

**RYAN
REYNOLDS**
OPENS UP ABOUT
SPIRITED

**FAWAD KHAN
& HAMZA ABBASI**
ON THE LEGEND OF
MAULA JATT

The Unstoppable
AIMA BAIG

"I AM STILL EXPLORING WHO I AM AND ONE DAY
I MIGHT HAVE THE ANSWER"



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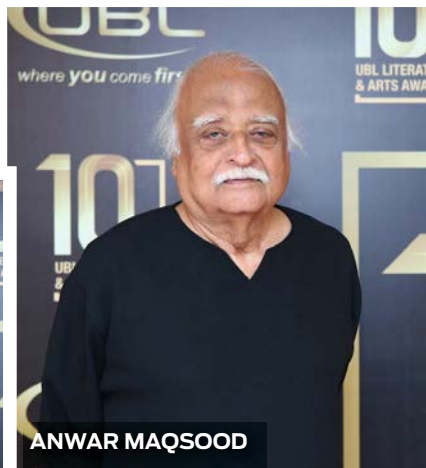
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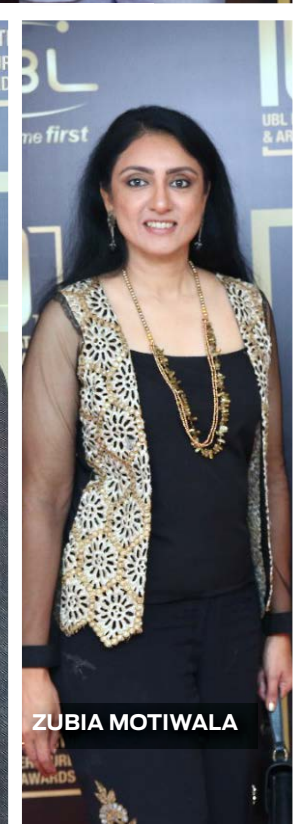
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Shaan Shahid hosts the
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WITH HIS WIFE



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**"I look for inspiration
in real life"**

AIMA

BAIG

*In an exclusive
conversation with OK!
Pakistan from her home in
Lahore, the gorgeous singer
talks about being Aima, all
things close to her heart,
and her future plans*





A graduate of Lahore University, this 1995 Rahim Yar Khan born and Oman-raised songstress began her career in 2014 with an upload to SoundCloud and there has since been no looking back. Almost a decade later, with countless hits, many an acclaimed performance and a *Tamgha-e-Fakhar-e-Imtiaz* under her belt, Aima Noor-ul-Ain Baig or Aima Baig as she is more popularly known, lives life king-size and on her own terms.

Tell us about yourself - your family, childhood, school and college, friends etc.

AIMA BAIG: I would say sometimes introverted, sometimes extroverted, and imaginative, also someone who likes to mind their own business. I am sensitive and emotional, and I would also call

myself strong. When it comes to describing myself I don't really know how to. I think as an individual I am still exploring who I am and one day I might have the answer. Although I would prefer not having an answer because it's way more fun to keep exploring.

My family are the best people that I know – they love me unconditionally and are extremely supportive. Each and every time I am low, they are there to pick me up. The same also goes for my friends. I am not the kind of person who makes new friends every day, though I am a firm believer you can never have enough friends. I have had the same circle since I was a child, a close group of 10 to 15 girls who've been together since school. What I really appreciate is that they've never treated me like a celebrity or any different since the day we

became friends.

You were brought-up in Oman – what made for the move to Pakistan?

AB: I had had enough. Most of my life I have lived with my father. And I wanted to spend more time with my siblings and my mom when she was diagnosed with cancer. So I never wanted to leave her. This is probably the main reason for my move to Pakistan. When I was 15 years old, I was visiting my family in Pakistan for my summer vacation, and I was like, I am not going back – that was it.

You have a degree in Film and Television from the University of Lahore – would you say your degree has helped shape and power through your professional career?

AB: I look back at my time at university very fondly – I had a really good time doing what I love doing. Singing is my number one passion but I love film production. Being behind the camera, being the person who's handling everything, directing, script writing, making it all happen really is my jam. I wouldn't say my degree has helped me – but yes, the theatre I did when I was in university gave me a lot of courage and confidence to face people, to perform in front of a live audience. I wouldn't deny that credit to my degree.

You have actively worked with cancer patients and championed awareness programs after your mother succumbed to the disease – is it a cause you still continue to work for?

AB: I don't consider working towards the welfare of cancer patients as championing a cause. To me, helping them out or doing anything, anywhere in this world, is personal because of my mother. My God knows, my family knows and I know that we tried our best to save her, but nothing worked back then. I wasn't able to save her. But if there's any help, even a small fraction I can provide to a single cancer patient I would be more than happy. For me, helping cancer patients in need is a priority. People don't know about it, I don't want people to know about it – it's something very personal and very close to my heart.

I help some families on a permanent basis – I visit them and provide them with what they need. Mostly what they need is love and care. The welfare of cancer patients is a cause very close to my heart, one that will always be a part of my life till the day I die. I've seen my mother in pain because of the disease – the suffering, the medical expenses, the hardship, the pain of chemotherapy and other treatments. I know it all too well – so, I just try to help in my own capacity which is really the least I can do.


What made for your foray into the entertainment industry?

AB: I never planned on becoming a part of the entertainment industry. I was just passionate about singing, and with luck on my side, it turned into a career for me for which I am extremely thankful and grateful. I have believed in manifestation since I was a child. Back then I didn't even know what it was and I was doing it intentionally. I always knew big things would happen for me, because I am a firm believer that intention matters and as far back as I can remember, my intention has been to pursue my passion.

What is your earliest memory associated with music?

AB: A project with ISPR post the attack on Army Public School in Peshawar. We were painting ►



A woman with long brown hair is seated in a dark wooden chair, wearing a vibrant red, sleeveless dress with a flowing, draped skirt. She is looking directly at the camera with a calm expression. Her right hand is raised, touching her hair. The background is a warm, textured wall with soft, golden light filtering through, creating a bokeh effect of out-of-focus circles. The overall mood is elegant and intimate.

**“ I am only 27 but
I feel I am 72 because
I have this motherly
instinct in me. ”**



the school after it was rebuilt – a bunch of us were helping out. The vibe was something else – friendly and peaceful. I just didn't want to leave. That was a memory that made me recognize that being part of the music industry isn't a song and a dance and all things glam – it gives you the space to help others. That would be my first good, good, good memory associated with music.

Tell us about your debut - what was the inspiration for your first song/album?

AB: My first song was "Nanay Hathoon Mein Kalang". It was for ISPR for the kids who were attacked. The inspiration behind it was to help these kids, their families; to rebuild that hope – what those families and kids had lost. We are never sure of what is going to happen. Just standing there in that demolished school – it really gave us inspiration to write a song about it.

Your repertoire boasts songs of diverse range – what genre of music do you enjoy most and why?

AB: I was recently sitting with a legendary, international composer in a studio to work on my next album when he asked me what kind of genre I would like to pursue. I was like this is music, and it is all about having no boundaries, no restrictions, no language barriers, no obstacles – we can just be free. I think more than singing in *sur*, I am more passionate about being versatile. That has worked for me for the past six years. I could be singing anything – rock, rap, folk, classical, hip hop. I don't have a single genre. For me an album isn't an album but a chapter of my life. Because to me, the process of writing a song has a story behind it. I don't want to limit my music with boundaries. I am open to all the genres.

Film, television, jingles, sports anthems, studio collaborations, motivational national songs, you've done it all – as an artist and as an individual what have you enjoyed more and why?

AB: I actually enjoyed it all to be honest. It is so much fun. I live my life to its fullest when I am at the studio engaging and brainstorming with creative minds. I feel like I am actually doing something right with my life and bringing about a change. When I am about to hit the stage, I become nervous as I am an introverted person. But once I am up on stage all that changes in an instant – a priceless feeling.

What would you define as a dream project?

AB: To produce my own documentary – one that documents everything an artist goes through both personally and professionally. Like an artist's reflection of the life of a fellow artist. I dream of having my own production house one day where I can compose songs for others as well as help upcoming artists with their big break. I am only 27 but I feel I am 72 because I have this motherly instinct in me. I really want to help others fulfil their dreams. I would love to do world tours and promote new artists.

Any international collaborations/projects in the offing?

AB: There are a bunch and I am really excited about them. I think this is a huge step forward to be heading where I would want to see myself. With each success, I'm always like 'oh, now I want to reach another level'. It's a constant battle within yourself which one day I hope to make peace with.

Had you not been a musician, what might have been your alternate calling?

AB: I would be a writer – a script writer; I could also have been a chef because I love cooking. But I do make quite a bit of a mess so I am not sure about that. Maybe, I could be someone's manager because I manage things really well.

How do you tackle controversy?

AB: I don't tackle. My mantra is I don't tackle. I just let it be. And you know, eventually the madness dies down. I strongly believe that each controversy, each uproar, each scandal has a certain timeline and eventually it passes, everything goes back to normal and everyone forgets about it. In the beginning I would really get affected by such things, because deep down I am a very emotional person. I'm a Piscean and I'm sensitive. But being in the industry, I've become a strong person – these trivial things don't matter to me anymore. Negative comments about me, or my family or how I am dressed, how I am singing, about my songs – I no longer really pay attention. I let it go. I try to stay away from Instagram and other social media platforms. In the beginning of my career that wasn't the case. But I learnt my lesson, that the more you're going to be in touch, the online commentary will drive you crazy and scar you. I only had one controversy that scared me and I've learnt so much from it – it was enough for me to learn a lesson.

Personally and professionally, what in your view has been your biggest high and what has been your greatest challenge?

AB: My highest high was undoubtedly being awarded the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz. I was in LA on vacation when I received a call from an unknown ►



“ I live my
life to its fullest
when I am at the
studio. ”

number saying I've been nominated. In disbelief and to the caller's surprise, I responded saying that can't be true because I haven't done anything worthy of being bestowed one of the highest civilian awards in the country. Being awarded the Tamgha-e-Fakhr-e-Imtiaz is and will always be one of the highlights of my life.

For me, as a musician, the greatest challenge is making music every day – to do my best, to raise the bar and compose a song better than my previous one. The pressure from my fans and listeners is real.

As an individual, I find becoming part of the rat race is frustrating. To engage with people is also sometimes challenging when you don't want to dress up or put on makeup or shower for two days because you're being lazy. You just want to stay home but you have to step out, interact with people, smile and take photos. It makes you realise you are merely someone's mode of entertainment, even when you're not in the mood.

Both as an individual and as an artist: 1) what motivates you to push and raise the bar, 2) what inspires you, 3) what is your motto, 4) your comfort zone, 5) your getaway?

