



## From Oman to the World: OCEC soars to new heights

### ▣ AQUA TOURISM

Enjoy a variety of marine activities with SeaOman & Marina Bandar Al Rowdha

### ■ BUTHAINA AL BULUSHI

Rediscovering the exceptional beauty of Musandam with Atana Hotels

### ● W MUSCAT

Unveiling the storyline behind the design of the trendiest hotel in town

### ● THE TURTLES' GUARDIAN

Meet Nasser Al Ghailani; a passionate talent at the Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve



Upon its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, OMRAN, the Sultanate's leading executive arm for tourism development, remains resilient on building a sustainable foundation for Oman's tourism sector, by creating world-class destinations and assets that contribute to socio-economic development and economic diversification.

As we commemorate this important chapter of steadfast growth, we extend our gratitude to all the members of OMRAN Group family, stakeholders, business partners and local communities for their continuous dedication and active role in shaping a prosperous future for the nation, guided by Oman Vision and the National Tourism Strategy 2040.



نتقدم بثقة  
Moving Forward  
with Confidence





Panorama will take you on an incredible journey that will give you a varied view of all that our country has to offer.

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Cover image: Madinat Al Irían Theatre Dome at OCEC by Faisal Al Balushi @faisphoto

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DEAR READER

Welcome to this special issue of Panorama that is being published amid our commemoration of OMRAN’s 15th anniversary. As we celebrate this important occasion, we proudly mark the instrumental role OMRAN has played in developing the infrastructure of the tourism sector through its flagship developments, strategic partnerships, hospitality assets and tourist destinations across the country.

This new issue features a wide range of articles that serve to illustrate OMRAN’s national presence and provide a detailed account of our ever-expanding role in Oman’s economic diversification, the Vision 2040 Strategy, and the country’s developmental goals. We also bring you interesting stories of some of our people– those who work tirelessly every day to shape a stronger future for our tourism industry.

As we look forward to an early end to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has severely impacted all aspects of life, including the tourism sector, we remain hopeful that the many tourism activities and destinations showcased in this edition will form part of your next travel itinerary.

Taking centre stage in this issue is the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), the iconic landmark developed by OMRAN and a glowing example of our role in diversifying the local economy through business tourism. Additionally, we introduce you to a selection of entertainment options where you can embark on an exciting marine adventure with ‘Marina Bandar Al-Rowdha’ or enjoy the thrill of water activities with Oman Sail’s ‘Sea Oman’. You will also explore the wonders of Majlis Al-Jinn ‘meeting place of the genies’, and we will introduce you to one of our Omani talents, Nasser Al-Ghailani, who is dedicated to the preservation of marine life at the Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve. If you are diving enthusiast, we encourage you to explore ‘the marvels of the deep’ with the Freestyle Divers at Atana Musandam Resort where the breathtaking beauty and diversity of marine life will be unveiled. Find out more about Musandam with our special guest, Buthaina Al Bulushi, Oman TV news anchor and social media personality, as she shares the delights and highlights of her visit to Khasab.

We relish this opportunity to share the details and fruits of our long-established partnership with the Orascom Group and proudly feature two of our finest recent additions to our hotel portfolio; JW Marriot and W Muscat. Also in this edition, you will get to know about ‘Zaree,’ a truly inspiring community outreach program by OMRAN that has empowered a group of local women to become the ambassadors of authentic Omani hospitality and culture.

# Marina Bandar Al Rowdha



## Oman's preeminent hub for aqua tourism

Located in the heart of the vibrant city of Muscat, with the Hajar Mountains as a backdrop and overlooking the Sea of Oman, the Marina Bandar Al Rowdha is the Sultanate's preeminent destination for aqua tourism and a haven for yacht owners. At the Marina, visitors and members alike have the opportunity to enjoy a wide range of shore-based and water-based activities such as fishing, diving, or even relaxing by the marina's exclusive beach.

Working in collaboration with the marina are more than 20 small and medium-sized companies offering a wide array of leisure activities including cruises on board traditional Omani dhows, dolphin-watching boat trips, sport fishing, and dive trips designed to enable tourists to explore the stunning underwater life thriving in Oman's coastal waters.

[www.marinaoman.net/](http://www.marinaoman.net/)  
+968 2473 7286  
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"THERE ARE NUMEROUS RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE FOR VISITORS AT MARINA BANDAR AL ROWDHA, SUCH AS DIVING, KAYAKING, WATER SKIING, AS WELL AS SPENDING A DAY AT THE BEACH OR SIMPLY RELAXING IN THE POOL AND JACUZZI. IN ADDITION, VISITORS CAN APPRECIATE THE FOOD AND SPECTACULAR SEA VIEW AT OUR 5-STAR MARLINS RESTAURANT WHERE A VARIETY OF INTERNATIONAL AND TRADITIONAL OMANI CUISINE IS OFFERED, INCLUDING COFFEE AND REFRESHMENTS".

**Colin Ralph**

General Manager  
Marina Bandar Al Rowdha



### Ride your dream boat with Captain's Club Oman

Marina Bandar Al Rowdha has now become a major destination for yachting enthusiasts who, through membership of Captain's Club Oman, can now enjoy riding their dream boat without owning it. The club started its activities in 2018 and is the first of its kind in the Sultanate, offering many benefits, such as training in yachting, and yacht and boat maintenance.

"Owning a boat or a yacht is almost everyone's dream, but the cost of achieving that is high considering the large expenses associated with the maintenance, cleaning and repairs, and so on, but with Captain Club Oman, it's now possible to sail freely and privately along Muscat's amazing coasts using the annual subscription of the club, which allows the members to use a fleet of small boats for unlimited times, and it offers many other benefits," he said.

## Jebel Sifah offers exceptional entertainment facilities

Jebel Sifah boasts an array of facilities that are simply breathtaking and world-class in their own right. Most noteworthy amongst them is the nine-hole golf course exceptionally designed to PGA's international standards.

Jebel Sifah is home to a superb marina which can accommodate more than 30 luxury boats and yachts ranging in length from 6 to 60 metres. Yacht owners from around the world use this splendid marina and its facilities as a base to cruise the stunning coastline of Oman or to venture beyond, into the Sea of Oman where whale and dolphin sightings are common. There are opportunities for game-fishing, scuba-diving and other adventure exploits awaiting tourists eager to explore Oman's marine wonders from the comforts of a luxury yacht.

[www.jebelsifah.com](http://www.jebelsifah.com)  
+968 2464 5555  
[communications@muriya.om](mailto:communications@muriya.om)  
@jebelSifah

# SEA OMAN



**POWERBOAT. SUP. KAYAK.  
SAIL. WINDSURF. CRUISE.  
SCUBA DIVE. SNORKEL.**

## Your Starting Point For Great Marine Adventures

Tourists and adventure enthusiasts can capture all of the thrills associated with Oman's marine and coastal attractions. SeaOman offers an array of options from the opportunity to embark on an unforgettable diving adventure to a cruise with family and friends on board a luxury yacht spanning just a couple hours or several days. For those looking for a spot of tranquillity out at sea, there are options to practice yoga or meditation. SeaOman also specialises in providing professional training in a variety of water related pursuits, including diving, snorkelling, dinghy sailing and wakeboarding.



### Powerboat Trips

SeaOman's powerboat trips and cruises start from two locations: one from the centre's headquarters at Oman Sail in Al Mouj Muscat and the other from the Millennium Resort Mussanah. The latter is a delightful resort overlooking the Sea of Oman with a marina for luxury yachts, full-fledged recreation centre with swimming pools and dedicated facilities for tennis, games and sports.

### Kayaking

Water sports are increasingly a big draw for people of all age groups. That's because it's becoming easier for all manner of enthusiasts, regardless of their age and background, to practice the sport of their choice. All it takes to become a fan is your passion for that sport. It is no wonder that loads of people are taking to paddle boarding or kayaking because of access to training facilities and professional instructors here in Oman. These water sports simply require basic swimming experience and eventually the ability to balance oneself and stand on a board. Kayaking based on single canoes or catamaran-style double canoes is also attracting new adherents.

### Sailing and Windsurfing

The sport of windsurfing can be an exhilarating experience for enthusiasts. It does require a bit of experience before you opt to rent out a powerboat and go windsurfing, either alone or with friends. SeaOman has the requisite equipment as well as the training capabilities to help beginners, as well as others master the specialised art of sailing and windsurfing.

### SUP

Stand-up paddle-boarding is another delightful activity that you will return to again and again. Paddle-boarding is a favourite pastime among youngsters – teenagers and young adults alike. But those with a passion for this exciting sport must necessary know how to swim to begin with. With a bit of practice, you will be able to balance yourself standing on the paddle-board. Indeed, so exciting is this pursuit that you will keep practising until you are comfortable stand-up paddle-boarding.

### DAILY DIVE TRIPS

(8am-2pm) from:  
Al Mouj Muscat and Millennium Resort Mussanah

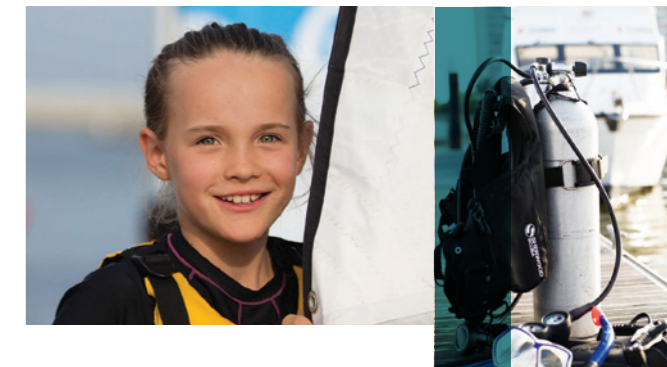


### Luxurious Year-Round Cruising

Cruising on board the luxury yachts of SeaOman can make for unforgettable experiences. Equipped for all-year cruising, these yachts and powerboats cater to various groups of passengers. Cruising options offered by SeaOman include the opportunity to rent their luxury catamaran, which can accommodate 12 people on day cruises or 8 people for night charters. They are also suitably equipped for traditional fishing, windsurfing, diving and rowing. A pair of powerboats is also available for rent and are perfect for quick trips out to sea or to explore scenic bays or exclusive beaches hidden away in nooks along Muscat's coastline.

