


first Avenue



2014 TRENDS
ALERT

THE SPRING
FASHION

THE RED CARPET
CELEBRITY
FASHION

AMY ADAMS

Nobody will force me to do
something against my will



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EDITOR'S NOTES

The season of plump blossoms, wafting scents, leaping zephyrs is here... A time to forget the woes and cruelty the weather brought, and celebrate the imminence of change. And that's what our latest issue is all about! First Avenue Magazine brings you all that is new, all that revels in change and all that brings the best to you from the world of fashion, lifestyle and Dubai.

To, a lineup of glamorous celebrities walking the red carpet at the most anticipated events of the year we have dedicated a whole section picking out the best dressed celebrities from the red carpet. Then, moving on, our cover girl for this issue is also a red carpet maven; Amy Adams. The Academy award nominated actress talks to us about her career and the characters as well as her experiences on the big screen.

With spring comes the time to update your look. Being tired of layering and limited with mounds of fabric, it is time to show some skin! But before that, we have to make sure that our skin is spring ready too. Check out our feature, 'Nailing the perfect finish' for a look that's flawless, and learn to keep your hands and feet ready for the season. With the same note, don't forget to read makeup artist Nilo Haq's Spring makeup trends 2014, she shares with us, to keep us looking fab. Our style roundup feature spring 2014 trend alert is also there to keep you in the know with the world of fashion and glamour.

With your looks ready for the season, it is time to now look & check out, what's happening around. Our magical Dubai section brings you the best of what's happening around town, and finest places to dine in. And if you are looking for a break outside your domestic hearth, then discover with us the beauty of the world in spring time, and journey to the blooming gardens of spring! Talking of home, our DIY Home décor, helps you unveil simple DIY tricks to give a new look to your living space.

Since spring is the time to move out, frolic around and be one with nature and smell the sweet scents of fresh blooms, why not work on our breathing habits, and kick off a simple regimen that will help you for the rest of your life... Read on, for a full breath, our health and fitness feature, "Breathe, breathe in the air" and learn how by just breathing better you can combat different physical and emotional problems in your life.

With all this and more, from fashion pages, jewelry and watch collections to lifestyle, we've got something for everyone, to discover, learn and cherish!!!

Time to sing the 1969 Beatles song, Here Comes the Sun!

Lamiya Sami

Here comes the Sun

*Little darling,
it's been a long cold lonely
winter,*

*Little darling,
it feels like years since it's
been here*

*Little darling,
the smiles returning to the
faces*

*Little darling,
it seems like years since it's
been here*

*Here comes the sun,
Here comes the sun,
and I say, It's all right!*

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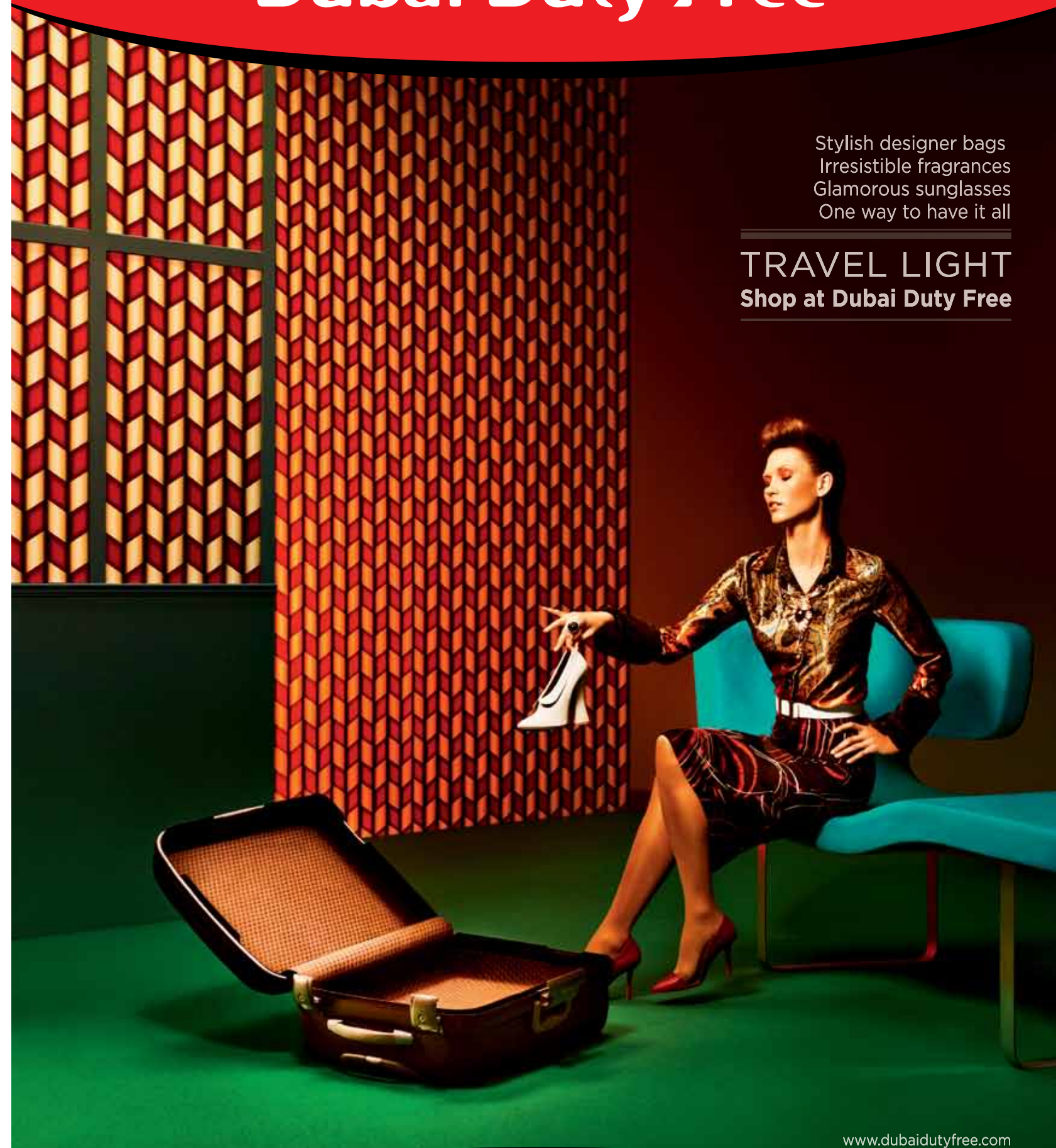
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Charlize Theron
Oscars 2014 Red Carpet

Charlize Theron looked stunning on the red carpet at the 2014 Academy Awards. The 38-year-old actress wore a Christian Dior haute couture dress on the red carpet and accessorized herself with Harry Winston jewels and Christian Louboutin shoes.



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Jennifer Garner
Oscars 2014 Red Carpet

Jennifer Garner rocked the red carpet with her fringe dress at the 2014 Academy Awards. The 41-year-old actress rocked in a silver tulle tiered fringe gown with micro bugle and bead embroidery by Oscar de la Renta. Jennifer completed her look with an Oscar de la Renta bag and Forevermark jewels.



Kate Beckinsale
Honors Ben Kingsley at Holocaust Museum Dinner

Kate Beckinsale showed her support at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for the '2014 Los Angeles Dinner: What You Do Matters', held at The Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. The 40-year-old actress was joined at the event that honored Sir Ben Kingsley, by Morgan Freeman, Rosanna Arquette, and Ben himself. Kate wore a Marchesa dress, Christian Louboutin shoes, Rauwolf clutch, and Neil Lane jewels.



Red carpet

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Julia Robert
Oscars 2014 Red Carpet

Julia Roberts looked like the pretty woman, which she is, with her famous smile, while hitting the red carpet at the 2014 Academy Awards. The 46-year-old actress was nominated for Best Supporting Actress for her role in August: *Osage County*. Julia wore a Givenchy Couture gown with Bulgari jewels.



Jessica Biel
Oscars 2014 Red Carpet

Jessica Biel caught everyone’s eye in a metallic dress at the 2014 Academy Awards. The 31-year-old actress chose to wear a dress and bag by Chanel Haute Couture, Manolo Blahnik shoes, and Tiffany & Co. jewels.



Kate Hudson
Vanity Fair Oscars Party 2014

Kate Hudson glammed up, with a Zuhair Murad gown from the Spring/Summer 2014 Couture Collection, for the 2014 Vanity Fair Oscar Party, held after the 2014 Oscars in West Hollywood, California. The cap sleeved, black embroidered gown featured a sheer silk skirt with delicate hand-beaded detail. Kate finished off her look with Christian Louboutin shoes, a Salvatore Ferragamo clutch, and Lorraine Schwartz jewelry.



Naomi Watts
Oscars 2014 Red Carpet

Naomi Watts exuded elegance in a white dress by Calvin Klein Collection with a Bulgari bag and jewels on the red carpet at the 2014 Academy Awards.



Penelope Cruz

Oscars 2014 Red Carpet

Penelope Cruz looked gorgeous at the 2014 Academy Awards. The 39-year-old Spanish actress wore a Giambattista Valli dress, Loewe clutch, and Chopard jewels.



Sandra Bullock

Oscars 2014 Red Carpet

Sandra Bullock stunned people with her pure elegance while walking down the red carpet at the 2014 Academy Awards. The 49-year-old actress was nominated for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role for her work in the movie, *Gravity*. Sandra wore an Alexander McQueen dress and Lorraine Schwartz jewelry.





