

Lebanon 8,000 LBP

Lebanon Traveler



+ YOUR HANDS-ON
GUIDE TO LEBANON

A publication of Hospitality Services in a joint venture with Beyond Beirut | Issue 21 | December 2016 - February 2017

LET IT SNOW!
70+
TOP WINTER
ACTIVITIES

5 THINGS TO DO IN
AWARD-WINNING
AKKAR
EL ATIQA

HAPPENINGS
& BRILLIANT GEMS
IN BEIRUT

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS
SKI CHAMPION **JACKIE CHAMOUN**
MISS LEBANON **SANDY TABET**





For those who want more Experience Lufthansa Premium Economy

Enjoy a more relaxed and stress-free vacation. In the Lufthansa Premium Economy on intercontinental routes, you will experience significantly more comfort and service, as well as, numerous extras on the ground and in the air.

Up to 50% more personal space with the Premium Economy seat

Feel free to stretch your legs. In your specially developed Premium Economy seat, which offers each passenger their own armrest, fold-out table, adjustable backrest and footrests, you can get really comfortable during your flight. What's more, you will never be more than one seat away from the aisle. You will certainly appreciate having up to 50% more space, as well as increased legroom and privacy. You can confirm a complimentary seat assignment in advance.

Enjoy a more relaxed start to your vacation

For passengers traveling with sports equipment or for those that may indulge in retail therapy while on vacation will appreciate the advantage of the Premium Economy baggage allowance. Each passenger may check in two pieces each weighing up to 23 kg/50 lbs complimentary, alleviating stress



when packing. Traveling in Premium Economy also offers you the option to access select exclusive Lufthansa lounges** for a fee.

Look forward to more extras on board









An extra special service awaits you as soon as you board your flight, when you will be greeted with a welcome drink. At your seat, you will find a bottle of water and a high-quality amenity kit with useful travel accessories. You can relax and choose from the menu, before enjoying a meal served on china tableware. You can then sample our extensive in-flight entertainment program on an -11 or -12inch touchscreen monitor, with your own remote control.

Whether you would simply like to sit back and relax, enjoy a little peace and quiet or make the most of our unlimited in-flight entertainment – Premium Economy Class means enjoying a relaxing flight and arriving refreshed at your destination.

You can experience the comfort of Premium Economy Class on all Lufthansa intercontinental flights.***

More information at:
LH.com/premium-economy

The benefits at a glance

-  **More personal space**
New seat with up to 50% more space
-  **More baggage**
Two complimentary checked bags, each weighing up to 23 kg/50 lbs*
-  **More delight**
Meals served on china tableware
-  **More to look forward to**
On board welcome drink
-  **More entertainment**
Larger -11 or -12inch screen
-  **More relaxation**
Amenity kit with useful travel accessories
-  **More refreshment**
Individual water bottle at every seat
-  **More exclusivity**
Access to select Lufthansa lounges for a fee**

* HON Circle Members and Senators can check in three bags each up to 25 kg/50 lbs.

** Premium Economy Class passengers may access select Lufthansa Business Lounges and the Lufthansa Welcome Lounge at Frankfurt Airport for a fee of EUR 25 or EUR 50 respectively (approximately USD 28/ USD 56). For HON Circle Members, Senators and Frequent Travellers, lounge access is granted in conjunction with the applicable Miles & More member status or Star Alliance member status.

*** Except for flights to/from Nairobi and Pune.



Lebanon Traveler

Official Partners



JAMMAL TRUST BANK
WE SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE



A publication of Hospitality Services in a joint venture with Beyond Beirut
 Group Editor **Nouhad Dammous**
 Managing Director **Joumana Dammous-Salamé**
 Publication Manager **Zeina Dammous-Nahas**
 Project and Sales Manager **Maha Khoury-Hasbani**
 Editor **Helen Assaf**
 Community Manager **Lisa Jerejian**
 Publication Coordinator **Rita Ghantous**
 Subscription Coordinators **Houayda Haddad-Rouman, Mirna Maroun**
 Sales team **Eugene Abela, Randa Dammous-Pharaon, Josette Hikri-Nohra, Elissa Massaad, Gaelle Rbeiz, Mabelle Zgheib**
 Graphic Designers **Rebecca Haddad, Bob Kastoun, Elias Tufunkji**
 Circulation Coordinator **Karl Hitti**
 Editorial Assistant **Roula Koussaifi**
 Production and Printing **Arab Printing Press**



Published by Hospitality Services s.a.r.l.
 Burghol Building, Dekwaneh, Lebanon
 P.O. Box 90 155 Jdeidet el Metn 1202 2020
 To advertise contact our office at
 01 480081 Fax: 01 482876

We welcome views on any relevant subject. The editor reserves the right to select and edit letters. Please e-mail your comments to info@lebanontraveler.com

All the information disclosed in the magazine was provided by the parties concerned and checked to the highest possible extent. The magazine cannot ensure accuracy at all times of all information published and therefore could in no case be held responsible should any information reveal to be false or insufficient.



The cover photo was taken by **Ramzi Semrani** in Laqlouq



Photo: *Vamos Todos*

A winter welcome

The view of white-capped mountains above Beirut signals that winter is finally upon us. Even though most people won't be rushing to test the cliché of skiing in the morning and swimming in the Mediterranean in the afternoon, there's still plenty of action beckoning around the country. For snow sports fans this is certainly the season of satisfaction, with a range of ski resorts to suit all tastes. International ski champion Jackie Chamoun shares her own thoughts this issue on how Lebanon's mountains sparked her journey to the Olympics to represent her country. For the less ambitious winter adventurer, there is still a wealth of inspiring destinations to discover, including Tibneen in the south and Lebanon's favorite village Akkar el Atiqa in the north.

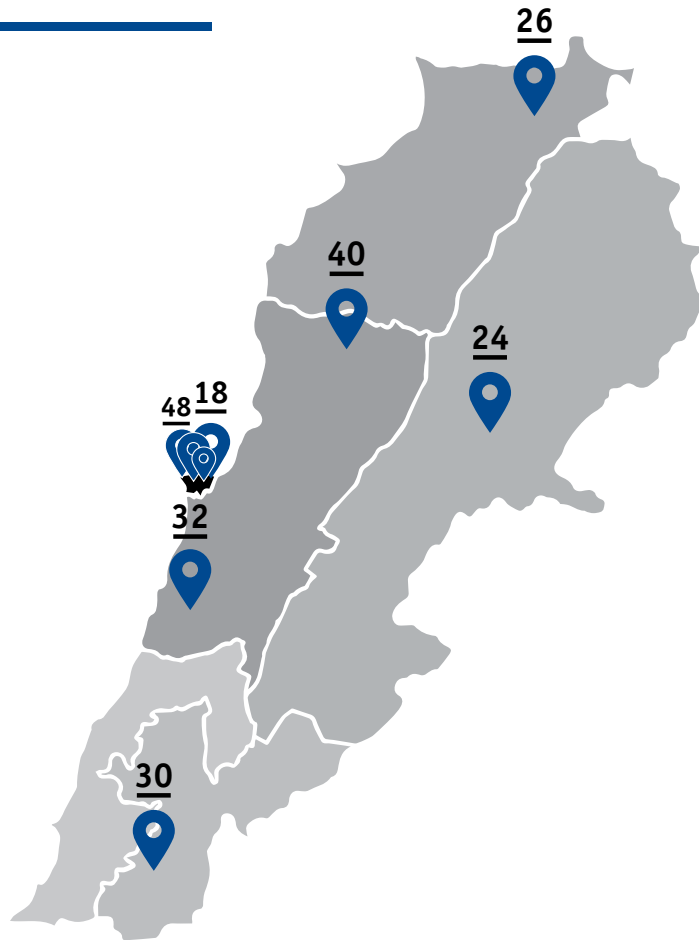
Closer to home, Beirut can also be a source of revelation. Don't miss our guide to eight spots in the capital, where a taste of real history lives on. We also check out fashion designers breathing new life into tradition, and mural artist Yazan Halwani, whose art is transforming walls with powerful messages.

If the weather outside is just a bit too chilly to bear, don't worry as we've also lined up some indoor touristic destinations worthy of a visit. Comfort food is also on the menu this issue, with a look at *kishk* and its regional specialties. All this plus exclusive interviews and so much more awaits you in the following pages. So wrap up warm, enjoy the view and let Lebanon's coolest season entertain you.

- 📸 Follow [@lebanontraveler](https://www.instagram.com/lebanontraveler)
Hashtag [#LebanonTraveler](https://www.instagram.com/lebanontraveler)
- 👍 Like [LebanonTraveler](https://www.facebook.com/lebanontraveler)
- ✉ Write to info@lebanontraveler.com

CONTENTS

- 08** Update
— *The latest happenings*
- 14** Shopping
— *Floored by design*
- 16** Interview
— *Ward el Khal*
A rose on our screens
- 18** Hot topic
— *8 gems of old Beirut*
- 22** Reader's experience
— *A Beirut love affair with*
Gordon Campbell Gray
- 24** The great escape
— *Bekaa*
- 26** Focus on
— *5 things to do in Akkar el Atiq*
- 30** Hidden gems
— *Tibneen: Heritage in the hills*
- 32** Indoors
— *Where history reigns in the Shouf*
- 34** Culinary heritage
— *Kishk, Lebanon's winter warmer*
- 36** Outdoor action
— *High altitude ambition*
- 40** The great escape
— *Saki Richmaya*
- 42** Customs & traditions
— *Abayas à la mode*
- 44** Design in Lebanon
— *Embroidered stories with*
Salim Azzam
- 48** In focus Beirut
— *Beirut's man with a message*
with Yazan Halwani



- 52** Region through an artist's eyes
— *Making sense of the city*
with Philippe Aractingi
- 56** Getaways
— *Winter getaways*
- 58** Best beds
— *Best beds at altitude*
- 60** On the table
— *New flavors to savor*
- 62** Travel to...
— *Destination: Adana*
- 64** Agenda
— *Where to go and what to do this winter*
- 66** Insider guide
— *Miss Lebanon, Sandy Tabet*





CONTRIBUTORS



Zeinab Jeambey

With a background in nutrition, food heritage and tourism, Zeinab Jeambey developed Darb el Karam, the first food tourism trail in Lebanon, a main program of the Food Heritage Foundation. She is project manager at the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association.

 food-heritage.org, lebanontrail.org



Christian Ghammachi

Photographer and author of the book "Rise Above Lebanon," Christian Ghammachi is a true believer in the country's potential for greatness. His passion for photography spans over two decades, and has led him around the world. Seeking out the less obvious and overlooked details, finding beauty in hidden elements and emotions, Christian is inspired by the resilience of people, landscapes and wildlife.