AB: What motivates me to push and raise the bar – I think it's just myself. I know that being an overthinker isn't a good thing but I am one. I keep telling myself to stop, because over-analyzing isn't going to change anything. You simply need to be able to pick up the pieces and hit the road running. I know it isn't easy but it must be done. I could be in my studio for days facing a creative block without making any music. I spend time sitting with my dad, talking to my brother or sister over Facetime. Just me unwinding and enjoying a moment with my near and dear ones, gives me so much inspiration. It's hard to explain what type of inspiration I am talking about. Artificial things don't inspire me – I look for inspiration in life, real life – happiness inspires me, my family, my siblings, my father motivates me to keep making music and not just give up yet. Unintentionally it makes me a hustler, I don't mind being one.

I don't have a motto per se but I very definitely believe in manifestation – I believe if you work hard you are going to get there in the end. There are people that say we work so hard, why aren't we blessed, why aren't things working out for us? I am a firm believer, give it your 100% and trust that it will come together.

My comfort zone is undoubtedly my family and friends, or else me cozying up in my blanket watching documentaries or listening to podcasts.

My getaways are vacations not in Pakistan but somewhere where no one recognizes me. I am not complaining, I am very grateful to Allah for giving me this life but sometimes you just want to be the person you are and I am naturally an introvert.

Your Bucket List?

- To make a documentary.
- To visit all the haunted houses across the world.
- To learn multiple languages.
- To know how to make your own hair – I just cannot. I think girls who can make their own hair are very talented.
- A foundation where there is no underhandedness involved. One that is able to create a platform for people who want to have a space where they can heal themselves.
- To help kids and broken people.
- To bring a change in the industry – to make an impact through music.



Bungee Jumping, Scuba Diving and Parasailing all of which I've done usually feature highly on most Bucket Lists but never did on mine.

You have collaborated musically with a number of artists – which collaboration have you thus far enjoyed the most?

AB: I love all my fellow artists and I've enjoyed working with each and every one of them – all of them were amazing! Every time I collaborate with someone senior to me, I get to learn a lot and gain experience – it's like I am attending an institute. Collaborating with someone my age or younger than me, I get to share ideas and share the same feelings – like when working with Asim or Arjit, it's a different vibe.

How would you define Aima Baig – the

individual and the artist?

AB: She's a mess – whoever she is. But she isn't a bad person, I am sure. I do not aim to step on people just to get what I want.

Aima, the individual, is a mediator.

Aima, the artist, is a *mazdoor*.

What's next for Aima Baig?

AB: There are a lot of projects I've done so far for this year, I am looking out for those projects. As far as what is next for me, only Allah knows. It could be having babies or not for the next 20 years, or making an impact. It could be anything or I could be dead – only time will tell. **OK!**

INTERVIEW: YUSRA ASKARI
PHOTOGRAPHS: ADIL ISHAQ



“YOU SURRENDER TO THE PROCESS”

RYAN REYNOLDS

This month, Reynolds can be seen co-starring in *Spirited* – a musical adaptation of Charles Dickens’ 1843 novel, “A Christmas Carol” – now available on the Apple+ streaming service



Ryan Reynolds is handsome, polite, self-effacing, and above all Canadian. All those qualities have helped endear him to millions of fans around the world including audiences who have flocked to his *Deadpool* movies that have earned over \$1.5 billion at the worldwide box-office.

But nothing in the arsenal of his foul-mouthed, wise-cracking anti-hero alter ego could have prepared him to take on that rarest of film genres – the Hollywood musical.

The film is the latest in a series of screen adaptations of the venerable children's classic which sees Reynolds play Clint Briggs, a cutthroat advertising exec and modern-day version of Dickens' iconic Ebenezer Scrooge.

But the chief twist in *Spirited* is how it features Reynolds and Ferrell singing and dancing their way through this musical take on the beloved Christmas tale, not that Reynolds has any illusions about his vocal gifts.

"I wasn't trying to be the best singer in the world, I was trying to be the best singer I could possibly be," says Reynolds. "That was a lower and much more achievable bar to reach!"

Although the story remains faithful to the original novel up to a point – Clint is in fact visited by three Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future – *Spirited* updates the story by obliging Will Ferrell's Present spectre to re-evaluate his own past and

his relationship with Kimberly (Octavia Spencer), a woman he has met during his visit to Earth.

The 46-year-old Ryan Reynolds was born and raised in Vancouver, Canada and is happily married to actress Blake Lively. They live in Bedford, New York, together with their three daughters, James, Ines, and Betty.

“You can operate with a modicum of integrity and still do really well.”

Reynolds decided to take a year off after completing work on *Spirited* in 2021 and spent most of the time enjoying life with his family and driving his two eldest girls to and from school.

Making your first movie musical must have

been a daunting prospect. Were you trying to channel your inner Fred Astaire?

RYAN REYNOLDS: [Laughs] No, and I don't profess to be a natural singer and dancer. But I had never done a movie where I was singing and dancing, and I feel at this stage of my life I'm comfortable with learning something completely new, and I'm comfortable with not being an expert at something. That allows me the space to learn and grow in my craft.

What was it like when you arrived on the set of *Spirited* and faced the fact that you were tackling a very different kind of film genre?

RR: You surrender to the process. You're working with these people who are absolute experts at their craft and they have a lifetime of experience. It was really just about letting go and being comfortable. It felt safe to suck at first and then that safety gave me a foothold into becoming what I would guess is adequate.

We also had 40, 50 takes to get this right. It wasn't a live production, thank God. But I also had Will with me — we were in the same boat. We both had to learn it from scratch and we spent months together learning these numbers and dance routines before we shot a single piece of footage. I look back at that with absolute fondness.

Do you think all the work you put in before and during the making of the film paid off?

RR: I can't really speak to whether or not I got ►



**“I was trying
to be the best
singer I could
possibly be!”**



better, but I can say that I'm glad that it wasn't a live show. [Laughs] We did multiple takes to kind of get things the way we wanted them. I was so focused on the singing and dancing that it was almost hard to focus on anything else. It was like they were just these huge spectres coming up, each one of these song and dance numbers.

Was there ever a moment when you felt that you had finally gotten the hang of it?

RR: We definitely had moments in the tap dancing sequences, where we really clicked and got it all right. I don't know that there's a better feeling on Earth, short of my own children being born, than that. That's also the power and magic of editing, thank God.

You're good friends with Hugh Jackman who's probably the reigning song and dance man of our time. Did he give you any advice about how to handle the dance numbers?

RR: Nothing specific other than telling me to try to follow the beat in your head and that will help you to get into the rhythm of dancing. But I never really got to the point where I could do that the way I would have liked to.

His best advice was to tell me to try to have fun and enjoy the element of performing that comes with singing and dancing. Whenever I felt lost, I would try to remember that and not worry so much about whether I wasn't able to master all the steps or not.

What was it like working with a comic legend like Will Ferrell?

RR: He's the real reason I wanted to do the movie — and the reason I said I was in before I even finished the script. I've spent my entire professional career wanting to work with him.

Why are you such a fan of Farrell's?

RR: You'd be hard-pressed to find another comedic performer who has contributed more to the landscape and comedic lexicon that we currently live and thrive in. Will Farrell is one of those actors whom people, old and young, quote without even knowing they are quoting him.

So, I've always admired him, particularly his vulnerability. He's so vulnerable and that makes him so funny. You can see his heart beating in his chest in practically every scene. So to spend time with him in such a challenging environment was one of the great privileges of my career and life.

Your character Clint in *Spirited* is very determined to succeed no matter what. During your time in Hollywood, you must have run across your fair share of shark-like personalities?

RR: I've met a lot of people like that — people who would sashimi their own children to get ahead. But I've learned that you don't have to screw people over to get ahead. You can operate with a modicum of integrity and still do really well. Weirdly enough, the concepts that have helped me professionally are the opposite of what Clint's are, which is that we are all designed and hardwired to crush, win and kill. If you can deactivate that instinct a little bit, and instead of trying to win, you try to learn from somebody, that's the thing that's helped me the most.

How do you handle conflict?

RR: When I find that I'm at odds with somebody, if I avoid trying to win, and instead seek to learn something from them, it doesn't mean that I have



to agree with them, but it creates a nice foundation for conflict resolution and allows everybody to kind of win.

I know that's esoteric and silly, but I do think about the conflict-resolution courses that I took when I was in my 20s and those really changed my life in a way that trying to win never could.

Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" has been filmed many times before. What is your perspective on how this adaptation manages to translate Dickens' original message for today's audiences?

RR: Some poor wretched person treats everybody horribly and then has a moment of self-realisation that is quite profound and life-changing. It's a kind

of universal and timeless concept.

Now that you've made your song and dance breakthrough, would you be willing to do another musical at some point?

RR: This film swallowed my entire life whole for the better part of a year. I'm so happy and so glad and I think incredibly proud that I did it. I think I can speak for Will Ferrell and say that he feels the same way. But no, I was not immediately scouring my desk for the next musical project. I was happy to let this one be. **OK!**

The above comments by Ryan Reynolds were made on Nov. 8th via Zoom chat from New York City while he was promoting his new film Spirited. His comments have been condensed and edited for length and clarity.

INTERVIEW: JAN JANSSEN (WENN.COM)
PHOTOGRAPHS: WENN, SHUTTERSTOCK



THE LEGEND OF MAULA JATT

Actors extraordinaire Fawad Khan and Hamza Ali Abbasi open up about their new film, undoubtedly the most ambitious project in the history of Pakistani cinema

THE JATT FAWAD KHAN

“All my performances have been different from one another”

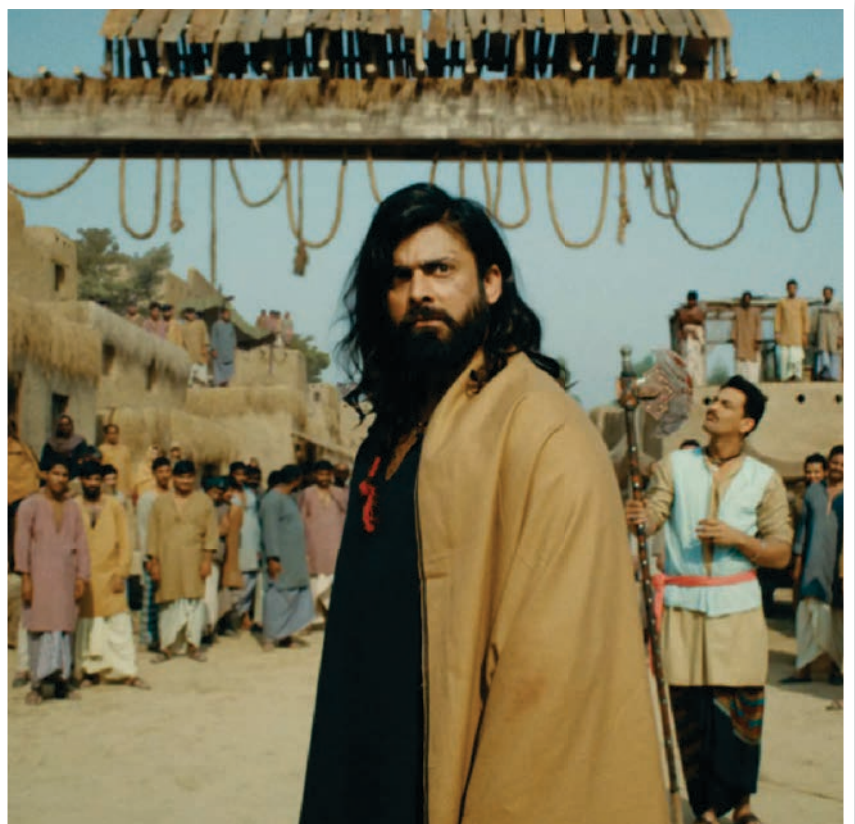
Just days ahead of the release of *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil*, the sudden souring of cross-border ties in the wake of the Uri attack made for Fawad Khan's Bollywood exit in 2016, leaving many a fan heartbroken. Today, after an over six year hiatus and a Marvel series later, Fawad has made his long-awaited return to the silver screen with a Punjabi language action ensemble drama - a reboot of a 1979 cult-classic. Directed by Bilal Lashari, *The Legend of Maula Jatt* - that stars Fawad Khan in the title role - is a modern take and retelling of the legendary rivalry between a local hero named Maula Jatt and Noori Nath, a brutal gang lord. *The Legend of Maula Jatt* is not only the most ambitious and expensive Pakistani film made to date, but also the biggest blockbuster in the country's cinematic history. Fawad Khan speaks exclusively to OK! Pakistan about his big

comeback and all things Jatt.

