by writing letters to our homeland and hanging them on the barbed wire entwined around the tree to make it grow and bloom ever larger. I proposed this concept in memory of the first year of the blockade imposed on the State of Qatar on 5 June 2017.

How do you see the art scene in Qatar developing over the coming years?

Qatar's art scene is diverse and growing.

In Qatar, contemporary art is the genre of choice. We are opening museums, such as the National Museum of Qatar, which is bound to become another icon of Qatar's glory. We have the Museum of Islamic Art, Mathaf Arab Museum of Modern Art, Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Msheireb Museums, Katara Cultural Village, and many galleries.

I am glad to say, the art scene in Qatar is thriving.

2

Communities in Qatar

People from all walks of life and from every corner of the globe call Qatar home.

These communities have helped create the fabric of Qatari society, contributing to its customs, traditions, and passions.

As these communities grow, they transcend cultural divides and bring together people of all backgrounds through sport, food, and fashion.

Page 30

Qatar International Food Festival: Variety is the spice of life

Page 34

#Trailblazer Khalifa Al Misnad: Living life in full colour

Page 38

Doha Fashion Fridays: Dress to impress

Page 40

The Ministry of Interior: Qatar welcomes the world

Page 44

TriClub Doha: Sporting glory



*Culture connects people, and through international festivals,
our new museums and an array of programmes for
exploration and exchange, the arts in Qatar are both growing
organically from within and reaching out across the seas.*

”

Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani,
Chairperson of Qatar Museums





| *The live cooking theatre at QIFF 2019 allowed visitors to learn how world-famous chefs create delicious meals with ease*

Qatar International Food Festival

*Variety is
the spice of life*

It is a celebration of life through food. Qatar's longest-running multicultural event, the 10th edition of the Qatar International Food Festival (QIFF), took Doha by storm this year.

Street food such as noodles and samosas shared space with the most elegant of international haute cuisine and American classics.

The sizzling of grills and heavy aroma of spices filled the night sky, as Doha residents shared food together at the vast open-air festival, in what has become a much-anticipated annual celebration for the city.

The March event brought culinary and cultural experiences from around the globe to the city, with 37 big-name chefs participating over eleven days. It highlights Doha's growing "foodie" culture, and the role food is playing in bringing Qatar's communities together.

Over 150 stalls were set up at Oxygen Park in Qatar Foundation's Education City for a programme that featured not only cooking demonstrations but also musical entertainment and activities for children.

Mashal Shahbik from the Qatar National Tourism Council explains why the event is important. "It's the biggest festival in town," she says. "Hundreds of people attend. We have live cookery demonstrations, new recipes, much Qatari inspiration, and many activities."

"We want to have a great calendar of events, for residents and visitors alike. The fusion between cultures is celebrated and enjoyed by all."

She adds: "Food brings people together, everyone can have their favourites. Mixed cultures are reflected in food. It unites us."

It was above all a community event. The Torba Farmers Market brought farm-to-table experience to the festival, while local schools took part in healthy food workshops at the Qatar National Library during the celebrations.

Doha's five-star restaurants once again offered diners the opportunity to join internationally-acclaimed chefs for an interactive cooking and tasting experience through Chef's Table events.

The hugely popular live cooking theatre this year featured Japanese



| QIFF 2019 brought people from all over Qatar to Education City's Oxygen Park

chef Masaharu Morimoto, Ireland's Shane Macneill and French patissier and chef Eric Lanlard, among others. Celebrity chefs also hosted cooking masterclasses, showcasing specific culinary skills.

The festivities also extended to more than 90 restaurants around Qatar throughout the month of March, with special three-course menus on offer at discounted rates.

Mashal, herself a self-confessed foodie, says that all the behind-the-scenes hard work is worthwhile when crowds begin to congregate at the festival. She says: "When

I watch the crowd from afar and see how people are enjoying the food, that is my proudest moment."

She explains how the organisers keep the event fresh, a decade on. "Now, we take the festival to a new location every few years to give it a new look and feel and to showcase Qatar's scenic venues. It will continue to grow bigger and better."

There is one simple reason for the festival's enduring success, she says, jokingly: "Everyone loves food!"

"Food brings people together, everyone can have their favourites. Mixed cultures are reflected in food. It unites us."