 [@riseabovelebanon](https://www.instagram.com/riseabovelebanon)



Elsa Sattout

Elsa Sattout is a passionate conservationist, scholar and teacher. She strives to share the value of nature for human well-being and the importance of reconnecting with nature through the interpretation of places and spaces.

 elsasattout.com



Ramzi Semrani

Coming from the beautiful village of Jaj, Ramzi Semrani started his photography career four years ago; it's his way to show the whole world the real Lebanon.

 [ramzi.semrani](https://www.facebook.com/ramzi.semrani)



Martine Btaich

Martine Btaich is a professional in community and sustainable tourism development. She is also the vice president of the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association.

 lebanontrail.org



Nada Karam

Nada Karam's passion for adventure led her to be a professional artistic photographer in 2007. In her photographs, Nada transmits that "a photo is boundless, like the soul."



Nour Farra-Haddad

Nour Farra-Haddad, PhD, is a religious anthropologist and researcher, and manages her own travel consultant company NEOS. She is author of "Eco-Lebanon: Nature & Rural Tourism" and "Wiz Kids" guidebooks.

 neoslb.com



Khaled Taleb

A passionate guide in Akkar. He captures the beauty of the region with great enthusiasm, conveying great pride for a place he loves to call home.

 [k_taleb](https://www.instagram.com/k_taleb)



zaatar
زعتر



zaatar machrou7a
زعتر مشروحة

Supporting SMEs
with a bigger appetite



JAMMAL TRUST BANK^{SAL}

we speak your language
1558 | jtbbank.com

Awarded Lebanon's Best
SME Financing in 2014



Awarded Lebanon's Best
SME Financing in 2015



UP DA TE

On the web LEBANESE WINE COMES TO YOU

Wine lovers the world over are surely raising a glass to the launch of 209LebaneseWine.com, the only online marketplace to bring almost every available Lebanese wine together in one place. More than an e-commerce outlet, 209 Lebanese Wine also aims to educate and connect wine consumers through its Wine Blog and the first Lebanese-dedicated Wine Club.



Instagrammers we love LEBANON TRAVELER HITS 10K ON INSTAGRAM

We just hit 10,000 followers on Instagram thanks to those who have helped remind us why we love Lebanon. Scroll through images of incredible views around the country with these five fabulous Lebanese Instagrammers.



1. **@antoniohab** - Playing with light and symmetry, Antonio's posts always remind us what's so special about this tiny country we call home.



2. **@frame_with_a_view** - Diala Shuhaiber's pictures capture scenery from around Lebanon through doorways, windows, trees and other beautiful natural frames.



3. **@saadude** - Ever wondered what Lebanon looks like from 9,000 meters above the ground? Instagrammer and MEA pilot, Saad Dabbous, is here to show you.



4. **@theobaf** - Using geometric shapes and creative framing, Theo Bafitos truly combines Instagram with art.



5. **@joe_kosseify** - Joe Kosseify captures the wild side of Lebanon with his pictures of paragliding, parasailing, and biking.



SNAPCHAT STAR

Georgio Bassil
@georgio.copter



Georgio Bassil, a Lebanese architecture student, took a picture on Snapchat two years ago and drew a monster on it. Fast forward to September 2016, Georgio was awarded the Best Snapchat Artist of the Year Award at the Ghosties, a ceremony honoring the world's most talented users. Georgio has

been named one of the top Snapchatters worldwide by NY Magazine, Mashable, TechInsider, BuzzFeed, Glamour Magazine and more. We caught up with the man himself to learn more about his rise to stardom.

WHAT GOT YOU TO START SNAPCHATTING?

A couple of years back, I became an avid user of Snapchat as it intrigued my creative side. Limited Snapchat drawing tools meant I had to be very imaginative!

SO WHY THE MONSTERS?

I enjoyed creating monsters who follow me on my daily workout routines, in my studies, on my hikes, on my way to college... These monsters became my signature. I can always create a new and unique one for the next adventure!

WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO KEEP SNAPPING?

I, along with the best worldwide Snapchatters, created a Snapchat community where we inspired each other to grow as international influencers. What gives me

great pride and motivation is that I continue to be the only Middle Eastern Snapchatter in the international Snapchat community.

YOU ARE DEFINITELY THE FIRST LEBANESE SNAPCHATTER TO GO INTERNATIONAL. HOW DOES THAT FEEL?

So many people living in the US and Europe came to me after I won the awards and told me that I changed their view of Lebanon! I think this is something really huge after what's happening around us and how people are seeing the Middle East.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU AREN'T SNAPPING?

I'm currently doing my master's in interior architecture at USEK and I still have one semester left.

WHAT DO YOUR PARENTS THINK ABOUT YOUR NEWFOUND SNAPCHAT FAME?

My parents have been my number one supporters from day one and they really believe that greater things are coming.

Perfection is our passion and Swiss hospitality our heritage. Mövenpick Hotel Beirut offers professional event management encapsulating the highest quality standards, creative cuisine and qualified, friendly service. We create ideal conditions for your wedding with our individual solutions tailored to your requirements.

For more information about our wedding packages, contact 01 869 666 or email hotel.beirut@movenpick.com.

Passionately Swiss.™


MÖVENPICK
Hotel Beirut

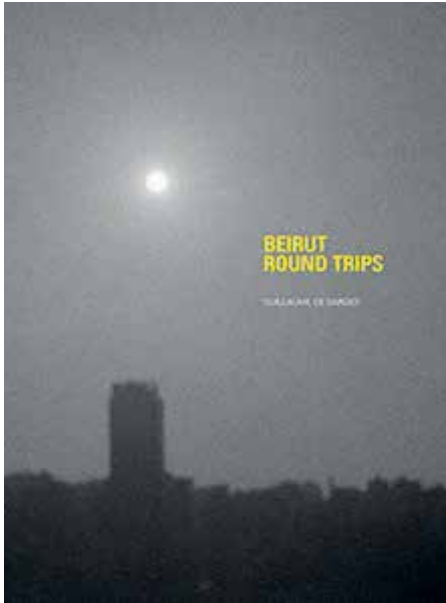
Mövenpick Hotel Beirut
Général de Gaulle Avenue
Raoucheh 2038 6908, Beirut - Lebanon
Phone + 961 1 869 666, Fax + 961 1 799 505
hotel.beirut@movenpick.com
f MovenpickBeirut
@ @MovenpickBeirut

www.movenpick.com



Where efficiency  inspiration meet.

Off the shelf BEIRUT ROUND TRIPS



A new book published by Kaph Books offers an artistic exploration of Beirut through the lens of Guillaume de Sardes, the multi-talented photographer, film-maker, curator and writer, who also currently curates the Photomed Festival in France and Lebanon. Captured over seven trips between 2014 and 2016, the photographs are a subjective look at the city, or as de Sardes puts it, “testimonials of an intimate experience, of my discovery of Beirut and its people.”

kaphbooks.com

Trending D BEIRUT: THE CITY'S NEW CREATIVE DESTINATION

Art, design and wellbeing are all at home at D Beirut in Bourj Hammoud. The 1970s factory building has been transformed into a creative destination with multi-functional indoor and outdoor space for special events. Architects, artists, fashion designers, photographers and a yoga studio are already settled at D Beirut, including Carwan Gallery, Garen Demirdjian, Karim Bekdache Studio, Raafat Karimeh, Roger Moukarzel - Minime Production, Solarco, Vick Vanlian and Yoga Souk.

dbeirut.com, [#DBEIRUT](https://twitter.com/DBEIRUT)

lebanontraveler.com

Creative talent HOUSE OF TODAY

Le Yacht Club Beirut provides the location for the third design exhibition of The House of Today, a non-profit organization with a mission to identify, showcase, nurture and connect emerging Lebanese designers. The event, set to run from December 8 to 29, features the work of talented designers including Carla Baz, David Raffoul & Nicolas Mousallem, Nour Al Nimer and Rabih Geha.

houseoftoday.com

Good things LEBANESE DESIGN INNOVATORS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

During Dubai Design Week, from October 25 to 28, Beirut Design Week was invited to curate an exhibition of three Lebanese designers whose work formed part of MENA Design Research Center's sustainability program aimed at creating innovative materials for production, using organic and recycled elements. Tamara Barrage's lighting solutions and decorative items made from textures resembling fruits and vegetables, Muriel Kai's collection of products from innovative organic material 'fruit leather' and Paola Sakr's 'Morning Ritual' collection made from recycled ground coffee beans and paper made up the display.

dubaidesignweek.ae



Urban adventure AN INTERACTIVE NEW GAME TO GET YOUR PULSE RACING

The latest adventure craze has come to Beirut! This interactive logic game is perfect for birthdays, team building activities, or company events. Here's how it works: teams are locked in a room and given a series of brain-teasing clues and riddles to escape before the time runs out. This game is guaranteed to get your heart pumping, so take up the challenge if you dare!

