

THE JOY OF HOBBIES



RECREATION: Pastimes encourage creativity, independence and motivation



EDUCATOR: Berenice

“With the rising competition, most parents feel compelled to encourage their children to be ‘the best’.”



YOUNG: Zoya engrossed in art

COMMUNITY REPORT
By MELISSA NAZARETH
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PSYCHOLOGISTS and teachers in Bahrain are encouraging young minds to pursue their interests without feeling pressured to excel at them, nodding to the return of the ‘lost art of pastimes’.

Remember when you put hobbies on your resume? Not anymore! These days it is all about ‘passion projects’ and ‘side hustles’. While there is nothing wrong with alternative careers or additional sources of income, approaching every activity as a means to an end can be counterproductive.

With the rising competition, most parents feel compelled to encourage their children to be ‘the best’. While this is well intended, it could cause unnecessary stress.

Additionally, social media and its culture of validation has aggravated the problem, with users – across ages – scrambling to portray every small thing as an ‘achievement’. Ironically, it often leads to feelings of inadequacy especially when you compare your performance with others.

“Young individuals, today, are under unprecedented pressure to be ‘perfect’ as social media generally



PSYCHOLOGIST: Dr Suzanne

celebrates physical beauty, busy lives and financial achievements,” Child Foundation Centre licensed psychologist Dr Suzanne White told *GulfWeekly*.

“It puts forward a world where being ‘perfect’ is normal, and so, kids who use a lot of social media and become focused on ‘likes’ and ‘followers’, may experience anxiety or develop lower self-esteem,” she warned.

The expert noted that hobbies allow children to develop a sense of identity and self-worth that is not based on achievements or school grades. They encourage creativity, independence and motivation, and give kids something to turn to in times of stress,” she added.

The expert encouraged allowing children to choose their own hobbies, highlighting that they will be more likely to continue.

“One hobby available to all kids is unstructured play, preferably outdoors. This gives them the freedom to be creative and try out new things, which builds confidence and independence.

Choosing a pastime that is developmental is important, as activities such as excessive online gaming or highly competitive sports, may be problematic for your child’s self-esteem,” Dr Suzanne explained.

She also underpinned that parents who have hobbies are likely to raise children who acquire them.

Schools play an equally important role in encouraging hobbies considering children spend a considerable amount of their time there. Organising extracurricular activities without the pressure to win competitions can help students discover their interests while also interspersing learning with relaxation.

“It’s wonderful for children to try different activities, but not every interest needs to become a pathway to excellence, competition, certificates, or even a future career,” American School Bahrain visual arts teacher Berenice Coelho said.

“A child can play football without needing to become a

footballer, or take an art class without having to produce amazing art. Children need opportunities to experiment, explore and enjoy activities simply because they like them. When the focus shifts to achievement, recognition or ‘What will this get me?’, they can lose sight of the joy of the activity itself.

“As an art teacher, I try to create a space where students feel safe to experiment, make mistakes, explore different materials and learn that failure is part of the creative process. Not everything they create needs to be impressive; sometimes the value is simply in the experience,” she added, highlighting a balance between supporting ambition and offering a safe space.

Echoing the same sentiments is mother-of-two Zainab Javid from Riffa, who

noted that while it is normal to expect children to do well at something they like and are good at, they should not be forced into activities.

“Our daughter Zoya has always enjoyed art. We encourage her to be creative and take part in competitions,” she added, pointing out that they have never pressurised her to paint. “On family outings to restaurants, she likes to take her sketch book along, and even follows online tutorials,” she said.

Bahrain University Master’s student Fatima Quadir from Janabiya noted that it is natural for parents to expect their children to make an effort especially if they are registering them for expensive activities.

However, she felt that genuine interest and constructive feedback rather than unrelenting pressure is the way to go.



TALES OF THE EAST
New travelogue
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Art contest results
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LEISURE SCENE
Flavours galore
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PULSE OF POP
Movie, books & more
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TRAVEL, for first-time author Salman Al Mattar, is not about collecting destinations, but rather nurturing curiosity.

The 39-year-old Bahraini serial entrepreneur and lifelong traveller has published his debut book *The Daring Duckling* - an archive of his maiden trip eastwards to discover the tantalising treasures of Thailand.

"I'd travelled extensively through Europe since I was a child and had been to the USA a dozen times, but this was my first real introduction to Asia outside of our own part of the world. And it genuinely surprised me," the serial entrepreneur told *GulfWeekly*.

"I think I had become very familiar with travelling west. Europe had been almost a second home through the years, and I knew what to expect from it.

"Thailand felt completely different. It was more spontaneous, more raw, more authentic and, in many ways, much more effortlessly cool.

"What really stayed with me, other than the phenomenal food, were the people.

"There was a warmth and openness to them, but also a sense of individuality and passion that I found incredibly inspiring.

"People seemed to be doing things because they genuinely loved doing them, rather than because they were supposed to."