### Scuba Diving and Snorkeling

Diving excursions organised by SeaOman open up some of Oman's most spectacular underwater treasures for viewing up-close. Some of this treasure is located in the waters around the nine islands of the Daymaniyat Islands in the Sea of Oman. Visitors can combine a dive in these waters, teeming with some 1100 different species of coral and other exotic marine creatures, with the opportunity to soak up the sun on a sandy beach on one of the islands. There are around 24 dive sites in these surrounding waters offering amazing diversity and plenty of thrills.



### Looking For More?

Aside from the mesmerising sights that await diving and snorkelling enthusiasts in the waters of the Sea of Oman, if you're lucky, you could enjoy the sight of a whale shark out at sea.

[www.seaoman.com](http://www.seaoman.com)

+968 2427 4201

[info@seaoman.com](mailto:info@seaoman.com)

@DiscoverSeaOman f Instagram Twitter

# Dive into Khasab's enchanting underwater splendours

Khasab, with its unique fjords jutting into the majestic mountains of Musandam Governorate, makes for perhaps one of the most exciting dive destinations in the Arabian Gulf. Khasab is a magnet for diving enthusiasts – both amateurs and professionals alike – eager to explore a magical world rich with marine life ranging from dolphins, turtles and eagle rays to big eye trevally, sunfish and even whale sharks.

Diving options in Khasab has recently witnessed a significant uptick. To capitalize on the area's rich natural assets, Freestyle Divers, an Omani-based scuba diving and water sports group, set up a full-fledged dive centre facility at OMRAN's Atana Musandam, adding to the luxury property's appeal not only as a splendid holiday destination but also as a base from which to explore Khasab's diverse natural and marine attractions.

Packages by Freestyle Divers are tailored to capture much of Khasab's extraordinary underwater world. Traditional dhows ferry dive tourists to little explored sites deep inside tranquil fjords all located within a 30 – 50 minute boat ride. The dive centre is equipped to cater to the requirements of all manner of dive tourists: from a single tank recreational setup to twinsets, or even closed circuit re-breathers, wet suit or dry suit, photography and video, or even free-diving. The Centre is also suitably equipped and professionally manned to provide a range of beginner and professional technical training courses catering for any experience level.

**For diving packages, how to get here, or anything on your mind:**

[www.dive-khasab.com](http://www.dive-khasab.com)

+968 7221 0385 / WhatsApp +44 77 7227 7222

Darren@dive-khasab.com



كلية عُمان للسياحة  
Oman Tourism College

The Only Premium Institution in Oman Fully  
Specialised in Tourism and Hospitality

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Tourism & Hospitality Management



Tourism Marketing



Event Management



Business Enterprise

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- Food & Beverage
- Etiquette & Protocol
- Food Safety
- Tour Guide

... and more!

From the quality of the study programmes and the credentials of the teaching faculty, to the strength of industry collaborations, Oman Tourism College is exclusive.

Its diverse and industry-leading courses offer a complete 360 degree coverage in the sectors of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management.

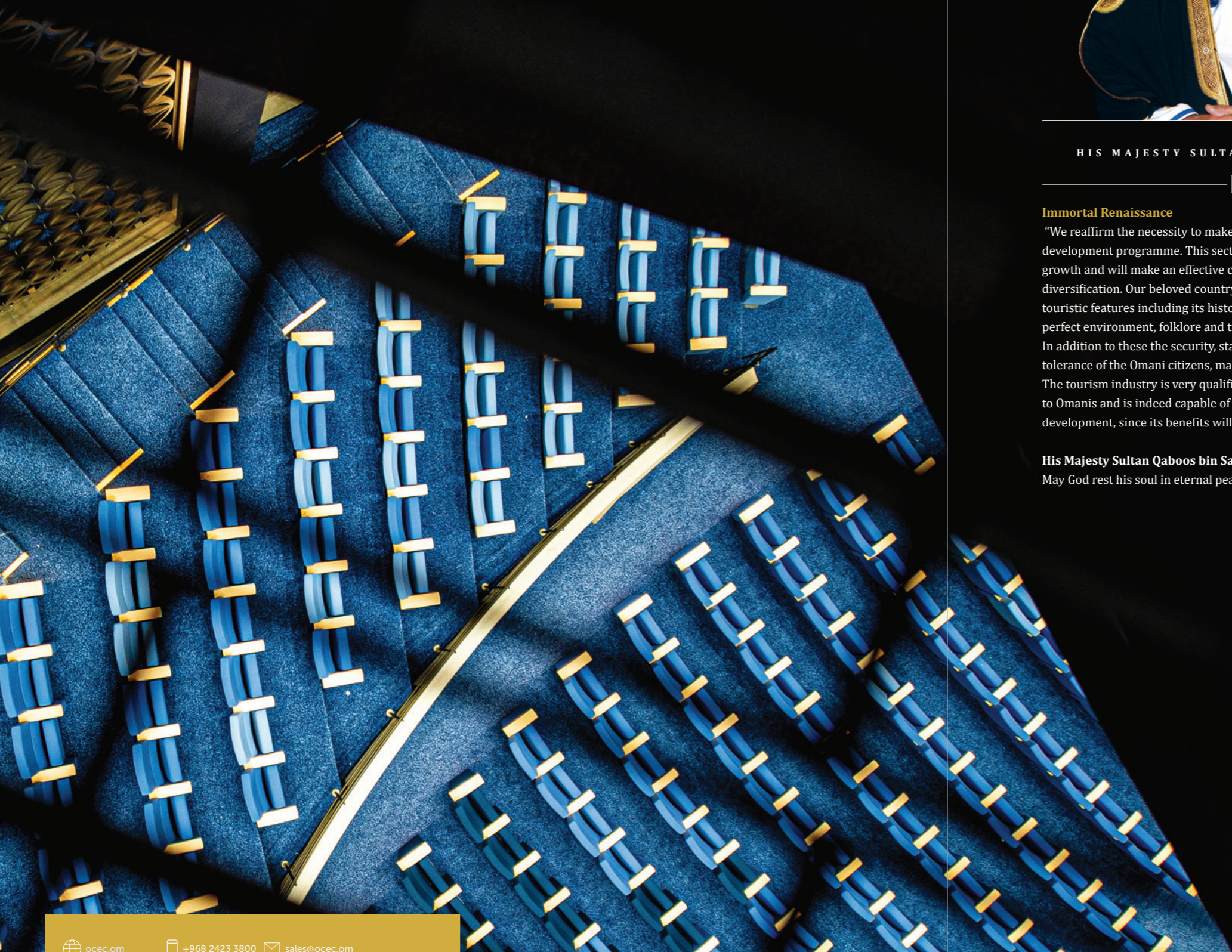
A Member of  
OMRAN Group





OMAN CONVENTION &amp; EXHIBITION CENTRE

## An Iconic Venue To Drive Business Tourism and Economic Diversification



HIS MAJESTY SULTAN QABOOS BIN SAID

### Immortal Renaissance

"We reaffirm the necessity to make tourism a priority in the future development programme. This sector shows great potential for growth and will make an effective contribution towards economic diversification. Our beloved country possesses such splendid touristic features including its historic heritage, natural beauty, perfect environment, folklore and traditional industries. In addition to these the security, stability and the spirit of tolerance of the Omani citizens, makes Oman a haven for tourists. The tourism industry is very qualified to offer career opportunities to Omanis and is indeed capable of serving the aims of regional development, since its benefits will cover all regions."

**His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said,**  
May God rest his soul in eternal peace



HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK

### Sustained Growth and Prosperity

The extraordinary progress made by Oman's tourism sector and its elevation into the ranks of one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in the world are among the fruits of the Blessed Renaissance ushered in by Sultan Qaboos bin Said (may God rest his soul in peace).

Over the course of his 50-year reign, in what was indeed a developmental and prosperous era, the Sultanate was transformed into a thoroughly modern country, but remains an oasis of safety and stability in the region and the wider world that has opened its arms in welcome to all nations. The fruits of the Omani Renaissance encompass all aspects of national life and the economy, including the tourism sector, which is now considered one of the main pillars of economic growth and diversification.

Now, under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq (may God protect him), and guided by an ambitious vision and strategy to boost economic growth, the Sultanate continues confidently on its path towards prosperity and achieving further progress worldwide.

To this end, efforts continue to develop projects of national pride, such as the iconic Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre and attract new investments into the tourism sector. OMRAN Group, the government's executive arm for tourism development, is relentless in its drive to support this growth through tourism.

With its rotunda -shaped dome and newly opened multi-purpose facilities, Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, (OCEC) is a striking addition to Muscat’s skyline. The centre has emerged as a full-fledged venue that boasts state of the art architectural design which blends in seamlessly with the surrounding natural landscape, offering amazing panoramic views and a unique experience for the visitors and businesses alike.

Situated in its own purpose built fully integrated precinct for business and events OCEC is supported by leisure and hospitality facilities, enhancing Oman’s appeal as a tourism destination. The centre is also well connected to main road networks in the capital, making it the perfect hub for hosting Oman’s most prestigious and high-profile events. These include: conferences, economic forums,cultural concerts and art shows, all of which reinforce OCEC as the venue of choice for local, regional and international events.