Escape The Room escapetheroom.me
Exit Beirut exitbeirut.com, 71 721192
Escape Games escapegamesbeirut.com,
76 333587





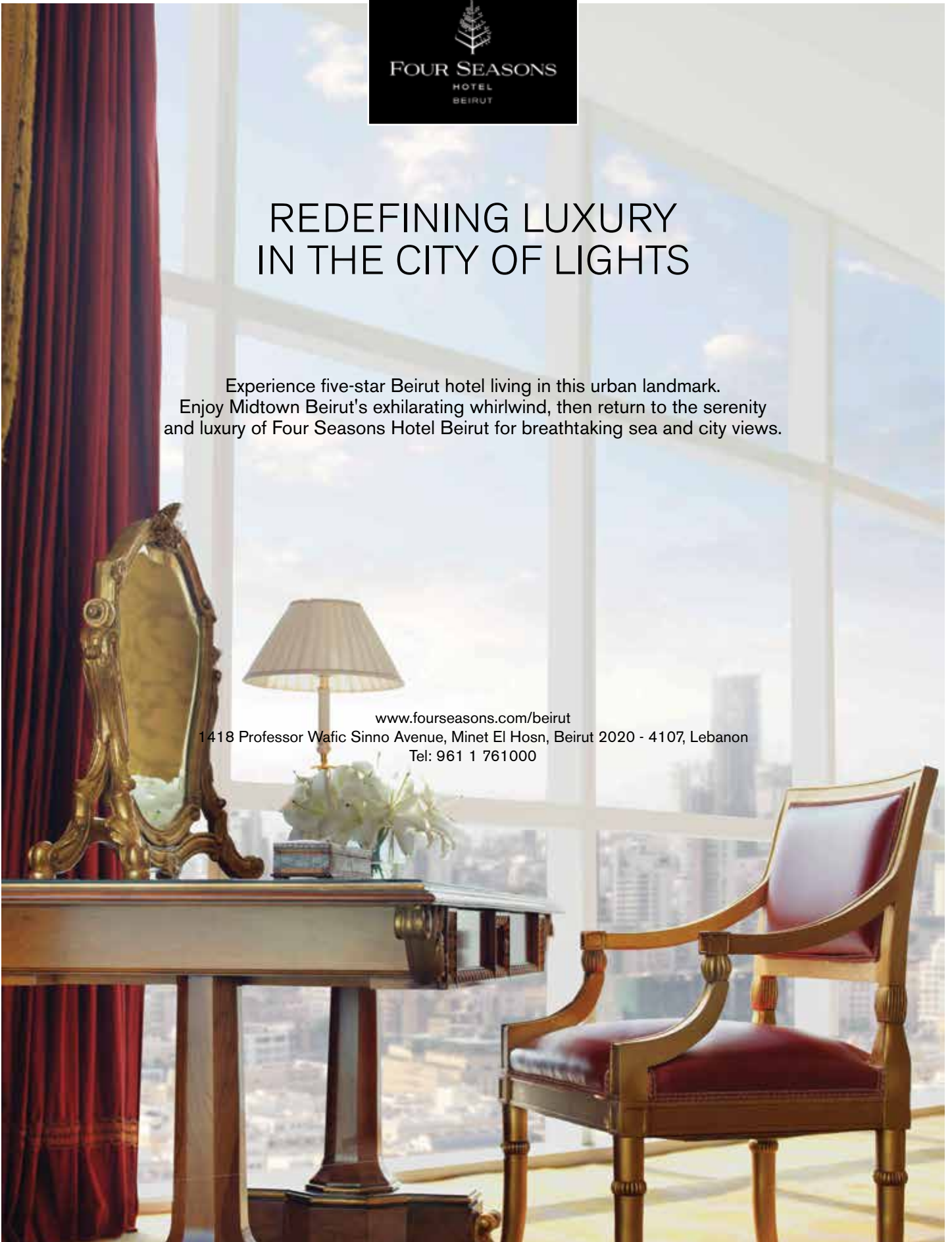
REDEFINING LUXURY IN THE CITY OF LIGHTS

Experience five-star Beirut hotel living in this urban landmark.
Enjoy Midtown Beirut's exhilarating whirlwind, then return to the serenity
and luxury of Four Seasons Hotel Beirut for breathtaking sea and city views.

www.fourseasons.com/beirut

1418 Professor Wafic Sinno Avenue, Minet El Hosn, Beirut 2020 - 4107, Lebanon

Tel: 961 1 761000



 *Footprints in New York*
LEBANESE WINES HEAD TO THE BIG APPLE!

The third international **Lebanese Wine Day**, organized by Lebanon’s Ministry of Agriculture, held its first US event in New York City on November 17 at the Astor Center. More than 300 members of the trade and press had the opportunity to sample wines from 25 Lebanese producers at the walk-around tasting. Representing the diversity of Lebanon’s terroir, wines came from the heart of Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley, Batroun, Mount Lebanon and the south.

In the afternoon, select members of the wine trade and press were also invited to participate in unique master classes about Lebanon’s rich wine heritage.



 *On the horizon*
AKOURA’S NEW TOURISTIC VILLAGE

A touristic Lebanese-style village is set for development in Akoura, a village in Mount Lebanon’s Jbeil caza. The USD 3 million project, spearheaded by Lebanese expatriate and landowner Rabih Abi Nader, is expected to kick off by late 2017, with a two to three-year anticipated completion date. Civil engineer Joseph Shartouni and architect Rami Maacaron are onboard. The development, set on a 6,000m² plot, consists of 25 furnished villa-like units that will be made available for rent, as well as a main building housing a reception area and restaurant. An additional 4,000m² of land is available to expand the project at a later stage.



 *Trailblazers*
PHOENICIAN TOURISM ROUTE

London’s World Travel Market (WTM) in November saw the official launch of the Phoenician Tourism Route, an initiative by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Ministry of Tourism of Lebanon and Council of Europe. The route aims to boost tourism, intercultural exchange and a cultural revival among the 18 countries that share a common Phoenician heritage. At the WTM, participants discussed three pilot cultural tourism itineraries covering the “Phoenician Origin” (Lebanon, Cyprus and Greece), the “Punics and the Sea” (Italy, Malta and Tunisia) and the “Expansion” (France and Spain).

More on lebanontraveler.com



Join the adventure
  **#lebanontraveler**

Download the app  

LEBANON GOES GLOBAL!

The food and drink events that got people talking

It was a busy November and December for Lebanon’s culinary scene. Not only did major international shows head to our country’s glistening shores, we also traveled abroad to show the world what makes us so special. Here are some 2016 highlights that made headlines...



1. BEIRUT COOKING FESTIVAL

Lebanon’s largest annual food event once again took BIEL by storm. More than 15,000 foodies visited over 160 stands, which featured unique food and beverage items. In addition to the vast array of live cooking and lifestyle demonstrations, the festival’s “Pop-up Resto” offered visitors the chance to enjoy gourmet food prepared by top chefs, with proceeds going to Tamanna, the Lebanese non-profit organization.

2. SALON DU CHOCOLAT

The famous international event for chocolate lovers returned to the capital for its third edition, with a plethora of stands displaying the tastiest sweets and pastries around. Blending food and fashion, 15 chocolate dresses sashayed down the runway in the 50s inspired chocolate “Fashion Show,” including an intricate gown created with over 8,000 chocolate flowers by none other than Lebanese designer Rami Kadi and chocolatier Chef Charles Azar.



3. LEBANESE WINE DAY

Twenty five of the leading Lebanese wineries took over New York’s famous Astor Center in an event aimed at showcasing the nation’s rich wine heritage. Organized by Lebanon’s Ministry of Agriculture, the Wine Day kept over 300 members of the trade and press entertained for hours in walk-around tasting sessions and special master classes. The event was also a big hit with the Lebanese diaspora.



4. WHISKY LIVE BEIRUT

Lebanon became the 18th country in the world to host Whisky Live at Le Yacht Club Beirut, an event dedicated to whisky enthusiasts. Brand ambassadors from the finest distilleries in the world conducted master classes with passionate whisky-lovers during the event, which was the first of its kind in the region. International whisky experts Neil Ridley and Marlene Leon led special tasting sessions in the VIP and Collector’s Room for rare and valuable bottles.





BLOOMING BEAUTY

This pure silk Qom rug, featuring a garden of flowers design, was woven by the legendary master Samadi and contains over 60 colors. 200 x 300cm. *Khansa Carpets, Mar Elias Street, facing Sakanet al Helo.*
76 003333, 76 000041

FLOORED BY DESIGN

When made with stunning craftsmanship, rugs are akin to works of art at your feet. **LT** walks you through some of the highlights waiting to transform your home

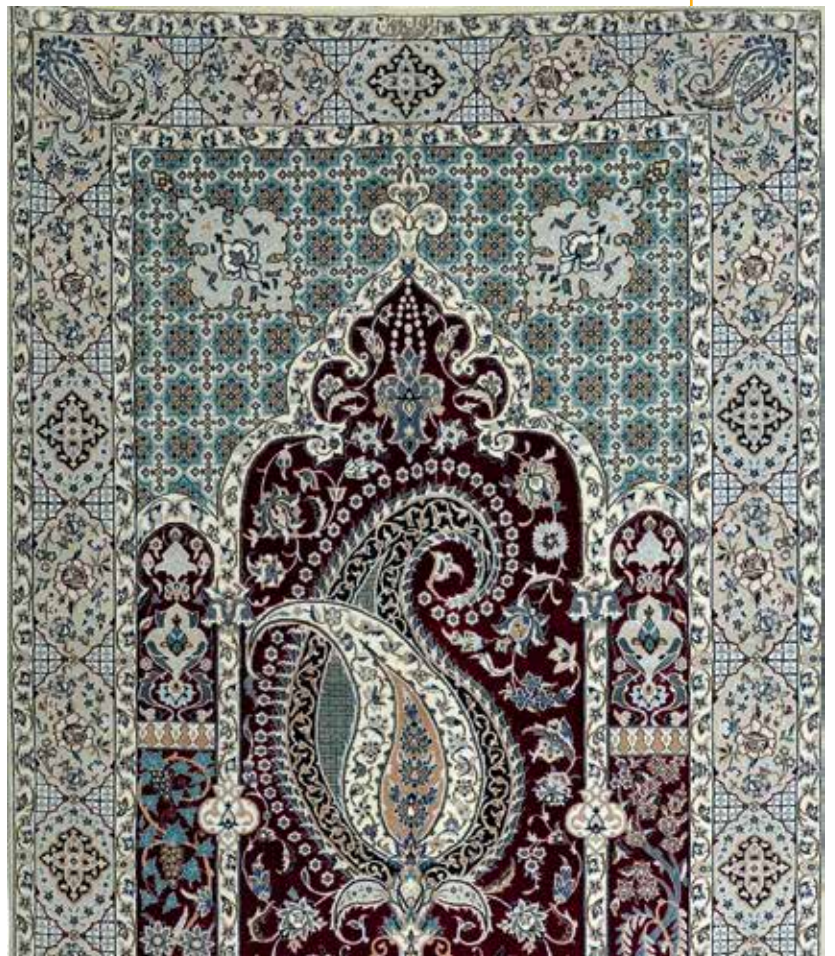
RENOWNED ARTISTRY

A Persian handmade carpet by Nain Habibian in silk and wool. 130 x 205cm. *Mahmoud Kabalan.*

01 652223/30, kabalans.com

Facebook: [Tapis Mahmoud Kabalan sarl](https://www.facebook.com/TapisMahmoudKabalan)

Instagram: [@TapisMahmoudKabalan](https://www.instagram.com/TapisMahmoudKabalan)





PERSIAN PERFECTION

This Persian rug by Hossein Rezvani is from the Termeh collection and is woven from kork wool with silk.