Salman is quick to assert that *The Daring Duckling* is not a travel guide - you won't find checklists of restaurants or hotels here.

Across 134 pages of photography, fragmented storytelling and experiments with graphics, it is an invitation to discover rather than study - 'a book you can pick up, open anywhere and immediately find yourself somewhere else', according to the author.

COVER: *The Daring Duckling*

"It's a collection of strange nights, loud cities, hidden bars, chance encounters, and the kind of moments that crack something open inside you," he explained.

From Phuket dive bars and Chiang Mai jazz clubs to Bangkok hi-fi listening rooms and underground warehouses, Salman has documented his first trip to Thailand through obsession, music, design, food, chaos, and the people you only meet when you stay out too late.

Raw storytelling forms the core of the book and while travelogues often feature polished photography, Salman opted



BOOK REPORT
By NAMAN ARORA
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for iPhone photos to convey the beauty, strangeness, chaos, quiet and everything in between.

"I wanted to capture Thailand as I experienced it," he explained.

"Some images are carefully composed; others are completely spontaneous. I actually like that they weren't produced with professional photographic equipment.

"They feel more immediate and honest, almost like fragments of memory rather than photographs created specifically for a book."

The book's name *The Daring Duckling* - suggested by its graphic designer Ali Allababidi - is a nod to Ibn Battuta, a well-known

and prolific pre-modern traveller, explorer and scholar from Morocco who travelled through much of Africa, Asia and the Iberian Peninsula between 1325 and 1354.

In Arabic, Battuta translates to 'duckling'.

"A duckling is curious by nature," Salman added.

"It is small, slightly naïve and venturing into a world it doesn't fully understand.

"Add 'daring' to that, and you have something that felt quite close to my own approach to travel: not necessarily knowing exactly what you're doing, but being brave enough to go anyway."

Beyond the trip, writing the



RAW: Salman's photographs capture the ambience of a moment as much as its visuals

book itself was also about being brave enough to do something even if Salman didn't necessarily know exactly what he was doing.

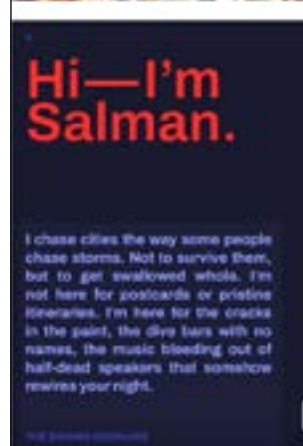
He was helped along the way by the book's chief editor Zahra Khamissa and Ali who helped him mine his collection of photographs, notes and ideas and turn them into 'something else'.

"Writing the book made me realise that I had been collecting stories for years without necessarily thinking of myself as a writer," he explained.

"It also changed the way I travel.

"I'm much more conscious now of the small details and moments that normally disappear as soon as a trip ends - a photograph, a conversation, a strange afternoon, even a feeling you can't quite explain.

"When you start documenting those things, you realise how much of travel is actually about the details you

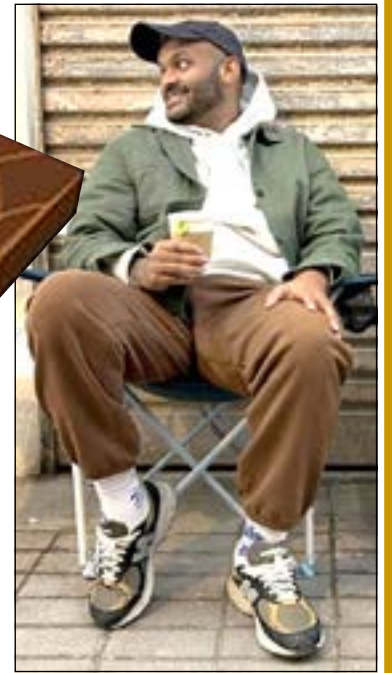


BLURB: Chasing cities

don't expect to remember."

The first edition of the book, limited to 100 copies, is available for purchase on www.areweawakestore.com.

Curating Curiosity



DARING: Salman

Next morning: checkout. Then I realized—I'd left my headphones in the hotel room. The one thing I need to survive a flight.

I called Anantara. No problem. They FedExed them to our next hotel in Bangkok. Free of charge.

This is what I mean by Thai hospitality. Europe, catch up.

And just like that, Chiang Mai was behind us. Next stop: Bangkok. And everything changed.

STORIES: An excerpt from the book

BRAIN-BUSTERS

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



- 1) Which author famously wrote *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*?
- 2) Which country's flag was solid green from 1971 to 2011?
- 3) To which Greek god were the ancient Olympic Games dedicated?
- 4) What was the name of the container ship that ran aground in the Suez Canal?
- 5) What Canadian dish is made from French fries topped with cheese curds and gravy?

- 6) In which city/country were the first Asian Games held?
- 7) Which country did Hitler invade in September 1939?

1. Mark Twain
2. Libya
3. Zeus
4. Ever Given
5. Poutine
6. New Delhi, India
7. Poland

ANSWERS

ENTRIES poured in as *GulfWeekly* launched an art contest last month, writes Melissa Nazareth.