Mashal Shahbik, Director of Festivals and Tourism Events at the Qatar National Tourism Council



| Celebrity chef Manal Al Alalem adding the final touches during her live Jordanian cooking demonstration

FIVE REASONS TO VISIT QATAR



2

Visit Qatar's architectural masterpieces such as the Qatar National Library, the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha Tower, and the National Museum of Qatar



1

Arrive at the five-star Hamad International Airport on one of the world's most luxurious airlines, Qatar Airways



4

Explore the Qatari desert while dune bashing, camel riding, or camping under the stars



3

Learn about the rich history of Arabian falconry at Qatar's traditional market, Souq Waqif



5

Visit countless festivals celebrating food, culture, and shopping – attended by international celebrities such as the world-renowned pastry chef Dominique Ansel or Indian singer A.R. Rahman



#Trailblazer: Khalifa Al Misnad

Living life in full colour

A lawyer, creative, entrepreneur, and kitesurfer, Khalifa Al Misnad mixes business life with adventure.



| Khalifa takes a rest while mountain biking in Colorado, United States

What inspires you?

I draw my inspiration from different aspects of life and the experiences available to me. I feel the more we experience life outside of our comfort zone, the more we can appreciate the infinite beauty that life has to offer. We take tens of thousands of breaths a day, each one can be inspirational if awareness is brought to those fleeting moments, so I always try and find inspiration through slowing down and being more conscious.

How did you become passionate about water sports?

With Qatar being a peninsula, I always wanted to explore what our sea had to offer. I first tried scuba diving, and then came across kitesurfing, which is a relatively new sport. Qatar has a historic connection to the sea through pearl diving, and since we've moved on from the trade, there is a danger that this connection will be lost. Kitesurfing allows me to re-connect with the elements.

It's an incredibly freeing sport as you can control your movement both horizontally and vertically, but also very freeing from a mental and spiritual perspective. Qatar could be a destination for kitesurfers internationally as the wind and temperature conditions are ideal. We're also seeing a growing number of Qataris getting involved in sports that will lead them back to the water, and there are fantastic sports initiatives by Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani that encourage Qataris to reconnect with our environment.

How do you juggle being an entrepreneur with kitesurfing and other leisure activities?

We all look for some form of financial stability, yet it's important we devote energy to our self – the building block that will influence health, relationships, and overall life. Working as an entrepreneur can really consume you, so it's important to build a great team and culture around you to help find balance in life. Kitesurfing is one of my



“I feel as though my experiences have really opened the world to me and I have learned how to appreciate the fundamental miracles around us.”

Khalifa Al Misnad,
Founding Partner at Al Misnad Law

| *Khalifa overlooks the dramatic canyons on a hike in Utah, United States*

many hobbies and I love to do it in Qatar, which has some of the best kitesurfing conditions in the world.

How has the mix of being an entrepreneur, a creative, and sports fanatic made you into the person you are today?

As a teenager, I played basketball for the Qatar National Team. Sports helped me to develop discipline, teamwork, leadership, and good health. I started my entrepreneurial journey while studying mechanical engineering and followed it up with a master’s degree in law, which taught me about perseverance and finding balance. I then worked as an in-house legal counsel for Qatar Petroleum, where I had the opportunity to travel. Through travel I picked up photography, which really taught me how to “frame” the world around me in a different way.

Now I’m getting back into competitive sports and have been running around the world – my last race was 190km in Qatar. I feel as though my experiences have really opened the world to me and I have learned how to appreciate the fundamental miracles around us.

How can Qatari youth build a successful career, whilst also following their adventurous dreams?

I do not believe that a career and an adventure should be looked at in isolation, and I have not followed a stereotypical career path. As humans we tend to follow the path of least resistance and often conform to external pressures. It’s important to challenge our assumptions, and to do so, we need to venture out of our comfort zones to connect with our raw selves. In Qatar today, we live extremely comfortable lives in comparison to our ancestors, and we need to make it a point to venture into the unknown to find the pearls.



| Resting on a mountain biking expedition in Utah, United States

Doha Fashion Fridays

Dress to impress

Doha Fashion Fridays showcases street portraits of guest workers in their best dress each Friday – their day off. We talk to photographer Aparna Jayakumar about the unique platform she contributes to.

From henna-haired men to the bright silk saris of Indian women, Doha Fashion Fridays provides a vivid picture of modern Doha.

It is an Instagram showcase of guest workers in Doha, dressed up for their day off work. The street portraits of the workers tell the story of individual cultures in the Doha melting pot.

It is the brainchild of Sudanese political cartoonist Khalid Al Baih, who was inspired by seeing guest workers gather on the Corniche to relax.

Doha Fashion Fridays (DFF) photographer Aparna Jayakumar explains: “One day, while walking in the Corniche, Khalid noticed how fashionable the guest workers are when they get together on the Corniche on Fridays.