Iwan Maktabi, Ashrafieh.

01 336301, iwanmaktabi.com

© [iwanmaktabiofficial](#),

[f](#) [Iwan Maktabi](#)



TIBETAN TRADITION

This silk and wool blend rug is from the Modern Collection and is made in Tibet.

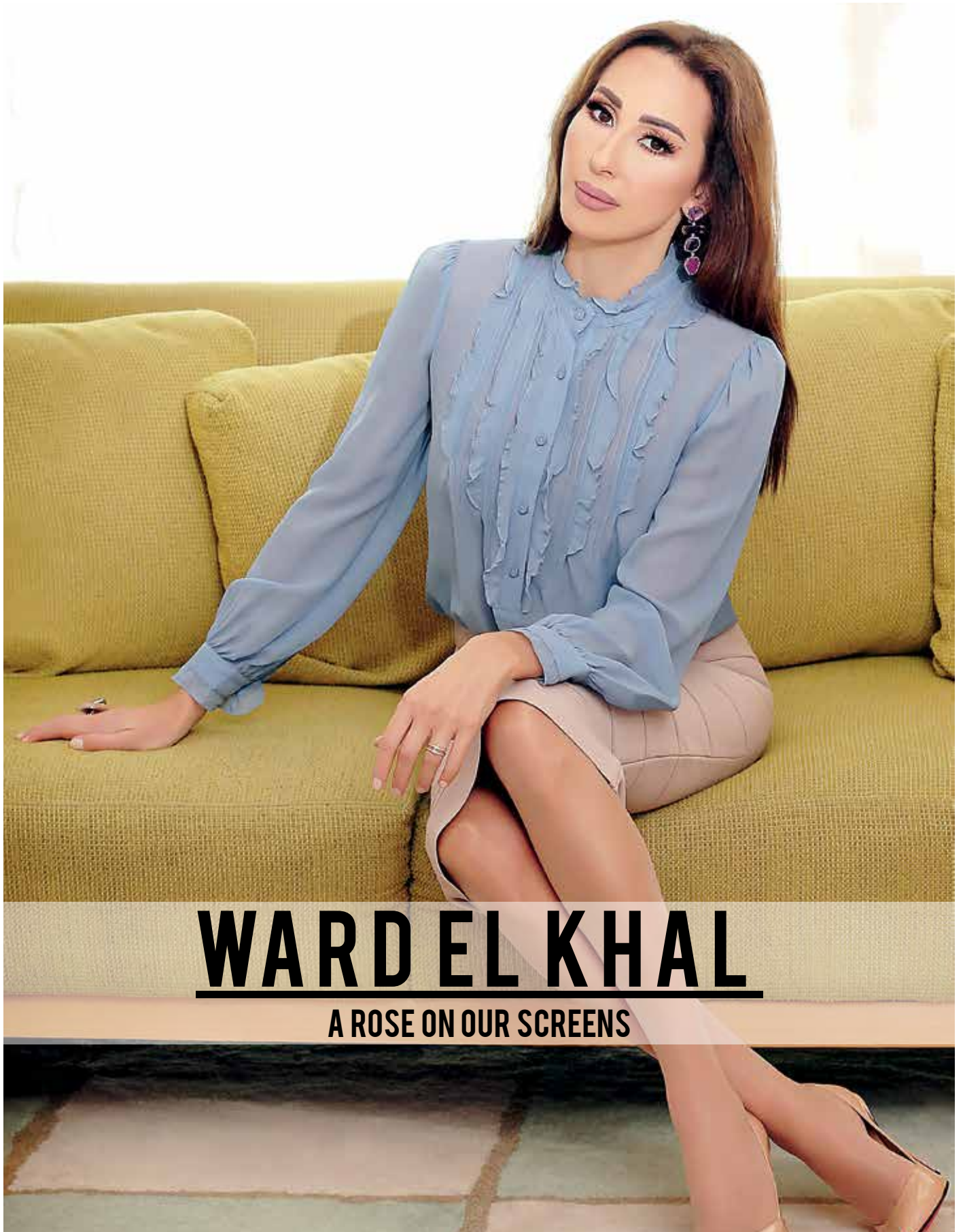
250 x 300cm. *L'Artisan Du Tapis, Sodeco.*

01 426011, 71 889885.



BOLDLY MODERN

The Tabriz Canal Aerial rug in wool and silk is from the Erase Heritage collection by contemporary rug artist Jan Kath. *Iwan Maktabi, Ashrafieh.* 01 336301, iwanmaktabi.com
© [iwanmaktabiofficial](#), [f](#) [Iwan Maktabi](#)



WARD EL KHAL

A ROSE ON OUR SCREENS

We've seen her on our screens, but how much do we really know about the personality behind the face? Between shooting scenes for a new TV series, Lebanese actress **Ward el Khal** gave **Elsa Yazbek Charabati** an exclusive interview

Ward el Khal, you're always on the run! What are your current projects?

I'm shooting a series about the peasant revolution that took place in 1860. It is a Philippe Asmar series written by Claudia Marchalian tackling a very deep subject about slavery and feudalism that will be aired in 2017.

You started your career in 1995, appearing in the series "Rabia' Al Hob" and "Asabea' min Zahab," but your big break came with the "Nisaa' fil A'sefa" series in 1997. In 2008, you played the part of Asmahan and Farid Al Atrash's mother in the Asmahan biopic series. Your roles have earned you popularity and wide acclaim, but which is your favorite?

I like to play all kinds of roles. I'm attracted to new characters and I love challenges. I dream about playing roles that require special physical training, roles that make me outdo myself. The problem in our region is that we produce drama series or movies, but we don't have the means for big productions like in Hollywood. I wish I had this opportunity to challenge myself.

Are there any roles you don't like? Have you refused any?

Yes, of course: the ones that I feel are pointless or repetitive.



Do you have any regrets?

No, not really. It is my destiny to have been born in Lebanon and work in this field. I like it, but the problem is that everybody here wants to be a singer or an actor. And at a time when technology is progressing, we are regressing! Originally, acting is not in our traditions or habits. It's an imported art and not everybody excels in it.

Your father is the famous poet Youssef El Khal, your mother is Maha Bayrakdar, the well-known poet and painter, and your younger brother, named after your father, is also a talented actor. Did being born into a family of artists influence your career choice?

Art is not acquired; it comes naturally. Of course my genes have had a big influence on me. And I'm sure that if I'm passionate, stubborn and easily bored, I inherited this from my dad. My mom gave me a lot from her personality and education too.

Who is your favorite Lebanese actor?

Many Lebanese actors have talent, but, for me, my brother Youssef is one of the most remarkable. Our relationship is very intense. He sees me as his role model and I find him very talented. He also works a lot on himself to evolve. He has his own strategy and a lot of culture. He's not only an actor; he also writes poems and loves music.

What about you - does your career leave you with some space and time to do something else?

I enjoy reading, walking, jogging and painting, and I also write. I write my thoughts and maybe one day, I'll publish a book.

What do you like and dislike about Lebanese society?

I love this society with its bad and good sides. It's an open society in which people evolve, things change but not always, and we suffer a lot from an unstable environment. I tried to live abroad, in Italy, but it didn't work. I was born in Lebanon and I love the warmth of the people here.

When you want to escape, where do you go?

I love the mountains, whatever the season. I never liked the fall, but recently I feel good during this season. I like to contemplate nature, to enjoy the smell of the earth. I also like Amchit and the beaches in the north.

Where are you from originally?

From everywhere! My father is from Tripoli, then he moved to Ras Beirut. Our family house is in Ghazir. Now, I still live in Keserwan, but in Adma. I like this place, with its sea view and still surrounded by some nature; it's close and far away at the same time.

8 GEMS OF OLD BEIRUT

With all the development that defines 21st century Beirut, it is easy to forget that amid this bustling modern capital lies a rich, hidden past. If you know where to go, the city can transport you back to a time when *kaake* vendors meandered through the streets and ice cream was made by hand. **LT** takes you on a whistle-stop tour

1 HANNA MITRI ICE CREAM

The Hanna Mitri Ice Cream Shop does not look like much to the untrained eye. With neither a sign nor awning to announce its presence, you might not guess that this whitewashed corner store serves up the best hand-made ice cream in Beirut.