We invited Bahrain-based talents under 18 years to send us their artworks, with the goal to showcase unique perspectives and encourage creative thinking and expression.

Young artists reached out to us with their original paintings and sketches, which they created during the summer holidays – a respite from ubiquitous AI-generated content.

These are a selection of the artworks that we received...

Striking impressions



Saar resident Vrinda Chaudhary fell in love with art six years ago, exploring different styles and experimenting with different mediums. Over time, practising became less about trying to create something 'perfect' and more about discovering styles that inspired her. "Hobbies are most meaningful when they are pursued out of genuine interest rather than the expectation of being good at them or turning them into something profitable. When art starts feeling like a task, I lose some of the freedom and expression that made me enjoy it in the first place," noted the 16-year-old Indian expatriate, who attends St Christopher's School.



TALENT: Vrinda



COLOURFUL: Vrinda's nature-inspired piece

Kenyan national and Capital School Bahrain student Zainab Quadir is a fan of birds and aliens. The nine-year-old recently started watching online tutorials and experimenting with different techniques, which has helped her hone her skills.



CREATIVE: Zainab

offering feedback and encouragement," older sister Fatima Quadir, who is currently pursuing Biosciences at Bahrain University said.

"I feel like hobbies are losing their diversity in that most pastimes now revolve around a screen

and a comfortable place to sit," highlighted the Janabiya resident, who is passionate about the written word.

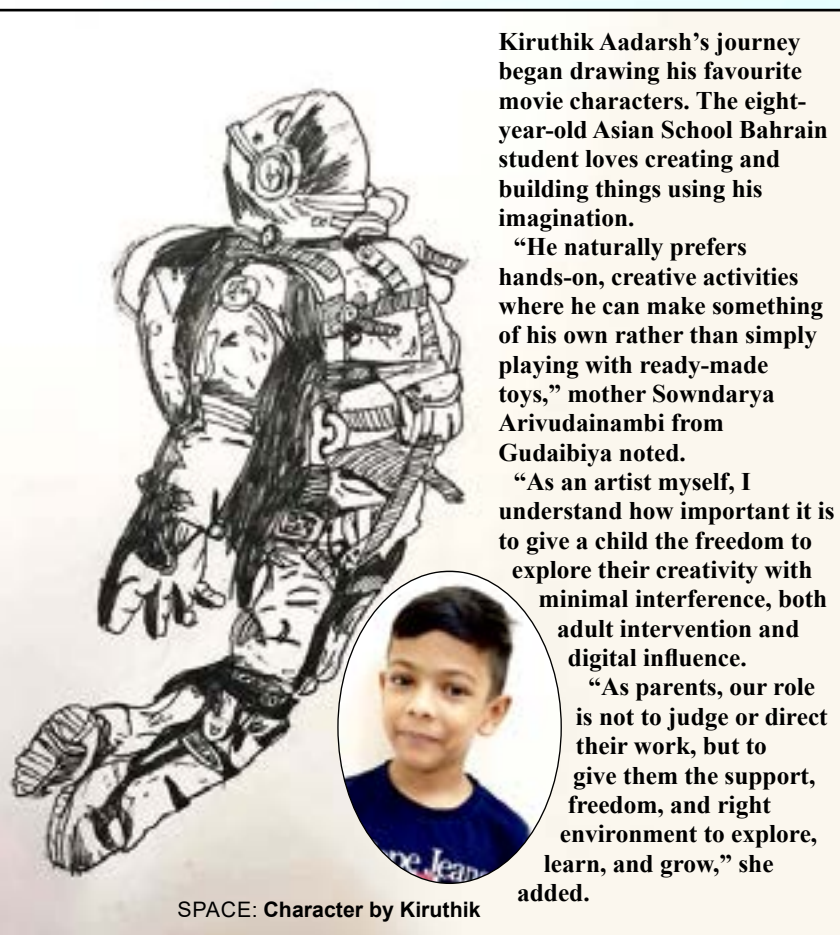
Six-year-old British-Russian expatriate Mila Giddings has created a vibrant piece entitled 'The future is only one step away...' – a slogan the St Christopher's School student came up with.



ARTIST: A happy Mila with her latest creation

"She designed the top layer to represent a rainbow, transitioning down to a warm sunset, and finishing at the bottom with dawn and a crescent moon," mum Tatiana Giddings from Al Jasra explained, noting that her daughter was 'thrilled' when they told her about the *GulfWeekly* contest.

"Mila has loved drawing and painting ever since she could hold a brush. Thank you so much for running such a lovely initiative for the young artists in Bahrain," she added.



SPACE: Character by Kiruthik

Kiruthik Aadarsh's journey began drawing his favourite movie characters. The eight-year-old Asian School Bahrain student loves creating and building things using his imagination.

"He naturally prefers hands-on, creative activities where he can make something of his own rather than simply playing with ready-made toys," mother Sowndarya Arivudainambi from Gudaibiya noted.