Amy Adams

"Nobody will force me to do something against my will"

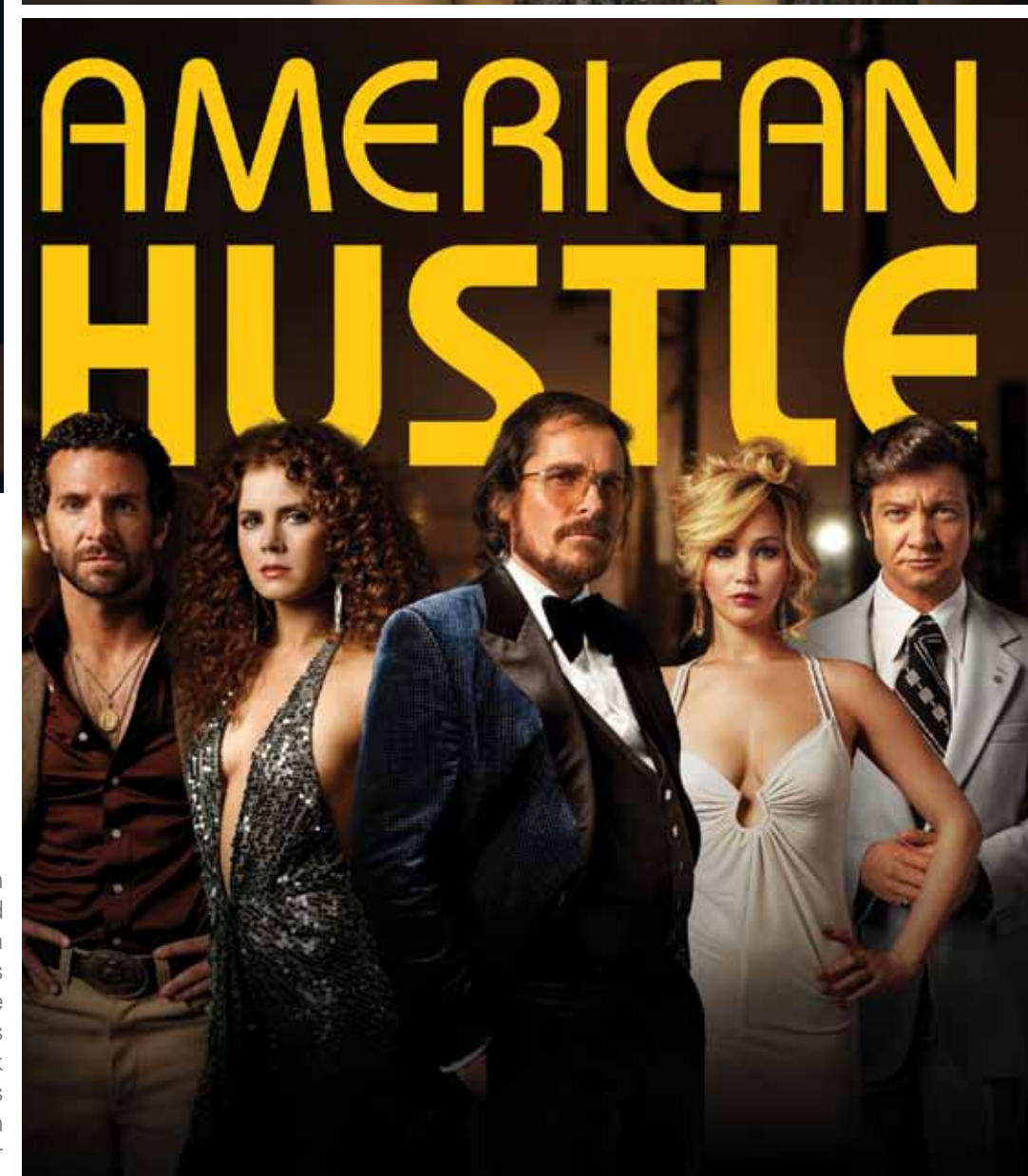
*P*etite, shy, and soft spoken; Amy Adams' emergence can be traced from the lovable characters, like the fairytale princess in Disney fantasy *Enchanted* in 2007, to stronger, more bold characters like the young nun alongside Meryl Streep and Philip Seymour Hoffman in 2008's *Doubt*, but undoubtedly, Amy Adams is the rising star of the Hollywood's elite

brigade. Nominated for the best actress in a leading role academy award, for her role as the long-term mistress of a conman in *American Hustle* - an entertaining comedy-drama set in the Seventies, Amy forever engraved her name as a versatile actress capable of playing characters as vulnerable as a Disney princess to characters that do not take no for an answer, in movies like *The Fighter* in which she played

Charlene, a woman who brawls, swears and takes no crap... AMY ADAMS may have lost out to Cate Blanchett at the Oscars but there's a bright career ahead for the actress that bodes well for her chances of bigger rewards... *First Avenue* got a chance to meet the IT girl in Paris for an exclusive interview, and talked about her characters, her experiences and about her road to success.

FIRST AVENUE : You played alongside Christian Bale and Bradley Cooper in the David O'Russell film *American Hustle*, which received very positive reviews as well as highly important awards, among them Golden Globe for best actress won by you. Tell us about this experience.

AMY ADAMS : I am a big fan of director David O'Russell, and especially since I worked with him in *Fighter* a few years ago. I also saw his film *Silver Linings Playbook*, a pure masterpiece. And the way he directs his actors is quite exceptional. I think I have never been as convincing as in the two films that I made with David (O' Russell), meaning *Fighter*





and American Hustle. I was so flattered and happy to work under his direction again, especially in the company of Jennifer Lawrence and Bradley Cooper, who is a friend in addition to being a wonderful actor. And there was also Christian Bale with whom I had also worked in The Fighter, meaning that I was very well surrounded, during the shooting of American Hustle. I found the matter disturbing and exciting at the same time.

F. A : Why disturbing?

A. A : Simply because they are all heavy weights, talent-wise.

F. A : So, you made it to the Oscars with that same film?

A. A : Yes, indeed. And I am very happy about it.

F. A : In Man of Steel you played the part of Lois Lane opposite Henry Cavill who appeared for the first time as Superman.

How did you face this character knowing that Lane was already famous and so often represented on the screen?

A. A : The challenge was actually very big, but perhaps even bigger for Henry Cavill. It raised the question of whether his version of Superman, would stand up and remain etched in the memories of moviegoers, or immediately vanish after the film was removed from theatres. Difficult to answer such a question; I also wondered about Lois Lane. The character already had her fans around the world, and if they did not feel seduced by me, then it was done! Fortunately for Cavill and myself, there was the director Zack Snyder to reassure us at all times and advise us, to stay focused on our interpretation and not to worry about the consequences of events which anyway did not belong to us.

F. A : The film worked well everywhere in the world. So did this success reassure you afterwards?

A. A : Mostly, yes. But I think we as artists are never really reassured. The film actually worked very well as you say, but did those who saw me in the character of Lois Lane love me as much as they did the actresses who played the part before me? I do not know. And maybe it's better not to get into such a game of comparisons. It is fatal. But we never change, do we? We are, as we are.

F. A : How would you describe your temper?

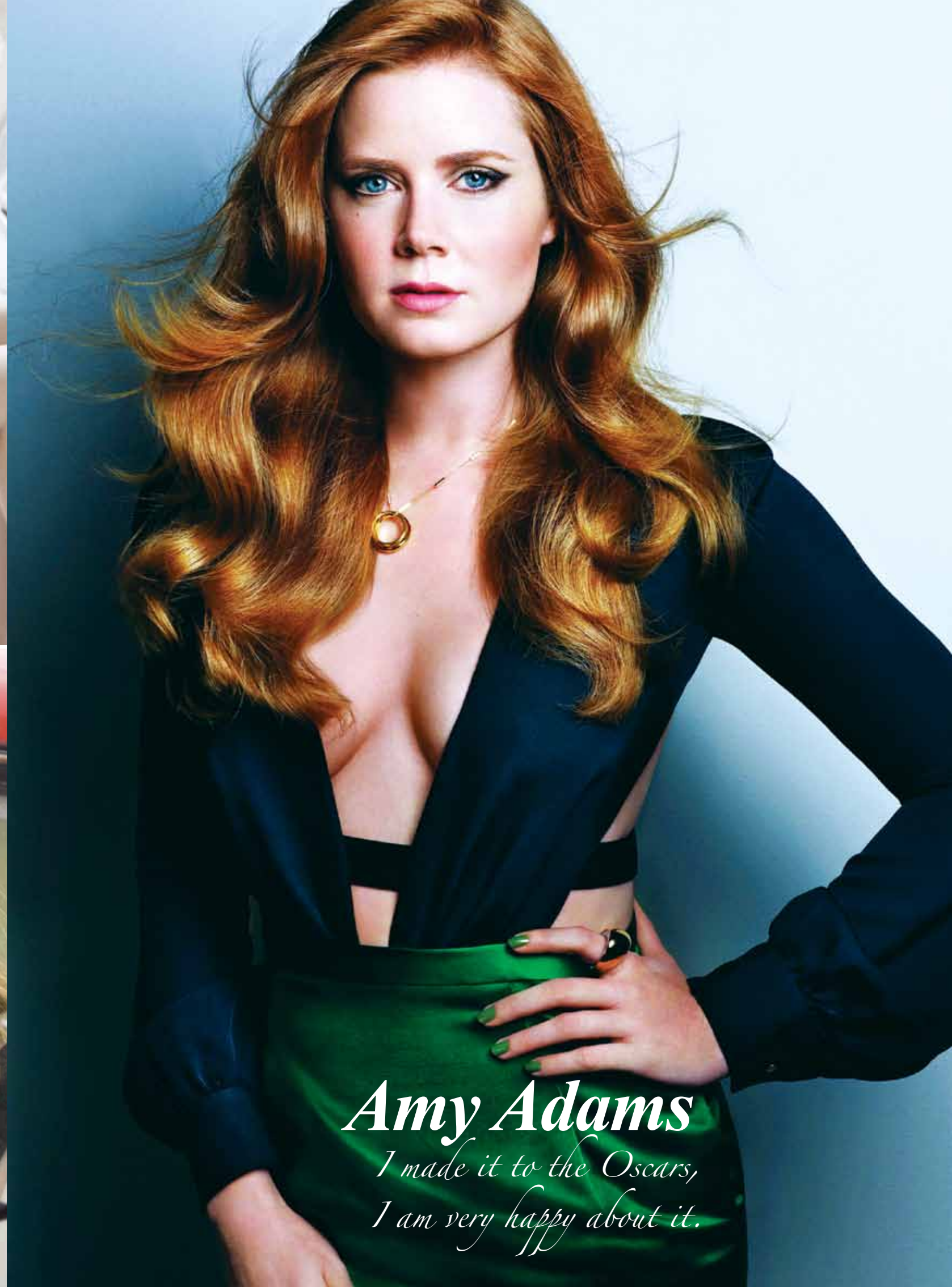
A. A : Anxious, as a matter of fact very anxious. I have little confidence in my abilities, and everything that goes with it.

F. A : Does this lack of confidence prevent you from achieving some of your goals in your everyday life?

A. A : It spoils my life, for sure. But I don't believe it prevents me from achieving my goals. And I also consider my anxiety as being my



I have little confidence in my abilities, and everything that goes with it.



Amy Adams
I made it to the Oscars,
I am very happy about it.



I personally think that women do ask for their lover's hand nowadays, where and when they want. This is called emancipation

strength. If I was confident in myself, I would be less good, on screen and on stage, that's a fact. I draw my strength from doubt.

F. A : Tell us about your experience in the comedy Leap Year, which was a resounding success?

A. A. : I really enjoyed playing in this movie, mostly because I usually do dramatic roles and on the other hand, pure slapstick comedies. While, there, I had to mix the two elements, be funny at some times and draw the audience to tears at other times. All in an atmosphere of very pronounced romance through the beautiful landscapes offered by the Irish countryside. It was a truly beautiful artistic experience.