“He wanted to turn it into a project that talks about their stories via fashion, a project that is a cross between a street fashion blog and Humans of New York, and was looking for a photographer to collaborate with. When he told me about the idea, I got wildly excited and that’s how DFF began.

“I go to the Corniche and photograph men and women who catch my eye. I’m always on the lookout for the most fashionable – those who are bursting with personality and have something interesting to say.”

Aparna, who comes from Mumbai, says that she has been struck by the individuality of those she photographs, many of whom wear the traditional workers’ blue jumpsuit during the working week.

“One who stands out is Moses Mintah from Ghana with his dapper brightly coloured suit and velvet bow-tie, or the Nzume couple from Cameroon who always try to wear matching outfits.”

She believes that DFF, which has a growing following, can build a sense of community in Qatar. “The idea is to create awareness about the diversity of life here in Qatar,” she says.

“It is also to celebrate those members of society who might otherwise go unnoticed through the work week. If these pictures are able to transcend class barriers and celebrate diversity, that is the sense of oneness we are hoping to build.”

One group stands out: “We interact the most with Nepali migrant workers,” she says. “In Nepal, it is part of the culture to be fashionable.”

The project has been well-received internationally, with an exhibition in Russia and media attention worldwide.

But it is creating a sense of community from the individual tales of their fashion-conscious subjects that matters most

to Khalid and Aparna. “I wanted to tell their stories,” says Khalid, who has lived in Qatar for 25 years.

“This is a social movement. It’s about art, it’s about fashion, and it’s about bringing people together and getting to know each other better. Having style isn’t about money. It’s how you say, ‘This is me, and there’s more to me than you think there is.’”

Discover Doha’s vibrant street fashion by following @DohaFashionFridays on Instagram.



| Guest workers’ styles captured by Doha Fashion Fridays



| *Qatar Airways flies to over 160 destinations worldwide*

The Ministry of Interior

Qatar welcomes the world

Hamad International Airport is Qatar's gateway to the world. Qatar's modern border system and revolutionary visa programme have made it the most open country in the Middle East, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization.



With a 20 per cent higher check-in rate year-on-year, Hamad International Airport's passenger traffic continues to grow. This is no surprise to the Ministry of Interior's Airport Passport Department, which has been preparing for this influx through the nation's flagship terminal at Hamad International Airport.

"Qatar's visa programme has gone through a quantum leap", says Director of the Airport Passports Department, Colonel Mohammed Rashid Al Mazrouei.

The Ministry of Interior has always aimed to stimulate tourism in the country, says Colonel Al Mazrouei. The Airport Passports Department facilitates entry and exit procedures, he adds, implementing a modern electronic system to ease travel woes.

Even the most experienced globetrotter will encounter hiccups along the way, including lost or expired visas and residency permits.

To further assist passengers and save them time and effort, an office was opened at the airport to facilitate access to the services provided



| Hamad International Airport welcomed over 34 million passengers in 2018



| Hamad International Airport opened in April 2014 and will be connected to the Doha Metro in time for the 2022 World Cup

by the Visa Entry Department. The office works to overcome travellers' struggles, including the renewal and cancellation of residency, the amendment of visa entry, and the extension of visas.

In an effort to speed the overall process and to ensure passengers make their flights, Qatar now issues 'On Arrival' and 'In Advance' visas for citizens from 92 countries. This visa system promotes tourism and further positions Qatar as a holiday destination, in collaboration with Qatar Airways and the Qatar National Tourism Council.

Now, this openness is being celebrated globally. The United Nations World Tourism Organization last year announced that Qatar has become the most open country in the Middle East and the 8th most open in the world in terms of visa facilitation.

Colonel Al Mazrouei says that this contributes significantly to the promotion of tourism in Qatar,

making the country a truly modern destination on the global tourism map.

With the increase in passengers from around the world, the Airport Passports Department has worked hard to ensure it can accommodate this growth. Logistically, Colonel Al Mazrouei explains that the electronic gates – known as e-gates – facilitate movement for citizens and residents alike.

The e-gates are one of the most important updates in the new border system provided by the Ministry of Interior through Hamad International Airport. In total, 2.3 million people used the new gates in 2018.