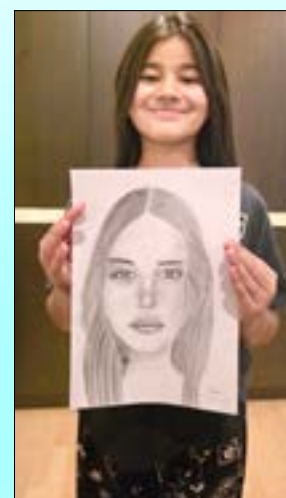
"As an artist myself, I understand how important it is to give a child the freedom to explore their creativity with minimal interference, both adult intervention and digital influence.

"As parents, our role is not to judge or direct their work, but to give them the support, freedom, and right environment to explore, learn, and grow," she added.



Nine-year-old Syeda Zoya Ali, who attends American School of Bahrain, has been surrounded by art forever. Coming from a family of creatives, she has always loved painting.

"Over time, she developed a keen interest in observational drawings and is especially good at drawing people," Zoya's mother Zainab Javid revealed, adding that they have always encouraged her to pursue her interests without pressuring her. The Pakistani national from Riffa



ALL SMILES: Zoya with her sketch

believes that as parents, it is important to recognise children's talent and nurture it.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our hearts are full seeing the overwhelming response from young artists in Bahrain. Keep at your hobbies, little ones! We could not feature all entries in print but will showcase more on our social media @gdnonline on Instagram.



Leisure Scene



What's on guide

By Julia Cassano

RITZ-CARLTON'S TAPAS TREAT

THE weekend is set to sizzle at The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain, where the dining line-up moves effortlessly between smoky kebabs, colourful tapas and sophisticated nights of live jazz.

Tonight, Thai Lounge hosts its 'Drunch' (dinner and drinks), offering an unlimited selection of Thai tapas paired with a choice of beverages for two hours of indulgence.

There is an added treat for September birthday guests, who can dine for free when presenting a valid ID. A minimum of two guests is required per booking, with the experience, priced at BD45 per person, running every Thursday this month from 7pm to 10pm.

Music lovers can settle in for an intimate evening at La Terrace, where Jazz Night brings together live music, a fun atmosphere and expertly crafted beverages. The event is priced à la carte, and takes place on Friday from 6.30pm to 9pm.

Nirvana is also serving up an unlimited feast of

SUCCULENT: Kebabs at Nirvana



succulent Indian kebabs, with delicately marinated meats seasoned with aromatic spices and grilled to perfection. Priced at BD25 per person, guests can add three selected beverages for an additional BD10. The

experience runs on Saturdays from 7pm to 11pm.

Mexican flavours take centre stage at Cantina Kahlo with its Taco Tuesday Fiesta, celebrating Mexico's Independence Day on September 15 and 16. A live taco station will serve freshly made creations featuring tender marinated chicken, spiced meats, zesty shrimp and bold vegetarian fillings. The fiesta runs from 6pm to 10pm.

Steak takes centre stage at Burlington Club's Gentlemen's Cut, pairing a premium cut with a carefully selected beverage designed to complement its flavours. Priced à la carte, the fine dining experience begins September 18 and runs every Thursday from 6pm to 11pm.

For bookings and more information, contact 17580000 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com.



POSH: A gorgeous brunch

FOOTBALL fans have even more reason to catch the action at InterContinental Bahrain, where every Saudi Pro League matchday comes with the chance to score rewards.

Guests will receive a Football Passport on their first visit and earn a stamp for every matchday they attend at Elements Pool and Lounge. Collect five stamps and a BD10 voucher is yours.

At Legendz SteakHouse, guests can explore a new à-la-carte menu inspired by French cuisine, featuring foie gras, delicate sole meunière, crisp mesclun salad and steak frites. The dishes are complemented by a choice of green olive tapenade butter or classic Bordelaise sauce.

FUN AND GAMES AT INTERCONTINENTAL

The menu is available Monday to Friday, from 6pm to 10pm.

Mondays at Legendz come with a special Buy One, Get One offer on steaks of equal or lesser value, available from 6pm to 10pm.

Meanwhile, Noor Lounge is putting a luxurious twist on the classic afternoon tea with the vibrant flavours of ube. Guests can enjoy an elegant selection of handcrafted pastries, savoury bites, freshly baked scones with ube jam and signature desserts, complemented by premium teas and speciality coffees.

The afternoon tea is

available Thursday to Friday, 2pm to 7pm, priced at BD8 per tray.

At Noor Lounge, guests can discover the Blanc series, featuring a selection of specially crafted beverages.

The Matcha Blanc is a smooth and velvety latte made with premium Japanese matcha, offering delicate earthy notes and a perfectly balanced finish.

Meanwhile, the Purple Blanc combines purple yam, or ube, native to the Philippines with a creamy texture and subtle vanilla sweetness. Both are priced at BD3.800.