F. A : Do you personally believe that girls ask the hand of men in Ireland, during leap years, just like in the film?

A. A. : They are, very old tradition in Ireland, especially in the small villages that still practice some ancient beliefs, but I personally think that women do ask for their lover's hand nowadays, where and when they want. This is called emancipation.

F. A : There is no doubt that a beautiful woman like you constantly has the attention of men focused on her, especially in your profession?

A. A. : The answer is yes, but I am happy with the man I love and therefore I do not grant the matter the slightest importance. I just smile

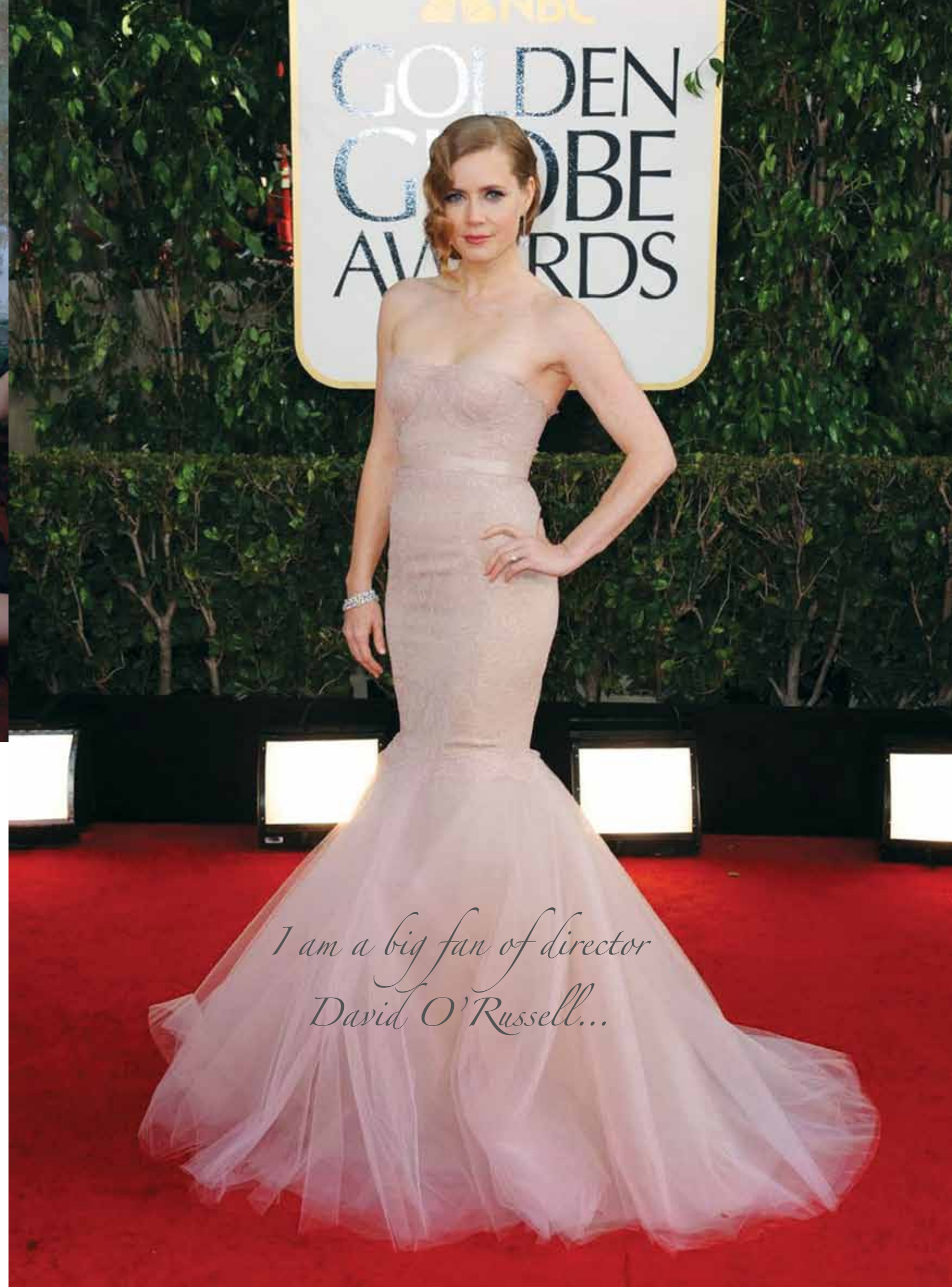
to ordinary fans, and the same thing goes for those who wish to marry me, of course.

F. A : How do you handle the situation precisely if certain limits are to be exceeded?

A. A. : I act strictly according to the degree of urgency, either by calling the security services or by demanding to have bodyguards around me at official events.

F. A : But if they are more than just fans, for example people in the profession such as producers, directors or movie stars?

A. A. : I behave with them as I do with others. Nobody will force me to do something against my will, believe me.



I am a big fan of director David O'Russell...

Fashion Must Haves

From cosmetics, shoes to handbags, here are some fashion trends and accessories that you may want to consider purchasing...



IsaDora Shine Bright Collection

IsaDora presents Shine Bright collection, and this is exactly what will happen to you when you put on this shining, sparkling and colorful make-up. Choose between two looks: the cold look that combines pink with silver or the warm look that combines red and gold.



HAPPINESS FROM NEOM

'Happiness' the new scent from NEOM Luxury Organics, comes from the range of organic luxury bath and home products. NEOM has experimented with using a unique way of releasing scent from actual blades of grass. The result is a characteristic fresh, green, grassy note which combined with essential oils of white neroli, mimosa and lemon creates an amazingly evocative, crisp scent. NEOM candles are all hand-poured in Britain, with 100% natural ingredients and have a high concentration of essential oils that boost the mood through aroma.



Clare bag by Chloé

Clare bag by Chloé is a tailored and modern bag with an attitude, perfect for the spring 2014 season. The *Clare* is a bag that best captures all of the new signatures of what Chloé is now, soft to the touch and slung over the shoulder, it embodies the spirit of the brand. Now available in different color combination, size and fabric in all Chloé boutiques.

Katharine Pooley

Katharine Pooley, award-winning British interior designer, has hand selected gifts from her own line of Katharine Pooley home furnishings and accessories that are sure to make any mother smile. These heartfelt and highly sought after items encompass classical contemporary living without sacrificing comfort, coherence or style.



L'Oréal Professionnel's Mythic Oil Souffle D'Or

L'Oréal Professionnel's Mythic Oil range unleashes the legendary benefits of natural oils. L'Oréal Professionnel now presents the sparkling new Mythic Oil Souffle D'Or range which will add a dazzling shine coupled with a lightweight finish to your beautiful hair. Offering a charming sensual experience, the premium range consists of a sparkling shampoo and conditioner set that adds the perfect shimmer with the combination of the precious oils of Argan and Safflower. A traditional beauty secret of Moroccan women, Argan oil contains vitamins and fatty acids that are easily absorbed by the hair and provide it with the nutrition it requires.

Promod Spring/Summer 2014 Collection

Promod has some amazing and spectacular looks in store for the spring-summer season! The fashionable collection has just hit stores, so make sure you don't miss out!



Nailing The Perfect Finish

Simple advice for the essential beauty treatment. . .



The age old proverbial sentiment that beauty is skin deep, doesn't actually go with the concept of beauty in the modern times, well sorta! Beauty, nowadays, is a workout that requires blood, sweat and tears. It needs polishing, refinement and a whole lot of effort to maintain and look picture perfect. Where effect on the face is the main focus of any beauty regimen, it is equally important not to overlook your hand and your feet, for, after the face they are the most noticeable feature of your personality...Taking care of hands and feet should be the part of every fashionista's beauty routine, and that's when manicures and pedicures come in.

A luxurious mani/Pedi doesn't just leave your nails flawlessly cleaned, shaped, buffed, and polished, with cuticles trimmed, but exfoliates dead skin off your hands and feet, helps you heal problems like cracked heels and even fungus, and leaves your skin soft and smooth. But, as relaxing as it can be, to escape real life and head to the nail salon, it becomes quite impossible to book an appointment at a nail salon, especially if you have a busy schedule. So, before you abandon yourself to neglect and fail to take care of your assets, here are some easy at home tips to consider to keep yourself looking perfect from head to toe.





Get into position

To get maximum results, sit at a table or a desk instead of lounging on the couch, this will give you the best angle, particularly for a manicure. Place hands on top of a paper towel, to catch any spills. For the pedicure, while seated in a chair, put the arch of your foot on the edge of the table so you can easily reach every toe.



Moisturize

When feet and hands are hydrated and free from dry patches, they instantly look well-groomed. Moisturize your foot with some rich foot cream, and do the same with your hands using a hand cream. While moisturizing your feet, pay close attention to the driest areas; which include the backs of the heels and the area around the cuticles.

Scrub

Dip feet into a tub of warm water and pat dry. Massage a handful of a scrub onto the skin. Choose an oil-based product, which will moisturize as it exfoliates dead, dry cells. For a more homey approach, put some sugar or salt in a dish and pour on some olive oil, use it as a scrub for your hands/feet, rinse then dry.

Prepare your nails

The key to a long-lasting mani / pedi are super-clean nails. Remove previous nail polish by rubbing a Q-tip or cotton ball dipped in low-acetone remover on your nails. Dip your hands/feet one at a time in warm, soapy water, dry thoroughly with a soft towel. Use a buffing block to smooth each nail surface and remove yellow stains. Start with the gritty side, then switch to the smooth side, which gives a high shine—not as shiny as polish, but close enough, in a pinch. You can also use the gritty side to soften skin at the tips of your toes.



File & Polish

After scrubbing, file/clip nails straight across to even out their shape. Wipe off any oil left on the nails from the foot scrub with nail polish remover.

Base coat & Nail color

A thin coat of the base coat creates a smooth surface for nail polish to cling. So, if you are planning to finish off your mani/pedi with a great color, use a base coat for your finger nails and your toes. Whether you're doing a manicure or a pedicure, hold the brush midcap, you'll have more control that way. Paint on two layers of polish with light-handed strokes, allowing color to dry completely between coats. For pedicures: Save your big toe for last so you'll be less likely to smear it when you do the others. Once done, don't forget to apply the top coat to smooth away flaws.



Quick Tips

- Don't cut your cuticles (they'll grow back thicker!). Instead, lightly push them back with a towel each night before bed.
- Exfoliate hands and feet often to remove dry, scaly skin. We suggest keeping a scrub in the shower as a daily reminder.
- A French manicure always looks classic. DIY with Sally Hansen's French Manicure Pen Kit. Paint on the sheer color and line the tips with the pen. Apply a topcoat to make the look last for days.
- Use a base coat before applying this summer's hottest hue (purple!) to prevent staining toenails.
- Try just one coat of nail polish to keep nails chip-free longer.