What does Fawad Khan, the actor and the individual, feel about making this comeback?

FAWAD KHAN: I'll be very honest with you, I've lied to the rest - I'm just nervous and that's it. I'm excited as well, but I'm more nervous than excited.

Do you consider your enactment of Maula Jatt to be different to other roles you have



“As an actor, every role you do changes you a little bit.”

- FAWAD KHAN

essayed?

FK: All my performances have been different from one another. This, though, is starkly different, because I've never carried this much weight. And this is the first other language I've spoken on screen – other than a little bit of English.

How do you feel this role defines you as an actor?

FK: Maybe, my ability to tackle something outside my comfort zone.

Announced in 2011, the film has taken over 10 years in the making - what does this journey mean to Fawad Khan, the actor and the individual?

FK: As an actor, every role you do changes you a little bit. As a person, it was a bit of a difficult time, which is a personal space that I don't want to get into. But yeah, it did change me in a lot of ways - in a lot of ways that I didn't like.

Would you say your role in *The Legend of Maula Jatt* is, for you, a coming of age of sorts?

FK: I don't know if Maula Jatt did that, but maybe time and space did. I still haven't matured, I think it's going to take me time. I don't think it's a really great space to be in because sometimes I think of myself as Peter Pan – I've got to grow-up someday. I think there was a certain coming of age. I had realisations and I had a lot of time to think - which isn't the best thing either, too much thinking does you damage.

What was your equation like with your co-stars, some of whom are also your friends – did that kind of camaraderie materialise on screen?

FK: Hamza and I were social acquaintances, most of our interaction was during the shoot of the film. And I think that kind of lent itself in a good way to our chemistry because we are playing the role of antagonists. As far as Mahira and Humaima are concerned, I had performed with both of them many years ago – again, that comfort zone helped in the kind of chemistry we shared on screen. Faris was someone I didn't know at all but I was and am a big fan of his hip hop music. I've known Meesha but I've never really been introduced to Faris who plays my brother in the film. He is a very easy going person and that kind of made things really easy for me. Gohar I had known for a while, I had met him during Anwar Maqsood sahab's theatre plays - I got to know him then and he is a wonderful person. All in all, most of the faces in this film were familiar and it was working in a comfort zone which did help me get through that difficult time as well.

With regard to *The Legend of Maula Jatt*, what is/was: 1) Your biggest motivation to do this film? 2) Your biggest challenge? 3) Your biggest takeaway?

FK: My biggest motivation...I didn't think about it much, I just kind of went in, guns blazing. And this is one of the only projects that I really didn't think about too much before committing to. My biggest challenges were: learning Punjabi, the



action sequences and putting on the weight that I did because of the transformation. And my biggest takeaway, undoubtedly, is never transform yourself physically like that again.

What next from Fawad Khan can fans look forward to?

FK: I take one thing at a time. I've shot two other films and they should be releasing shortly. One is *Neelofar*, which is a home production, the first ever production for which me and a few friends got together – it's a simple film. And the one after that

is Faisal Qureshi's *Money Back Guarantee*. There's a project that I did with Asim Abbasi for an online platform, it's called *Barzakh*. So, it's these three projects.

On the heels of what is slated to be a Lollywood blockbuster and a Hollywood foray under his belt, might a Bollywood comeback for Fawad Khan be a possibility in the near future?

FK: I've enjoyed a lot of love, I've enjoyed a lot of appreciation from fans in India – and they have my love and respect too. Unfortunately the political ►



situation is such, I don't think it's going to happen anytime soon. So, the question should be put to those who can make it happen. I've just done a digital series with an Indian platform. Whatever happened was unfortunate and can be hard to forget, but then I've enjoyed a lot of love and support in that difficult time from India. So yeah, why not, but I think time will tell.

THE NATH HAMZA ALI ABBASI

"I am back to pursuing my passion - my craft"

With Hamza Ali Abbasi's comeback to the silver screen after a gap of four years, *The Legend of Maula Jatt* brings yet another onscreen hiatus to a very welcome end. On the heels of a personal quest of self-discovery that draws an ironic parallel with his last on-screen persona as Qalb-e-Momim in *Alif*; Hamza in his second cinematic venture with Bilal Lashari, stars as the lead antagonist, the larger than life Noori Nath, bringing alive the long-awaited reboot of the legendary Jatt vs Nath rivalry. Critically recognized and widely acclaimed for his enactment as Noori, Hamza speaks exclusively to *OK! Pakistan* about his personal journey, the impact it has had on him both as an actor and individual, and all things Nath.

You effectively announced an apparent end to your acting career – is this the last body of work fans can expect from Hamza Ali Abbasi or is there any more in the offing?

HAMZA ALI ABBASI: I think there is a misunderstanding. Four years ago, I announced I was taking a break by means of a video that got hundreds of thousands of views. It was primarily a very long break, over the course of which I found



**“ Each frame of
The Legend of Maula
Jatt is a painting. ”**

- HAMZA ALI ABBASI

some conclusive answers to my questions with regard to God, with regard to life. It was in my quest to find these very answers that I announced a break. But in our society, religion is considered such an anti-thesis that when reports of my break made the headlines I was labelled a born again Muslim and people automatically assumed I had bid farewell to the industry. But in my view, religion in no way prohibits art within the parameters defined by the Almighty. Over the past few years, under

“ The Noori Nath and Maula Jatt rivalry is not to be missed. ”

- HAMZA ALI ABBASI

the tutelage of Javed Ahmed Ghamdi sahib I've managed to find some very necessary answers. Satisfactorily done for the time-being, and I am back to pursuing my passion, my craft.

Now that you have confirmed that this was a break, what next can fans expect from Hamza Ali Abbasi?

HA: I think more television and less films, because I believe the parameters in place are easier to follow in television. Television projects are within the necessary ambit, film, on other hand, not. I am hoping to work on interesting projects in television - I am looking for good scripts.

Is there any political ambition in the offing?

HA: A political career has never been an ambition. On the other hand political activism, the time I engaged in it, I did so with a great patriotism - something I believed was the need of the hour. In my view, to be political, politically active and politically loud is a necessity rather than a career because everything in our lives is governed by politics, be it having an uninterrupted supply of electricity, the type of water you are getting, the price of petrol. As a Pakistani I am involved, I will vote and when I vote, if I find the need to support someone vocally, I will do that too. In my view, shedding the bias is the biggest challenge, moving away from pretense is the biggest challenge. My flow of energy will now be towards religion - I personally think is very much needed. My aim will be to talk about the Islam I have got know over the last four years to dispel the contradictions of others like me who were confused and had many questions they need answered. My constant activism will now be on the religious side rather than the political side.

What has been your biggest takeaway from The Legend of Maula Jatt, and what have the years that project has taken in the making left you with?

HA: It has left me with a lot of hope, that if in Pakistan a project of this magnitude can be made at this time, looking ahead too it can continue and grow. We need to have intent, we need to work hard and my biggest hope is that others will



be inspired by this project to take on other such projects of this scale that can set milestones. And even internationally, this project will open up many doors for us that previously were closed.

Why should fans be watching The Legend of Maula Jatt?

HA: The direction, the story, the characters, the cast, the scale, the action - each frame of The Legend of Maula Jatt is a painting. I urge everyone to watch it in the cinemas, as it is a film that has been made for the cinemas. And of course, the Noori Nath and Maula Jatt rivalry which is the core of the film is not to be missed. **OK!**

INTERVIEW: YUSRA ASKARI
PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY, SHUTTERSTOCK



**"I AM STILL IN THE PROCESS OF
BECOMING WHO I AM"**

CATE BLANCHETT

Cate Blanchett delivers the most electrifying performance of her career as Lydia Tár in the taut psychological drama, *Tar*



There are some actors who are so good at their craft that they only perform at their best when given material that allows them to soar. Cate Blanchett is one of those performers. Her best work has come in films like *Carol*, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *Blue Jasmine* (for which she won the Oscar), and *Elizabeth*, where the writing and directing allowed her genius to flourish.

That's the case in *Tár*, the first film in 16 years from director Todd Field. Blanchett delivers the most electrifying performance of her career as the title character, Lydia Tár, a highly ambitious and at times brutally manipulative composer and orchestra conductor. A taut psychological drama, *Tár* played to wild applause at September's Venice Film Festival where Blanchett deservedly won the Best Actress award.

The story unfolds with Lydia, a virtuoso pianist and the first female conductor of one of Germany's leading symphony orchestras in Berlin, suffering under the creative stress of finishing a recording of Mahler's Fifth Symphony. Lydia treats most of the people around her with patronising disdain, including her violinist and concertmaster wife (the excellent German actress Nina Hoss), her assistant Francesca (Noémie Merlant), and other lesser mortals.

The only people Lydia seems to care about is her daughter Petra, and a promising cellist, Olga, whom she lusts after and tries to promote within the orchestra. Meanwhile, her obsessions have taken her to the point where she is teetering on disaster owing to her abusive behaviour.

"Lydia believes in the power of being the exception," says Blanchett. "And she wants the chance to fly. But her Achilles' heel and the Greek nature of this is that once you reach the peak of a mountain, the only way is

down. And so there's a willful destructiveness as much as there is a very strong creative urge in her. For me, that's where the film really lives."

Tár is an odds-on favourite to receive a Best Picture Oscar nomination as is Blanchett for what may well come to be regarded as the defining role of her career. Todd Field and Nina Hoss are also likely to come in for awards season attention in a generally lacklustre year for film.