Colonel Al Mazrouei explains that the Airport Passports Department has adopted several new systems that contribute to making the facilities at Hamad among the most advanced in the world, offering Qatari citizens, residents and tourists a seamless experience as they embark on their next journey.



| Qatar's Ministry of Interior in Doha

TriClub Doha

Sporting glory

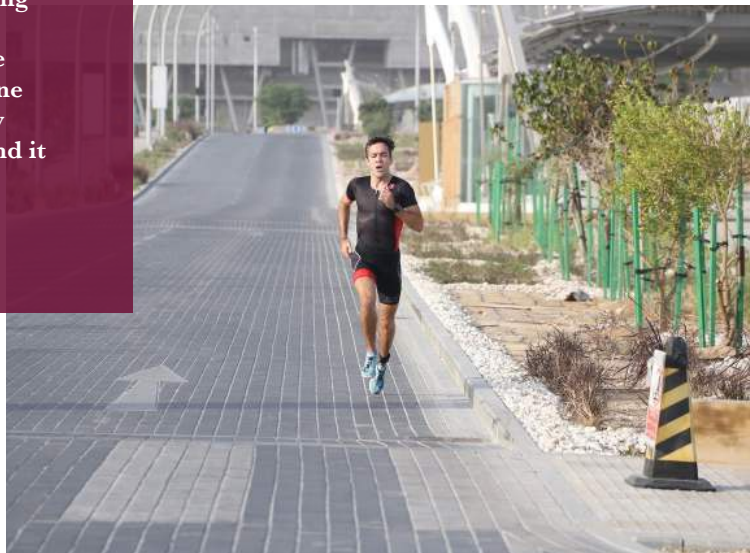
Since its establishment in 2013, TriClub Doha has grown a loyal following. We spoke to director Ewan Cameron to take a closer look at how the club is supporting Qatar's vision of sporting success through community initiatives.



| Children sprint towards the finish of a triathlon in Doha

“It was hard to convince people to try something new at first, but we got around 100 people together at Aspire Zone in 2013, which quickly grew to 250 people, and it continued to grow.”

Ewan Cameron,
Director of TriClub Doha



| A triathlete pounds the streets of Doha during a triathlon race in Education City

The true pinnacle of sporting achievement is the triathlon. The glory of a three-part race across land and water is hard to beat. But as residents of Doha have discovered, it need not be daunting.

Ewan Cameron, director of TriClub Doha, explains: “A triathlon is a race where the participants will swim, cycle and run to the finish line, typically in that order. It can be done as an individual or as part of a team.”

Race lengths range from short distances which can take 20 minutes, to the full Ironman level, where athletes can take up to a full day to swim 4km, cycle 180km, and run 42km.

“That’s the epic event for a triathlete,” says Ewan. “The race length we typically do takes an hour to an hour and a half, with a 500m swim, a 20km bike ride, and a 5k run.”

A decade ago, the triathlon did not exist in Qatar. TriClub Doha was formed by a group of expat athletes

in 2013. They were training to compete in triathlons abroad and decided to develop an event in Qatar.

“It was hard to convince people to try something new at first,” recalls Ewan, who lives and breathes triathlons, “but we got around 100 people together at Aspire Zone in 2013, which quickly grew to 250 people, and it continued to grow.”

The Qatar Olympic Committee soon got involved, setting up a Qatar Triathlon Federation, which has started to organise triathlons on the Pearl, the Corniche, and at the Museum of Islamic Art Park.

The largest event took place at Qatar Foundation in early 2019, with 470 participants. “It’s been great fun seeing lots of people join in,” says Ewan. “At the first event, there were ten kids. At the last race, there were more than 200 youngsters, trying all three disciplines. They get a medal when they cross the finish line, and a T-shirt. They’re always happy.”



TriClub Doha, which is run by volunteers, is an extraordinary success story. Ewan says: “This year we’ve held four triathlons, four aquathlons – just swim and run, and four duathlons – a bike and run. Plus a running series.

“The Doha triathlon is an event we helped set up two years ago, working with the Museum of Islamic Art, which is the perfect venue because you can run around a beautiful park, you can swim there, and then bike along the Corniche.

“Our first event in 2017 was an Olympic distance triathlon, that was promoted internationally, and attracted people from overseas to compete.”

He describes how some become addicted to the sport, while others achieve distances they never imagined possible.

“The more experienced triathletes get hooked,” he says. “Recently, some TriClub members took part in the Ironman 70.3 in Muscat, with a 2km swim, 90km bike ride, and a 21km run.

“That requires a good three months training, but it’s achievable for all ages, shapes and sizes.

“We’ve seen lots of people who never conceived of doing a triathlon in their whole life, and they come along with their kids, because the kid got an email from school. Then they think: ‘I could try that too’.