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Spring Makeup Trends 2014

Nilo Haq, Makeup Artist & Brand Ambassador
for Pond's Arabia shares the latest and in
vogue make up trends for the season...

Spring is a great way to bring new
colors into your makeup wardrobe.
This spring brings together some bright,

bold and fun trends, orange lips, bushy
eyebrows and white eyeliner there is
something different for everyone to try!

Trend #1: Bright Orange Lip

Orange lips have been a popular color during the
warm weather for quite some time. Take this trend
up a notch by going bolder and brighter than ever!
It's a great pop of color for the spring/summer as
compared to the usual red lip.

Trend #2: Glowing Skin

This spring bring on the glow! Everyone loves healthy,
glowing skin. Try the trend by mixing a bit of Pond's
Gold Radiance Day Cream into your foundation for
a natural yet glowing complexion. For added shine,
apply a powder highlighter on the cheekbones. You'll
be getting compliments all day!

Trend #3: Pops of Blue

Turn your eyes into a notable statement with bright
blue eye shadow on the eyelids. Play with the trend
to suit your personality by even placing pops of blue
shadow under the eye or even bold blue liquid eyeliner
paired with heavy mascara.

Trend #4: White Eyeliner

White was a happening color this past winter and
continues into spring 2014. Dare to wear something
different by adding some white to your makeup! Try
replacing your usual black eyeliner with white! It's
a fun way to change up your look without being too
drastic. Complete your look by pairing it with a hot
pink lip color!

Trend #5: Bushy Brows

Overly shaped and even arched eyebrows are a trend of
the past. This season it's all about bushy brows. Bushy
brows may not be for everyone, so instead change up
the shape of your brow by keeping them square.

Trend #6: Orchid

Radiant orchid is the color of the year for 2014! You'll
be seeing it from clothes to bags to coats. Adding
orchid into your makeup bag is a must! Try the trend
by applying some orchid eye shadow to your eyelids or
a beautiful orchid shaded gloss. You will love it!



Nilo Haq
*There is something different
for everyone to try!*

Spring 2014 Trends Alert

With the weather changing, it is time to say good bye to your old wardrobe and hello to the new one. Whether you are planning to update your wardrobe or want to buy a few fashionable pieces to stay trendy and fashionable all season long.

Look no further! We have compiled a list of some of the hottest trends for the season that have rocked the runways and will soon be making their way to every fashionista's wardrobe... Here are the season's most noteworthy trends.



90ties are back...

The 90ties have come back with a bang. With a little bit of a makeover, the 90ties grunge has a more modern flavor, an approach regenerated with better fabrics and beautiful designs. From matching jackets and skirts, slip dresses and pumps to cropped tees with interesting slogans that get your inner angst out... It's all about expression, rebellion, angst and sensitivity and all with a modern twist.

The old faithful white shirt...

Let's admit it, a white shirt always acts as a perfect foundation piece for your wardrobe. But be creative this time. The runways bore asymmetric, paneled and ruffled shirts that took center stage for spring. From Victoria Beckham, Paul & Joe, to Valentino, it was obvious that white is might!





Breathable trousers...

Finally, like most of us, if you are sick of the skinny jean trend, then this season carries good news! Let your legs breathe with generously-proportioned trousers and put your figure-hugging skinnies aside for some time... As seen on the runways of Mulberry, Michael Kors and Paul Smith, enjoy wearing this new trend as an elegant alternative to the old skinny rant. Culottes are also the trouser shape for the season. They look great with high heel pumps and a crisp white shirt.



Be a lady...

It is time to not just feel like a lady but be a lady. Longer skirts and hemlines are the trend for the season. This ladylike trend is great because it accentuates the waist which is the smallest part of the body. Romantic, voluminous, calf-covering full skirt creates a silhouette that also feels innately formal but is pretty simple to style.

The bling ring...

Randomly sewn jewels and crystals are a huge trend this season, and runways have it, the more the merrier! So replace your dull look with a sparkle here and there, for the bling is the season's hottest trend. It is fun and sexy and can instantly add imagination to your wardrobe.



Modern floral

Florals for summer is another huge trend. A breath of romanticism ran through the Spring/Summer 2014 collections, with designers turning to roses, poppies and camellias to bring the countryside into the city with embroidery, print and textured fabrics. Christopher Kane stunning show took the standard spring floral trend and deconstructed it into something totally modern and fresh.





Sportswear accessories

Another fresh entry is the season's number one trend; the sportswear accessories. Big bucket bags, rucksack

hybrid, the trend's already made an impression at the Saint Laurent, Alexander Wang, and Zara runways.

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I Dubai

Find out what's happening and trending now...

So, now that the weather reclaims spring, it is time to go out, frolic around a little and love the sun before it devours us with the passionate embrace, that will last for another six months. It is the best time of the year in Dubai, so why not make the most of it! Here's what is hot and happening...

The Grub

SoHo Bar & Grill 400 degree SoHo Stone

SoHo Bar & Grill, invites customers to an interactive dining experience through their unique SoHo Stone. The SoHo Stone provides customers with the opportunity to cook their own steak to their liking. This interactive dining experience is sure to create memorable moments for guests to share with friends and family, while showing off their cooking skills. Customers are invited to feast on meats cooked to perfection on a super-heated volcanic stone, which ensures that the steak will boast a distinctive mouthwatering flavor, as the stone locks in all the natural juices and nutrients and enhances the tenderness. This unique stone is recognized as one of the healthiest methods of cooking, using no added fats or oils.



Cargo Pier 7 Dubai Marina

Sit back and take in the view as Cargo transports you to a bustling harbour-side eatery, reminiscent of 1960s Hong Kong. With its roots firmly planted in East-Asian culture, Cargo is a laid back restaurant and lounge bringing the rawness and spice of the East to new Dubai. Think shipping crates, raw steel, concrete and weathered wood interiors, looking out onto impressive views of Dubai Marina. Throw in delicious 'street food' inspired Asian cuisine, an eclectic beverage menu and relaxed atmosphere, and you have a perfect place to meet, eat and mingle, whatever the occasion. Cargo's kitchen serves up dishes including chilli and garlic edamame, sesame crusted tuna and lemon grass chicken skewers, along with much-loved mains of teriyaki- glazed cod or Pad Thai with smoked duck.

GITEX Shopper - Spring Edition 2014

23rd - 26th April 2014

GITEX Shopper is the largest gathering of the region’s leading ICT retailers and suppliers. The event attracts visitors not just from the Middle East but also from North Africa and the Indian Subcontinent. GITEX Shopper attracts the biggest names in the retail sector, with unique launches and special offers across the best technology, communication and entertainment products. Loyal buyers await this shopping bonanza year after year for exclusive deals and bundled offers which are not available anywhere else.



6th Dubai Tango Festival

21st - 25th May 2014

This is the 6th year for the ever-successful Dubai Tango Festival, a time for all things tango. The 6th Dubai Tango Festival will host various tango dance workshops, milongas, an unparalleled tango dance night and a gala dinner. Enroll by yourself or as a couple to learn the beautiful and traditional art of Tango dancing, and witness some of the masters in the field at work. Check the website for detailed pricing and timings on all classes and events through the four nights.



Places

Fairmont the Palm

Ba Restaurant & Lounge Fairmont The Palm has launched a Saturday Yum Cha Brunch with a modern twist, combining Chinese delicacies with access to the hotel’s beautiful pool and private white-sand beach and allowing you to take the day at your own pace – the perfect alternative to Dubai’s traditional brunch. Enjoy delicious Asian tapas in between sunbathing, listening to DJ-spun music and taking a refreshing dip – Ba’s staff will ensure your glass is kept chilled and your plates topped up as often as you choose from 12pm to 3pm.



Travel

Journey to the blooming gardens of Spring ...



Spring is in the air, flowers blooming everywhere, in every streak, shade and hue, Tulips, Begonias, blossoms, irises, lavender and roses too, that attract with their tinted lightness, bold flushes and bright aspect, perfect fairytale landscapes, with maybe a castle, a tower or two, however, without dragons, demons and spells but with plenty of enchantment. To capture this essence, we travelled to truly panoramic landscapes in the Netherlands, Belgium and Japan, in the

middle of the season which celebrates colour, life and joie de vivre....

Looking at these surreal images of nature is certainly a treat, so this season head out to see the rich harvests of Keukenhof, Holland, admire the ephemeral blossoms of Japan, lush scenes of the Belgian spring, and finally home to the Miracle Garden, in Dubai.

Keukenhof Holland

The largest garden in the world with millions of flowers over fields of 32 hectares just outside Amsterdam, in Lisse, it is undoubtedly a spectacular sight and one of the most popular ones. Blossoming flower beds of colourful tulips, fresh daffodils, rich hyacinth clusters, amaryllis, crocuses and that is just the beginning. In addition to the tulips, hyacinths, daffodils the colourful display includes orchids, roses, carnations, irises, lilies and numerous others, creating an overwhelming spectacle of colours and bouquet of fragrances. A picture perfect location with colour coordinated flowers arranged for maximum effect, in seven inspirational gardens with themes like Bee Happy. Each year Keukenhof creates a complete new look based on a central theme in one of its garden and for its parade in May. The parade theme for 2014 is 'energy'. Do not miss the bustle, enchantment and inspiration of Keukenhof, not just the flowers but the events and activities planned for eight weeks from March to May. Then, grab a bicycle, boat or cruise along the fields of row upon row of flowers, surrounding the Park and/or head towards the Castle Keukenhof right across from the entrance to the garden to experience the grandeur of the Dutch golden age in the 17th century. Closer to Amsterdam, there is the Duin & Kruidberg Santpoort-Noord, a fairytale castle set in the breathtaking scenery of the Kennemerland National Park, where you can sleep, bike, hike or dine. Surrounding Amsterdam are flower fields full of daisies which are unique and engender freshness, as you walk among them, the perfect symbols for innocence.