The 53-year-old Cate Blanchett resides at her Sussex countryside estate together with her husband of 24 years, screenwriter Andrew Upton, 55 and their four children, Dashiell, 20, Roman, 18, Ignatius, 14, and five-year-old adopted daughter, Edith.

With respect to the Oscar buzz surrounding her performance in *Tár*, how does Blanchett feel about the possibility of winning a third trophy (after winning Best Actress for *Blue Jasmine* and Best Supporting Actress for *The Aviator*)?

"I don't read that stuff because I don't know what to do with it," she said. "But that's lovely. I mean, in the end, I just want an audience to see it and I want them to see it in the cinema."

How do you see Lydia's predicament and somewhat twisted behaviour?

CATE BLANCHETT: She's full of contractions like all of us. But what Todd (Field) has done is to create a fictional character that is so vital and so real that it should act as a cautionary tale for all of us.

You don't need to be a classical musician or an artist of any kind to be able to appreciate that shameful, horrifying, tragic moment in our lives when you realise that you are not who you think you are and that people perceive you often entirely differently from your own self-perception.

Why do you think she's driving herself closer and

closer to the edge?

CB: She's about to turn 50, there's incredible pressure on her at home where her daughter's having problems at school, and she feels that she's not a good parent. But the real issue that is causing her to unravel is that she's trying to finish a composition (the Mahler cycle), which she's struggling to complete because it represents the end of the creative pinnacle of her career. There's considerable grief that comes with that because she's suddenly become incredibly obsessed with her legacy. But of course none of that excuses her behaviour.

Was it all empowering for you to put yourself into the mindset of a supremely gifted, albeit flawed, conductor?

CB: Nothing will prepare you for the moment when you stand on the podium – which was terrifying – and give the downbeat and start making that sound with an orchestra of that size. I will never forget that moment.

Lydia Tár also seems to be troubled by deeper psychological issues?

CB: She's haunted by something, by her past, by herself, by past deeds. You experience someone who has put her past in a box and who – through her immense talent – has tried to reinvent herself and be saved and changed and transmogrified by the music...She's also spent much of her life trying to sweep things from her past under the rug.

This character is a force of nature. Did you ever find yourself becoming so absorbed in Lydia Tár that you would take her home with you?

CB: We shot the film during the pandemic and my kids were home a lot of the time. So I didn't really have much of a choice but to leave Lydia behind even though I felt a certain degree of loneliness while playing her ►



**“It’s
important to
show what
women can
achieve!”**



because of everything that's running inside her head. Todd and I would have a lot of conversations about Lydia when we weren't shooting, though. As we got on, we would occasionally have the odd dinner discussing issues in a film that is asking big metaphysical and existential questions. So it was a very practical experience.

The night before he'd be prepping and talking about what needed to be done the next day. And when we were working with the Dresden orchestra, I would wake up with my hand in the air, moving sound.

This film operates on many different levels. But in some ways it also speaks to female achievement and how Lydia has succeeded in becoming a conductor, a position almost exclusively reserved for men. Was that important to you?

CB: It's important to show what women can achieve and that we need to break down all these barriers that still limit us in society. And Lydia has enjoyed an extraordinary career and made her mark as a woman operating in a highly patriarchal world. But that doesn't keep her from making the same mistakes that men in positions of power make.

You were raised by women. Would you consider that you had a "feminist" upbringing?

CB: I grew up with a single mother, who has always had to work, and with a strong and energetic grandmother. But I can also tell you that my mother never felt comfortable with the term "feminist" because in those days it meant being against the family and being anti-American. She had grown up with that kind of sensibility.

And it was only later on that I began to understand the stigma that came with the way the term came to be defined...I'm very glad that things are changing.

You've managed to lead a busy and successful career while raising four children. Where do you find downtime to relax?

CB: I lock myself in the bathroom [Laughs]. I think I'm like most people! There is no balance between parenthood and work and your personal aspirations. There is no balance. It's ridiculous saying that there is - the wheels are constantly falling off. Life is confounding and confusing and absurd and the great thing for me about having kids is they really keep you humble.

Is it true that at the beginning of your career you almost quit before you got started?

CB: When I got out of drama school I decided I didn't have the level of resilience to deal with rejection so I thought I would give it five years. I never did expect to make a movie, so it's a constant surprise that I'm working in this medium and always grateful for the opportunity.

I came to make films very late. My first role was when I was 25. I didn't expect it to continue. I thought I had five years. I thought at 35 that they put you out to pasture as an actress.

That's certainly changed. That's because women are at the helm more. They're not the exception anymore.

Did playing Lydia and embracing her contradictions also make you think about your own contradictions?

CB: I am still in the process of becoming who I am, I am still evolving because life is a constant evolution. And it's up to us to be able to grow as individuals. **OK!**

The above comments by Cate Blanchett were made on Sept. 2nd at the Venice Film Festival where she was promoting her new film, Tar, on the occasion of its world premiere. Her comments have been condensed and edited for length and clarity.

INTERVIEW: JAN JANSSEN (WENN.COM)
PHOTOGRAPHS: WENN, SHUTTERSTOCK





NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

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Each year, the senior students at the Asian Institute for Fashion Design display their talent before entering the workforce and each year we are awed by the level of skill and creativity they show.

Take a look at these works of art that should be seen on international runways.

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PHOTOGRAPHY: UMAIR BIN NISAR, JAFFAR HASAN
STYLIST: HAFSA FAROOQ
HAIR & MAKE-UP: RYHAN THOMAS
SET DESIGN: AIFD STUDENTS ASSISTED BY ARTISAN
STUDIO KARACHI













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PKR 80,000

**VALESSANDRA
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Cherry Earrings,
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**BOTTEGA
VENETA**
Sequin Sandal,
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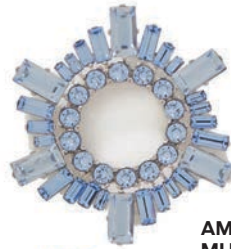
**ROTATE BIRGER
CHRISTENSEN**
Hemly Croc-Effect
Dress,
PKR 48,000

MACH & MACH
Samantha Bag,
PKR 200,000

H&M
Sequined Top,
PKR 6,200



H&M
Sequined
Wrap Dress,
PKR 16,000



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MUADDI**
Begum
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MANGO
Platform
Shoe,
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Bains Dress,
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ZARA
Pompom
Sandals,
PKR 14,000

ZARA
Sequin Dress,
PKR 14,000



PARIS TEXAS
Dalilah Pumps,
PKR 170,000



STAUD
Ilana Dress,
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MINDY KALING IN NAEEM KHAN

PHOTOGRAPH: WENN

STOCKISTS: ACLER, ALAÏA, BENEDETTA BRUZZICHES, KARA, MACH & MACH, NEW ARRIVALS, ROTATE, SELF PORTRAIT www.modaoperandi.com; ALESSANDRA RICH, GAUGE81, LOEWE, PARIS TEXAS, ROTATE BIRGER CHRISTENSEN, STAUD www.netaporter.com; AMINA MUADDI www.aminamuaddi.com; BOTTEGA VENETA www.bottégaveneta.com; H&M www.hm.com; MANGO www.mango.com; ZARA www.zara.com; prices are approximately

OK! *Red* CARPET



Kiran Malik is our ultimate style crush in this head-to-toe black ensemble.



Maha Tahirani looks va va voom in a Zain Hashmi gown.



Maha Tahirani looks va va voom in a Zain Hashmi gown.

ROCKSTARS



Yashma Gill dons an Ahmad Sultan gown with grace.



Something so regal about a woman in an elegant saree.



Urwa Hocane looks ethereal in Sana Safinaz.



KATE MIDDLETON

The Princess of Wales has proven she is the queen of style time and time again. In this issue the impeccably-dressed royal is our ultimate style crush. Here's how you can get her look:

GET THE LOOK



ASTLEY CLARKE
Round Stilla Pendant
Necklace
PKR 41,300

ROLAND MOURET
Axon Wide-Leg
Trousers In Black
PKR 98,837



GIANVITO ROSSI
Pier 85 black Suede
Block Heel Pumps
PKR 153,681



ZARA
Cobalt Tailored
Double-
Breasted Blazer
PKR 21,000



BONY LEVY
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PKR 18,000



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Velvet Pants,
PKR 17,000



H&M
Velvet Jacket,
PKR 18,000



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Slim Tuxedo Jacket,
PKR 25,000



PAUL STUART
Hope Velvet Slippers,
PKR 50,000



GEORGE CLEVERLEY
Albert Loafers,
PKR 85,000



RUBINACCI
Sahariana Velvet
Jacket,
PKR 100,000



RIVER ISLAND
Velvet Western
Jacket,
PKR 16,000

WACKO MARIA
Tapered Sweatpants,
PKR 100,000



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Double Breasted
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H&M
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PKR 12,000

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Jacket,
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STOCKISTS: CONVERSE, GEORGE CLEVERLEY, OLIVER SPENCER, PAUL STUART, RUBINACCI, WACKO MARIA www.mrporter.com; H&M www.hm.com; RIVER ISLAND www.riverisland.com; ZARA www.zara.com; prices are approximate

VAN CLEEF & ARPELS
Ceinture d'émeraudes
Necklace

BOGHOSSIAN
Ruby set in
Diamond Ring

VAN CLEEF & ARPELS
Art Deco Ludo
Necklace

CARTIER
Coral & Emerald
Necklace

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*Bright, dazzling emerald
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a contrasting stone will
speak volumes this festive
season.*

FARAH KHAN
Cabochon
Emerald, Sapphire
& Diamond
Earrings

DE GRISOGONO
Boucles d'Orielle
Earrings

GRAFF
Emerald Butterfly
Watch

PIAGET
Blue Sapphire &
Emerald Earrings

BVLGARI
Imperial Spinel
Necklace

CARTIER
Tutti Frutti
Necklace

GLENN SPIRO
Ruby & Diamond
Earrings

BVLGARI
Spinel, Emerald &
Diamond Earrings

CHAUMET
Pastorale Anglaise
Emerald Earrings

PIAGET
Limelight Gala
Watch

What's IN HER BAG?

Actress, model and former author, Sabina Syed, shares the contents of her bag with OK! Pakistan



Perfume
Tease by Victoria's Secret - VS scents are an ultimate dream



Wallet
Red is my favourite colour so I thought why not get a red wallet



Chewing Gum
Extra gum since it's better to have gum rather than munching on junk, right?



Concealer
Dior concealer - it's a concealer that conceals everything

Sanitiser
I keep The Body Shop strawberry santiser on me at all times to stay safe and protected - it's a habit



Pen
I carry a black gel pen - never know when a pen comes in hand



Lipgloss
I carry the Fenty Gloss Bomb and just like the name, it is a bomb

AirPods
This is one thing that I just cannot live without



iPhone 11 Pro
My best friend



Lip tint
The Benefit tint is perfect for any time of the day and I have to have it with me at all times



Notebook
I carry a small glitter pink notebook - I like to pen down my thoughts from time to time

SCENTS OF PURE

**Calvin Klein Eternity
EDP Intense For Her,
PKR 13,800 for 50ml,
£78 for 100ml**

A passionate new chapter in the Eternity love story, this fragrance blooms with rich Turkish rose, entwined with jasmine and spiced up with a pinch of pepper. Because some flames burn too hot to ever go out.