“They start with the beginners’ distance, a year later they’re entering the Ironman in Muscat. We’ve seen many of our participants go through that evolution in the course of a year.

“It’s hugely addictive, there’s a big adrenaline rush when you cross the finish line in a race you’ve been training for.”

Indeed, Ewan has worked hard to achieve his own goal. He says: “I wanted to do a half Ironman in under five hours. Two and a half years ago I worked with a coach and did the half Ironman in Bahrain. I was able to achieve a time of 4.47, which was more than 17 minutes better than my previous best.”

He jokes: “I was really proud of that achievement, but did realise it would be very difficult to ever achieve that again.”

Visit www.triclubdoha.com to learn more about TriClub Doha’s upcoming trainings and community events.

JOGGING WITH A VIEW

Running route for beginners



3

Qatar-India Year of Culture

Qatar and India share a long-lasting partnership, extending far beyond economic and diplomatic ties.

This year we celebrate the Qatar-India Year of Culture, which is designed to further deepen understanding between the two countries. We dedicate this year to exploring cultural similarities, as well as their differences, through a variety of exhibitions, festivals, and events.

Whether it's enjoying fine Indian cuisine or playing in a local cricket match, the personal connections between Qatar and India will strengthen our shared experiences.

Page 50

Qatar and India: Centuries of cultural connections

Page 52

Vineet Bhatia: Culinary high-flier

Page 56

Warriors Cricket Club: Hit for six - Qatar's growing cricket community



Trade and investment are things that bring the two countries together. Historically, we are united through the pearl trade, the construction of dhows and traditional boats, the trade of spices and textiles, and people-to-people links.

”

Mr P Kumaran, Ambassador of India to the State of Qatar



Qatar and India

Centuries of cultural connections

From the pearl trade to energy security, Mr P Kumaran, Ambassador of India to the State of Qatar, explains the historic and increasingly important ties between Qatar and India.



As the Kathak dancers bring their dazzling performance to a close, the audience erupts into rapturous applause, a symbol of a true partnership between two countries: India and Qatar.

The Rhythmic Expressions performance, organised by the Embassy of India in Doha, the Katara Cultural Village, and Qatar Museums, is one of the centrepieces of the 2019 Qatar–India Year of Culture. It celebrates the historic links between the two nations and pays tribute to India’s rich cultural diversity.

Following the performance before VIP guests, Mr Kumaran, Ambassador of India to the State of Qatar, explains: “This is a very important event. We host many each year, in fact my ambassador friends joke that I am in the newspapers all the time.

“But this year is special – and we are already off to a flying-start. We have many celebrations to mark the Year of Culture, from Bollywood music and dance, to film festivals and painting and photography exhibitions. We have tried to showcase a little of everything.”

This includes “the mega musical performance” by the Oscar award-winning Indian composer, A.R. Rahman.

In front of a crowd of 30,000 at Khalifa Stadium, the performance was the largest ever musical event in Qatar.

Why is this year so important to Indians and Qataris alike? There are over 700,000 Indians living in Qatar, the largest expatriate group in the country.

Mr Kumaran says: “The Indian community has made a significant contribution to the growth and development of Qatar. This has acted as a force-multiplier in strengthening economic and commercial linkages over the years, with around 6,000 Indian joint business ventures operating in Qatar and Indian nationals working virtually in every sector of the economy.”

India and Qatar have deep-rooted ties, nurtured through history, he explains: “Trade and investment bring the two countries together. Historically, we have been united through the pearl trade, the construction of dhows and traditional boats, the trade of spices and textiles, and people-to-people links over the years.”

These links helped build two strong nations, expanding trade and creating personal relationships. “Ships used to go from the Gulf region to the west coast of India,” he says. “They would carry riches such as pearls and Arabian horses to India.



“This year is special – and we are already off to a flying-start. We have many celebrations to mark the Year of Culture, from Bollywood music and dance, to film festivals and painting and photography exhibitions. We have tried to showcase a little of everything.”

Mr P Kumaran,
Ambassador of India to the State of Qatar

| Kathak dancers perform at Katara Cultural Village

“When they arrived, the traders used to wait for the ships to be filled up with products to take back to Qatar. Traders would stay in India for several months, and in some cases started families while they waited. So, these links between our nations go back several centuries.”

This centuries-old relationship has led to both Qatar and India placing importance on collaboration in youth and cultural affairs. Mr Kumaran states that he aims to continue to “enhance the awareness of the younger generation about these traditional bonds”, adding that “the celebrations as part of the Qatar-India Year of Culture offer our two countries a unique opportunity to renew and revitalise our special bonds of cultural heritage.”