Coffee lovers can opt for the Mont Blanc, made with cold



SPORT: Watch the Saudi Pro League and unlock rewards

brew coffee, silky cream and a touch of sweetness, priced at BD3.600. The Blanc creations are available daily

from 9am to 10pm.

For bookings and more information, contact 36967701.

UNWIND WITH WATERFRONT VIEWS

SUMMER days are made for getting away, and Aqua Vista Bahrain has plenty on offer to make the season even more tempting.

Guests can choose between a bed and breakfast package at BHD55net per room per night or a half-board package at BD65net per room per night, both including a complimentary room upgrade.

Guests who book an

executive suite will receive an upgrade to a club suite with a balcony, with the bed and breakfast package priced at BD75net per room per night.

Those looking for a day of relaxation can opt for the pool day pass, which includes pool access from 8am to 7pm, waterfront views and a complimentary beverage. It is priced at BD9.900 per person.

Weekend mornings can be spent with The Waterfront's breakfast buffet, featuring fresh



SCRUMPTIOUS: Enjoy a scenic breakfast at the hotel

ingredients, live cooking stations and sweeping views. The buffet is available tomorrow, September 4, and Saturday, September 5, from 6.30am to 11am,

priced at BD10 per person. As the day winds down, Maestro Lounge offers a chance to relax with its Happy Hour, available daily from noon to 2am. Maestro Lounge's Ladies'

Night awaits, featuring three complimentary drinks for ladies. Daily from 5pm to 9pm.

For bookings and more information, contact 17177333.



ALFRESCO: Stunning city views at B

SOPHISTICATED

SHERATON Bahrain Hotel is inviting guests to enjoy a selection of dining experiences, from sunset drinks and Latin American-inspired flavours to traditional feasts and globally inspired dishes.

At Brasero Atlántico, Atlántico Hour offers a sophisticated rooftop setting, bringing alive the spirit of Latin America. Enjoy bold flavours, expertly crafted bites and refreshing beverages.

With panoramic views of the Manama skyline, the experience is ideal for after-work gatherings, sunset sips or relaxed evenings with friends. Atlántico Hour is available from Sunday to Thursday, from 4pm to 7pm. Brasero Atlántico is open daily from noon to midnight.

Meanwhile, Golestan Persian Grill celebrates the rich cultural heritage and cuisine with its Royal Golestan Feast Platter, created for special occasions and group gatherings.

The feast features a selection of the restaurant's signature grilled dishes, including Kabab Koobideh, Kabab-e Tikke Masti, Kabab Shishlik lamb chops, served alongside fragrant

Leisure Scene

Weekly Entertainment



setup at Thai Lounge



Casero Atlántico

ROOFTOP DINING

saffron rice and grille vegetables. Available for groups of six or 12, the feast concludes with Golestan's signature saffron ice cream. Golestan is open daily from noon to 11pm. At WILD, fresh ingredients, bold flavours and globally inspired cuisine come together in a relaxed yet stylish setting. The menu, prepared by the hotel's culinary team and complemented with herbs grown on-site in the hydroponic garden, takes inspiration from global flavours. Highlights include Peruvian-style smoked cauliflower with lentil chimichurri, char-grilled miso eggplant and a grilled seafood platter. Guests can enjoy WILD's breakfast buffet daily from 7am to 10.30am, with pool access also available. From Sunday to Thursday, lunch is served from noon to 4pm, providing an option for business meetings and casual gatherings. In the evenings, WILD offers its à la carte menu until 9pm, with guests able to choose between indoor and terrace seating. *For bookings and more information, contact 17533533 or 38885408.*

GET into the back-to-school spirit with a spectacular Friday Brunch at Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay.

As summer draws to a close, Bahrain Bay Kitchen brings back its iconic Friday Brunch this month. Enjoy an indulgent spread of salads, appetisers, mains and a dessert island, featuring warm kunafa and soft-serve ice cream.

The brunch runs every Friday, from 1pm to 4pm and is priced at BD35 with soft beverages and BD48 with a selected beverage package. Children under five dine with the hotel's compliments, while those aged six to 12 receive a 50 per cent discount.

Over at CUT by Wolfgang Puck, Friday afternoons take on a lively feel, with flowing bubbly, energetic DJ beats and a trolley serving drinks tableside. Each glass is paired with a selection of Wolfgang Puck favourites created by executive chef Brian Becher, including yellowtail Hamachi ceviche, beef sliders and premium steak selections.

It is available every Friday from 12.30pm to 3.30pm, and costs BD70, inclusive of free-flow bubbly package.

Japanese culinary artistry takes centre stage at re/ASIAN CUISINE, where Chef Kiyoshi Udagawa

AN INDULGENT FEAST



TUCK IN: Desserts at the hotel's Back-to-School Brunch

invites diners to experience an intimate Omakase journey. Each course showcases the precision, seasonality and craftsmanship at the heart of Japanese cuisine.

Available from Wednesday to Sunday, the 10-course Omakase is priced at BD69 per person, with an optional pairing available for an extra BD60 per person.