**Jimmy Choo I Want
Choo Forever EDP,
PKR 13,300 for 30ml,
£89 for 100ml**

Like high heels in fragrance form, this stylish scent is the perfect finishing touch to any evening outfit. The beautifully coordinated mix of black cherry liquor, bitter almond, vanilla and rose will have you walking tall.

**INITIO Parfums Prives
Paragon Extrait De
Parfum, PKR 66,500
for 90ml**

A mystical mist blended to speak to the soul, borrowing from ancient shaman rituals with its sacred notes of white sage and palo santo. It settles on the skin, yet lands so much deeper.

**Carolina Herrera Gold Myrrh
Absolute EDP, PKR 65,000 for
£100ml**

Does the name not say it all? This gourmand glory is Christmas luxury all wrapped up, with precious myrrh and golden floral immortelle nestling alongside rich licorice, cacao and vanilla. Truly, what a gift.



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Estée Lauder Oasis Dawn EDP, PKR 38,400 for 100ml

A heart of wild nature beats in this exotic oasis, alive with wild fig, orange flower and vetiver. And even if you spritz it at dawn, the all-day scent technology ensures it will linger until night falls.

Kayali Vanilla Royale Sugared Patchouli | 64 EDP, PKR 21,900 for 50ml

Vanilla is a note synonymous with Kayali perfume, but this over-the-top extravagance takes it to a whole new level. Here, the classic gourmand note has been whipped into a million calorie confection of crème brûlée, brown sugar and golden rum. Naughty but oh so very, very nice.



Givenchy L'Interdit Givenchy EDT, PKR 13,600 for 35ml, £84 for 80ml

Promising to be the most sensual L'Interdit so far, this is a sizzling encounter between ravishing petals, ginger-spiced citrus and musky leather. If it wasn't a perfume, it would be its own Netflix series (with strict PIN protection).

Miller Harris Myrica Muse EDP, PKR 26,300 for 50ml, £125 for 100ml

Who says sustainability can't be sexy? The latest Miller Harris scent has upcycled rose and patchouli at the heart of it, plus intriguing notes of Reunion Island rum, sandalwood and musk.



GLAM SQUAD

Nowadays my idea of a good night out is a nice sit-down meal and being home in time to watch Gogglebox. But when the guest list looks as good as this, I could be tempted to stay out past my bedtime. Charlotte Tilbury has brought together Kate Moss, Lily James, Jourdan Dunn and



Twiggy in this dazzling, Studio 54-esque campaign to celebrate the arrival of Charlotte's "gifting universe" – a huge selection of treats with something for every make-up lover in your life. Too much choice? You can even book a one-to-one virtual consultation to help you find the perfect present.



CHRISTMAS WRAPPING

L'Occitane always has incredible festive scents and this year's Shea Green Chestnut might just be the snuggliest yet. Combining the comfort of sweet vanilla with the evocative aroma of roast chestnuts, it's been designed to conjure the bliss of wrapping up in a blanket by the fire after a winter walk. Find it in a soap, PKR 1,400, hand cream, from PKR 2,200, shower cream, PKR 4,700, body cream, PKR 6,300, and shimmery body oil, PKR 9,100. (PS: would it be OK to skip the stroll and go straight to the bit with the blanket, Baileys and Love Actually?)

BEAUTY *Essentials*

RED HOT FAVE

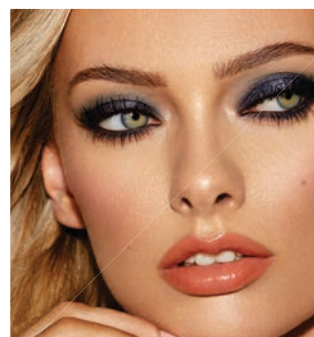
Well, look who's all dressed up for Christmas! One of my favourite face serums of all time, Estée Lauder Advanced Night Repair, £86, has been given a sparkly new look for the holidays, and it's looking oh-so pretty in Santa red. Of course, it's what's on the inside that really counts – and believe me, the stuff within is a bit of Christmas magic.



PRESSING MATTER

False nails are having a moment right now, ever since Kim Kardashian swapped her usual short, neutral mani for Barbie-pink stiletto talons and revealed they were press-ons. I'm getting stuck into the trend with MeAmora's limited-edition Christmas Nail Ons, PKR 2,900, which are saving me from the annual folly of trying to copy a cute festive nail art look from Instagram. It's a trend that's

for life, though, not just for Christmas – for proof, see how Nails Inc has branched out from polish and launched a whole press-on range, PKR 2,900 each, including this cute pink Give Me A Swirl design.



GLAZED EXPRESSION

My plus-one to any party night last year was Iconic London's Glaze Crayons, and I'm delighted to see this sparkly eye stick is back with glam new shades for 2022, PKR 6,700 each.

Pick from luscious options such as the midnight blue After Hours, the glittery bronze Desert Rose and the opulent gold Goddess, which all glint temptingly like shiny wrappers in a Christmas selection tub. And there's not a Bounty-like dud among them.



prices are approximate

MORE INSIGHTS LESS CATFIGHTS
MORE GLAMOUR LESS DRAMA



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THE LIFE OF MARYAM RAZA

The talented model, music video director and aspiring educator discusses her favourites with **OK! Pakistan**



Favourite travel destination?

Rome has a special place in my heart.



Signature scent?

It varies but the scent of apples is pretty constant - 212 VIP Carolina Herrera.

Three things you can't live without?

Moisturiser, loved ones and lip balm.

Last show you binge watched or show you recommend?

How I Met Your Mother.



Ideal weekend?

A fun Friday, wholesome Saturday, and a healthy Sunday.



Favourite restaurant or cuisine?

Thai cuisine from Thailand.

Instant mood lifter?

Running.

Words of wisdom or favourite quote?

Neuroplasticity in the brain. It'll grow, and strengthen, and adapt to what you regularly practice.



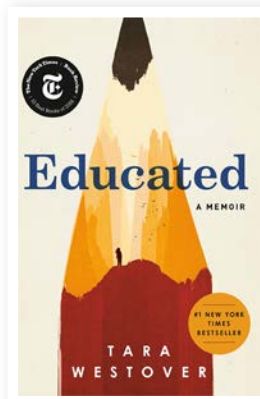
Exciting celebrity encounter?

While in university I was presented a certificate by Shabana Azmi. I tried to play it cool but I look ridiculously starstruck in the picture that was taken.



Last thing you splurged on?

Skincare essentials.



Any book you would recommend?

Educated by Tara Westover.



Three words that best describe you?

Caring, hardworking, and adaptable. I think.



Guilty pleasure?

Sprite or 7up. Let's not get too political.



All time favourite film?

Oh god - there are so many. For now I'll say *American Hustle*.

How do you keep your self fit?

Finding something sustainable. That's running for me.



Most inspirational person you know?

My parents are pretty inspirational.

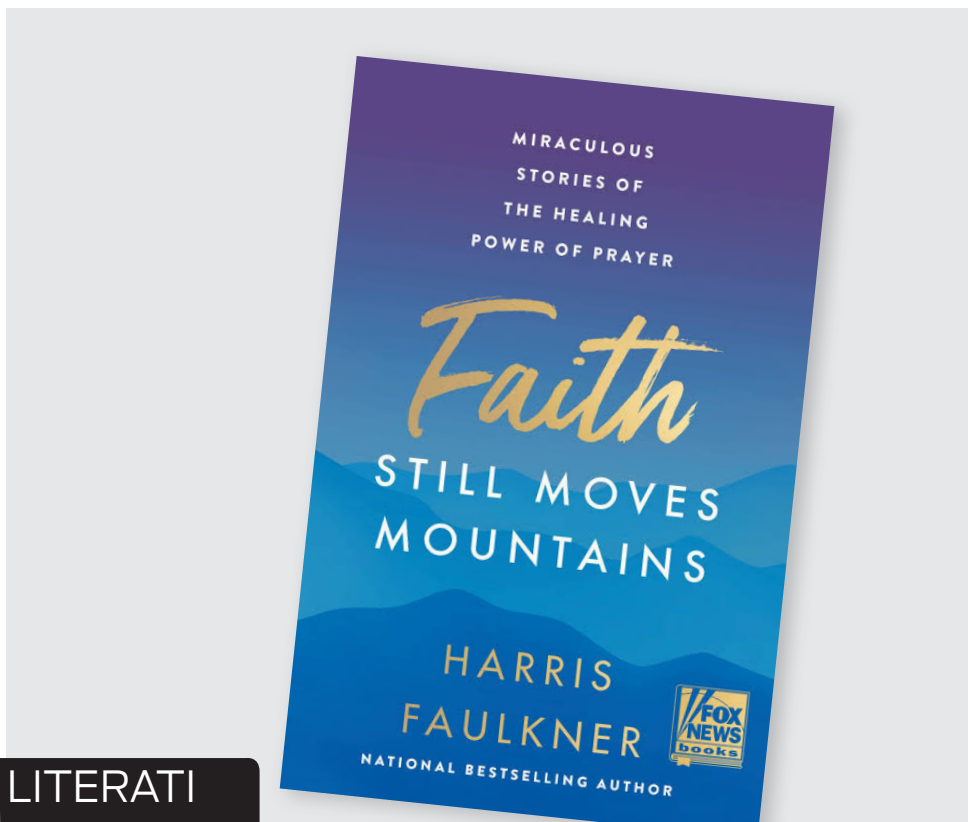
ENTERTAINMENT



MOVIE

PINOCCHIO

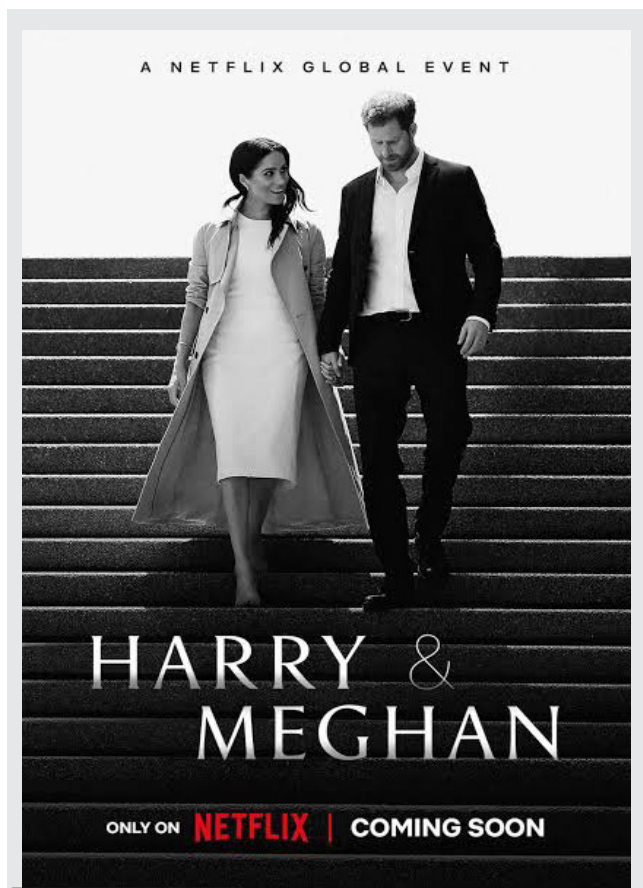
With an impressive Rotten Tomatoes rating of 97%, this film will take you back to your childhood as a father's wish magically brings to life a wooden boy. The film is perfect to watch with the family during the winter holidays.