Hakkaido, Japan

The beginning of spring in Hokkaido is heralded by a profusion of surreal pink and dreamlike purple moss phlox flower (shibazakura) and its unique sweet scent, as it pervades the ten thousand square metre park at Takinoue, in May. An amazing and awe-inspiring site, the hillside overlooking Takinoue is covered with a carpet of these flowers with winding trails and paths to complete the dreamy landscape. Just the thing to relax, spend a few hours walking along the gently sloping hillside in a picture perfect setting. Then join the crowd for the Shibazakura Festival for food & drinks, music & dance. A small town in Hokkaido, Furano has breathtaking fields of flowers. Famous among them are the lavender fields of Farm Tomita. In Furano, there is also the possibility of enjoying the view of

such fields in a hot air balloon. The town holds a number of festivals, one of them is the belly button festival, where dancers paint their bellybuttons as characters using paint, special costumes, along with props and then dance. Japan is famous for its blossoms and associated with chrysanthemums. To see blossoms in bloom, head out to Hakodate's gardens full of plum and cherry tree blossoms at Goryokaku. Goryokaku was the scene of the Tokugawa clan's defeat by the Meiji government. Surrounding the ruins of the largest ever fort built in Japan, by the Tokugawa Shogunate, is a park full of cherry blossom trees. Another more significant site is the Hirosaki Castle Park covering forty nine hectares, the perfect spot to view the blossoms on cherry trees. The turreted hira-yama

style castle was constructed by the Tsugaru family who once ruled the region. The castle tower, the turret on the southeast corner and the east gate of the outermost castle wall are designated Important Cultural Properties. Walk along the castle's western moat to capture the bright red Shunyo Bridge, stately castle tower, pale pink cherry blossoms, and snow-crested Mt. Iwaki. The park has about 2,600 trees of 50 different varieties, mainly Somei-yoshi, Kanzan and Kasumi-zakura that bloom in spring. The 120 year-old Somei-yoshino planted at the beginning of the Meiji Era is said to be the oldest in Japan. The Hirosaki Cherry Blossom Festival is usually held every year from 23 April to 5 May and for chrysanthemums the festival is in August and September.



Carpet of Begonias Belgium

Belgium, the home of Begonias; the flowers favoured for variety and vivid colours as well as their resilience. In the center of Brussels partake in the spectacular festival of flowers, as 100 gardeners weave a carpet of begonias in the historic Grand Palace Square, this August. The Carpet of Flowers with 300 begonias per square meter is woven using more than a million flowers; an event that takes place every two years. The historic Grand Palace Square provides a perfect backdrop to the floral carpet for four days. Explore landmarks of the Square, like the gothic and baroque buildings of the Grand Place, the Town Hall and other guildhalls, looking out over the ledges, from the myriad windows that line the square, including St. Michaels Cathedral and the seat of the European Union Parliament. While exploring these landmarks, a trip

to the local chocolate shops wouldn't go amiss, one cannot come to Brussels and not taste the famous Belgian chocolates. Delectable and delicious chocolates that just melt on your mouth, filled with cream or liquor.... As you step away from the Grand Palace and along the Rue Charles Buls take a tasting tour to the various chocolate shops of Brussels or maybe a single master chocolatier would do. When you reach the street corner of Rue de l'Étuve & Rue du Chêne, see the iconic statue Manneken Pis taking a leak; an elfin, defiantly perfect symbol. Seven kilometers west of Brussels is the Groot Brijgaarden, a fourteen hectare garden which can be admired in full bloom in the spring months of April and May, when it hosts a festival of daffodils, jacinth, tulips and roses, with the Kestel von Groot-Brijgaarden in the background.



Then, head out to ...



Miracle garden, Dubai

Truly a miraculous achievement, the largest garden of the world in the middle of a desert, the Dubai Miracle Garden is a beautiful garden with a mind boggling variety of flowers, 45 million different flowers in every shade and hue. Lending an amazing charm and creating a beautiful rousing experience for visitors, the park covers an area of about 72,000 square meters in Dubai land. Landscaped with a unique and special design for each region represented in the park, and ornamented with peacock, cars, clocks, pyramids or a hillock full of petunias and the iconic tallest building of the world Burj Khalifa covered with flowers, creates an enchanting

village involving 10 flower houses and a large palatial structure decorated with flowers and a garden filled with the sun-tracking sunflowers alongwith objects like cars, trolleys decorated with flowers, as well as walkways with an arbor made of Hannah Montana image embossed umbrellas, in addition to a walkway with heart shaped arches. The Aromatic Garden allows visitors to see rare aromatic and medicinal plants from around the world. They will be allowed to touch, smell and even make their own cup of herbal tea fresh from the garden. The fruit garden is the perfect place to pick fruit and vegetables like strawberries, tomatoes, lettuce, and no gardener

would chase you off. Shopping outlets, restaurants and nursery plants added to the park make the park fully equipped and very special. Open every day for tourists from 09:00 to 21:00, with an entrance fee of about 20 AED (\$ 5.50) per person. It is a place to relax and take a stroll among the flowers. For a sharp perspective, take a dessert safari, a drive over the golden desert dunes to admire the landscape of the shifting sands that frame the city of Dubai. End the day, exploring the high points or the high life, the city has become renowned for.

Happy Travelling!

RIRA
gallery

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DIY Home Décor

Creative DIYs home decor ideas to inspire you in no time!

Decorating our home is something we love to do or take time out for, but what often prevents us from such engaging activity is the fear of starting something and then needing someone else's help to finish it off... If drilling, nailing and hammering sound all too scary and prevent you from revamping the look of your

home, then DIY home décor is the answer to all your qualms. Do-it-yourself decorating allows you to customize your living space without the help of another person. Here are some of the best DIY Home décor ideas that are sure to inspire you instantly, and make your home look fabulous...



1 Enhance open storage

Take advantage of existing storage spaces, which are otherwise neglected and as a result they look dull and cluttered. Take one of the cabinets, enhance its look by taking the door off, paint the inside with a rich neutral color, and add an attractive picture or embellish it with wall stickers and it becomes a pretty backdrop for a small collection of clear objects. Make sure to color coordinate and store everything with similar colors together.



3 Books art

We love to read books, but often times storing them becomes an impossible task to manage. With a little bit of imagination you can turn your books into art pieces. Simply color coordinate books to create a subtle collage with reams of papers. You can also take the sleeves off hard cover books and arrange the spines by color.

2 Maximize space

An excellent way to efficiently increase the dimensions of your space is to change the way it looks. You can easily extend your space by placing a small table against a mirror, as mirrors tend to create an illusion of bigger space. When a space is empty or not in use, you can add character if you go big with flowers or branches for a focal point, they add architecture to the space. It also helps to create a rich finish, using just simple everyday materials.





4 Calendar art

Calendars are not just calendars; they often exhibit beautiful sceneries that are inspiring and motivating. Simply clip away dates from your calendar art and frame it. You may put them up in groups on the wall or in the form of picture frames on a shelf.

5 Wrapping paper

End of a festive occasion brings stocks of pretty wrapping papers scattered all over the house. The greatest task is to collect them and keep them stored somewhere in the supplies storage boxes. But this time think out of the box!!! Simply turn the pretty wrapping sheets into placement mats by easily cutting them into desired measurements, and laminating them with a laminating machine, available at photocopy shop.



6 Tables

Coffee tables are usually alone positioned at the center of the room. But here's a simple trick to not just glam up your space but use it effectively. If you are bored by the look of your coffee table, replace it with a group of two or three smaller tables together. It'll give you flexibility and allow you to mix different styles.

Breathe, breathe in the air



Breathing is the signature move we all make our entire lives, which is designed to sustain our body, yet interestingly, we seldom pay any attention to it. If we were to know the benefits of breathing we would focus more on the lungful of air we breathe than the amount of stress we gasp in and out of our system daily. Breathing properly is the best way to connect the mind and body, and an essential tool for overall wellness.

Who doesn't suffer from stress, anxiety, high blood pressure or digestive problems nowadays... It is almost pandemic. These elements are hard to avoid and control but they can easily be offset by body's natural response, stimulated through breathing. It only takes a few minutes to focus on breathing techniques to ensure the

right amount of oxygen is flowing in your blood to counter the overwhelming effects of such strain and anxiety. You can do them anytime during the day if or whenever you feel stressed or on the edge. And if you practice these routines regularly, you will notice that you're handling the day better, your blood pressure is lower and overall your body equilibrium is more in balance.

Leading an inactive lifestyle or sitting for extended periods in front of the computer or TV also creates a serious oxygen deficit. Have you ever noticed that you may actually feel exhausted after sitting in front of TV? Your fatigue is actually caused by the lack of oxygen. To help restore balance, the parasympathetic system needs to be strengthened and the only way this can be achieved is through breathing.

Breathing technique

To get the maximum result from your breathing and to ensure your overall wellbeing, check out this breathing routine. The first step is to find the ideal space, find a quiet and comfortable place. Make sure the room is not too bright. If it relaxes you, you might play some music, but make sure that it's soothing and set at reasonable volume. Wear comfortable clothing, that is, not too tight.

Stand, sit or lie in a position that keeps the back straight. Start by clearing your mind of all thoughts and focusing only on your breathing. Feel the air come into your lungs and go out of your lungs. Do this for several minutes, until you enter a relaxed state. Use the first few breaths to make your breathing as slow, deep, quiet and regular as possible. As you continue to focus on your breathing, try to exhale completely, pushing all of the air out of your lungs. You will need to use the muscles between the ribs to do this. Inhale very slowly and fill your lungs back up, with fresh air.

Once you have done that now try these simple relaxing techniques. Make sure that the tip of your tongue is against the roof of your mouth, right behind your teeth, during this entire exercise. Close your lips and breathe in for 4 seconds. Hold that breath for 7 seconds. Open your mouth and push your lips out, exhaling that breath for 8 seconds. Repeat these steps for a series of 4 breaths. Finish by breathing regularly, continuing to focus on your breathing. You should notice an immediate feeling of peace after completing this exercise.

Breathing and weight loss

Weight loss is the new mania that pervades throughout the world and quite interestingly deep breathing promotes weight loss. No matter how unbelievable it may sound but chances are that some simple breathing techniques can really help you slim

down! Unlike gym and heavy workouts that may result in muscle cramps and pains, breathing exercises are much easier and the workout to lose weight is as painless a techniques as breathing in and out.

How's that possible? When you take a deep breath, the deep inhalation fills your lungs with fresh oxygen that gets transferred to all body cells. This increases oxidation and helps in burning

fat cells. With deep breathing in yoga, oxygen intake in blood increases and the rate at which carbon-dioxide leaves the body slows down, thus giving us more energy to workout. Breathing exercises also boost metabolism. The thyroid gland is responsible for regulating metabolic rate, deep breathing triggers release of hormones from the thyroid gland that stimulate metabolism leading to weight loss.

Breathing tips

Breathing exercises, when performed, should begin by inhaling deeply. The inhale should begin in your abdomen. Start your inhale by expanding your belly, then your ribcage and finish by filling the top of your chest. Your shoulders should not rise when inhaling, but should remain relaxed. Follow a similar pattern when exhaling, but try to make your exhale twice as long as your inhale. Start your exhale in your abdomen, move to your ribcage, and then finish by emptying the top of your lungs.

Focus on your breath during each exercise. You can even close your eyes to help improve your focus and relaxation. Some of these exercises may be very energizing, so you may not want to practice them right before going to sleep.