For something a little sweeter, Bay View Lounge is transforming afternoon tea into a chocolate lover's

dream with its Chocolate Dreamscape Afternoon Tea.

The experience combines savoury bites, handcrafted chocolates, elegant pastries and more. Available daily from September 6 to October 31, the experience runs from noon to 9pm at BD22 for a regular package or BD26 for the Royal package, including one premium tea and one mocktail.

Meanwhile, Byblos is inviting diners to rediscover Lebanese flavours in a

refreshed beachfront setting.

The restaurant will feature lively DJ performances every Thursday and Friday from September 15, running from sunset until midnight. The refreshed à la carte menu brings together Lebanese favourites including mezze, fattah, shawarma and freshly prepared saj bread, alongside an expanded selection of live cooking stations.

For bookings and more information, contact 17115500.

A BRUNCH TO REMEMBER

BRUNCH is getting an extended makeover at Hilton Bahrain this weekend with the launch of a brand-new six-hour experience.

Kicking off for the first time tomorrow, September 4, the Friday Brunch event will run from 1pm to 7pm, giving guests six hours to indulge in a spread of food and drinks.

The experience is priced at BD29net per person, including selected beverages, or BD35net with premium drinks.

Meanwhile, seafood lovers can dive into an evening of ocean-inspired flavours at Origin Kitchen and Culture's Seafood Night, taking place tonight from 7pm to 10pm.

The experience features an array of fresh seafood, from sushi counters to live-cooking stations, showcasing a selection of ocean treasures. Prices start at BD32 per person, including soft beverages. Mornings at Origin Kitchen and Culture come with a generous breakfast buffet, available daily from 6.30am to 10.30am for BD13net.



VIBRANT: Spread at Hilton's extended Friday Brunch

Over at CLAW BBQ, guests can enjoy food, games, entertainment and panoramic views of Bahrain's skyline from the 44th floor.

Sundays come with an extra dose of indulgence, with two hours of unlimited beverages for BD12.500. The offer can be extended for another two hours for an extra BD10, while also enjoying 20 per cent off the full menu.

Monday is dedicated to the ladies, with Ladies' Night running from 8pm to 11pm. The offer includes four complimentary drinks and a sharing platter for BD15, along with 30pc off the full food and beverage menu.

CLAW BBQ turns up the flavour midweek with Taco Tuesdays, running

from 6pm to midnight. Guests can enjoy unlimited tacos and drinks for BD16, with the option to add unlimited selected beverages for an additional BD3.500.

Come Friday, CLAW's signature brunch brings together food, drinks and entertainment from 12.30pm to 4pm, with tickets starting at BD24. The fun continues afterwards with two additional hours of Happy Hour from 4pm to 6pm.

Meanwhile, Lamar Café and Lounge is open daily and serving its iconic Matcha Latte, with prices starting at BD3.500.

For bookings and more information, contact 33692013.



ENJOY some of the English language films being screened at Cineco Seef this weekend.



THE DOG STARS (15+)

In a post-apocalyptic world, a virus wipes out humanity. Survivors face roaming scavengers called Reapers. Protagonist Hig, a pilot, survived the flu but lost his wife.

Actors: Jacob Elordi, Josh Brolin, Margaret Qualley

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

MISDIRECTION (PG-15)

A couple's trust is tested on their last 'big job' as their victim reveals a hidden agenda resulting in murder.

Actors: Frank Grillo, Olga Kurylenko, Oliver Trevena

Timings: 10.45am, 3pm, 7.15pm, 11.30pm

OFF THE GRID (PG-15)

After a morally-bankrupt company tries to weaponise a brilliant scientist's revolutionary technology, he goes off the grid to safeguard humanity. When the company sends a strike force to find him, they make their biggest mistake of all – they weaponise the man they are trying to catch.

Actors: Josh Duhamel, Peter Stormare, Greg Kinnear

Timings: 2.30pm, 7pm, 11.30pm

COYOTE VS ACME (PG)

After enduring years of malfunctioning products, Wile E Coyote teams up with a personal injury attorney to take on ACME, the manufacturer of anything and everything used by the Looney Tunes.

Actors: Will Forte, John Cena, Lana Condor

Timings: 11am, 1.15pm, 3.30pm, 5.45pm, 8pm, 10.15pm

Pulse of Pop

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

Forces beyond your ken

ROAD horror film *It Ends* is out now in theatres and brings alive the terrifying experience of four friends on a late night drive.

New college graduates James (Phineas Yoon), Tyler (Mitchell Cole), Fisher (Noah Toth) and Day (Akira Jackson) embark on an adventure that spirals out of control when they turn onto a never-ending, two-lane hellscape surrounded by cosmic forces beyond their understanding.

Any time they pause, they have only 90 seconds before hordes of screaming people swarm and attack them.

In an interview, director Alex Ullom talked about his inspiration for the film and what led him to tackle the themes of fear of eternity.