**The design of the circular dome of the theatre is inspired by the Sultan Qaboos Rose named by the Netherlands-based World Rose Society in recognition of the late Sultan’s contributions towards local and international causes**



“ The national objective of establishing a convention centre has flourished over the years to become a proud legacy today. This achievement is a testament to OMRAN’s strong determination and desire to rank Oman as a hub for local and international events, not least in terms of establishing a world-class venue but providing the requisite support infrastructure as a destination for business travel. This vision is in line with the Sultanate’s strategy to develop a vibrant tourism industry which promotes economic diversification and evolves it into an attractive and competitive destination for local, regional and international tourism.”

**Peter Walichnowski**  
CEO  
OMRAN Group



The completion of OCEC cements OMRAN Group’s role in turning a vision into a reality and contributing to the national tourism strategy in line with the government’s economic diversification agenda. This landmark project, which will be inaugurated officially at a later stage,, will also fuel the Sultanate’s sustainable development drive in accordance with the Vision 2040 strategy.



**World-class Facilities**

OCEC provides a range of facilities for all types of events, including a vast column-free exhibition space covering an area of over 22,000 sqm across 5 halls capable of accommodating approximately 22,000 guests. It has over 105,000 sqm of exhibition space and 27,000 sqm of external space. There are two auditoriums, one with tiered seating for 456 guests and the main Madinat Al Irfan Theatre, with seating for 3,200. The Grand Ballroom, which can be divided into 7 separate fully equipped meeting rooms, accommodates 2,688 guests and the Junior Ballroom approximately 860. In addition, there are 20 smaller meeting rooms for groups ranging in size from 25 to 360. VIPs or business delegates may also use any of the 10 suites ideal for hosting smaller gatherings. A total of 55 meeting areas, catering to every requirement, complete the facilities. Multi-storey car parks nearby can accommodate over 4,000 vehicles, with a further 600 parking spaces available in front of the ballrooms.

Madinat Al Irfan Theatre is considered to be a key component of OCEC, where first class facilities and easy access make it an ideal platform to host conferences, cultural concerts and artistic shows. The theatre is arranged in three sections and is the largest modern auditorium in the Sultanate and amongst the biggest in the region.



**Advanced Technology**

Successful venue management requires every aspect of the facilities available for guests and hosts to be perfect in every detail and in full working order. OCEC is equipped with advanced audio-visual technology designed for ultra-modern venues. The Madinat Al Irfan Theatre has state-of-the-art audio visual (AV) and lighting technology. The infrastructure of the theatre has titanium cables for lighting providing high-resolution colours using ArtNet technology. It is equipped with a world-class sound system, as well as an internal broadcast video system, capable of screening high-resolution video links on large screens.

Every aspect of the set up and smooth yet swift transition from one event to the next can be remotely controlled from a central control room, thanks to the forward-thinking design which has laid out specs for everything - from the cutting edge audio visual equipment installed in the theatre to the fabric for the seating and the soundproofing of the walls, headphones, amplifiers and other systems, each carefully selected and installed. Such attention to detail, skill and craftsmanship is the key to ensuring that OCEC maintains a competitive advantage and helps boost the growing portfolio of future events.

High Performance

OCEC has welcomed an estimated 800,000 visitors across more than 100 nationalities in the last year. Events include the International Road Transport Union World Congress 2018, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Royal Hospital Conference, the World Business Forum 2019, the Oman Health Exhibition and Conference, and the World Heavy Oil Congress and Exhibition (hosted by OCEC for the second year), the 7<sup>th</sup> annual medical conference hosted by the Gulf AACE branch, the International Hospital Conference, the 40<sup>th</sup> Orthopaedic Conference SICOT 2019, which attracted more than 3000 delegates, the Gulf Conference for Autism Spectrum Disorder and the International Gas Research Conference 2020.

Sustainability and In-County Value

Apart from its predominant role in stimulating the growth of the tourism sector and supporting economic diversification, it is estimated that OCEC will create up to 15,000-18,000 jobs both directly and indirectly and contribute approximately RO 200-240 million to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2030.

In keeping with the principles of sustainability and in-country value advocated by OMRAN Group, OCEC’s philosophy is rooted in four principles: supporting economic development, preserving the environment, building links with society and strengthening the Sultanate’s cultural heritage. OCEC projects continue to provide employment and improve opportunities for Omani companies and support to SMEs in all aspects of the development.

Having established its position as the crème de la crème of venues, and to maintain this status, OCEC adheres to the highest standards of sustainability in its design, construction and operation as enshrined by the US Green Building Council, thus ensuring that the buildings are energy efficient with a low carbon footprint. A policy which guarantees future expansion will not compromise on these underlying sustainability principles.



Certificates and Awards

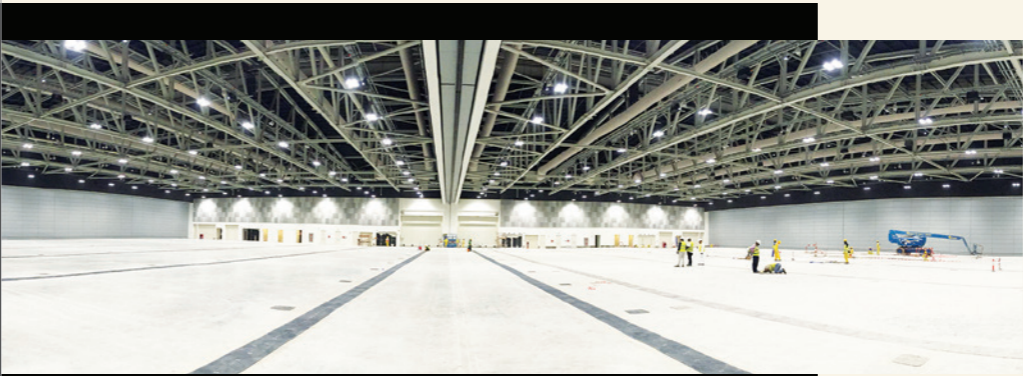
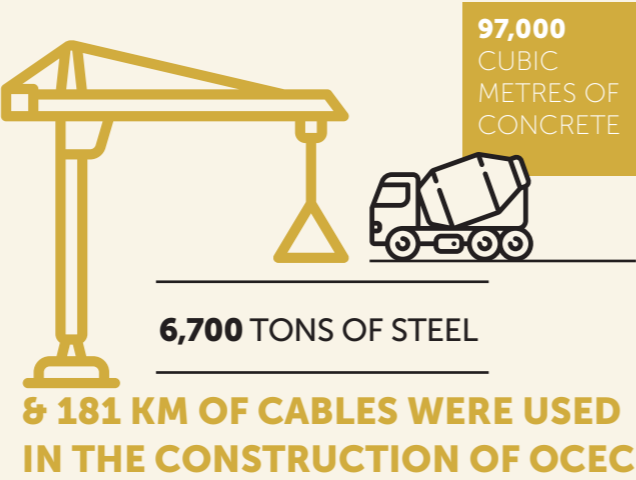
OCEC is the first tourism project of its kind in the Sultante to obtain a “LEED Golden” certificate for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) from the US Green Building Council, affirming OMRAN Group’s abiding commitment to sustainable development.



At the 2019 World Travel Awards held in Muscat, OCEC was named “Best New Conference and Exhibition Centre in the World”, effectively positioning the Sultanate as a global destination for conferences and exhibitions.

“ We commend the role of OMRAN Group in establishing the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in line with its ceaseless efforts to support the economic diversification of the country in close collaboration with the relevant stakeholders to stimulate the growth of the business travel segment of the industry. We are proud to have hosted more than 230 different events during the past year, representing a 36% increase over the corresponding period for 2018. The OCEC’s team is constantly striving to attract more international events with the aim of drawing in over 40,000 international visitors to Oman by 2024.”

Said Al Shanfari  
CEO  
OCEC



5 COLUMN-FREE  
EXHIBITION HALLS  
COVERING **22,000 SQM**  
CAN ACCOMMODATE  
MORE THAN 22,000 PEOPLE

**15,000 – 18,000 DIRECT  
AND INDIRECT JOBS**  
TO BE CREATED BY OCEC,

**RO 200 – 240 MILLION**  
IS AN ESTIMATED  
CONTRIBUTION TO  
GDP BY 2030.

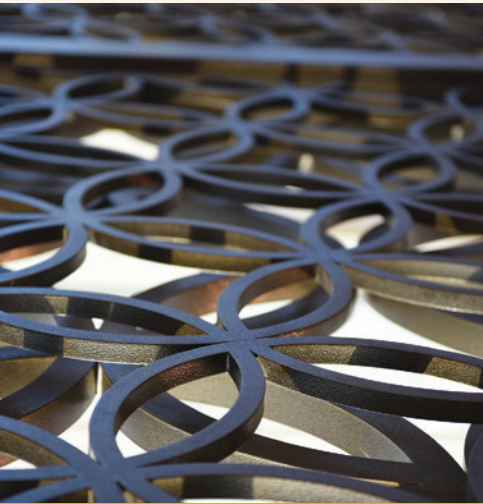


“ OCEC, a landmark development by OMRAN Group in the first phase of Madinat Al Irfan has achieved great milestones, beginning with the launch of the exhibition halls in 2016 and the Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC in 2017; the first hotel asset within the complex. Several landmarks were opened in 2019, notably the Madinat Al Irfan Theatre, Omantel’s new headquarters in the business park and the JW Marriott Hotel. In the next phase, OMRAN Group will focus on setting up the Ibis Styles Hotel, that will complete OMRAN’s commitment to hotels at OCEC Precinct.”