Breathing for relaxation tips

- . Exhale all the air from your lungs until there's no more air left. You will notice that by exhaling completely you will automatically be able to inhale more air.
- . Slowly inhale through the nose while counting up to 4.
- . Then, hold your breath for a count of eight.
- . If you are a complete beginner, don't hold your breath or hold your breath for a shorter period of time and gradually build up to an 8-count.



Taste of Dubai

The Emirati way!

The last month has seen many a gastronomical escapades contrived on the culinary map of Dubai. The food fest itself was just one part of the greater "Taste of Dubai" festival.

With so much happening, such offerings and literally innumerable styles and cuisines, one often wonders what exactly is the real taste of Dubai?



To define the taste of Dubai we must travel deep into the desert where the bellowing camels look on, unyielding as the desert wind that sweeps the sand, forming intricate dunes that define the forever changing and shifting landscape of the desert. Then, we dive into the sea looking for pearls... yet, at the same time, outlining the contours of what will become the taste defining palate for the peninsula we now know as the United Arab Emirates.

The culinary traditions of the UAE are influenced by its geography and resources. For long, it has been a coastal settlement, where foreign traders, caravan traffic followed by seaborne travel, thrived due to its position as a port, for the ships enroute to various locations around the world. This flux of trade also brought with it spices from across the region as well as the globe, enhancing and creating



a modified palate of flavors that later became quintessentially 'Emirati'. If we were to delineate the taste of Dubai (UAE), we would mix up a concoction of spices that found their way from the deep recesses of the desert towns to the bustling bazars aka souqs, then we would sift all the piquant elements out to form a mellow taste with a purist approach to the ingredient and lastly we will combine aroma with exotic ingredients, a staple within the fare of the local people, making something simple and healthful. The local Emirati taste is simple, basic ingredients, minimal spices and rather uncomplicated cooking techniques. The people believe in using the simplest ingredients to create delectable dishes, which in turn, also represent the lifestyle of the people living in the region for centuries. This uncomplicated and rather down to earth social allusion, has paved its way into the kitchen 'Matbakh' where the daily meal comprises of ample protein from either fish or other livestock and/or in the form of protein rich lentils, vegetables that are easily grown in the region including garlic, potatoes, squashes, tomatoes and spices that are exotic and fit for a sultan, including cumin, cardamom, Zaatar (Thyme), nutmeg etc. Olive oil is an indispensable part of the Emirati cuisine, as well as parsley, tahini (sesame paste) Bharat (mixed spices). Because the cooking techniques are simple, an Emirati table brags sumptuous BBQs, slow cooked tagines, and roasted nosh. There are a number of traditional dishes that are considered classic yet scrumptious. Although, in the modern time and with the metropolitan status, the Emirati cuisine has undergone changes, assimilating a diffusion of flavors, and soaking up some creative twists to the traditional recipes, but at the core it still remains simple and delicious, satisfying to the heart and gratifying, to the last morsel.

Some of the famous local dishes on the menu include, the following; Machboos, a traditional rice dish that is slow cooked in a large pot. It consists of rice, onions and meat, seasoned with spices, salt and dried lemon called Loomy. This dish is prepared by cooking the meat, spices, dried lemon, and seasonings in boiling water until they are very tender. Cooked rice and saffron are added to the meat mixture in layers. Another distinctive local dish is Harees, whose origin dates back centuries. It consists of small pieces of meat, wheat, and water. Prepared by cooking ground wheat in a pot with a pinch of salt, to which the meat is added. The mixture is then left for many hours until it is fully cooked and the meat is completely dissolved, into the wheat. In the final stage, the pot is surrounded by charcoal and is left to cook overnight. After several hours, the thick mixture is removed and stirred with a special piece of wood called 'midrib'. Before serving the dish is topped with ghee or olive oil. For a meal befitting a king, Mahshi is the absolute choice. Roasted lamb, stuffed with rice, raisins, onions, eggs and a host of different spices and seasoning, Mahsi is roasted for 7 to 8 hours and is typically prepared for feasts and weddings. Finally no Emirati menu is complete without mentioning the famous Shawarma, prepared with chunks of meat, sauce and pickle, Shawarma is the arch nemesis of its Turkish counterpart the Doner Kebab. Unlike Doner which is usually prepared using pita bread, shawarma is made using Arabic bread called 'Khubz', which is thinner than the pita and thus absorbs more flavors from the sauces and the meat. The flavors of the four Emirati dishes seem simple and uncomplicated yet as the taste buds unravel the simplicity they expose the earthy flavors that suffuse the meal, the base ingredients rather than added spices





Jewelry & Watch Collections

Inspired pieces to unique and exceptional creations, contemporary gem stones to innovative and revolutionary designs; check out our selection from the latest high-end jewelry and watch collections



Carrera y Carrera BAMBÚ COLLECTION

Elegant pieces and cocktail rings with dazzling colored stones join the Asian harmony of Bambú. Carrera y Carrera surprises with new pieces that extend the Bambú Collection; Bamboo is considered a symbol of good luck in the Far East. Following the collection's prior success, the pieces have been reinvented, while maintaining the original style and creativity.



Plukka Jewelry

Plukka, the online designer fine jewelry brand offers highly creative luxury designer jewelry through an innovative made-to-order business model. After making waves in the international fine jewelry market with its exquisite designer pieces and online innovative business model, Plukka, has now arrived in the UAE with a grand opening at Cuadro Gallery, DIFC.



TIFFANY & CO. NEW ATLAS JEWELRY DESIGNS

Tiffany & Co. presents new Atlas® jewelry with the striking beauty that made this celebrated design a fashion icon. The latest options trace the collection's signature Roman numerals in designs symbolic of strength and freedom. These creations distill style to its very essence; each is bold enough to stand on its own, yet graceful and uncomplicated enough to stack and layer, so that every wearer can tell their own unique story.

FENDI Chameleon Diamond Designs

FENDI Timepieces brings the distinctive, streamlined design of the Chameleon to new heights – adding the luster of diamonds to the iconic leather bag buckle design. Iconic and glamorous, the new enchanting diamond-set designs are presented in two sizes and different executions for ultimate choice. FENDI dresses this timepiece with diamonds, offering a more sparkling and exclusive blend of Italian taste and Swiss-made craftsmanship. This glistening look of the FENDI signature with diamonds offers unparalleled glamour and timeless elegance for the discerning modern woman.



EBEL Onde 36 mm malachite dial

Malachite has long been used for personal adornment. The pattern on each semiprecious stone mined watches, is totally unique, giving the individual face of each of these new EBEL Onde 36 mm models its own personality – and making each watch a one-of-a-kind investment. Deep green is a strong color that complements many skin tones, but requires a certain attitude of stylish confidence to wear. Designed for a dynamic yet practical woman, the watch is waterproof to 50m while the crown sparkling with 18 diamonds appeals to a woman's innate sense of glamour and luxury. EBEL's signature double E logo at 12:00 sits opposite an applied Arabic numeral at 6:00, enhancing the design's exotic nature. The smooth green alligator strap with stainless steel buckle brings the perfect final touch to this enthralling addition to the Onde family.



MOVADO CONCERTO

Concerto is a contemporary timepiece marked by clean lines and subtle contours that gracefully reflect Movado's modern design aesthetic. Recently the women's Concerto collection gained a glamorously golden, petite new model crafted in yellow gold-plated stainless steel. Its smaller round 26.5mm case still features an elegantly recessed crown. The comfortable bracelet with high polished finish is designed with wide, sculpted middle links and a hidden deployment clasp. Simple by design, the striking gold-toned sunray Museum dial is minimally detailed by a Movado's signature gold-toned concave dot at 12 o'clock, gold-toned dauphine hands, and a subtle new minute track.

PIAGET Altiplano Date

Timeless and classic, the PIAGET Altiplano Date is equipped with the 1205P, the world's thinnest automatic date movement at 3 mm, housed in a 6.36 mm case – a new double record. Sleek and elegant were the watchwords when designing the look of the Altiplano Date, a model of timeless purity and a true classic that is sure to stand the test of time. Crafted in white gold, pink gold or gem-set pink gold, the 40 mm case was specially designed to house the 1205P calibre. A movement adorned with traditional finish, circular Côtes de Genève, circular-grained main plate, bevelled bridges, sunburst wheels, blued screws, dedicated index assembly and a pink gold micro-rotor engraved with the Piaget coat-of-arms.





FALL 2014 READY-TO-WEAR

Check out the exclusive photos of the Fall 2014 Ready-To-Wear collections from top fashion designers of the world.



Dolce & Gabbana *FALL 2014 READY-TO-WEAR*

Called “Once upon a time... in Sicily” designers, Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana, took viewers on a jolly jaunt into a luxury fairytale. The whimsical collection exuded a fairy tale feel with pieces like, tunic length armour, gloves and snoods covered in shimmering crystals, flowing draped gowns, wide corsets covered in woodland creature prints, where the wicked witches still wore all black, and Red Riding Hood with her cape covered in fox fur that almost looked surreal.



Emilio Pucci
FALL 2014 READY-TO-WEAR

Designer, Peter Dundas, titled his fall/winter 2014 collection for Emilio Pucci, "Call of the Wild" and took to the idea of giving his glam, uptown girls a lesson in savage sophistication. Part Native American, part American Hustle—yet all skimpy, sexy, sizzling with seventies silhouettes, Peter Dundas had brought the blankets, ponchos, and furs, combined with hip-hop slash rocker sensibility, silver studs, and a pink-brown Emilio Pucci vintage print.



Gucci FALL 2014 READY-TO-WEAR

Designer Frida Giannini took the Gucci brand back to its heyday – with a clean and focused collection that gave a modern twist to the 1960s Mod fashion movement. Echoing the pastel candy colors, the Gucci woman this season basically, is sexy and dramatic. The collection bragged some fine pieces like the slim and seductively slouchy denim jeans, leather bib ruffled tuxedo shirts and a dusty rose biker jacket. By going back to codes of the brand or what Giannini called “the essence of Gucci”, she underlined the impact this house’s heritage has had on modern fashion.



Hugo Boss *FALL 2014 READY-TO-WEAR*

On the surface, Jason Wu wasn't an obvious choice for the German brand Hugo Boss. while Wu is famous for designing Michelle Obama's inauguration gowns, it had to count for a lot with the Boss, eager to make a leap into women's wear. Celebrities like Reese Witherspoon, Gerard Butler, Diane Kruger, and Gwyneth Paltrow, were also in attendance at the show. The collection had precisely tailored, minimal look. The palette was strictly neutral: all black, charcoal, camel, and ivory. Leather belts accentuated waistlines, but the silhouette was long and lean.