"I think for people my age, our relationship with infiniteness and liminality stems from the fact that we don't really have a destination to 'arrive at' anymore," the 27-year-old said.

"There's a movement away from any sort of interconnected moral system in our generation that there might have been in the past. The tent poles of structure that used to hold up society, whether it was having a



ROAD TRIP: The characters' eerie encounters

family or buying a house, all of those structures have kind of dissolved, and in their place is kind of nothing," he added.

It Ends marks the creative talent's debut project, which he started working on five years ago. After filming its first version in 2022, he

brought a rough cut to some early investors and asked for the cash to reshoot most of the movie.

The film had a festival premiere at the South by Southwest Festival last year and later became available as a digital rental for a limited time on the newly

introduced Letterboxd Video Store service.

It was then acquired by independent film production and distribution company Neon, resulting in a US-wide theatrical release.

The critically praised film scored 92 per cent on *Rotten Tomatoes*.

The power in knowing



STAR: Ellie

EGLISH singer-songwriter Ellie Goulding releases her sixth studio album *I Know Too Much* tomorrow, September 4.

Unlike her last creation *Higher Than Heaven* (2023), which was described as 'purposefully impersonal', the new ensemble is said to draw from the pop star's observations of her life, friendships and connection with nature.

"The album came from the idea that maybe we can know too much," the artist said in an interview.

"There is a certain kind of freedom in the ease of not knowing.

"The album is a collection of songs that represent a crossroads in my life where I realised what the freedom of not knowing has gifted me in the past, yet a time when I am at the precipice of understanding the true power in knowing," she added.

"Through the chaos of this great change, I went to my comfort zone and found my refuge in the studio. My initial instinct was I didn't know where it was all going, but I just knew I needed to be in the studio. Writing a song has always been my best form of therapy."

Born Elena Jane Goulding, the 39-year-old is best known for her 2010 debut album *Lights*, which spawned a number of hits, including the titular track and *Starry Eyed*.

Its follow up *Halcyon*, released in 2012, earned critical acclaim for how its bold synthesiser-driven production complimented Ellie's breathy vocals across lower-register and falsetto passages.

For what's next, the singer has revealed that she has created a classical music album as a 'passion project'. However, no release date has been confirmed.

Modern womanhood

CONTEMPORARY fiction novel *Queenie Is Working On It* by Candice Carty-Williams hits the shelves on September 8.

Featuring a compelling narrative, the book follows 33-year-old Queenie Jenkins as she unravels truths about her fertility.

After a series of confusing 'situationships' and her beloved grandfather's failing health, the successful media professional feels as if her time is running out. The Jamaican-British protagonist

begins to confront her racing biological clock, questioning if she wants to start a family, all the while facing enquires about her plans to 'settle down' from her mother, grandmother and aunt Maggie.

During this time, she is surrounded by friends who are falling in love and getting pregnant at the drop of a hat.

The upcoming release is the second instalment of the author's *Queenie* series.

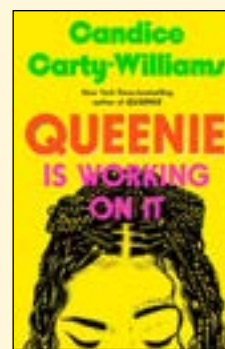
The original 2019 titular novel, which followed the character's cultural struggles as a 25-year-old, was positively received and later adapted into a 2024 TV series with the same name.

In an interview, Candice explained her thought process behind bringing Queenie back.

"I knew that at 25 I'd put her through some things in order for her to deal with her own trauma, and that I didn't just want to put a character I cared about through sticky situations just for the sake of it," she said.

"I wouldn't have enjoyed that, or believed it. And so, bringing her back at 33, when she was older and a bit sturdier, I could put her through her paces again," she added.

"When I wrote Queenie in my twenties, it was my way of 25-year-old me working things out. Now that I'm in my thirties, not much has changed. I still need to process things in a creative and expansive way," she noted.





EXECUTIVE AI IMMERSION SPRINT

Understanding AI. Identifying Opportunities.
Defining the Path Forward.

Develop a board-ready AI strategy,
prioritize high-impact use cases,
and define a practical roadmap
for AI implementation.



**Executive AI
Readiness**



**AI Opportunities
Identified**



**Leadership
AI Empowered**



**Pilot Scope
Defined**

The Executive AI Sprint Journey

01



**Strategic
Understanding**

Understand AI,
its business value,
and why it
matters now.

02



**AI In Your
Business**

Explore global AI
trends, industry
benchmarks, and
how market leaders
are adopting AI.

03



**Opportunity
Discovery**

Identify and prioritize
2–3 high-impact
AI use cases
aligned with
your business.

04



**Readiness &
Decision Framework**

Assess data readiness,
governance, and
Build vs Buy vs Partner
decisions.

05



AI in Practice

Apply AI in
leadership and
daily operations
to confidently
drive enterprise
AI adoption.