Looking towards the future, Mr Kumaran believes India and Qatar can become even closer. “Qatar is currently the most important source of LNG for India, and will therefore continue to be a key energy security partner for many years to come,” he says.

“Our trade and investment ties, which are already impressive, have significant potential for further growth. Increasing Qatar’s investment in the Indian economy, taking advantage of the high growth rates projected for

the coming years, and the new business-friendly policy environment, presents a win-win scenario for both countries.”

“I admire the warm and welcoming nature of the Qatari people.” Mr Kumaran ended by stating; “They, along with the large and well-regarded Indian community, make me, and my family, feel completely at home in Qatar.”





| Vineet Bhatia was the very first Indian chef to earn a Michelin star

Vineet Bhatia

Culinary high-flier

Michelin-starred chef Vineet Bhatia is accustomed to serving food at altitude.

He is an advisor to Qatar Airways' menu team and his new restaurant,

Indego 360 by Vineet, overlooks Doha from 41 stories in the sky.

“The views here are absolutely stunning,” he says from Indego 360, his restaurant located in Tower 1 in Abraj Quartier in the Pearl. “You can see Downtown, the Pearl, and beautiful uninterrupted 360-degree views of Doha. When I first stepped into the space, a Qatar Airways aircraft flew by and my heart started pounding with joy. You can’t get much better than this.”

Bhatia has a lifelong love of airplanes. Born into a middle-class family in Mumbai in 1967, he explains: “When I was a young child, I didn’t have an alarm clock. I didn’t need one. I was awakened at 6:30AM each morning by the roaring engines of the DC-10 that took off from the airport near our house in Bombay, India.

“I still remember those airplanes, not only because they were how I began each and every day, but also because my ambition at that point in time was to fly jets. I was always fascinated by them. I rode to school on a bicycle and I’d pass by a small flying club and stare endlessly at the Cessnas taking off and landing, marvelling at their speed and their aura of luxury.”

Indeed, Vineet wanted to become a pilot, and applied to the Indian Air Force. “I became a chef by mistake,” he jokes. “I wanted to be a pilot originally. I was told I was too short to fly a plane,” he says. “They turned me down.”

“Then I wanted to be a barman, and they said I was too short to stand behind a bar counter, so they put me in the kitchen. That was the best thing that ever happened to me. It was 1985, I fell in love with it, now I cook for a living.”

This is something of an understatement. On the advice of his parents, Vineet also acquired a degree in economics. He trained with the Oberoi Group, worked in some of London’s most renowned Indian restaurants, including the Star of India, and now runs his own glittering culinary empire.

In 2004, he opened his first restaurant, Rasoi, in London’s Chelsea with his wife, Rashima. It has received numerous international accolades, and he now owns nine restaurants worldwide.

A pioneer in the kitchen, Vineet was the first Indian chef to win a Michelin star. He has written two cookbooks and had his own TV shows.

He also advised British Airways on its menus. He says: “I moved to London because of Heathrow Airport, so I could see the planes. I used to live under the flight path of the Concorde, and every evening I would watch it fly past. On the last flight of the Concorde, they served my chocolate dessert.”

“There is a cross-flow of ideas. Here in Qatar, we use za’atar leaves, sumac powder, rose petals, pistachios. We had on our previous menus a Pearl biryani, our nod to Qatar – we made small pearls out of vegetables, wrapped in silver leaf. It was quite stunning.”

Vineet Bhatia,
Michelin Star Chef



In 2009, he was named one of the 1,000 most influential Londoners for his cuisine, which he describes as “evolved” Indian cooking.

Now, he takes inspiration from Qatar. He says: “The souq is very inspiring, a proper old-fashioned genuine souq. When I arrived here twelve years ago and walked around there, I fell in love with it.

“The aromas wafting in the air, the spices, the culture, the fabrics, the people, the falcons. You also get to see what the locals like to eat, because we always incorporate things from the local culture into our cuisine.”

He adds: “There is a cross-flow of ideas. Here in

Qatar, we use za’atar leaves, sumac powder, rose petals, pistachios. We had on our previous menus a Pearl biryani, our nod to Qatar – we made small pearls out of vegetables, wrapped in silver leaf. It was quite stunning.”

He says the historic links between Qatar and India made Doha the natural home for his most ambitious venture.

“Because of the association Qatar has had with India for so many years, Qataris understand Indian cuisine,” he says. “It is no problem sourcing things like spices. There are new Indian restaurants popping up all the time, because there is a demand.”