Eng. Said Al Qasmi  
Vice President of Project Management  
OMRAN Group



**Turning A Dream Into Reality**  
Professional, highly skilled OMRAN staff worked effortlessly with top-drawer consultants to provide a design that is truly emblematic of Oman’s modern renaissance, providing a conceptual design that encompassed the distinctive topography of Madinat Al Irfan, the rich natural settings and the pristine environment. After extensive studies, it was agreed to build OCEC on the highest point, a vantage position that can be seen for miles around. The success of this iconic project is visible in every detail of work. Perfect planning and teamwork in close collaboration from start to finish delivering a project which is truly iconic.



  
**50 MILLION** MAN-HOURS WERE ACHIEVED  
DURING THE CONSTRUCTION OF OCEC  
WITHOUT A SINGLE LOST TIME INJURY

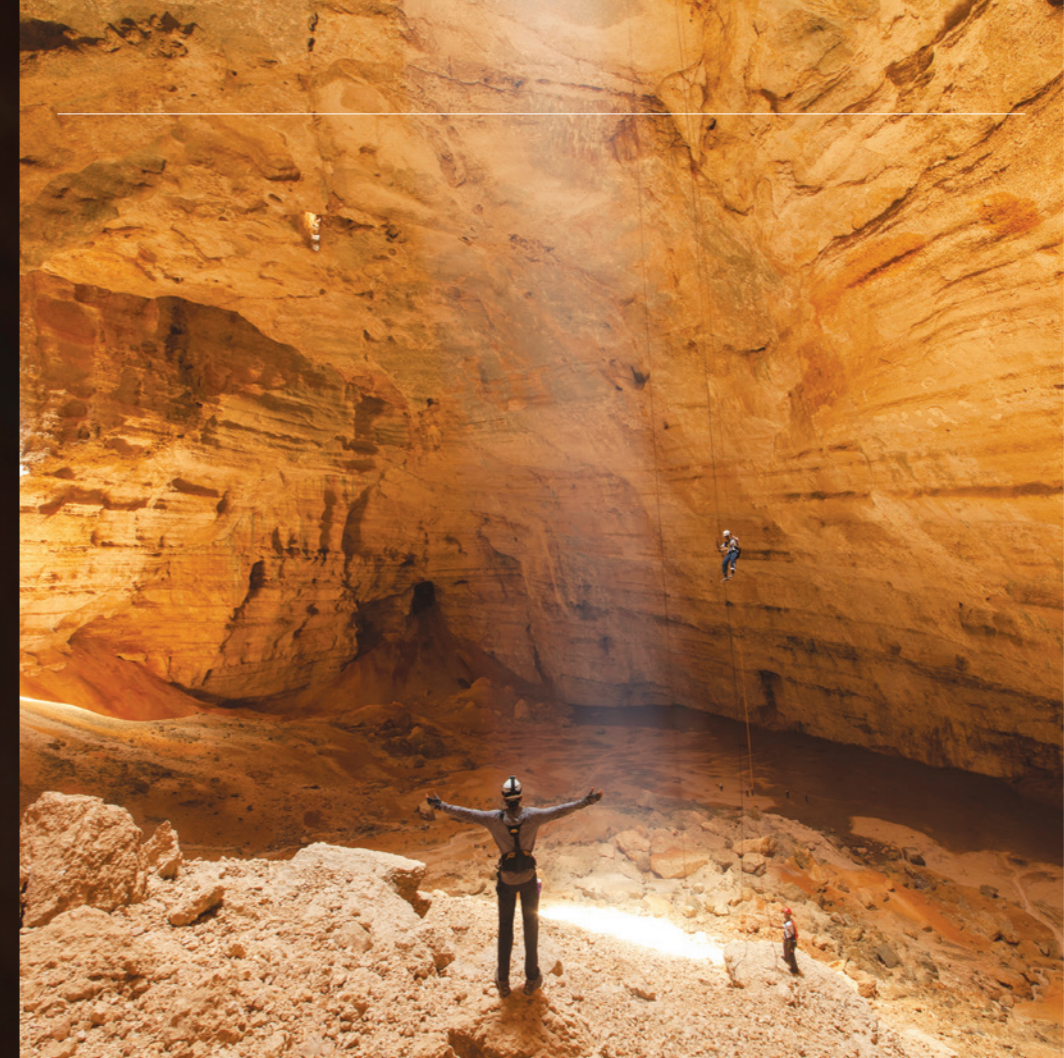


**4,000 CARS**  
CAN BE ACCOMMODATED  
AT THE MULTI-STOREY  
PARKS, A FURTHER  
600 CARS AT PARKING  
SPACES ADJOINING  
THE AUDITORIUMS

## OPENING UP UNTOLD GEOLOGICAL WONDERS TO ECO-TOURISTS

# MAJLIS

**Hidden away in the heart of the eastern Al Hajar Mountains, Majlis Al Jinn Cave earns the title of the ninth largest cavern in the world and is considered one of most spectacular geological marvels in the region.**



The Cave's name was inspired from the local people in the surrounding area, whom believed that the cave was filled with genies, which are prevalent in Omani mythology. In Arabic, the word for "genie" is "Jinn", and so the cave was named "Majlis Al Jinn". "Majlis" means "meeting place," making the cave name, "the meeting place of the genies."

This magnificent natural jewel boasts a capacity of approximately 4.3 million cubic metre. Despite its staggering size, 310 metres length, 255 metres width and 120 metres height, visitors must descend from one of three openings in the roof by ropes. Once you are inside the cave, its amazing geological features become apparent.

Located 1,800 metres above sea level, it is much cooler within the cave even during summer, which allows visitors to linger in the cave exploring its stunning natural formations, distinctive fauna and meandering tunnels extending nearly 12 kilometres.

The vast structure of this World Heritage Site is made up of three separate caves, including Majlis Al Jinn Cave, and four caverns connected by a network of underground tunnels.

The area around the Cave is dotted with wadis and breathtaking white sandy beaches, Fins Beach being one of the most notable. In close proximity to these treasures lies the Ras Al Shajar Nature Reserve, a protected sanctuary for the Arabian gazelle. This whole area has the potential to become Oman's first national ecological park.

### HOW TO GET THERE:

Access to the site is limited to 4-wheel-drive vehicles only. The cave location is at the northern limit of the Selma Plateau, near Fins village in the Wilayat of Qurayyat in Muscat Governorate where the road connects with Tiwi in the Wilayat of Sur, in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

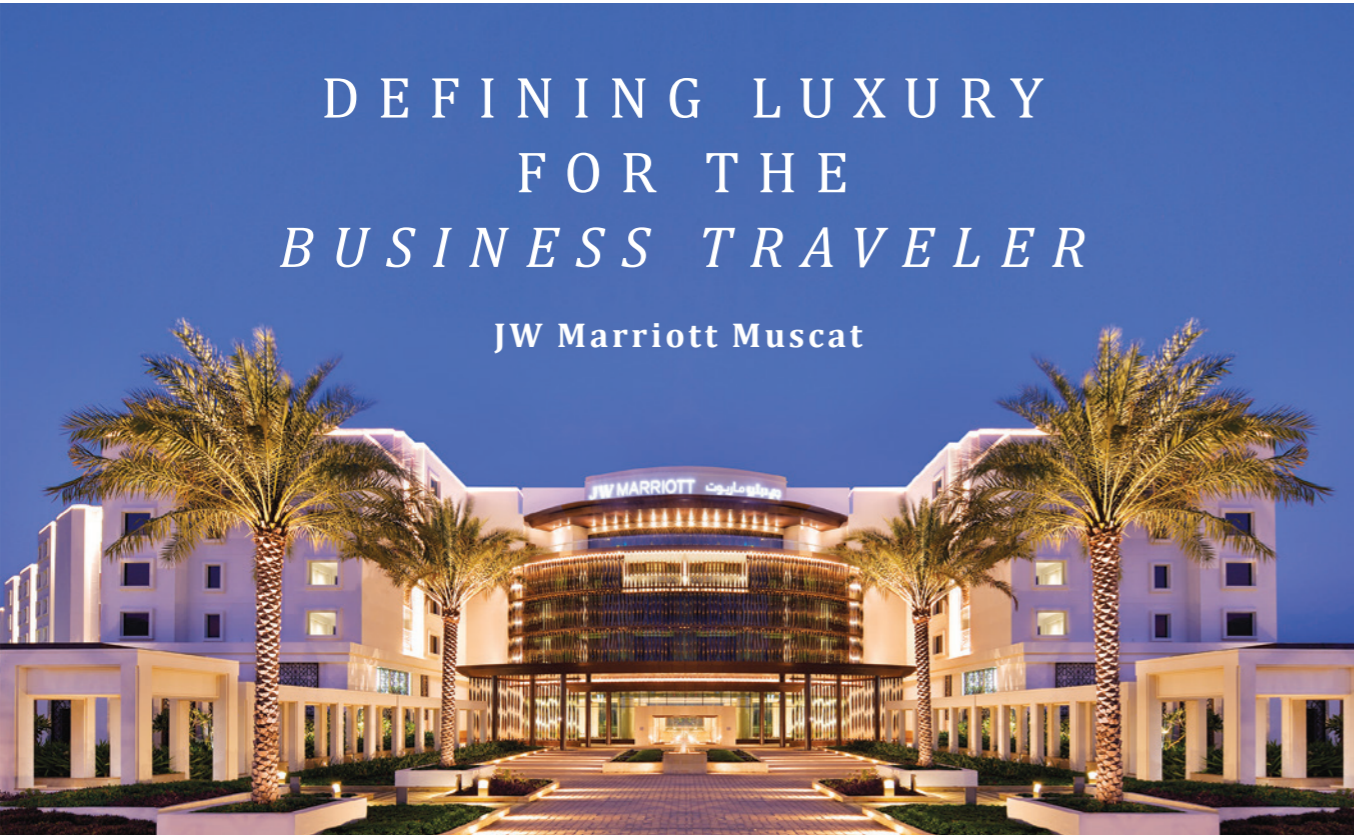
If you are starting from Muscat, take the Qurayyat road as far as Fins, then drive towards the Selma Plateau for about 25 kilometres along the well-signposted blacktop. A dirt track will then lead you a further 1,300 metres to the site.