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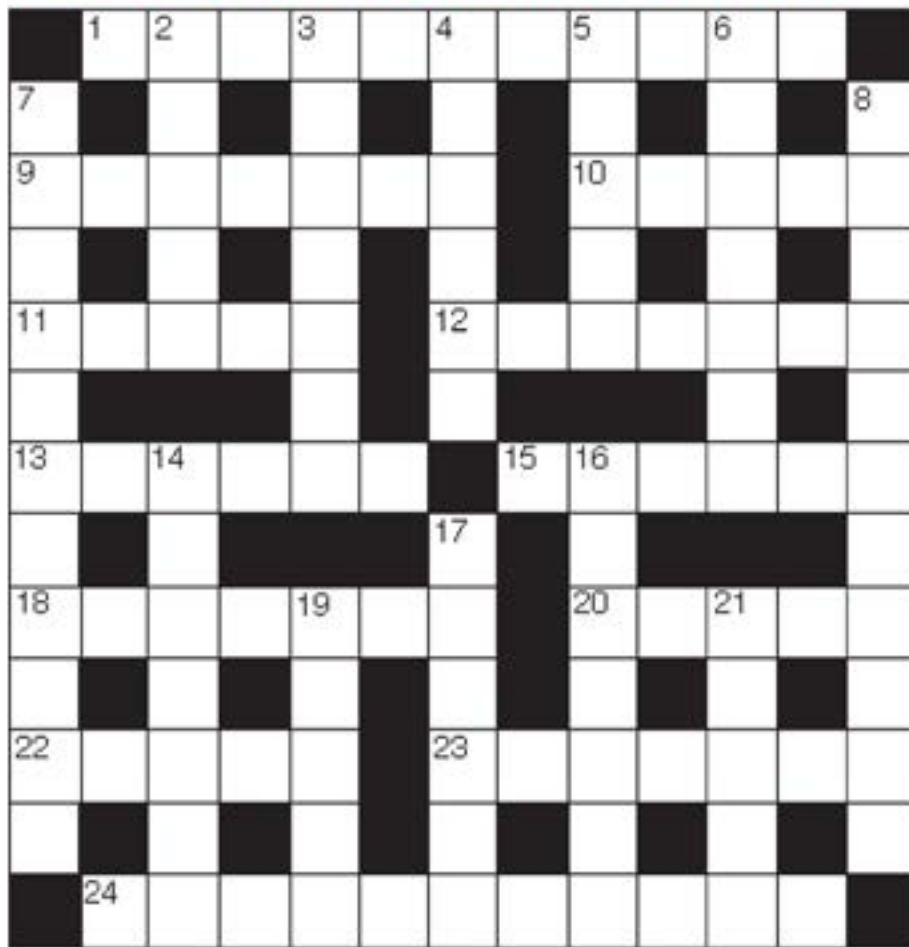
Time Out



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crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

1. Disappointment (11)
9. Finished work (7)
10. Guide (5)
11. Call on (5)
12. Durable (7)
13. Slim (6)
15. Equivocate (6)
18. Methodical (7)
20. Turn (5)
22. Repeated (5)
23. Chirp (7)
24. Mix (11)

DOWN

2. Ceremonies (5)
3. Extend (7)
4. Sift (6)
5. Chores (5)
6. Aperture (7)
7. Tentative (11)
8. In pieces (11)
14. Retracted (7)
16. Applause (7)
17. Method (6)
19. Scope (5)
21. Laud (5)

who, what, where, when

WHO ... shot Harry Whittington in February 2006?
WHAT ... was the title of the 2005 record album by the actor Robert Downey Jr?
WHERE ... in the North Atlantic are the districts of Cat Island, Exuma and Inagua?
WHEN ... did Maria Sharapova win her first Grand Slam singles tennis title?
WHO ... wrote the 2005 novel *Forever Odd*?
WHAT ... type of art is Banksy associated with?
WHERE ... in Africa are the cities of Sumbawanga and Arusha?
WHEN ... did the UK television presenters Richard and Judy get married?

just so

compliment

pat
eht

SAHARA

cotaxme

darn tough sudoku

So you think you're good enough at Sudoku to crack this baby? Remember, we were the first in the Gulf to bring you this bit of Japanese mayhem...so we don't kid around

Last week's sudoku

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

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

darn tough sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

Across: 1 Attitude; 5 Gala; 9 Pass; 10 Assesses; 11 Guard; 12 Narrate; 13 Recrudescence; 18 Forsaken; 19 Arms; 20 Scarlet; 21 Vital; 22 Lull; 23 Admonish.

Down: 2 Traduce; 3 Insurer; 4 Disinterested; 6 Abstain; 7 Austere; 8 Metric; 13 Refusal; 14 Curtail; 15 Unable; 16 Evasion; 17 Compass.

JUST SO:

Watergate, Double cross, Cardiac arrest, A baker's dozen

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN:

Lynne Truss; Status Quo; Haiti, 1953; Starsailor; K9; Iran, 1821.

Darn Tough Sudoku

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