He adds: “I hope that our two nations can forge even

stronger links in the future. We have already got very strong foundations.

“Qatar has changed a lot over the last twelve years, and I am very pleased to be part of the change. I would encourage Indian people to travel here, because it is a beautiful and modern city.”

He is of course extremely proud of Indego 360, which is the tallest Indian restaurant on the Arabian Peninsula. “This is our new baby here at the Pearl,” he says. “It has

been amazing to bring this concept to Doha.”

Cooking comes naturally to Vineet, whose mother is also a dedicated foodie, but he has some tips for amateurs too.

“The best tip I can give to anybody is you have got to cook from your heart,” he says. “You have to have a passion for it. And never over-complicate things. Keep it simple, keep it clean, and cook from your heart.”

And if he were to give another life lesson, it would surely be: Aim high.

DID YOU KNOW THAT INDEGO 360

Is one of the highest Indian restaurants in the world, occupying three stories 41 floors above Doha’s waterways in Tower 1 of the Abraj Towers

Offers 360 views of Doha’s West Bay, Lusail, and the Pearl

Serves delectable dishes by the first Indian chef to be awarded a Michelin star

Was established by Qatari entrepreneurs





| Kushal Kumar stands alongside Warriors Cricket Club's impressive trophy collection

Warriors Cricket Club

Hit for six: Qatar's growing cricket community

From humble beginnings to international success, the Warriors Cricket Club is a force to be reckoned with in the cricket world. We spoke to founder Kushal Kumar to find out more about the club.



To many, there is no more evocative sound than the smack of willow on leather. From the village greens of England to downtown Calcutta, cricket is a game that unites all people. And so it proves in Qatar, where the Warriors Cricket Club (WCC) is taking hold of the cricket world and bringing together communities.

WCC is one of eight premier level cricket clubs in Qatar. It was founded in 2014 by one of the most famous and influential cricketers in Qatar's history, Kushal Kumar, and is currently ranked number one in Qatar.

Kumar says that cricket is in his blood. "Cricket is a religion for any Indian," he says. "It is the only game you can play without spending much money – all you need is a stick and a ball and a small table or chair to use as stumps. If we see an empty parking lot, we play.

"I started playing at the age of five with my dad and uncle, and I have been passionate about it ever since."

So much so that when he arrived in Qatar, he decided to set up a team, along with his friend Sandeep Kottary. "We'd been playing soft ball cricket, and I said: 'Let's play some real cricket.' I got my cousin and a bunch of friends together. There were fifteen of us."

They entered three qualifiers and won them all. "We thought, let's have some fun. Then we thought, let's make history. We were the runners up in that tournament. We were the underdog playing for the first time, but we did really well," he says. "We had nothing to lose, so we enjoyed ourselves."

Now, from that early success, the team has 48 members from different countries. "The majority of people here are Asians," says Kumar. "We are Indians, Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, and Sri Lankans.

"We are definitely building a community. The different nationalities here interact, we celebrate everyone's independence day, we share food, we share our experiences of the Middle East."

He says: "My favourite part of cricket personally is leading the team. I love planning different strategies and trying new things out in the field."

One moment in 2017 defines the Warriors Cricket Club, and it is worthy of a Hollywood movie. Kumar is a modest man, but he beams with pride. "Our proudest moment was when we went to South Africa to play in the Cape Town Sixes. We were the underdogs and we ended up winning. It was unbelievable when I saw all the stars lining up, competing against us. Then we won the championship. Lifting the winning trophy was amazing, a milestone in our club's history."

Indeed, Kumar's colleagues at Sidra Medicine were so delighted at the team's success that they made him a huge cake to celebrate, featuring a photo of him holding up the trophy.



He shows me the club trophy stand, his hand sweeping excitedly along the gleaming testament to sporting glory. The Cape Town Sixes trophy stands next to the Qatar Champions League 2018 trophy. “That was very emotional, because it was the first time we were champions in Qatar,” says Kumar.

There is also one to mark a win against the Maldives national team in 2018. “The Qatar national team was busy,” says Kumar. “So they asked us to step in, and we won against the odds.”

It has certainly been an exciting journey for the club, which began playing at a Qatar Foundation cricket ground in Education City.

Kumar says: “Promoting this sport in a cosmopolitan place like Doha has many benefits. It brings together communities, breaking stereotypes. It promotes exercise and healthy living. We are blessed to have His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. His National Sports Day initiative is an example to other countries.”