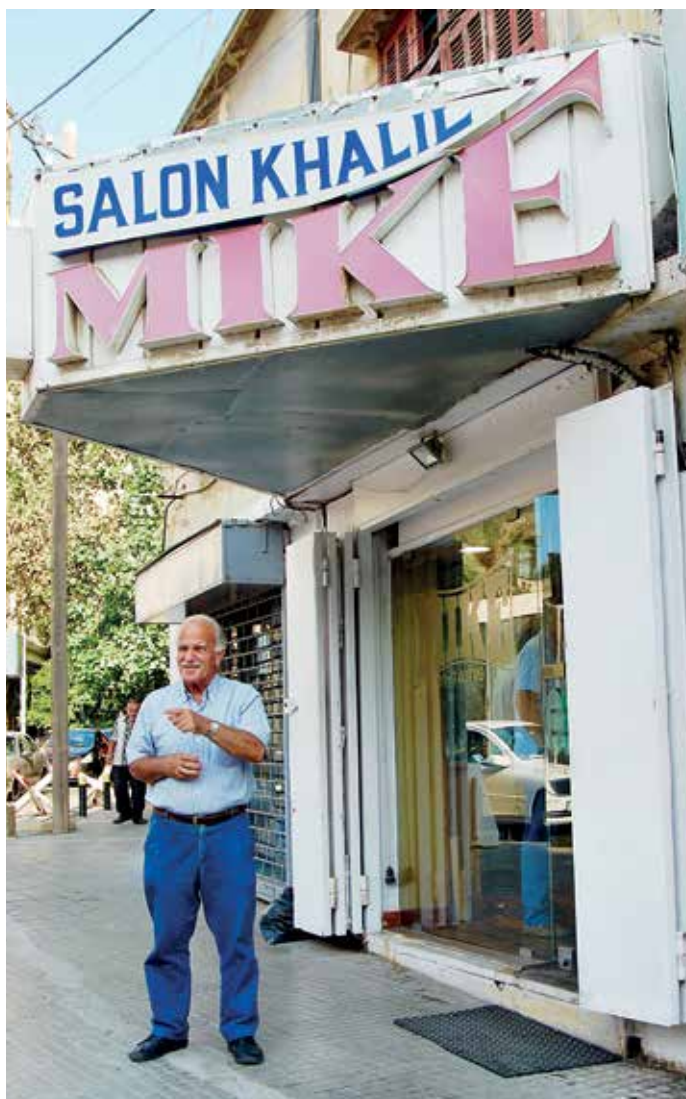
The shop opened in 1949, when Hanna Mitri Sr. decided to start his own ice-cream shop using fresh fruits and nuts. Hanna quickly became a local success, renowned for his delicious and unique flavors. Today, the shop is run by Hanna Mitri's son, who is the sole bearer of his father's secret ice-cream recipe. Perhaps the most unique thing about the Hanna Mitri ice cream is its flavors. Served up in biscuit-cones, flavors include rose water, pistachio, lemon, milk, strawberry, raspberry, and chocolate.

Ashrafieh, Saint Nicolas (01 322723)



Rose House





2 SALON KHALIL MIKE

Located on Bliss Street, next to the American University of Beirut (AUB), Salon Khalil Mike has become a local landmark in its own right. Offering up shaves and haircuts for men, the small barber shop has been around since 1948, when two brothers decided to pool their money to open a salon, where haircuts were offered for LL2,000. Since then, Salon Mike has become a neighborhood favorite, and has received clients including King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and US diplomat Philip Habib.

Mike, who now runs the small salon, can be found sipping coffee outside and greeting people passing by. A typically welcoming Beirut, he is quick to reminisce about the Hamra of his childhood, when residents knew each other by name and Beirut was a more intimate and quieter place.

Bliss Street (01 740709)

3 CAFÉ YOUNES

Café Younes has been serving up high-quality roasted coffee since 1935. Although the original café, located in Downtown Beirut, was destroyed in the Civil War, their signature Younes coffee roaster is still used to roast high-quality coffee beans today. Café Younes now offers its own signature blends, and a variety of preparation methods, from Turkish coffee to French press.

Café Younes has expanded significantly since 1935. Nonetheless, its five locations have relics of the original concept, and are styled to echo the ambiance of an old Beirut café. The cafés are known as gathering-spots for artists and intellectuals, whose vigorous conversations are punctuated only by the clink of coffee cups being refilled.

Hamra (01 750975), Hamra Roaster (01 347531), Sodeco Coffee Shop (01 424515), Aley Coffee Roaster (70 969658), Head office (01 741654)





4 GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL OF SAINT GEORGE AND CRYPT MUSEUM

If you want to visualize Beirut's 5,000-year history firsthand, the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Saint George and Crypt Museum is a must-visit. The Byzantine cathedral, with its stunning architecture and 1,600 years of history, is worth a trip on its own. Combined with the underground crypt museum that showcases ruins from the Hellenic Age to the Byzantine Age, the cathedral is a historical Beirut gem.

Walking through the underground crypt, one gets a rare glimpse into the deep roots and historical layers of Beirut. There are medieval oil lamps and smoking pipes, ruins of a Roman road, Byzantine mosaics, and ancient Greek statuettes. The museum serves as a reminder of the resilience of Beirut, a city that has survived the conquest of foreign rulers and witnessed the rise and fall of civilizations.

Nejmeh Square, Downtown

5 CAPTAIN'S CABIN

With the authentic feel of an old-fashioned pub, Captain's Cabin was around long before Hamra became a hotspot for chic bars and restaurants. Opened in 1964 by a group of airline pilots, Captain's Cabin is 52 years old, an impressive feat for a Beirut bar. The décor, an amalgamation of antiques and knick-knacks, has not changed much since. Nor have the rickety bar stools or old pool tables in the back.

Captain's Cabin is defined as much by its unpretentious feel as by its barman and owner, Andre. The son of one of the original founders, Andre is known to extend the bar's hours based on his own whims. The authentic and unassuming ambiance of the underground dive-bar has kept Beirut residents coming back for more through the decades.

Hamra, Adonis Street (01 740516)



lebanontraveler.com





6 SURSOCK MUSEUM

Tucked into Ashrafieh, the Sursock Museum immediately wins over visitors with its striking architectural presence. Housed in the former villa of Beirut aristocrat, Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock, the Sursock Museum is known in Beirut as a cultural hub. The building itself, built in 1912, exhibits a grandiose style that was typical of its time and has become a rarity in the modern Beirut cityscape.

Today, the museum exhibits art from local and international artists, and hosts a number of cultural events, from guest lecturers to film screenings. The atmosphere in the hushed corridors of the former villa is reminiscent of old Beirut grandeur. With art hanging from the walls and quiet patrons milling about, the museum offers a perfect way to experience Beirut while admiring contemporary artwork.

Ashrafieh, Sursock (01 202001; sursock.museum)

8 ROSE HOUSE

The Rose House, a gorgeous 19th century mansion overlooking the Manara waterfront, is something of an anomaly in the modern Beirut landscape. The rose-colored house has managed to survive the destruction and reconstruction that defines the wealthy neighborhood surrounding it. It is a relic of the long-forgotten and lavish city that Beirut once was.

Today, the Rose House is abandoned. Its rooms are littered with debris, decrepit furniture, and broken glass. However, it is this decay which infuses the Rose House with a nostalgic and dreamy air that permeates much of Beirut. Under the debris are memories of a time when Beirut's inhabitants lived in mansions decorated with beautiful architecture and ornate decor. Dust now covers the mosaic fireplace and the large balcony is crumbling around the edges; but if you can see beneath the rubble, you'll catch a glimpse of a glorious and romantic old Beirut.

Corniche El Manara



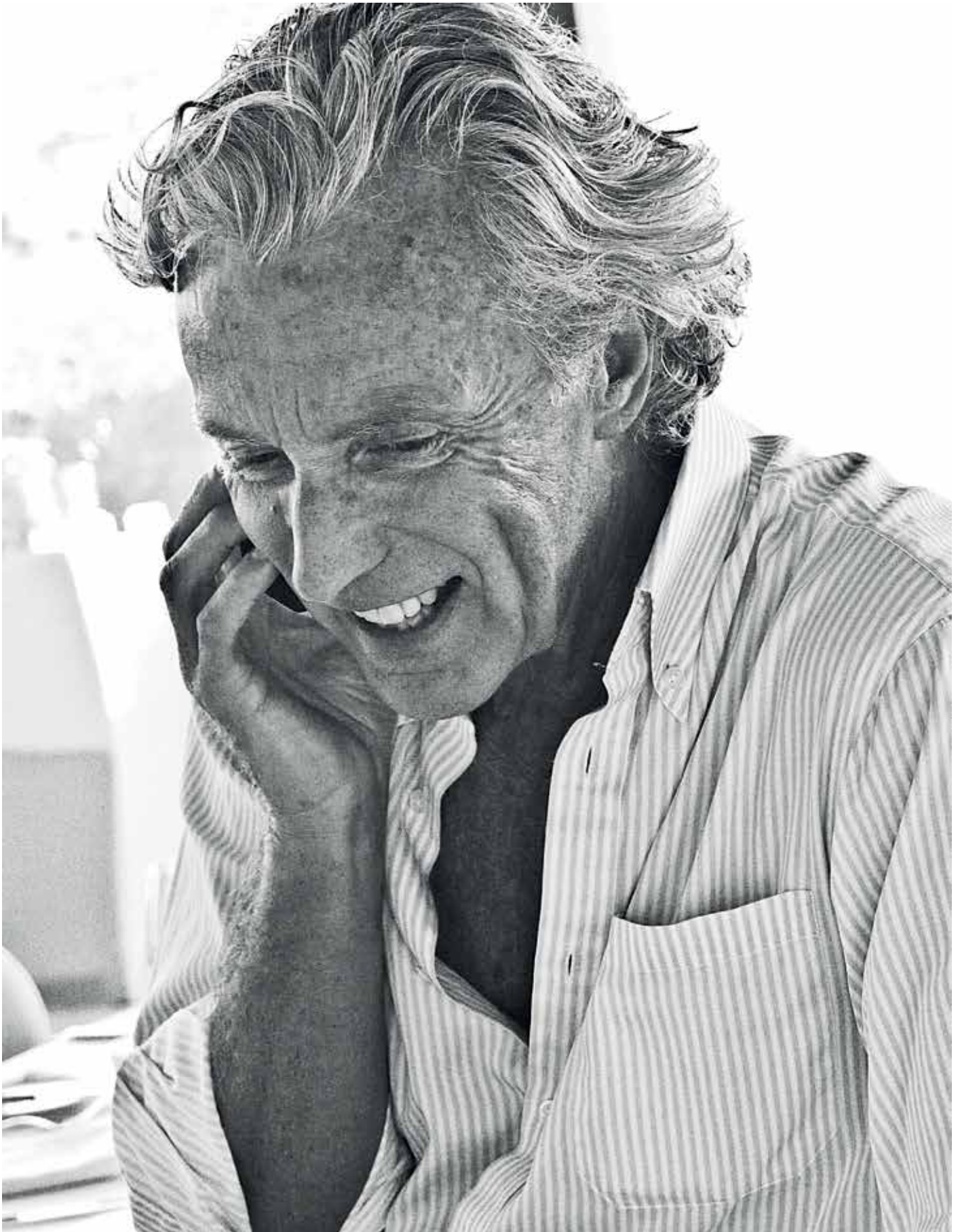
7 LE CHEF RESTAURANT

Somehow impervious to the ever-changing trends that define Beirut, Le Chef Restaurant was opened in the 1960s by Francois Bassil, and is still run by the Bassil family.