As one of the sites that has recently come under its supervision, OMRAN Group is planning to unlock the potential of this unique geological landmark, and transform it into a major attraction in the region for adventure tourism. OMRAN Group's phased plan for the development of the caves will initially involve reopening the cave for adventure enthusiasts during this year. In the next phase, the development plan will entail the creation of new experiences and facilities to welcome the visitors and tourists. With all of these elements combined, this delightful corner of the Sultanate has the hallmarks of an exciting adventure and eco-tourism destination in the making.

### ENG. KHALID MIRZA

Director of Special Projects  
OMRAN Group



DEFINING LUXURY  
FOR THE  
BUSINESS TRAVELER

JW Marriott Muscat



Set in the heart of Madinat Al Irfan, the new JW Marriott Muscat is a beacon of natural elegance in the up-and-coming business district. The moment you step into the hotel you are greeted with spiraling metal elements representing the nests of various native birds. As you flock into the light-filled lobby you will notice there are no flowers on display. The hotel has replaced throw-away flowers in favor of plants, a hint of the brand's "detail over ornament" ethos. The design itself is a unique architectural blend, interpreting the local context through a contemporary lens.

In December 2019, the JW Marriott Muscat opened its doors to welcome guests to the property and is the latest addition to the OMRAN Group's hotel portfolio. General Manager Giuseppe Ressa is proud to be at the helm of the luxury brand's flagship in Oman, which bears the name of its founder: John Willard Marriott Sr. In an interview with Panorama magazine, Giuseppe tells us all we need to know about Muscat's brand-new luxury destination.



Giuseppe Ressa  
GENERAL MANAGER



The first five-star hotel in the Madinat Al Irfan development and with 304 keys is one of the biggest hotels in Muscat. Directly connected to the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC), the property is an essential part of the area's appeal, and offers conference delegates and corporate visitors a much-needed place to retreat and relax. With 45 suites and more than 2,500sqm of flexible function space including 2 ballrooms with a separate entrance, state-of-the-art equipment, 2 terraces and outdoor gardens, guests can also host their own events and meetings in style and comfort. But make no mistake, the hotel offers far more than just business hospitality. Its 'mindful and present' mantra is manifested in a range of thoughtfully crafted moments for all kinds of guests, whatever the purpose of their stay.

Giuseppe tells us about some of the mouthwatering menus already available and those to be added. There is Tonika, where guests can enjoy fresh ingredients and in-house infusions inspired by nature and the craft of botanists. There is also Kitchen7, an open-plan shared style dining restaurant inspired by a famous sailor who discovered dishes from multiple lands. Butter Buns, a sports themed burger bar with no less than 24 TV screens; Catch, an al fresco restaurant offering Nikkei, the famous Japanese/ Peruvian fusion cuisine; and grill house Pink Salt, with its unique dry-aging refrigerator coming soon. All offer tailored culinary experiences that aim to feed the body, nourish the soul and ultimately, bring people together.

To work off those calories, the JW Marriott Muscat also boasts a state-of-the-art fitness center flooded with lots of natural daylight and overlooking the pool, sauna, steam rooms, jacuzzi, tennis court, and a multi-purpose court. Swimmers are more than catered for too, with 3 outdoor pools including a lap pool, a family pool and a kid's pool. For the health conscious amongst us, please take note; the hotel is completely smoke free, part of its eco-friendly ethic.

According to the sustainable development approach by OMRAN Group, the hotel was designed in line with the stringent LEED Gold Standards of the US Green Building Council. The hotel also boasts a very unique attraction in its surroundings, as it backs onto the Ansab Wetlands, home to almost 300 species of birds, providing birding enthusiasts with a unique opportunity to see so many species, at certain times of the year. There are plans to set up a 'hide' for avid bird-watchers at the rear of the hotel. This will be equipped with binoculars which will provide perfect bird watching and views across the wetlands and connected wadi.

Local artists will soon have an opportunity to showcase their work, as the hotel has plans to display local artwork allowing guests an opportunity to enjoy and appreciate the talent represented by Oman's artists.

Building on its philosophy of "JW Luxury", the hotel is well on its way to helping the Sultanate attract new visitors, but with its array of world-class features and holistic approach, is sure to be pivotal in their return.



Musandam is  
an exquisite  
natural canvas



BUTHAINA AL BULUSHI

MEDIA PERSONALITY



@buthainabulushi



There are places that seem familiar simply because you have visited them before, but imagine returning to these places for the joy of rediscovering their finer details and characteristics once again. This is how the talented Omani broadcaster Buthaina Al Bulushi describes her recent visit to Musandam, a place she had briefly visited once, many years earlier. In this interview, Buthaina shares with readers of Panorama details of her tour of Khasab and her exciting experience as a guest of Atana Hotels.



#### So, Buthaina how was your visit to Musandam?

With the confluence of the mountains and the sea, Musandam is an exquisite natural canvas. Caressed by cool breezes, this region abounds with tranquillity as well as opportunities for adventure tours amid its stunningly diverse outdoors. As much as I enjoyed its spectacular natural beauty and the warm welcome extended at every stop, I was also pleased to witness the profusion of tourist activity as was evident from the massive cruise ships docked at Khasab Port, overflowing with thousands of tourists hailing from different parts of the world. The port also buzzed with traditional Omani dhows that had either set out on fishing trips or were laden with hundreds of tourists eager to discover the marine delights of Musandam. Travelling from different parts of the world, these tourists are here to enjoy the unique tours and activities in Musandam.

#### What is your most memorable tour?

The cruise to Khor Sham will remain etched in my memory for a long time, as the weather was perfect and we had dolphins for company gliding alongside our dhow for a long period during the trip. The activities were enjoyable, and so was the warmth and hospitality extended to us by the boat's Omani crew; the proud sons of Musandam. It was a packed programme of activities that included fishing, diving and tours of old, yet still inhabited, fishing villages that dot the coastline. The highlight for me, as a media professional, was the visit to Telegraph Island, given its historic importance as the launch-pad for the first communications system in the Gulf region. Likewise, the sight of dozens of traditional boats laden with tourists and visitors kindled in me a desire to explore Musandam's history and its diverse monuments.

*The trip to Khor Sham is memorable while Khor Najd is perfect for unforgettable photos*

During my trip, I also visited Khalidiya Park, a lush parkland of trees surrounded by mountains, which makes an ideal camping site replete with fresh air and natural settings. Khor Najd, located high in the mountains, offers stunning panoramic views of the rugged landscape as it meets the sea. From these locations, nature photographers, whether professional or amateur, are afforded splendid vistas for some memorable scenes. Other historical attractions abound elsewhere around Musandam which I strongly advise everyone to visit.



#### What was your experience like as a guest at the Atana Musandam Resort developed by OMRAN?

My stay at the Atana Musandam Resort was a delightful experience overall, encompassing all facets of authentic Omani hospitality and local culture in all its diversity. There is no doubt that the Atana hotels chain, established by OMRAN Group as the first Omani hospitality brand in the hotel sector, is a significant addition to the contribution of the tourism sector in the Sultanate. I would like to record here my commendations to OMRAN Group on the success story this new brand represents as a symbol of Oman's vibrant culture for international tourists to enjoy when they visit the Sultanate.

I was also heartened by the genuine desire of the hospitality staff in the Atana Hotels to embrace the brand's distinctive ethos, which is rooted in service to guests in accordance with longstanding Omani hospitality traditions. Their warm welcome and attention to detail was also very touching.

Also ingrained in my memory is the striking design of the hotel, which is inspired by ancient Omani architecture. Elements of Omani heritage are also abundant in the rooms and suites as is evident from the furniture design and wall adornments. The rooms afford privacy and comfort, as well as all of the amenities required by guest for their relaxation and leisure.

Noteworthy was my experience at the Al-Mawra Restaurant in Atana Musandam with its varied menu featuring a mix of Omani and international cuisine. The dishes were delicious with their distinctive flavour. I especially liked the fresh seafood dishes which, no doubt, represent the bounty of Musandam's waters.

#### Your message to readers of Panorama, as well as everyone eager to visit Musandam...

A tourism industry can be deemed successful if it contributes, first and foremost, to uplift and empower the of local community. This is indeed true for Musandam, where I see great potential for the growth of tourism and the governorate's transformation into a preferred global destination. I was especially proud to see a great number of successful tourism projects that are passionately managed by the people and youth of Musandam. Some of these ventures are completely managed by Omani women. Notable in this regard is the example of the Zaree Project, which is one of the most successful Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives of OMRAN Group. The programme offers promising employment opportunities for local Omani women, while making it possible for visitors to enjoy an authentic Omani tourist experience.

I would have liked to extend my stay in Musandam, as I enjoyed every moment of it and I intend to return soon to this memorable place. I also encourage everyone to make the most of every opportunity to visit Musandam, which you will discover is not only an amazing natural tourist destination but also an ideal haven for those looking for tranquillity, relaxation, adventure and other activities amid its contrasting landscapes. I expect tourism to thrive in Musandam on the back of the support infrastructure encompassing new tourism facilities, hotels, port and airport. Perhaps most importantly, visitors can look forward to warm and authentic Omani hospitality.