Next, the WCC will go to play in Croatia for the first time. They hope to become a member of the Qatar Cricket Association, so they can participate in additional tournaments.

Now, the club boasts state-of-the-art facilities at its home in Old Ideal Indian School in Doha where a bowling machine spits balls out at 160 kilometres per hour.

There, the next generation of cricketers in Qatar are in training, and already showing huge promise.

Some 98 boys and girls attend the WCC’s academy, Warrior Sports Center (WSC), with five already playing for the Qatar under-19 team. The youngsters are given intensive training sessions by star cricketers at an indoor arena during the summer months. An international tour is being planned.

Last year, WSC organised a scholarship programme and 22 winners were selected from 200 hopefuls. They were given a year of free coaching and cricketing gear.

Kumar tells aspiring players to always respect the game. He says: “I tell them to respect other players and respect the game – it is a beautiful sport, never corrupt it.”

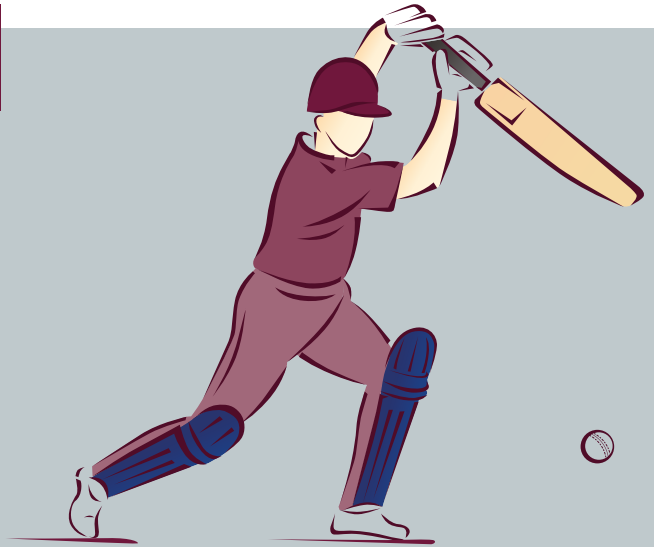
Kumar says: “Cricket has given me so much. I felt that it was time to give something in return and train the next generation. These are future warriors, and future stars. Some are super-talented, and in four or five years will be at international level. We are blessed to have them here, and my hope is that they can one day contribute to the Qatar national team, and one day that team will play in the Cricket World Cup.”



CRICKET: FAST FACTS

Cricket is
the world's
second most
popular
sport, with an
estimated

2.5
BILLION
global following



If a batsman is out
on the first ball of an
innings, it's called a
“DIAMOND
DUCK”

The longest cricket
match took

14
DAYS

between England and
South Africa, ending in a tie

The highest
individual score
in test match
history is

400
RUNS

About the Government Communications Office

The Government Communications Office (GCO) was established in June 2015 to effectively communicate the priorities of the Government of the State of Qatar.

The GCO works with Qatar's ministries and embassies across the world to tell the country's story and showcase its vision for the future.

The GCO falls under the jurisdiction of His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior.

His Excellency Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed Al Thani is Director of the GCO, and is the first point of contact for those looking to learn more about the State of Qatar.

The GCO is committed to transparent engagement with the international community as Qatar continues on its journey of development.

As part of its work, the GCO publishes *QMagazine* twice a year. Its purpose is to educate a global audience about the State of Qatar, and highlight the country's achievements and initiatives in various fields – locally and internationally.

QLife, the GCO's newest online platform, has taken on this vision digitally. Hosted online at [www.qlife.com](http://www qlife.com) and on Instagram at [@qlife_com](https://www.instagram.com/qlife_com), *QLife* is an exciting hub showcasing the people and ideas powering Qatar's development.

To find out the latest news from the GCO, please visit our website www.gco.gov.qa or Twitter at [@GCOQatar](https://twitter.com/GCOQatar).



مَكْتَبُ الْإِتِّصَالِ الْحُكُومِيِّ
Government Communications Office

We would like to thank all individuals and the following
organisations for their invaluable contributions
to the June 2019 Q Magazine:

Qatar Foundation | Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra | Phone Art Qatar

Fahad Al Obaidly | Fatma Al Shebani | Qatar National Tourism Council

Khalifa Al Misnad | Doha Fashion Fridays | Ministry of Interior

TriClub Doha | Embassy of India to the State of Qatar | Qatar Museums

Vineet Bhatia | Warriors Cricket Club



Issue 6



Issue 6

Produced by the Government Communications Office of the State of Qatar

June 2019