This old and cherished Beirut institution has been serving up traditional Lebanese food to Gemmayze locals for decades. Le Chef's owner will greet you with a hearty welcome upon arrival, and whet your taste buds with the aroma of garlic and cinnamon wafting through the restaurant.

Ashrafieh, Gemmayze (01 445373)





A BEIRUT LOVE AFFAIR

Hotelier **Gordon Campbell Gray** looks back on the story of how he brought his signature hospitality to Lebanon's shores, and what drives his passion after all these years

It took Gordon Campbell Gray one visit to Beirut to deeply fall for the city. Its charm turned him from a foreign Scottish hotelier and entrepreneur to a passionate leading figure in the Lebanese hotel industry, and a true believer in the country.

He has consistently repeated that he did not pick Beirut, but Beirut picked him. Though there are no similarities between the Lebanese capital and Scotland, Gordon Campbell Gray's home country, he believes that venturing in Lebanon is an exciting journey. The Abchi family, who were in the process of building a hotel that would later become Le Gray, had stayed in Campbell Gray's hotel in London. "They asked me if I would ever consider a property in Beirut. I said, never," he recalls.

It only took him a visit to the country for a short break with a friend, a dinner at Chez Sami, and a night at Music Hall, for him to change his mind. "I loved the people, the country, the generosity, and I liked the hotel's site. Then I said to myself it could be a true adventure."

I loved the people, the country, the generosity... I said to myself it could be a true adventure

”

The hotel opened its doors to the public in 2009. The first years of operation exceeded Campbell Gray's expectations, and continued to, despite all the obstacles and the country's instability. "A lot of people thought I would run away, but I didn't. I fell in love with Beirut," he explains. The hotel achieved instant success, and exceeded all expectations. However, having a hotel in Beirut comes with unique challenges. "We are doing well, but not as well as we wish, and this will be the same until the region settles," he says.

Le Gray has attracted a large number of travel-savvy tourists who connect with the property and its owner. "Foreigners resort to our hotel. They feel safe with me being here. I honestly feel safer in Beirut than I do in New York. Several foreigners have fallen in love with the country after visiting our property."

He continues: "Between me and Beirut it was a love affair. Like all relationships, there are cracks, but they are repairable." As an experienced and enthusiastic hotelier, Campbell Gray highlights the fact that Lebanon is suffering from a true brain drain. "This great population deserves better. Talents are searching for markets to sell their skills and appreciate their qualifications. They are not necessarily superior countries, but ones that, though artificial, offer better opportunities."

GORDON CAMPBELL GRAY'S THOUGHTS

On Beirut

A city by the sea is pure magic. This is how I see Beirut.

On where to go

My preferred Lebanese city is Batroun. I like water. It reminds me of my house in Scotland, which is by the loch.

On dining

I like Lebanese cuisine, most Lebanese food. But I get terribly bored if I go to five consecutive dinners, because it is very similar in every house. I love it, but not every day. In Beirut, I prefer Chez Sami for fish, though the journey is long. I also love Tavolina.

On other hotels

For lodging, and before opening Le Gray, I stayed for months in the Phoenicia; the Four Seasons was not there yet. I never stayed at the Albergo, but I like the property.





RISE ABOVE BEKAA

*Aerial image of the Bekaa captured by drones,
taken from the book, Rise Above Lebanon.*

*By Christian Ghammachi, christianghammachi.com,
© [@riseabovelebanon](https://www.instagram.com/riseabovelebanon)*



5 THINGS TO DO IN AKKAR EL ATIQA

Akkar el Atiqa Cascade. Photos: Khaled Taleb

In August 2016, the country elected its favorite village of the year: Akkar el Atiqa. It's not by chance that this village, nestled in the green mountains of North Lebanon's caza of Akkar, won the competition run by the Lebanese daily, L'Orient le Jour. The breathtaking landscape, the historical monuments and vestiges, the beautiful trails, and the hospitality of the locals are an enchanting combination. **Martine Btaich** takes you through the highlights of this unique hidden gem, 135km away from Beirut



Ain Ata Old Mill

1 CLIMB TO THE ANCIENT FORTRESS HOSN AKKAR

Elevated on a rocky mount between the two valleys of Akkar, Hosn Akkar (Akkar Citadel), is one of the most important historic monuments in the village. Although you'll need to hike a goat path to reach it, the breathtaking view makes it worth the climb. It is said that the citadel was built by Mohrez Bin Akkar, who was killed in 864 A.D.* The fortress was seized by the Seljuks, then the Crusaders and the Mamluks. It was later under the Ottomans, the Saifa clan precisely, that the citadel and the village thrived, before the incursion of Emir Fakhreddine destroyed the castle in the 17th century.

**Akkar, the Hidden Treasures by Michel Hallak and Badia'a Mansour, 2000, Dar An-Nahar*



Akkar el Atiqa's fortress

2 DISCOVER THE VILLAGE AND THE HISTORIC VESTIGES

Due to its strategic location on the road between Homs and Baalbek, the village was an important political, social and religious fief for all the civilizations that crossed Akkar. Stroll around to discover remains of arcades and heritage houses in between the new edifices. Don't miss the historic mehrab, and its beautiful arcades, the only thing left from an old Mamluk mosque. If you venture to the outskirts of the village, you'll discover the Ghazarta church from the Byzantine era.

3 TAKE A WALK AROUND THE ZABBOUD NEIGHBORHOOD

Named after the Zabboud spring, the neighborhood on the eastern side of the village is a must see. Zabboud is known for its abundance of water sources, beautiful lush green hills and walking trails. Don't miss Mazraat Zabboud, a fertile stretch of land with its farmers' houses and hospitable inhabitants, who will genuinely greet you with a warm cup of coffee. You can also discover impressive old sarcophagi, said to be from the Canaanite era, meticulously carved into the rocks.



Another view of the Akkar el Atiqa waterfall

4 TAKE A DETOUR TO WATCH THE CASCADE AND VISIT THE MILLS

At 160 meters tall, the Akkar el Atiqa cascade is one of the highest waterfalls in Akkar. It is located right above the citadel and is worth the detour. If visiting in winter, you will hear the water roaring, especially when snow is melting. It is said that the current waterfall takes its shape from the rock behind it, carved by broken ice. The area is abundant in water and a number of old water mills that are worth visiting.

5 VISIT THE FIR FOREST AND HIKE THE LEBANON MOUNTAIN TRAIL

Hiking and immersing yourself in nature is a must when you are in Akkar el Atiqa. Head for Ghabet el Chouh (the fir forest) and hike the Lebanon Mountain Trail. This section leads to bordering village El Kobayat, and is one of the most picturesque on the trail. The path takes you through Chir el Qammoua'a and under Wadi el Aswad, another superb landscape. Fir, juniper and many other perennial trees surround you on the way. Stop by Chir el Nemr for a superb view of Akkar el Atiqa and take in a breath of fresh air. Discover the remains of the church of Sarkis and Bakhous, said to date back to the 5th to 7th centuries A.D. Make yourself comfortable and take some time for contemplation. Visit lebanontrail.org for more information on walking the trail.



On the Lebanon Mountain Trail towards the fir forest

Where to sleep

El Kobayat (neighboring village)
Les Demeures (06 350991, 76 166877)
Jabalna Ecolodge (03 542935)
Graneroverde (70 473347)

Where to eat

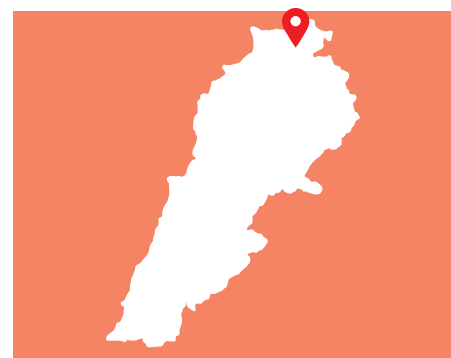
Naseem Al Jabal (70 494776)
Nabeh el Chouh restaurant (03 557892)

Useful contacts

Municipality of Akkar el Atiqa
 (06 885057)
Eng. Kifah Ibrahim (03 816626)
Environmental Council of Kobayat
marielou.yoll.net/environnement

Khaled Taleb is a passionate amateur photographer, capturing with his lens the pretty images of his beloved Akkar.

Follow him on [f lebanon.akkar](https://www.facebook.com/lebanon.akkar), the largest online page about Akkar. (76 719314)



LOUVRE HOTELS GROUP

Do dare *reinvent*



Firouze Palace Borjomi Managed by Golden Tulip – Georgia



Golden Tulip Doha – Qatar



Royal Tulip Act – Sharjah UAE

Building today's hotel industry, imagining tomorrow's concepts, opening up to target territories on the international stage and forging innovative partnerships, these are the ambitions of our group.

What makes us different? Our ability to act quickly and effectively, our strong commitment to service and our soul of a challenger, which values boldness and stimulates creativity and agility.

Welcome to the group where everything is possible.