# Tales to tell..

Enjoy authentic Omani  
hospitality and moments full of  
unforgettable stories and tales

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STORY IS TO  
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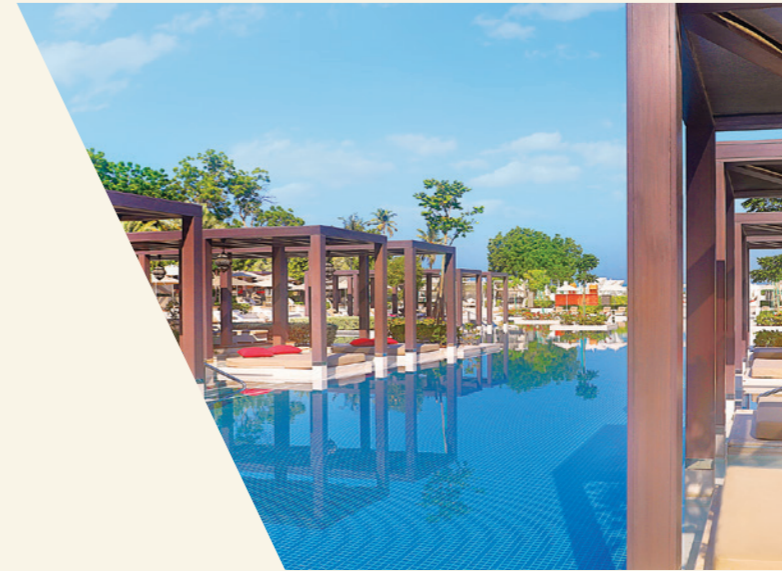


# W MUSCAT: IN CELEBRATION OF MUSCAT AT THE CROSSROADS OF HISTORY



**W Muscat, the Sultanate's trendiest hotel, is strongly emblematic of Oman's capital city which has sat at the crossroads of history, geography, trade and culture since antiquity.**

Ensnconced between the Al Hajar Mountains and the Sea of Oman, this ancient city was coveted by powerful empires in bygone times and thrived at the intersection of two culturally distinctive worlds; ancient and modern, eastern and western, classical and avant-garde. It was a magnet for maritime explorers and nomadic travelers, a hub for maritime trade and a melting pot of cultures. In the upshot, Muscat has evolved into a city that is at once culturally diverse in its appeal, yet modern in its outlook and chic in its style; the essence of which is captured in the distinctive design and stylish services of W Muscat.



Indeed, just about every facet of W Muscat, one of the newest properties of the OMRAN Group portfolio, has its roots in Oman's natural grandeur, rich culture and diverse heritage. Although distinctly modern in its architectural design and luxurious in its interiors, W Muscat encapsulates a varied repertoire of elements drawn from Omani heritage that are evident in its stunning exteriors, stylish interiors and in other design embellishments found throughout this charming property.

The fusion of Oman's traditional appeal and natural beauty, with the signature characteristics of W brand, is captured in the hotel's bold and innovative design. Embedded in the storyline behind W Muscat's extraordinary design is the theme of the Bedouin traveler whose life is an endless journey of exploration and adventure.

The design of the property is inspired by key themes from Oman's natural splendour, from its rugged mountains and expansive desert landscapes to the breathtaking shoreline

of the Arabian Sea. Blended in are elements drawn from Muscat's natural history and archaeological heritage.

Every facet of the project has a story to tell. The W sign itself, besides creating a wow statement, is inspired by patterns drawn from the local mashrabiya, decorative enclosed balconies, that are a feature of prominent traditional homes. A riveting feature of the hotel is the nine-ton frankincense tree sculpture located at the entrance. Designed by renowned Thai artist Pongsat Uaiklang, this splendid structure soars 10 metres high and is made of stainless steel. The structure pays tribute to the legendary hospitality of the Omani people exemplified by their use of frankincense as a symbol of welcome.

Also greeting visitors upon their arrival is the walkway paved with a diverse mix of Omani stone. It seeks to illustrate the country's rich geological elements that date back to a time when planet earth was in its infancy. The prehistoric mountains that provide a backdrop to the city of Muscat are a living testament to this geological wealth.



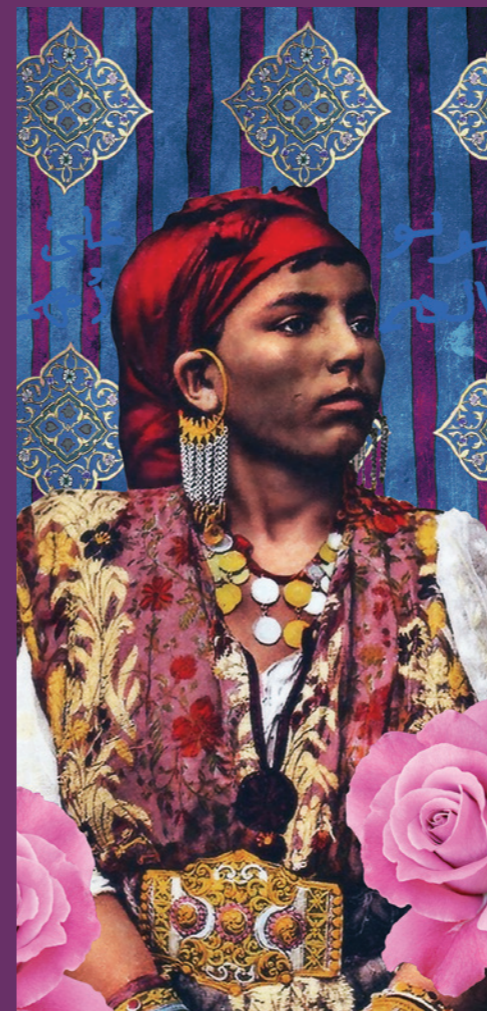


Inside the hotel in the lobby area, appropriately dubbed the Living Room, is in fact, a traditional Arabian majlis with a modern twist. Adorning the ceiling are outsized installations of Omani kummas. These embroidered caps are part of the Omani man's national dress. It is amidst this authentic setting that guests relax and unwind in typical majlis fashion.

Omani themes also resonate elsewhere within this delightful property. Suspended from the ceiling of the Great Room is a design feature inspired by the casting of fishing nets by Omani fishermen, a common scene on Muscat's beaches and an integral part of the country's rich heritage. Similarly, the WET Bar which is popular with the hotel's patrons and visiting guests alike is inspired by the Bimmah Sinkhole near Qurayyat, a picturesque lagoon of crystal clear turquoise waters. The Siddharta Lounge by Buddha-Bar, while symbolic of a cosy Bedouin tent, features an incredible ceiling dotted with thousands of tiny lights, reminiscent of a star-filled desert sky.

All 279 guestrooms and suites at W Muscat provide unrivalled views of the Sea of Oman and incorporate design elements that borrow heavily from the surrounding mountains and the windswept deserts beyond. Noteworthy is the example of the WOW and E-WOW suites, where art deco detailing exudes traditional Omani charm.

Suffused into the 'crossroads' theme of the property are symbols of Omani hospitality, reflected in the traditional coffee pots placed in niches around the hotel. Guests and visitors will also be struck by the profusion of animal-inspired themes and designs, denoting not only elements of Oman's celebrated fauna, including the Arabian Oryx and Gazelle, but also the Sultanate's longstanding links with the African continent.



## CORRIDOR ART

Adorning the corridors of the W Muscat are some vibrant works of 3D-art that celebrate local Omani and Arabic folklore. Themed around mythical characters, the stylish pieces feature stunningly regal women, burqa-clad and often featuring the signature beaked mask of Bedouin women.

There are six masterpieces that together make up W Muscat's corridor art. There is for instance, Ahlam, the Princess of Dreams shown adorned with Omani jewellery with traditional henna on her hands. Sideways Maira, so-called because her portrait is slightly angled to one side which makes her mask appear and then magically disappear as you walk through the corridors. Another example is Amirah, a princess from Salalah, adorned with Dhofari jewellery and a dress made from palm trees and banana leaves. Exemplifying the garden settings of Oman's wadis is Flora, Queen of Greenery. All six stylish pieces are a memorable facet of W Muscat's lavish interior design.



Abdullah  
Al Bulushi

# The Passionate Barista

Passionate about coffee-making, Abdullah Al Bulushi aspires to become the most famous barista in the world!



[www.ihg.com/crowneplaza/hotels/](http://www.ihg.com/crowneplaza/hotels/)



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**Watching Abdullah making a cup of coffee, confident in manner and distinctive in style, is like observing an artist at work. And, yes, when you have a sip of that brew, you rediscover your taste for coffee like never before, an experience that leaves you returning for your favourite coffee at the 'Connections Café' at the Crowne Plaza Muscat, Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) situated in Madinat Al Irfan.**

## Abdullah, tell us about your tryst with coffee?

My father, who is a local coffee distributor, instilled in me a deep-rooted love of coffee. I recall coffee had such a dominant presence in our household since my childhood. Over the years, I became passionate about all things coffee and dreamt about becoming a barista. I began to read about coffee-making, searching the Internet for the secrets and art of this trade and realised that my professional calling was rooted in the business of coffee-making.

After taking up my current job as a barista, I decided to perfect my skills by participating in barista tournaments outside Oman. At one such tournament I had the privilege to meet Romeo Perello, the celebrated international barista, who shared a lot of his secrets on the art of coffee-making. From him I learnt how to carefully weigh the exact amount of coffee that goes into each cup, to correctly gauge the temperature of the milk and the styles of latte art to embellish every cup. I was really honoured to meet him again when he participated in a hospitality competition held here at the Convention and Exhibition Centre some years ago. Perello is the barista who has had such a profound impact on my life.

## Who is your role model in life?

When I began work at the Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC, almost two years ago, I started from scratch, willingly accepting any job or task that was assigned to me. I absorbed this philosophy from my father who often told me that hard work and diligence pave the way for career growth and development. In fact, I began working for my father when I was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. During my summer vacations, I used to spend a month each year taking any job I could find before returning to the UK to continue my studies. My father, who took responsibility for me from an early age, is my idol and role model.