Victoria Beckham FALL 2014 READY-TO-WEAR

Victoria Beckham FW2014, was shown at the New York Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week. Consistent in creating clothes within the classy style and sharp edge tailoring, the collection embodies simplicity through quality. Her love for monotone, calf length skirts, and well-cut structural looks, were also persistent throughout the collection which can be summed as minimalist at its best. Natural faces with small leather goods along with Manolo's creation. All perfectly balanced without losing the feminine touch that is unique to the brand Victoria Beckham, and the creator herself.

The Heart & Soul of Matter...

Icons Coffee Couture, the dream behind the Reality



Perhaps, nothing in the world is credible anymore due to a lack of selflessness. Everything is cynically hemmed in by the efficacy of do's, which has driven soul out of matter to wobble in space; a total annihilation from meaning that makes human existence worthy. But, then, that which makes us question, is also what makes us go back; go back to the basic humanness which has led to the survival of our existence. The altruist; the one who waits, strives and finally accomplishes... is after all the heart and soul of our world! Beginning a story behind a fashionable coffee shop, doesn't have to be full of treacle. Nevertheless the story is empowering and motivating, requiring words of wisdom for understanding... The newly opened ICONS Coffee Couture, a coffee shop

serving sugar-free delights in Souq Al Bahar- Dubai, is an interesting new concept for weightwatchers, for ones with dietary restraints, and for those who simply wish to adopt a healthy lifestyle... Founded by Elena Weber, a German model, business woman cum philanthropist, whose charitable spirit was moved by the people, their lives and plight at the stevia farms, when she spent a month in Argentina among those people. As, a business woman, she aims to provide healthy food to the health conscious residents of UAE in a fashionable but sustainable manner. We sat down with Elena who told us her uplifting story that inspired the whole concept behind the coffee shop, the fashionable and glamorous part that is the driving force of it and the promising, bright future.





Q1: Tell us about yourself? Being a professional model, how did you come up with an idea like this?

I was discovered as a model during my university years, which was a great opportunity to finance my studies. In 2007, I was featured in a German Fashion Magazine, in which another model told her story about a company she set up in the Emirates. At that time I had to do an internship and somehow my intuition told me to contact her! And one month later I found myself in UAE! At the end of my internship, I had one last meeting with the founder of the Investment Company, under which the other company was listed. He asked me what I would like to do in my future! And I told him about my vision to establish a Charity Organization. He said he could appreciate my vision, BUT would advise me to start my own company, be successful and that this would enable me to do all the good I would like to do without running after other people, to raise money. This somehow made real sense to me and since then I have been thinking about what business I could set up which would enable me to change things!

After I finished University I decided to work as a full time model for one year, to travel around the world which brought me to America where I also had the chance to do a Charity month in a small indigo village in Argentina! Coming out of an Industry like the Fashion World where everything is shiny and beautiful, to see those children, having nothing, not even the possibility of an education – touched me deeply and made me think that I have to start something – NOW! If you have a dream, everything will come along! And surprisingly the solution was so close! While I was living with the indigo people I saw them using

a green leaf to sweeten their drinks and was highly impressed when I found out that it has zero calories, but is 300 times sweeter than sugar!

To me, this was the solution to all my problems, or maybe even every woman's problem! Especially in the Model business where the pressure is high to have a certain size. I couldn't enjoy sweets a lot, even though I loved them! Guilt free sweets, was what came in my mind when I found stevia! Who doesn't want to enjoy sweets without gaining the pounds?! Back in Germany I got a celebrity



Pastry

Chef, named Stefan Kopetz, on board, to create a wonderful guilt free but joyful assortment of sweets. As I wanted to make it cool to be healthy and to care about your body it was clear that I have to pack the whole concept in a Fashionable Lifestyle Concept, inspired from my life in the Model Industry! And here we are – ICONS Coffee Couture! The long term vision is to enhance a healthy change locally as well as to be able to support the regions we are sourcing our coffee beans & stevia from to make the maximum positive change!

Q2: So how did you land with this idea in the UAE?

I believe that life is about the people

we meet and what we create out of it! So I thought back on the Investment Company I did my internship with and the Owner who inspired me to create my own business and I submitted my business plan! Based on the high diabetic rate in UAE and our main USP of naturally sweetened food and drinks they decided to invest in ICONS and to start creating ICONS as a highly professional Franchise Company.

Q3: What does the brand stand for? Is it about fashion or following a certain food trend, or is it a mix of both, like you call it, "a lifestyle"?

Definitely, both! The Brand is inspired from my life in the model industry and this, combines both health & fashion! Health is the inside value to our products and Fashion is the outside cover to it and both together are the lifestyle we want to create! We want to make it cool to be healthy and to care about your body!

Q3: What is your target market? And how do you define your niche?

'Would you like to enjoy sweets without gaining the pounds?' If you can answer the question above with a yes then you are definitely a part of our target group! We are targeting everyone who wants to feel good in their body and who wants to enjoy sweets without feeling guilty afterwards! Therefore basically every woman! ;) As well as the fashionista's, trend setters, business people, families and just about everyone who wants to do something good for



themselves! Besides that, it also includes diabetic people who are not allowed to eat sugar and those who have special dietary requirements.

Q4: Your primary focus is on the healthy organic food, how do you bring variation to your menu in the UAE where local produce are rare?

Based on our values we try to source local Organic and Fair trade products where ever we can! But, at the same time we want to offer it for a reasonable price. Therefore, we can't source everything locally and organic yet, but we have the vision to be 100% organic in the future! We have a wonderful Executive Chef from Germany on Board who is always working on new and healthy,

but joyful creations to bring variations and fun into our assortment!

Q5: Do you have expansion plans within the UAE and Middle East?

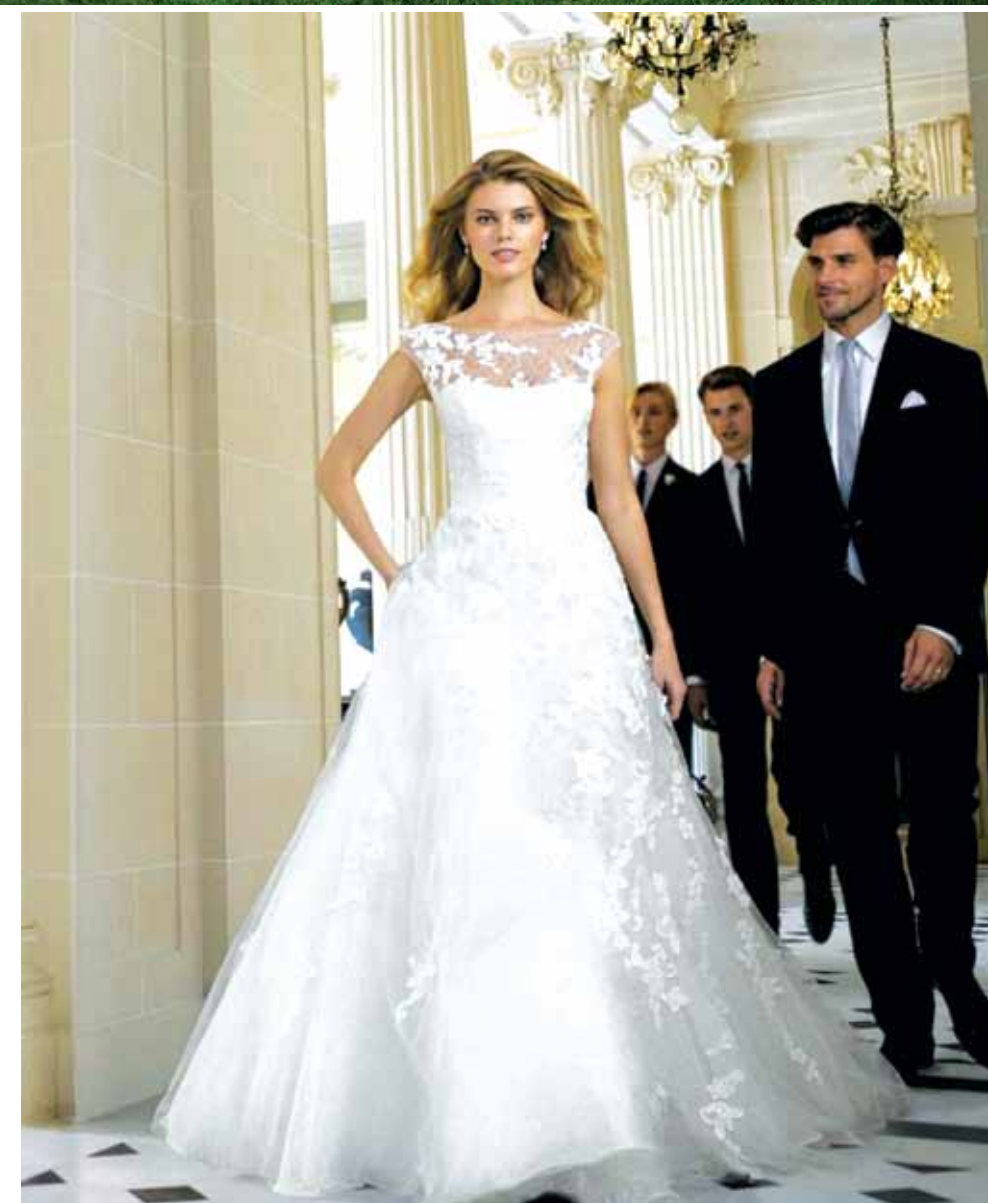
Definitely! We have built ICONS to be a Franchise from the beginning, to establish a ripple effect, starting from the UAE over to the GCC region and the world. We have hired professionals from the industry and developed a set of manuals, booklets & trainings programs to be ready for this expansion! We are impressed with the enquires we've received till today and are already in negotiations with Partners from several GCC countries who want to create and enhance a healthy, but joyful change together with us!





f Lifestyle

Latest motoring, luxury, fashion and lifestyle coverage from UAE and around the world.



Pronovias wins the prestigious DEBI award in the Bridal Better /Designer category

Pronovias, known for bridal fashion, for the third consecutive year triumphed, winning the Distinctive Excellence in the Bridal Industry (DEBI) Award in the Bridal Better and Designer category. The award, which is one of the most prestigious in the North American bridal sector, is awarded every year by the retailers' association of the United States and Canada. Leading manufacturers and retailers in the bridal sector, took part in this award, which dates back 26 years. Pronovias' brands sell in 90 countries including two stores in the Middle East – Dubai and Beirut.



MANZARI introduces Sable timeless elegance

MANZARI Luxury Furs collection has introduced the Sable black and brown overcoats this February in the UAE. High Fashion combines with brimming aesthetics and the best quality of raw materials to create garments which are timeless, luxurious and the most precious piece in the closet. The full sleeves, collared, knee length coats are clinched at the waist with a leather belt and keeps a person warm in the coldest regions. While the brown sable is designed with a front panel collar, the black sable has a polo high collar. The Black Sable over coat retails at 100,000 AED, and the-Brown Sable at 80,000 AED.