KEY FIGURES

- Second Largest Hotel Operator from Europe.
- Louvre Hotels Group operates in 51 countries with 6 brands classified across the two to five star segments with a total of 100,000 keys.
- We currently manage over 60 hotels in the MENA region with another 35 properties in the pipeline by 2020.



Campanile

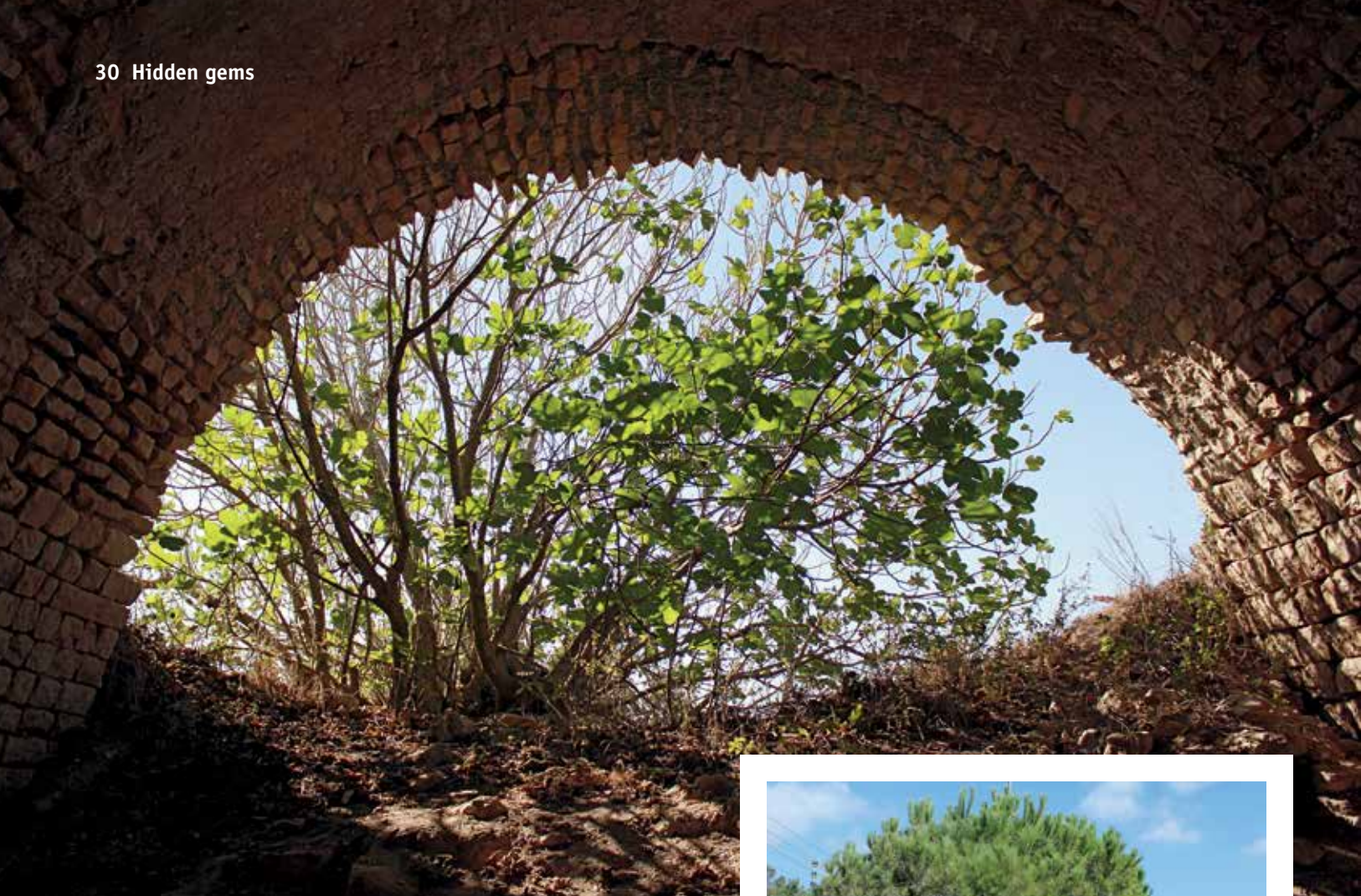
Kyriad



GOLDEN TULIP



Louvre Hotels
GROUP



HERITAGE IN THE HILLS

With its rich history, magnificent Crusader castle and panoramic views, **Tibneen** makes for a refreshing excursion in the south, as biodiversity conservationist **Elsa Sattout** discovers



The kazdoura, where locals love to stroll in the evening





Tibneen's forest of pine and cypress was planted under the Green Plan of 1951

It is inland, 120km from Beirut and 25km from Tyre, in the Nabatiyeh district, that Tibneen lies. Set in the heart of the Jabal Amel plateau, the village was named after the Phoenician god Tabnet, who symbolized strength and protection. Later it was called Tibneen by the Arabs and then Toron by the Crusaders, using an archaic French word for isolated hill or high plateau.

Vestiges of Tibneen's immense history still exist, with archeological findings dating from the early Stone Age preserved at the American University of Beirut, and Stone Age megaliths discovered on the road connecting Tibneen to Beit Yahoun in Nabatiyeh housed at the Institut de Paleontologie Humaine in Paris. Tibneen has been an important landmark for many conquests and civilizations, spanning from ancient history onwards. Set at between 700 and 800 meters altitude and extending over approximately 748 hectares, the town once acted as a crossroads between Tyre, Damascus and Jerusalem. When the Crusaders came and established rule, the locals enjoyed a certain amount of stability and autonomy, with their own coinage forged from red copper. At the time, the surrounding land was a fertile base for olive and wheat production,

giving rise to Jabal Amel's status as one of the Crusaders' granaries.

A cornerstone of Tibnin's Castle is believed to date back to 850 B.C., but it was in 1106 that it took its most well-known form as a major Crusader castle. Wars and sieges played out in the following years, with the castle conquered by Saladin in 1187, recaptured by Crusaders in 1229, later destroyed and then rebuilt in the mid-18th century by a local sheik. From its hilltop vantage point today, the castle offers a 360-degree vista across the neighboring villages of Haris, Baraashit and Chakra, whose ancient remains are also worth stopping by to see.

On a walk through the town, look out for the old paved alleys, known as zakouk, weaving their way between clusters of old houses. Visit on a Friday and you'll find the traditional market Souk El Jomaa in full swing from 8am to 1pm. The market, dating back to 1892, draws farmers and traders from different parts of the region to show off their wares. Stay until evening and you'll catch the locals indulging in a favorite pastime, taking a stroll along the Kazdoura, the long stretch of sidewalk embracing the hilly eastern area of the town.

Where to eat

A variety of welcoming restaurants can be found in the area, including **Tallet Al Kashef** (03 770587, 07 325991), **Hamoud, El Day'ah**, and **Cafeteria El Ghouroub**. Fast food lovers can head to **Goody's** (07 326275) for a tasty bite. A picnic is another option, with 50 hectares of pine and cypress trees as a backdrop.

On the way

On the way to Tibneen, don't miss the **Tomb of King Hiram of Tyre** found in Hanaway. A stop in **Qana**, the site where Jesus is said to have once turned water into wine, is also a must. Fans of fine art may want to schedule a trip on a Thursday or Sunday when the museum of artist **Moussa Tiba** (1939-2014) in **Haret Salha** (07 430149, 03 568925) is open, from 10am to 6pm.





WHERE HISTORY REIGNS

Moussa Castle makes for an enchanting and unusual day out

LT takes to the **Shouf** to explore three landmarks, each with a tale to tell

Lebanon's picturesque Shouf region offers a stunning glimpse into the country's rich history. With towering mountains and deep valleys, the region seems to radiate a grandiose air. Indeed, the Shouf region was once the royal seat of the emirs of Lebanon, and relics of that time dot the area.

Three of the most popular historical landmarks in the Shouf region are Beiteddine Palace, Moussa Castle and the Marie Baz Wax Museum, providing a unique perspective on Lebanon's archeological and historical past.

The drive up to the Shouf region is an adventure in itself. Emerging from the tangle of Beirut's traffic, visitors are welcomed to the Shouf with crisp air and a backdrop of tree-speckled mountains surrounding them.

MOUSSA CASTLE

Moussa Castle has the air of something straight out of a children's fairy tale, complete with turrets, battlements, and a moat.

The story of Moussa sheds some light on the distinct architecture and eccentricity of his castle. Born in 1931, Moussa Maamari fell in love with a beautiful girl



Life-like models depict life in days gone by at Moussa Castle

in his village. Upon confessing his love, the girl scoffed at the penniless young Moussa, and declared she would not marry him until he had a palace to his name. Determined to win her over, Moussa vowed to dedicate his life to building a castle for his beloved, using his very own hands.

At the age of 31, Moussa began construction, and over the course of the next 60 years, he erected his dream castle, brick by brick. Each stone is engraved with a symbol of his beliefs and values, rendering the castle's exterior a piece of art.

However, it's the inside of Moussa Castle that makes it truly unique. Life-like models are scattered throughout the museum,

depicting traditional Middle Eastern scenes. You can see old-fashioned barbers and bakers, mothers in traditional garb and children lugging their books to school.

The castle houses an impressive display of over 32,000 historical weapons, along with jewelry and gemstones from various eras, all of which Moussa has spent his life collecting. The tour of the castle ends in a sunny courtyard, where visitors can pose for one final picture with the backdrop of the striking Lebanese mountains behind them.

*Beiteddine Road, Damour.
Opening hours: 9am to 4.30pm
(05 500106; moussacastle.com)*



Beiteddine Palace is one of the country's best preserved treasures

BEITEDDINE PALACE

One of Lebanon's grandest and best-preserved treasures is Beiteddine Palace. Perched on the ledge of a small mountain village, Beiteddine is an impressive and strikingly beautiful palace complex that exemplifies the extravagance of 19th century Ottoman-ruled Lebanon. Though its occupants have varied, from Ottoman emirs to French colonialists to Lebanese presidents, the palace's beauty has remained untarnished over the years.