## How do you reconcile work and study?

My day begins just before 6am with the entire morning dedicated to work and making the best coffee for my clients. In the afternoon, I study Tourism Management at Oman Tourism College (OTC). I am really grateful for the flexibility that has allowed me to balance my workplace and study commitments.

## What is your ambition for the future?

My work as a barista has unleashed in me a profound desire to learn and develop my capabilities to the fullest extent possible. After completing my studies, I plan to work in the field of hospitality and tourism with the ultimate goal to start an innovative tourism project that is very distinctive and different to any other already available. There are many locations across Oman with huge potential to become tourism destinations in their own right but lack the requisite infrastructure and services. My goal is to support the development of the tourism industry and help propel Oman into the ranks of the world's leading tourism destinations.



## TIPS ABDULLAH SHARES SOME OF HIS SECRETS FOR THE BEST TASTING COFFEE



The ideal temperature of the steamed milk should be 55°C and definitely not over 65°C.



A ceramic cup or container is preferable to glass, because it conserves heat and also comes in diverse shapes and colour options.



If iced coffee is your thing, ask your barista to prepare it with a double shot of espresso, because the ice tends to weaken the taste of coffee.



The ideal amount of espresso per cup is between 24-28.2 grams.



Nothing is better than a quiet setting to enjoy your coffee.





# A fruitful strategic partnership between OMRAN Group and Orascom Holding.

Creating sustainable tourism assets and communities suited for modern living.

"Muriya encapsulates the strategic partnership between the OMRAN Group and Orascom and its underlying vision and goals, the fruits of which are already evident in the successful delivery of Jebel Sifah and Hawana Salalah, two Integrated tourism complexes that provide visitors, residents and tourists with an unparalleled lifestyle experience all year round. Muriya has so far invested over \$750 million in the Sultanate in the development of tourism destinations that are distinctive in character, features and amenities and are contributing to the growth of the tourism sector and the national economy in general. We are optimistic about Oman's tourism future given its abundance of unique natural elements, complemented by its political stability and security, which together make it a tourism destination catering to tourists from all over the world."

Ahmed Dabbous, CEO - Muriya




Ten years of fruitful cooperation between OMRAN Group, the government's executive arm for tourism development in the Sultanate and Orascom Development Holding, the internationally recognised developer of fully integrated tourism destinations, have spawned a proud legacy for Oman's tourism sector. Muriya, the product of this partnership, combines the expertise of OMRAN in the delivery of niche, authentic and sustainable Omani lifestyle destinations with the formidable international expertise of Orascom in the development of integrated tourism complexes (ITCs).

Muriya's portfolio now includes two of Oman's largest integrated tourism destinations, Jebel Sifah in Muscat Governorate and Hawana Salalah in Dhofar Governorate. Since their launch, the two projects have made a distinctive mark on Oman's tourism sector. In their design, quality and standards, they embody the vision and values set out by the Ministry of Tourism to position Oman among the top tourism destinations of the region.

Jebel Sifah and Hawana Salalah offer between them around 1,200 hotel rooms distributed across a number of luxury properties, including Salalah Rotana Resort, Fanar Hotel, Juweira Boutique Hotel and Sifaway Boutique Hotel. There is also the one-of-a-kind Souly Eco Lodge in Salalah. Since they opened their doors to guests, the hotels in both projects have recorded a total of 420,000 room nights as of the end of 2019, underscoring the strong appeal of the two properties.

Muriya's splendid integrated tourism complexes (ITCs) also offer premium residential housing units for citizens and residents on a freehold basis. In 2019 alone, the company delivered approximately 600 residential units to investors. At its Jebel Sifah destination, Muriya recently launched The Beachfront, its third residential development, following the success of its Golf Lake and Jebel Sifah Heights' residential schemes. At both Jebel Sifah and Hawana Salalah, the company continues to develop new freehold based residential projects, surrounded by luxurious hotels and an array of world-class amenities.


## Nurturing small and medium enterprises

Jebel Sifah and Hawana Salalah are making an important contribution to the local economy. This is achieved through Muriya's reliance on an ecosystem of local vendors and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to provide a range of goods and services necessary to sustain the smooth operation of the two ITCs. Indeed, this continued dependence on local service providers helps sustain the livelihoods of thousands of people, whether in direct employment or otherwise. These services may relate to construction and contracting, or to the wide range of services required by the large community of residents who have made the ITCs their home.

Weekly fairs organised in Hawana Salalah provide a platform for local Omani artisans and SMEs to promote their merchandise to visitors from across Europe, notably Germany, Italy and the Czech Republic. The Saturday Bazaar provides an ideal setting for local folks to display and sell their touristic creations made by families supported by the Omani Bahja Orphan Society.



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# ZAREE

## OMANI CULTURAL AMBASSADORS

**Awaiting tourists as they disembark from their cruise ships calling at Khasab Port is a pavilion set up just outside the port by Zaree, an all-female micro-tourism business, where authentic Omani hospitality takes on a whole new resonance, creating a cultural bridge between Oman and the world.**

Amid the traditional splendour of the tourist pavilion, the international visitors are treated to all of the distinctive characteristics of Omani hospitality in the form of generous servings of traditional Omani coffee and dates and confections that are popular in the region. Women tourists can get their hands decorated with some exquisite henna art while others browse through a collection of richly embroidered traditional Omani women's garments that are on display.

The Zaree project was launched more than seven years ago as an initiative by OMRAN Group, supported by the Ministry of Tourism, to help open up small-scale business and entrepreneurial opportunities for local women in the tourism domain.

Since the launch of the project, Zaree has opened up new opportunities for its members. Some have been trained to teach the art of traditional cooking to interested tourists. Others were equipped to provide catering services to tour companies with the accent on traditional cuisine and dishes.

This is in addition to their specialist skills in handcrafting, embroidery, handmade incense, traditional garmenting, and so on, the products of which are offered to tourists to take away as souvenirs.



## “ZAREE OFFERS UNIQUE LOCAL EXPERIENCES FOR VISITORS OF KHASAB”

Iman Al Salti

## “OMRAN GROUP HAS EXTENDED EVERY SUPPORT TO THIS LANDMARK INITIATIVE WHICH HAS OPENED UP AN ARRAY OF OPPORTUNITIES”

Iman Al-Salti, Supervisor of the Zaree project, says: “Amid the promising potential of the tourism sector, Zaree was conceptualised as a distinctive project that serves as a platform for Omani hospitality, a bridge for communication between cultures and an opportunity for tourists to explore Omani traditions and culture by participating in the activities of Zaree. OMRAN Group has extended every support to this landmark initiative which has opened up an array of employment opportunities in the Wilayat of Khasab through the development of small projects in the tourism field, particularly in the areas of traditional crafts, local cuisine and folklore.”

What began as something of an opportunity for visiting tourists to engage with local Omani women has now evolved into a more diverse enterprise that encompasses a variety of activities. During the cruise tourism season, Zaree members receive and welcome tourists at the tourism pavilion erected just outside Khasab Port with funding support from Oman Oil Company Exploration and Production (OOCPE). Furthermore, Zaree provides a range of tourist services to guests at the Atana Hotels in Khasab and organises Omani themed nights every week at the Atana Musandam Hotel. Recently, a Zaree souvenir shop was opened in the Atana Musandam Hotel.

The Zaree project receives around 38,000 tourists annually during the tourism season in Khasab. Zaree has garnered a number of awards, including the top prize in the field of entrepreneurship in the Al Roya Youth Initiatives Awards; the Women Empowerment Award in the third edition of the Best CSR Awards in Asian countries; the title of ‘Tourism Ambassador for Musandam Governorate’, Best Youth Project from the National Youth Committee and a special recognition from the Minister of Tourism on World Tourism Day.

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# The Turtles' Guardian

Nasser Al-Ghailani, Ras Al-Jinz Turtle Reserve Manager

**THE RAS AL JINZ TURTLE RESERVE** IS LOCATED AT RAS AL HADD IN THE WILAYAT OF SUR, AND IS A MAJOR ATTRACTION FOR TOURISTS GIVEN ITS GLOBAL REPUTATION AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PROTECTED NESTING SITES FOR ENDANGERED GREEN TURTLES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. THE RESERVE WELCOMES AN ESTIMATED 83,000 VISITORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD EVERY YEAR. WE SPOKE TO RESERVE MANAGER, NASSER AL GHAILANI, WHO IS ONE OF THE SHINING STARS OF A NEW GROUP OF DEDICATED YOUNG OMANIS WORKING IN THE SULTANATE'S PROMISING TOURISM SECTOR.



## We asked Nasser to tell us more about his role as a team member of this unique reserve.

My role as head of this facility encompasses a broad range of tasks, while ensuring the smooth daily operation of the reserve conforming to prescribed environmental and safety guidelines. My principal responsibility is to ensure that our accommodation facility, consisting of 19 rooms and 15 luxurious, environmentally-friendly tents, are in excellent condition. Our catering services provide a combination of international and Omani dishes. Room occupancy is typically 100 per cent during peak season. Also as part of our complex, we have an interactive museum that receives visitors from 9 am to 9 pm. There are sections focusing on the turtles and their habitat, local lore surrounding turtles, turtle nesting sites around the Sultanate and the archaeological heritage of the area. There is also a small pool for turtle hatchlings.

As part of our service to tourists, we organize nightly trips to the nesting sites where guests are able to observe the nesting turtles up-close but without disturbing them, of course, as this is very important. In fact, they get to view the entire process, from the time the female turtle scours the beach searching for the perfect spot to lay her eggs to her eventual return to the sea. A female turtle will return to the same beach where she was born, up to 25 or 30 years earlier, to lay her eggs. This breeding season is between the months of June to October. Advance bookings to observe this spectacular sight can be made via the 'Leisure Concierge' portal.