Beauty Connection Spa new Guinness World Record

A team of 100 manicurists from the Dubai-based Beauty Connection Spa, has broken the previous record of 25,720 nails finished in 4-hours and made history by setting the new record, to finish 51,500 nails and varnished in 8-hours while thousands of visitors waited in long queues to set the new world record within the due time. One hundred manicurists from the Beauty Connection Spa dressed as Rosie the Riveter, a symbol of feminism and women's economic power, they filed and polished thousands of people's nails, men and women at the Star Atrium, Dubai Mall.



Si Fashion Galerie

Si Fashion Galerie invites its customers to view their new collection. Inspired by roses, romance and relationships, the new collection has the perfect gifts for all women. Si Fashion Galerie's new collection includes unconventional Jewelry, Couture Wedding Gowns, Ready-to-Wear Dresses, Shoes, Patent Belts & many such creative accessories, created by talented and celebrity designers from Europe and the Middle East. Red, and a variety of red shades dominate the collection.



Edition KSA: The Kingdom of Limited Editions

Saudi's leading luxury & fashion consulting firm, Niche Arabia, and one of the most innovative online Arab fashion retailers, Mooda.com, hosted EDITION KSA, an event to gather Saudi's of the burgeoning fashion community, while promoting and showcasing talented designers from the Arab world. In addition, to a collection of exclusive items commissioned for the KSA market, Saudi designers, Rana Ismail of boho-chic brand Rana Ismail (Jeddah), Reem Faisal of bridal and evening brand Reem Faisal Couture (Jeddah), and Mashael Al Faris of evening wear brand Moushi (Riyadh), showcased exclusive limited-edition pieces. Edition KSA aims to highlight the various professionals within the Saudi fashion industry, from designer to stylist, to retailer and marketer.



The HH the Emir 23rd International Equestrian Sword Festival

The HH The Emir 23rd International Equestrian Sword Festival concluded with the two most prestigious races held at the Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club. Dubday, the first thoroughbred to carry the new Al Shaqab Racing silks of grey with gold braid, won

the H.H. The Emir's Trophy presented by Longines. In addition and in line with its slogan "Elegance is an attitude", Longines also rewarded the most elegant lady at the racecourse with the Longines Prize for Elegance.

Ford Celebrates International Women's Day

Ford marked International Women's Day, and National Women's History Month with a look at some of the women who played an important role in creating the all-new Ford Mustang, as well as women who have influenced the pony car over the past 50 years. Throughout the course of this American icon's life, women have made contributions to the Mustang story in many ways. In 1964, a Chicago schoolteacher, Gail Brown, made history when she became the first Mustang owner in America. She still owns the car, and what makes her story all the more special is that Brown bought her Mustang on April 15 – two days before the car was set to go on sale. Today, women hold key positions at the Ford Motor Company, in roles ranging from engineering the customer's drive experience, to picking the car's colors and materials, to continuing the Mustang legacy.



ELEQT Member Night at the Boutiq Ultra Lounge



ELEQT Member Night at the Boutiq Ultra Lounge



First Avenue & Al Badia Stand @ the Dubai World Cup 2014



First Avenue & Al Badia Stand @ the Dubai World Cup 2014



The Spectacular @ the Dubai World Cup 2014



The Spectacular @ the Dubai World Cup 2014



Dubai Duty Free @ the Dubai World Cup 2014



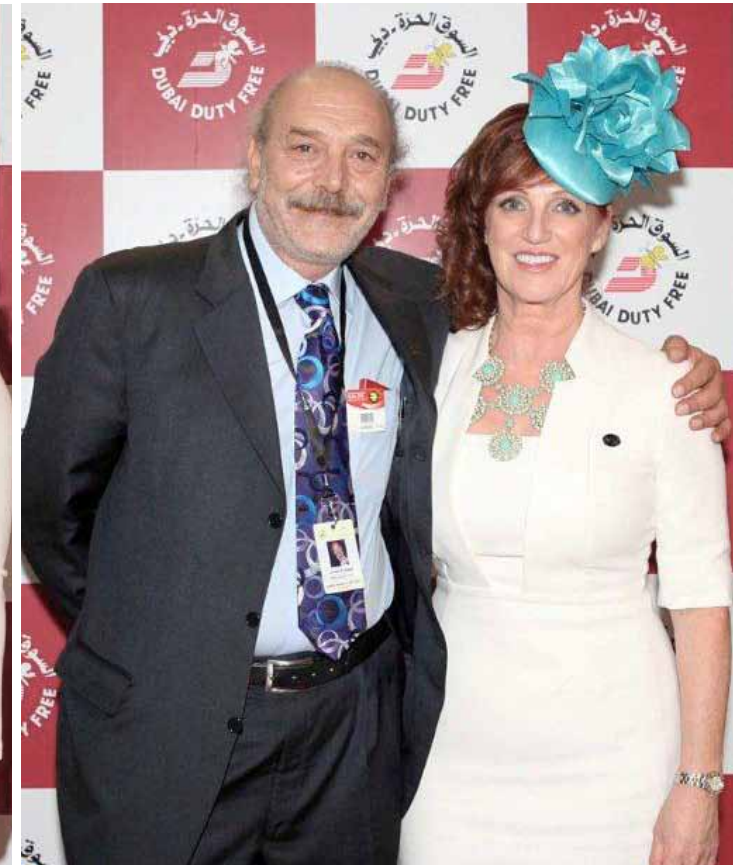
Colm and Breeda McLoughlin



George and Carmel Horan



Salah and Touia Tahlak



Jihad and Sinead El Sibai



HE Patrick Hennessy, Irish Amb and wife Pauline



Niall and Shirley McLoughlin



Bernard Creed with Deidre and Dennis Buckley



David and Colette Horan

The elegance of Longines @ the Dubai World Cup 2014



Prize-giving ceremony of the Dubai Sheema Classic presented by Longines: Mr. Ryan Moore, winning jockey of the Dubai Sheema Classic presented by Longines, Mr. Juan-Carlos Capelli, Vice President of Longines and Head of International Marketing, Sunday Racing Co Ltd, winning owner of the Dubai Sheema Classic presented by Longines, and Mr. Sei Ishizaka, winning trainer of the Dubai Sheema Classic presented by Longines.

The elegance of Longines @ the Dubai World Cup 2014



Prize-giving ceremony of leading owner, trainer and jockey of the Dubai World Cup Carnival: Mr. Patrick Aoun, Regional Brand Manager Longines Middle East, Mr. Silvestre de Sousa, leading jockey of the Dubai World Cup Carnival (riding for Godolphin), and Mr. Saeed bin Suroor, leading trainer of the Dubai World Cup Carnival.



Ryan Moore on Gentildonna, winner of the Dubai Sheema Classic presented by Longines.

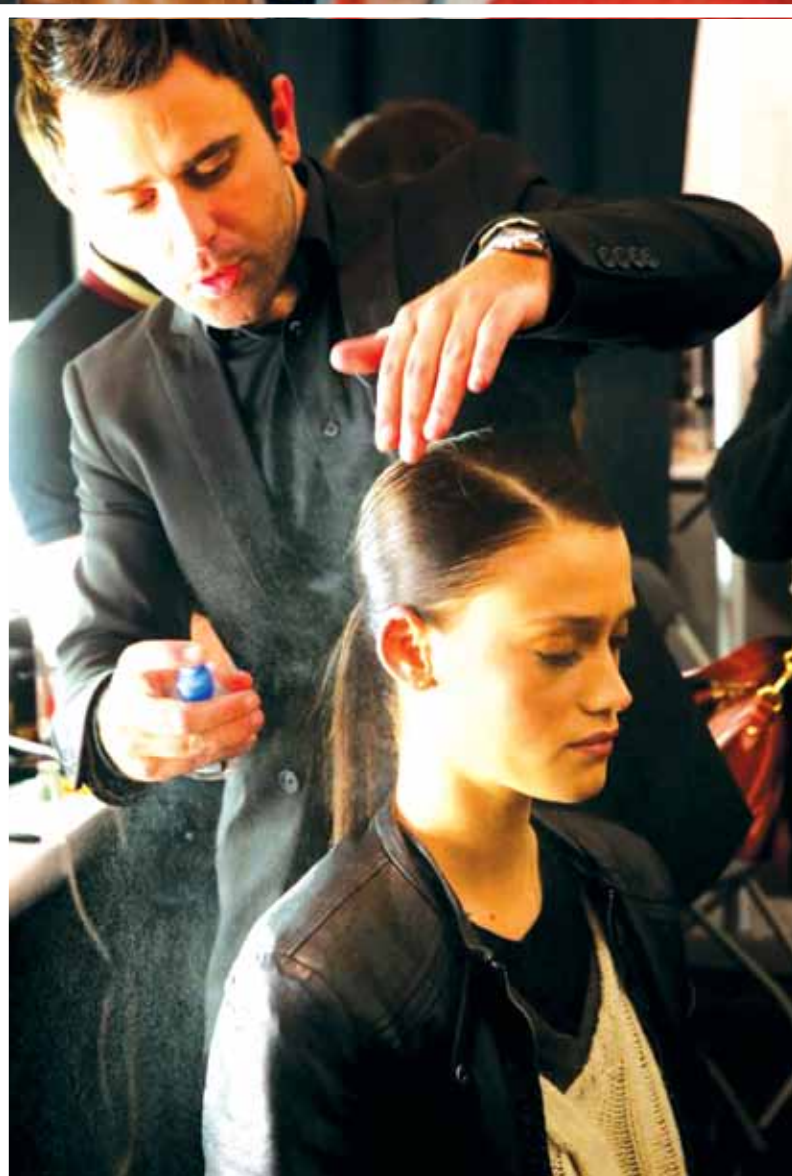


Mrs. Jessica McAndrews, Longines Most Elegant Lady, and Mr. Patrick Aoun, Regional Brand Manager Longines Middle East.



TRESEMMÉ® PARTNERS WITH FASHION DESIGNER VIVIENNE TAM AS THE HAIR CARE SPONSOR OF MERCEDES-BENZ FASHION WEEK

TRESemmé partnered with Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in New York to celebrate another season of the latest styles on and off the runway. As part of its role as the longest-running official hair care sponsor of Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week, TRESemmé partnered with contemporary women's fashion designer, Vivienne Tam. Led by the brand's global stylist Matthew Curtis, the team of stylists created the latest hair trends to accompany Tam's newest collection, which debuted at New York City's Lincoln Center.



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THE STORIES BEGIN AT OVER 25 INSPIRING DESTINATIONS WORLDWIDE



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Elegance is an attitude

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