LITERATURE

FAITH STILL MOVES MOUNTAINS

This book by Harris Faulkner brings together miraculous true stories which highlight the healing power of prayer. As we go through our busy day-to-day life, the book serves as a great reminder of all that can be achieved through prayer and the constant remembrance of God. What a treat!



TV SHOW

HARRY & MEGHAN

This is one Netflix show that everyone has been waiting for! Watch it to get at an in-depth point of view from the eyes of the highly talked about couple as they discuss how they met, their engagement, marriage, constantly having to deal with the paparazzi, and everything in between.

OK! SPOTLIGHT



FOLIA CREATIVES

A-Z with the creative Asma Wali Mohammad



Folia Creatives is a one-stop brand that does it all. Noticing a dearth of quirky greeting cards, stationery and gifting supplies, Asma Wali Mohammad eventually decided to launch her brand Folia and there has been no looking back ever since. Known for their minimal and tastefully elegant designs, Folia Creatives has become the go-to for giveaways and invites in a very short span of time.

Here OK! Pakistan talks to Asma Wali Mohammad about the launch of her brand, challenges and highlights, their work process, and everything in between.

Tell us about your background - what path led you to what you're doing now?

Asma Wali Mohammad: Growing up, I was obsessed with collecting stationery and greeting cards for any and every occasion. I was that person who would plan their friends' birthdays in advance, gifts in particular. I was always that 'extra' friend. There came a point where I was doing giveaways for my family and friends, and I realised that there was definitely a gap in the market.

There was no one producing quirky greeting cards, stationery or gifting supplies in the market. During that time, if one had to go acquire gifting supplies, your best bet would be to scour through Paper Market. That is pretty much how we started and came into being. I put in a lot of research into quality material, and for the first 6 months, Paper Market was my second home.

Like every business, I faced my own set of obstacles, like not having any technical skills. But, that did not stop me. And while I had studied Business Management, it was YouTube that pretty much taught me everything I know; for example Photoshop and Procreate.

The first thing to do was to set up operations. My basement became our first office space. Instagram and Facebook became my holy grail. At the beginning

I threw myself into anything and everything that came our way. I was planning events, making giveaways, designing wedding cards. You name it, I've done it!

I made tons of connections on the way, some helpful and some were just... let's just say interesting experiences.

Initially being a one-woman army, I had to manage creating the actual product, photographing, marketing, packaging it and then ultimately shipping it. Once the demand for our products boomed, so did our team.

Your work seems very varied. You make patterns, illustrations, prints, etc - do you have a favorite type of brief?

AWM: I love keeping it simple. I prefer muted and complementary colours and I like to keep a simplistic copy and minimal typefaces. As far as favourites go, it always helps when the client properly outlines deliverables and has expectations that can be managed. A clear, concise brief is exactly what we like as that is how we work as well.

What packaging trends are you currently seeing and what do you think we will start to see moving forward?

AWM: Type design is something that I have been seeing a lot, and I do think elaborate PR packages really might take off. Other than that, box designs that are minimal outside and maximal inside, are such a treat to open up. The trend for minimalism has been slowly picking up and while it'll be a while to see it happen commercially, there is a definite shift globally to cleaner and more versatile designs.

Describe your typical day at work.

AWM: While at Folia our working hours are from 9 - 5, my day never really ends at 5. Client satisfaction is our priority and since I'm a stickler for lists, until I haven't checked all the boxes on my list, work is never really

over. For example, last year at New Year's we received a few urgent corporate orders and we had to stay till odd hours of the night to fulfil the orders.

We love the fun and energetic branding Folia has done. Can you tell us a little about some of the stand out clients and projects you have worked with this year?

AWM: Here are some of the brands we are grateful to have created gifts for:

Zara Shahjahan

Nivea

Engro

Filigree

Balance beauty

Misha lakhani

Where do you look for inspiration when first tackling a new brief?

AWM: Mostly by just surfing online and randomly finding something, also window shopping when i'm traveling leads to some light-bulb moments. It all just eventually becomes a part of my thinking process.

What have been the biggest unforeseen challenges and highlights you have come across so far?

AWM: Too many to name, such little time [laughs].

Challenges:

1) Quality control - we are very particular about quality, but now and then some vendors will sneak in something below par, which can be quite a hassle to deal with.

2) Deadlines - sometimes the deadlines we get are at the 11th hour which can make everything tight. Being a small team, we try our best to accommodate every client we can.

3) Work ethic - sometimes, you can do all the right things, check all the boxes, be punctual, professional and even then deal with people with extremely bad ►



“ There came a point where I was doing giveaways for my family and friends, and I realised that there was definitely a gap in the market. ”



work ethic which can be demotivating.

Highlights:

1. Positive feedback - clients who are not afraid to give us a compliment pushes us to do even better. At the end of the day, our passion is what keeps us going.

2. Vendors we stock on our website. This is a definite highlight! Just finding the best people who are creating phenomenal products in Pakistan and just bringing that to the forefront.

What would be your dream creative project?

AWM: Doing packaging for international luxury brands! That would be an absolute dream.

What was your first project like?

AWM: We received an engagement invite order back in November 2018. It was nice for people to trust someone with no portfolio. It was exciting, scary and definitely worth it!

If you could only use one colour to design, what color would it be and why?

AWM: Cream - goes with anything and everything.

How would you say Folia is unique?

AWM: Folia is minimal. I would say when I launched my business we really stood out as there was barely any competition and no one was doing minimal packaging. Things have changed now! There have been quite a few new brands since then that have started creating interesting products.

Can you describe or give us an overview of your design process?

AWM: Usually when I'm not working and see something interesting - a colour palette, a print, a wall texture, an interesting shaped box, I bank that idea somewhere in my notes and come back to it when I need to work on something new. This is followed by a bunch of sketches and meetings with our vendors. We then send our

designs for sampling to see what works.

In your opinion, what's the best and worst part of your business?

AWM: Best - positive feedback! Getting validated about what we do is so great. We forget about the hurdles we go through.

Worst - vague briefs! We like experimenting and the kind of work we do requires a lot of trust, especially if it's a 'think outside the box' idea, and sometimes it's difficult for clients to understand your vision - but when they see the final product and are satisfied, we know we do this for a reason.

And finally, what advice would you give to creatives looking to launch and brand their own businesses right now?

AWM: A bunch of things! Don't sell your product, sell your vision. Don't let competition deter you! Healthy competition is sometimes exactly what you need to motivate yourself. Look around you, get inspired. Stay silly; experiment a little and stay true to yourself! Your brand should be a reflection of you and now what

others around you are doing.

Folia in one word for you?

AWM: Exquisite.

Last book you read?

AWM: I'm not much of a reader (not proud) and hoping to change that about myself soon. I did read *Outlier* a few months back and it was so inspiring. The book has definitely made it to my top 5!

Sweet or savoury?

AWM: Depends on the day/time of the month [laughs].

Ideal destination?

AWM: South Korea is number one on my bucket list.

One thing you can't live without?

AWM: I have an unhealthy obsession with my cat Lotus, who usually makes an appearance on our social media from time to time. Keep an eye out for him, you might just catch a glimpse! **OK!**

INTERVIEW: MEHR KASSIM
PHOTOGRAPHS: ASMA WALI MOHAMMAD

SIMPLY STUNNING

GIVE SHOP-BOUGHT INGREDIENTS AN EXTREME MAKEOVER
TO CREATE EASY - BUT VERY IMPRESSIVE - FESTIVE DESSERTS

Cheat's Black Forest gateau

SERVES 6

INGREDIENTS

- 180g shop-bought chocolate brownies, cut into bite-size pieces
- 4 tbsp kirsch (or if you want a non-alcoholic version, use the juice from the tin of cherries)
- 425g tin pitted cherries
- 4 tbsp Morello cherry jam
- 500ml double cream
- 2 tbsp icing sugar
- 75g dark chocolate, cut into shards
- A small handful of fresh cherries, to decorate

1. Put the brownies in a bowl and drizzle with the kirsch, or 2 tbsp of the juice from the tinned cherries. Mix gently and allow the liquids to soak in.
2. Mix together the drained cherries and jam in a separate bowl, then set aside.
3. Whisk the cream and the

icing sugar together until softly whipped.

4. Divide the liquid-soaked brownies between six glass bowls.

5. Spoon over the jammy cherries and whipped cream, then decorate with shards of dark chocolate and fresh cherries.



No-bake ginger and vanilla cheesecake

SERVES 8-10

INGREDIENTS

- 100g butter, melted, plus extra for greasing
- 250g ginger nut biscuits
- 600g soft cheese
- 100g icing sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 280ml double cream
- A handful of fresh redcurrants and raspberries
- Sprigs of rosemary, to decorate (optional)

- 1.** Butter and line a 23cm loose-bottomed tin with baking parchment.
- 2.** Put the ginger nut biscuits into a plastic food bag and crush them to crumbs using a rolling pin.
- 3.** Add the crumbs to a bowl, then pour over the melted butter. Mix thoroughly until the crumbs are completely coated. Tip

- them into the prepared tin and press firmly to create an even base. Chill in the fridge for 1 hour to set firmly.
- 4.** To make the filling, place the soft cheese, icing sugar and vanilla extract in a bowl, then beat with an electric mixer until smooth.
- 5.** Pour in the double cream and continue

beating until the mixture is fully combined.

- 6.** Spoon it onto the biscuit base and smooth the top. Leave it to set in the fridge for at least 4 hours, or preferably overnight.

- 7.** Remove from the fridge before serving and decorate with the fresh fruit and rosemary, if using. ▶

Individual Christmas trifles

MAKES 6

INGREDIENTS

- 280g shop-bought raspberry Swiss roll, cut into 12 slices
- 3 tbsp sherry
- 135g pack of raspberry jelly
- 500g of ready-made custard
- 300g whipping cream
- A handful of fresh raspberries and redcurrants, to decorate

1. Put two slices of the Swiss roll in the bottom of six glass bowls or champagne saucers. Trickle half a tablespoon of sherry over and allow to soak in.