The Reserve also provides cruises along the stunning shoreline, so that guests can enjoy turtle and dolphin watching out at sea. Other onshore activities are available for visitors eager to explore the local community or go hiking.

## What advice can you share with our readers?

I invite everyone to visit the reserve, at least once. The best time to visit is in summer during the nesting season. This stretch of Oman's beautiful coastline enjoys delightful weather all year round, with summertime temperatures ranging between 25-36 degrees Celsius. So it's a perfect time to visit. My staff and I look forward to welcoming you and sharing this unique opportunity with you.



## What attracted you to the tourism sector?

I was first given an opportunity to work at an industrial company in Sur. However, about 11 years ago, I applied to join the Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve as a driver. It was at this point that I discovered that a career in tourism would be so very much more rewarding, not just financially but would provide an opportunity for me to share my love of my country with others, and the idea just spoke to my heart. I decided to pursue my new calling with passion and vigour and learn new things about tourism. I began to read a lot, particularly about nature reserves and tourist attractions around the world. I find that I am grateful every day for the opportunity to be able to work in such a unique setting. Just two years after joining the reserve, I was given the opportunity to work as a receptionist at the Turtle Museum and then in 2012 I was promoted to the post of Deputy Manager of the museum. Four years later, in 2016, I was elevated to Manager of Operations and was then promoted to Manager of the entire reserve last year (2019). It has been a very exhilarating professional journey, full of success and rewards.

## Nasser was eager to share the secret behind the successful management of this eco-tourism facility;

As the head of the reserve and the team leader, I feel a great sense of responsibility, as well as the realization that my employers have placed a great deal of trust in me. I am also mindful of the fact that in order to manage this facility successfully I need to work in close collaboration with my colleagues. I feel truly fortunate to have gained their trust. Every member of my team is focused on their respective tasks and responsibilities. Our collective goal is to maintain the reserve at its pristine best while ensuring a meaningful experience for visiting tourists. I am grateful for the unstinting support that OMRAN has provided us, which has enabled all of us to deliver on our responsibilities.

## Are there plans for the further development of the reserve?

The most important future plan is to add a treatment centre to care for injured or sick turtles. We also intend to build protective structures to keep young hatchlings from going astray as they head to the sea. Ultimately, our ambition is to elevate the Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve to one of the most important tourist attractions in the world as a symbol of nature and wildlife conservation.

4	الداخلية / Al Dakhiliya
●	أليلا الجبل الأخضر Alila Jabal Akhdar
○	قلعة نزوى Nizwa Fort
○	كهف الهوته Al Hoota Cave
○	حارة البلاد Harat Al Bilad

5	جنوب الشرقية / Al Sharqiyah South
○	محمية رأس الجنز للسلاصف Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve
●	ضيافة أتانا الأشخرة Atana Stay Ashkara
●	منتجع جزيرة مصيرة Masira Island Resort
●	مشروع رأس الحد السياحي Ras Al Hadd Tourism Project

6	الوسطى / Al Wusta
●	فندق المدينة الدقم City Hotel Duqm
●	كراون بلازا الدقم Crowne Plaza Duqm

7	ظفار / Dhofar
●	هوانا صلاحة Hawana Salalah
●	كراون بلازا صلاحة Crowne Plaza Salalah
●	ضيافة أتانا صلاحة Atana Stay Salalah

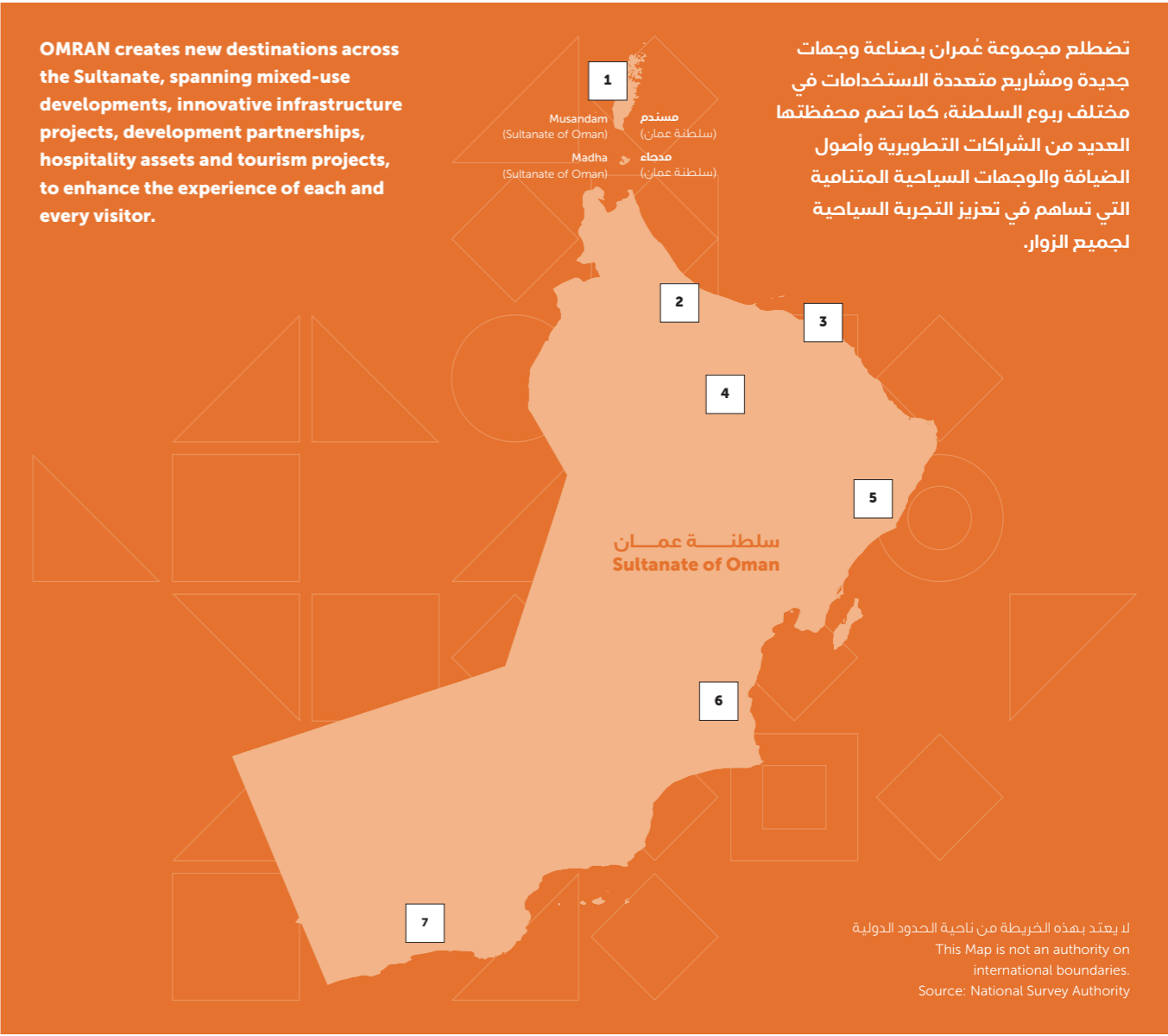
●	مشاريع عُمران OMRAN Developments
●	مرافق الضيافة Hospitality Assets
●	المشاريع المشتركة Development Partners
●	الشركات التابعة Subsidiaries
○	وجهات سياحية Destinations

1	مستندم / Musandam
●	أتانا مستندم Atana Musandam
●	أتانا خصب Atana Khasab
●	منتجع شاطئ دبا Dibba Beach Resort

2	شمال وجنوب الباطنة / North & South Al Batinah
●	فندق شاطئ صحرار Sohar Beach Hotel
●	ميلينيوم المصنعة Millennium Mussanah

3	مسقط / Muscat
●	مشروع مدينة العرفان Madinat Al Irfan
●	الموج مسقط Al Mouj Muscat
●	مركز عمان للمؤتمرات والمعارض Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre
●	جي دبليو مارriott - مدينة العرفان JW Marriott- Madinat Al Irfan
●	كراون بلازا - مدينة العرفان Crowne Plaza- Madinat Al Irfan
●	إنتركونتيننتال مسقط InterContinental Muscat

●	دبليو مسقط W Muscat
●	مشروع تطوير مرافق فندقية فخمة - بندر الروضة Luxury Hotel Development - Bandar Al Rowdha
●	مشروع إعادة تطوير فندق إنتركونتيننتال مسقط Intercontinental Redevelopment Project
●	جبل السيفة Jebel Sifah
●	الواجهة البحرية لميناء السلطان قابوس Mina Al Sultan Qaboos Waterfront
●	خليج مسقط Muscat Bay
●	مارينا بندر الروضة Marina Bandar Al Rowdha
●	عمان للإبحار Oman Sail
●	كلية عمان للسياحة Oman Tourism College
○	كهف مجلس الجن Majlis Al Jinn Cave



الشركات التابعة / OMRAN Subsidiaries	شركاء الضيافة العالميون / Global Hospitality Partners	شركاء التطوير / Development Partners
OMAN CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTRE مركز عُمران للمؤتمرات والمعارض	CROWNE PLAZA	ORASCUM DEVELOPMENT
الواجهة البحرية وخدمات المراسي WATERFRONT & MARINA SERVICES	JW MARRIOTT	MAJID AL FUTTAIM
OMAN SAIL	Alila أليلا الجبل الأخضر - عُمران JABAL AKHDAR, OMAN	EAGLE HILLS
كلية عُمران للسياحة Oman Tourism College	MILLENNIUM HOTELS AND RESORTS	QATARI DIAR القطرية
	W HOTELS	
	INTERCONTINENTAL	