2. Make the jelly according to the packet instructions and once it is cooled (but before it is set) pour it over the Swiss roll bases.

3. Allow the jelly to set in the glasses for at least 4 hours – but ideally overnight.

4. Divide the custard between the six bowls, pouring it gently over the jelly bases. Allow to settle and set for a couple of hours.

5. Whisk the whipping cream into soft peaks, then add a generous dollop to the top of the custard and decorate with the fresh fruit.

Yule log

SERVES 8-10

INGREDIENTS

- 120g soft butter
- 340g icing sugar, sifted, plus a little for dusting
- 340g cocoa powder, sifted
- 4 drops of vanilla essence
- A few drops of milk
- 350g shop-bought Swiss roll
- Berries and leaves, to decorate

1. Cream together the butter, icing sugar and cocoa powder.
2. Add the vanilla essence and a couple of drops of milk and beat until you get a smooth, glossy and spreadable consistency.
3. Place the Swiss roll onto a large sheet of baking parchment. Spread the buttercream icing over it. Once iced, lift the Yule log onto a serving platter, dust with icing sugar and decorate with berries and leaves, if using. 🍰🍴



HOW TO KEEP FESTIVE FURY AT BAY



THE RUN-UP TO CHRISTMAS CAN SEND US INTO A FRENZY. HERE ARE SIX WAYS TO CURB YOUR ANXIETY AND ENSURE IT'S A MERRY TIME

Tis the season to be jolly, right? Not for everyone. Nearly one in 20 Brits admit the festive period has a “negative impact” on their mental health. So if you’re feeling your snarling inner Grinch threatening to go on the rampage, you’re not alone. “It’s very normal to feel stressed in the run-up to Christmas,” says therapist Katie Rose, a member of BACP (British Association for

Counselling and Psychotherapy) and founder of TherapEast.

“Regular worries about money, family, relationships, body image, fear of missing out and loneliness collide just at a time when social media is telling us we should be at our happiest.”

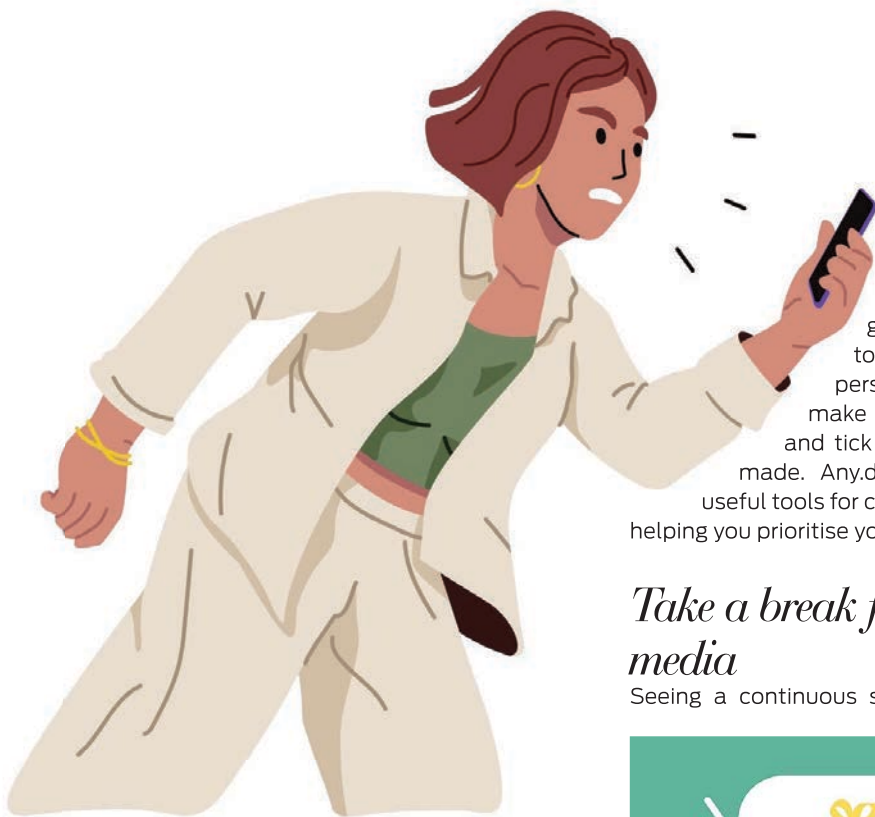
The result? An increased likelihood of stressmas-induced rage, which explodes the moment your Amazon gift delivery gets lost in transit or your partner dares to point out the turkey is a bit

rubbery.

Exercise, having some me-time and sharing the organising with others can help ease the pain. But here are a few more tips to prevent you from turning into a walking pressure cooker on 25 December...

Know your triggers

If you know the family game of Monopoly



Get appy

Sometimes loved ones are unwilling or unable to help with the festive juggling act, but technology could be your saviour. The Christmas Gift List is a great app that allows you to set a budget for each person you're buying for, make a note of present ideas and tick off the purchases you've made. Any.do and Todoist are also useful tools for creating gift lists, as well as helping you prioritise your festive chores.

Take a break from social media

Seeing a continuous stream of idyllic Yuletide

notifications and limit the amount of time you spend online during the festive period. "And remember, one curated image does not capture the entire experience," says Rachel.

Be kind to yourself

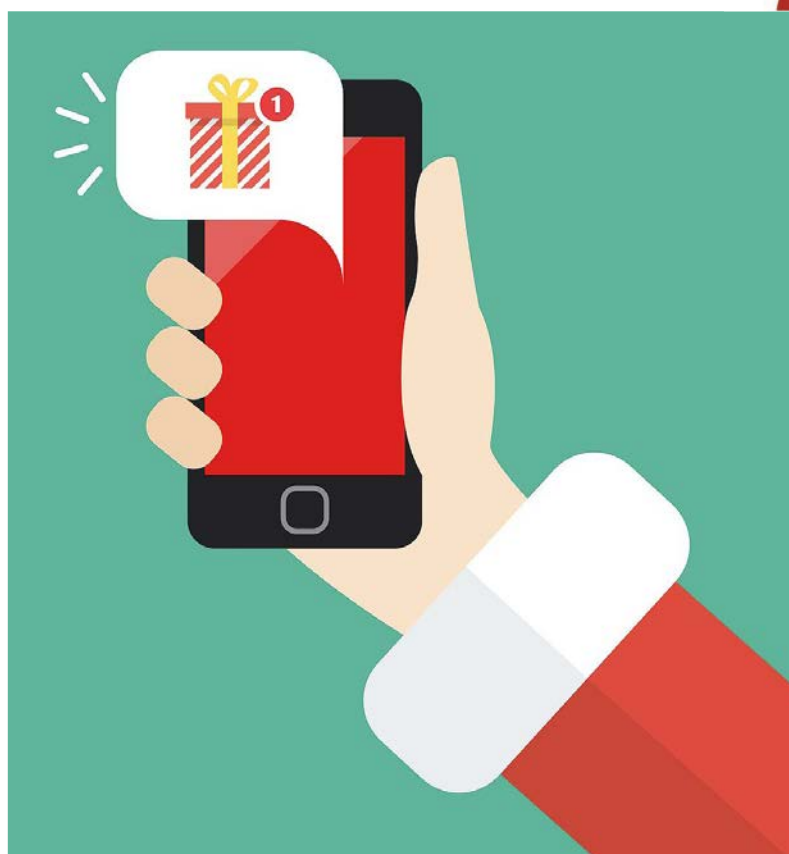
We can all be self-critical, but if you find yourself on the verge of snapping the Christmas tree in two because things aren't going the



always ends in a barney and certain dinner table conversations are guaranteed to touch a nerve, then you're one step closer to avoiding the situations that are likely to make you erupt. So try to identify your triggers – and for a deeper dive, ask yourself why these situations get your back up. Understanding the root cause may help you avoid getting wound up in future.

Give yourself the gift of anger management

Learning to control your frustrations so that they don't escalate into arguments can put you in a better mindset for tackling those niggling issues. If you feel your rage growing, step back from the situation and take a few deep breaths, exhaling for longer than you inhale to help slow your heart rate. Find a distraction or release your fury in a harm-free way, such as ripping up old newspaper – it really does work! When you do address what made you angry, start your sentences with "I" rather than the accusatory "you".



way you'd planned, it's time to cut yourself some slack. Focus on what you've achieved rather than your perceived festive failures. Give yourself an encouraging word – as you would to a friend. And remind yourself it's not the end of the world if you forgot to buy all the trimmings for the turkey. It's just one day.

Say the magic word: no

It's easy to feel overwhelmed when there are lots of people demanding your time and attention. But it's OK to set boundaries and say no. Ask yourself if you're just trying to please everyone out of a sense of obligation?

images "feeds into the unrealistic levels of perfection we set

"Tune into your inner voice and prioritise what you want to be doing rather than what society says you should be doing," advises Katie. "Let go of the guilt often associated with the word 'no'. A simple 'I'm sorry I have too much on at the moment' gets the message across without having to over-explain." **OK!**



ourselves," says psychotherapist Rachel Buchan. This can compound our insecurities and the resulting negativity can lead to anger. So mute

WORDS: BIANCA CASTRO
ILLUSTRATIONS: GETTY



SAY HI TO DUBAI!

WITH A HEADY MIX OF FUN VIBES AND RELAXATION, THE SUN-SOAKED JEWEL OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES IS THE PERFECT WINTER GETAWAY

WHY GO THERE?

The fact the sun is shining in Dubai, while the UK shivers, is just one of the reasons it's a celebrity playground attracting the likes of Billie Faiers, Molly-Mae Hague and David Beckham, who owns an apartment in Burj Khalifa tower. With jaw-dropping skyscrapers, theme parks, pristine beaches, high-end shopping malls and the only man-made archipelago of islands in the world, there's plenty to explore – even if you don't have a former footballer's bank balance!

But away from the glitz and glamour, there's also another side to the city. Old Dubai is an extraordinary contrast, with market souks, boat rides across the historic creek and traditional Arabic tea houses.

If you're visiting soon, you can also take in the Expo Dubai 2020 – the region's first World Expo, which is running until 31 March 2022. The idea is to give visitors the experience of travelling the world, but in one location. There are more than 200 pavilions to explore, each representing different countries and showing off their art, culture and cuisine.



THE EXPO WILL
GIVE YOU A TASTE
OF GLOBAL TRAVEL



CAESARS PALACE HAS THREE POOLS

Caesars Palace sits on the beachfront next to Ain Dubai, the world's largest and tallest observation wheel, meaning you're never far from a stunning view. Along with its very own private beach club, the hotel also has three temperature-controlled infinity pools. After a cooling dip, visit Qua Spa – where Japanese technologies and luxurious treatments soothe the mind and body. We were lucky enough to enjoy a 30-minute back massage, which left us feeling really rejuvenated.

Caesars also has more than 12 dining options, including Gordon Ramsay's world-famous Hell's Kitchen. Drawing inspiration from the hit reality show (but this time the red and blue teams work together), the restaurant offers some of the chef's signature dishes – including the Hell's Kitchen

lamb chops with chimichurri chutney and the Black Forest mithai cake.

For more chilled-out vibes, the Time Out Market, which overlooks The Dubai Fountain and Burj Khalifa, is a must-visit. With 18 award-winning homegrown restaurants, it brings the best of the city under one roof. Whether you fancy Italian, Lebanese or Japanese cuisine, it has something to offer everyone.



FIND OUT ABOUT BEDOUIN CULTURE



SAMPLE THE AMAZING MENU AT TRÈSIND DUBAI

Pop into the UK Pavilion, inspired by a project from the late scientist Stephen Hawking, and enjoy some tasty fish and chips to remind you of home!

WHERE TO STAY

Caesars Palace brings a touch of Las Vegas to Dubai, with stylish Roman-inspired details weaved throughout the interior. The 495-room hotel is spread across two towers – the Palace Tower and the Julius Tower – and is located on Bluewaters Island. We stayed in Julius Tower, which has rooms featuring a plush king-sized bed, a rose gold marble bathroom, cosy sitting area and private balcony

Burger and the sticky toffee pudding.

WHERE ELSE TO DINE

Trèsind Dubai offers a modern Indian dining experience – and it's certainly one we won't forget. A team of talented chefs under the guidance of corporate chef Himanshu Saini have skilfully crafted a culinary menu that engages all the senses.

We sampled the tasting menu and were treated to a selection of mouth-watering dishes all beautifully presented. We were particularly impressed by the arugula pani puri, which is a popular Indian street dish, the tandoori rosemary

WHAT TO DO

Sign up for an early-morning desert safari with Platinum Heritage, which kicks off with a camel ride into a Bedouin camp followed by an Arabian breakfast. You then hop in a 1950s Land Rover and take in the beauty of the sand dunes as well as looking out for the native wildlife – if you're lucky, you might get up close to an Arabian oryx. If you are seeking thrills, pay a visit to the Dubai Frame – a 150-metre-high structure with a glass-bottomed walkway that provides a bird's-eye view of the spectacular city skyline. Back on the ground, we recommend a food tour with Frying Pan Adventures, which take you to hidden spots in Old Dubai where the crowds don't go. We experienced the Dubai Souks & Creekside Food Walk, visiting spice souks and trying out tastings of Arabic, Indian and Iranian food, before a very enjoyable lunch at Al Khayma Heritage Restaurant – a beautiful Emirati restaurant housed in a traditional barjeel (wind tower). **OK!**

WORDS: GEORGIA TREVITT
PHOTOS: GETTY

KATHMANDU TRAVEL DIARY

Nimra Khan heads to the Nepalese capital with her family and shares details of her trip with OK! Pakistan





Where did you go?

Nimra Khan: Kathmandu, Nepal.

What made you go here?

NK: I love exploring different cultures and ethnicities, and this one was special because my family was with me.

What did you pack?

NK: Haha my favorite question! I love organising my travel pack. But the most important things are my gadgets, skin care and wardrobe.

What was favourite meal?

NK: Indian gol gappay.

What was the biggest highlight of your trip/ most memorable moment?

NK: Nepal is beautiful - my most memorable moment was zip lining towards fog and mountains. It was seraphic.

Favourite shopping destination?

NK: Didn't do much shopping there but Thamel St. was a fun place.

Some sights worth seeing?

NK: Hiking with the breathtaking Himalayan Views.

What are some spots for a night out?

NK: Durbar Square and Pokhara Lok Dohori Naach Ghar.

Travel essentials?

NK: Skincare kit including sunscreen(of course) and gadgets.

Any travel tips you would like to share?

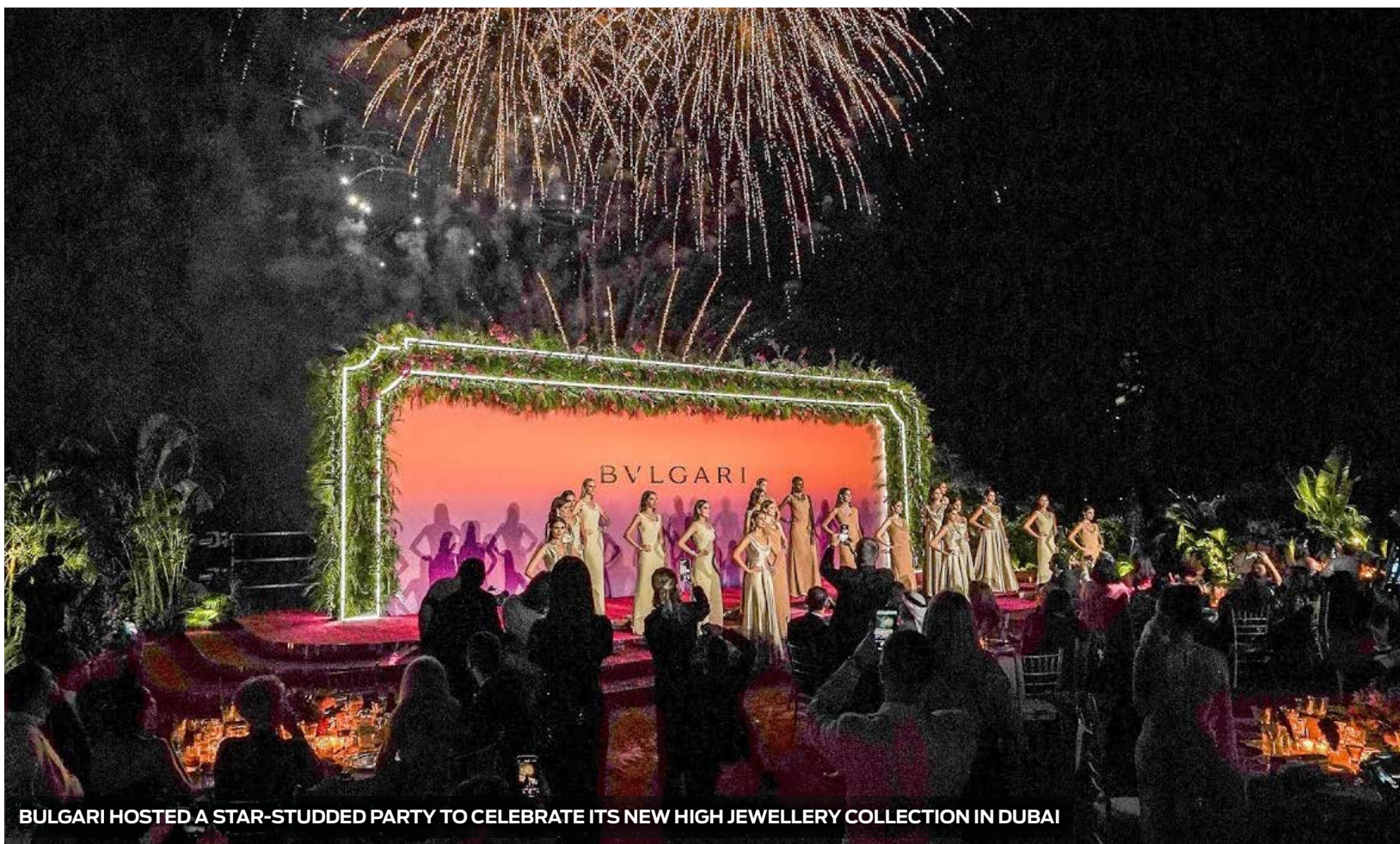
NK: Always travel with a free mind and have a purpose to make memorable moments. You always carry back some parts of the place wherever you go. **OK!**

TEXT: MEHR KASSIM
PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF NIMRA KHAN

OK! WORLD IN ACTION



ARGENTINA'S LIONEL MESSI LIFTS THE WORLD CUP TROPHY ALONGSIDE TEAMMATES AS THEY CELEBRATE WINNING THE WORLD CUP IN QATAR



BVLGARI HOSTED A STAR-STudded PARTY TO CELEBRATE ITS NEW HIGH JEWELLERY COLLECTION IN DUBAI



A MIGRATORY BIRD PECKS AT SNOW-COVERED RED BERRIES IN DAQING, CHINA



THE GOLDEN CANARY IS A PEAR-SHAPED YELLOW DIAMOND WEIGHING OVER 300 CARATS, AND IS ONE OF THE LARGEST POLISHED FLAWLESS DIAMONDS IN THE WORLD

HOROSCOPE & TAROT

IT'S WRITTEN IN THE STARS!

CAPRICORN

Dec 22 – Jan 20



A dream on the 1st could show you how to make more money. Work goes quite well for you on the 8th. You should find yourself with more energy after the 21st.

TAURUS

Apr 21 – May 21



If you buy it on impulse on the 1st, it won't be what it seems. Friends are very helpful on the 22nd. Travel is especially favored on the 28th.

VIRGO

Aug 24 – Sep 23



Don't believe everything that you hear on the 1st. Travel beckons on the 17th. You are full of creativity on the 24th.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23 – Dec 21



Don't let the desire for a second dessert overcome you on the 8th. Don't believe everything that you hear on the 21st. Money becomes more of a focus for you after the 21st.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21 – Feb 19



Intuition is high for you on the 10th. Intuition could help you uncover a deep personal pattern on the 22nd. Dream activity increases after the 21st.

GEMINI

May 22 – Jun 21



Be careful of saying too much on the 6th. A powerful dream on the 6th can show you a way to make more money. Creativity is yours on the 24th.

LIBRA

Sep 24 – Oct 23



Words are abundant on the 9th, but remember to quit once you've won the argument. You have an especially attractive way of putting yourself together on the 22nd. You know just what to say and just how to say it on the 29th.

PISCES

Feb 20 – Mar 20



Don't believe everything that you hear on the 14th. Friendships become more important to you after the 21st. Creativity is yours on the 28th.

CANCER

Jun 22 – Jul 23



You have lots of good ideas on the 3rd; write them down. Your intuition is high on the 10th. Your partner is willing to have a good time with you on the 24th.

SCORPIO

Oct 24 – Nov 22



If you buy it on the 1st, you will probably spend too much. Watch out for impatience on the 8th. Communications becomes easier for you after the 21st.

ARIES

Mar 21 – Apr 20



This month may be asking you to slow down. Your ruling planet, Mars, is in apparent retrograde motion. Avoid an argument with your honey by being patient on the 1st. Travel may be slow on the 8th. Ideas flow all month for you, though.

LEO

Jul 24 – Aug 23



Friends may have a difficult time seeing things your way on the 8th. Don't believe everything you hear on the 14th. Work becomes more of a focus for you after the 21st.



MEESHA SHAFI
DECEMBER 1, 1981



MAHIRA KHAN
DECEMBER 21, 1984

CREDIT: SOPHIE SAINT THOMAS;
PHOTOGRAPHS: SHUTTERSTOCK, WEEN



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