Commissioned in 1788 by Emir Bashir, the Ottoman-appointed governor of Lebanon, the palace was built to serve as a symbol of his power and glory. However, the Emir lived in his palace for only 30 years, after which he was exiled and the palace was used as a government building by the Ottomans. During the French Mandate, the palace was once again repurposed as a local administrative office. Finally, in 1943, Lebanon won its independence and declared the palace a national landmark.

Meandering through its sprawling grounds, complete with multiple salons, bedrooms, gardens and bathhouses, will leave visitors in awe of the immensity and extravagance of this Ottoman relic. The palace's intricately decorated rooms furnished with cushions make it easy to picture old Ottoman rulers lounging while smoking pipes, trading secrets, and discussing politics in the dimly lit chambers. With its courtyards, fountains and beautiful Arabesque architecture, it's no surprise that Beiteddine is often referred to as the 'Lebanese Alhambra.'

*Beiteddine. Opening hours: 9am to 4pm, closed on Mondays
 (05 500077)*

MARIE BAZ WAX MUSEUM

Conveniently situated in Deir el Qamar's charming main square, the Marie Baz Wax Museum boasts over 80 life-like wax figures of famous personalities from Lebanon's history ranging from Sultan Salim Khan to Emir Bachir II. The museum is a piece of history in itself, as it is located inside the old palace of Emir Fakhreddine II, a Druze prince and early Ottoman-appointed emir.

The detail of the wax statues is startling, down to the ruby rings that decorate the fingers of the emirs to the jeweled turban of the ancient sultan. The museum not only conveys the story of the past, but brings Lebanon's bygone era to life before your eyes.

*Deir el Qamar. Opening hours: 9am to 5pm
 (05 511666)*



The Maria Baz Wax Museum brings Lebanon's past to life





KISHK

LEBANON'S WINTER WARMER

Traditionally made in summer to be stored and consumed in cold winter months, *kishk* has a culinary history rooted in Lebanon's seasons. **The Food Heritage Foundation's Zeinab Jeambey** scours the country for this ever popular delicacy and discovers a diversity of flavors

Characterized as a fermented milk product, *kishk* is made of bulgur (cracked parboiled wheat) mixed with either milk or yogurt. Its name originates from the Persian word *kashk*, referring to a mix of cracked wheat and cracked barley.

A common food across Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Turkey, *kishk* begins to take shape in summer, when milk production is at its best and the sun's heat at its peak. Cracked wheat is soaked in milk or yogurt for almost a week and fermentation is kept under control by adding small amounts of dairy every few days. After the cracked wheat absorbs the dairy products and fermentation reaches the right degree, the pre-final product is an edible dough named *kishk akhdar*, or green *kishk*. At this stage, this type of *kishk* can be formed into small balls and then preserved in olive oil for consumption in winter.

To achieve the final *kishk* product, the dough is spread onto clean white sheets, on village rooftops, to allow the summer heat to dry it rock hard. Once totally dry, tradition calls for women to gather together for communal work: rubbing off dried *kishk* with the hands to obtain a fine, off-white powder, winter's most nutritious preserve.



Photos: The Recipe Hunters and Food Heritage Foundation



A CORNUCOPIA OF KISHK FLAVORS

Though all *kishk* in Lebanon is powdery in texture, the taste varies widely depending on the type of ingredients used in its production. It can be made with milk (cow, goat or sheep), yogurt, or an alternation between milk and yogurt, or yogurt and strained yogurt (*labneh*). The type of wheat used also has an impact: *baladi* wheat, *salamouni* wheat and white wheat confer different flavors, texture and color to the final product.

FROM AARSAL

Aarsal's mountainous community has a long pastoral history, with goat and goat milk products highly valued by local people. Halime Al Houjeiri, president of Aarsal Women's Coop, takes pride in the quality of the *kishk* produced by members. This particular *kishk's* sour taste is a reflection of the high quality milk produced by goats grazing on wild herbs and highland thistles.

Halime El Hujjeiri, 03 110802

LOCAL DISH: KISHK WITH KHODRA

Kishk powder is mixed with cold water to form a soft dough to which chopped tomato, cucumber, radishes, onions, mint and crushed garlic are added, with a generous drizzle of olive oil.

FROM KHERBET QANAFAR

A long-time food producer, Lina Haddad recently established her table d'hôte as part of Darb El Karam, a growing food heritage trail network in West Bekaa. Lina's family owns a farm of cows and Lina makes her dairy products at home. *Kishk* and green *kishk* are among her bestselling products, and these, among other specialties, can be enjoyed by visitors to her table d'hôte when in season.

Lina Haddad, 70 671399, 08 645303

LOCAL DISH: KISHK AKHDAR WITH WALNUTS

Kishk akhdar is spread on a plate and topped with chopped walnuts, onions, mint and tomatoes. The tangy taste of

green *kishk* makes a heavenly pairing with the nuttiness of the walnuts.

FROM MAASSER EL SHOUF

Farmer and food producer Elissar Temrez specializes in items solely cultivated on her land and processed by her and her husband. Her *kishk* is a mixture of cow's and goat's milk with *baladi* wheat, softening the strong taste of pure goat *kishk*. It's a perfect match to *aamaysheh*, a local specialty.

Elissar Temrez, 76 847534

LOCAL DISH: AAMAYSHEH WITH GRILLED ONIONS

Aamaysheh is a dish widely known in the Shouf area and the regions of Hasbaya and Rashaya. It is made of *kishk* and fine bulgur mixed with lukewarm water then combined with olive oil to soften the dough. The dish is eaten with grilled onions.

71 731437, food-heritage.org,
  Food Heritage Foundation



HIGH ALTITUDE AMBITION



Jackie Chamoun's passion for skiing has taken her all the way from Lebanon's mountains to the Olympic Games. **LT** asked her to share her passion for the sport and home country

When and where did you first start skiing?

I started skiing when I was three years old with my dad in Mzaar Kfardebian. We used to go to the mountain every weekend and during the holidays with my family. At the age of four, I started skiing with Ski Passion, the ski school

of Carlos Fenianos, my uncle. A few years later, my brother, my cousins and I started training with Faraya Mzaar club.

How did you become passionate about skiing?

My passion for skiing started when I was 12 years old. I always liked the sport, but my love for skiing grew when I was a teenager. I had goals such as winning as much as possible in order to be able to participate in international competitions. I succeeded in achieving my personal objective, which was to qualify and represent Lebanon at the most recognized and prestigious events: the World Ski Championships (2009 and 2013) and the Winter Olympic Games (2010 and 2014).

What is it about this sport that you love?

The feeling of freedom that it gives me, the fact that I am surrounded by nature, and a love of speed and adrenaline. It's a passion that motivates me and drives me. I am competitive and I certainly like to win, but above all, I ski for the love of the sport and for all the positive vibes it gives me.

Which equipment do you recommend?

There are many good brands and equipment adapted to each level of skiing. I personally think that Sport Experts in Lebanon provides excellent equipment. Sport Experts supported me during the Olympic Games by providing me with great material: Salomon skis, Spyder racing suits, etc.

How did your passion for skiing influence your career choice?

I left Lebanon when I was 17 years old. I chose to study in Switzerland because I knew this destination would enable me to continue skiing. I decided to study event, sport and entertainment management at the Glion Institute of Higher Education. I was so enthusiastic about this degree because, in my mind, it was the ideal way to combine my studies, my passion for sports and my interest in event management. I trained with a ski club in Villars sur Ollon to prepare for the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics. For the Sochi Olympics, even though I had already started working, I managed to continue skiing and qualify for the games. I focused on skiing over the weekend and physical training during the week, and I participated in several international competitions to qualify.

During my studies, I did two internships. I did my first six-month internship at Havas Sports & Entertainment. I was specifically working on the Global Sports Forum Barcelona, as the assistant to the chief editor and the speaker coordinator, and I participated in the event organization.

I did my second internship at the Peace and Sport Organization, a global initiative under the high patronage of Prince Albert II of Monaco. I worked on the organization of the Peace and Sport International Forum and I was managing the awards ceremony.

My first internship opened the door to my current position in the luxury business field. Thanks to an internal contact and an event I participated in, I met the right people and built my professional network.

Do you like to ski in Lebanon? Where?

I certainly do. I feel at home when skiing at the Mzaar ski resort. That's where it all started. I have great memories there with my family and friends and it always feels great to be back.

Where do you like to ski abroad?

Les Trois Vallées (Val Thorens, Courchevel, Meribel) in France. The ski area is very large, and the infrastructure and atmosphere are great.

Are you still representing Lebanon in international tournaments?

I stopped competing after the Olympic Games in Sochi 2014 as my professional life and work became my priority. I still ski a lot during the winter but I certainly miss competing.

Do you come to Lebanon often?

Three to four times a year.



Jackie's talent has earned her a place representing Lebanon in two Winter Olympics



**Do you like Lebanese cuisine?
Which is your favorite restaurant?**

I do love Lebanese food. Abdel Wahab has delicious food and friendly staff. I used to go there often with my Chehab relations on my mother's side of the family.

Which places in Lebanon do you usually visit when you are in the country?

Annaya, Mar Charbel with my mom; it's peaceful and wonderful. ATCL, Kaslik, the club where I used to water ski and practice sports when I lived in Lebanon. I still water ski a lot with my father and brother. Mzaar Ski Resort in winter. I mainly come to spend time with my family and visit my grandfathers as well.

Where are you from originally?
Deir El Qamar.

What do you enjoy doing there?

It's a charming village. I like to spend time with my family, admire nature and disconnect from the city. I love Deir El Qamar and Beiteddine.

Are you a wine drinker, and if so, do you have a favorite Lebanese wine?

Yes I do. I recently visited Ixsir, which I really liked. The wine is good and the setting is wonderful. I also had great food there on the terrace overlooking the vineyards.

WHERE TO SKI

With six ski resorts catering to skiers and snowboarders of all skill levels, Lebanon has something for everyone.

MZAAR SKI RESORT-KFARDEBIAN

Altitude 1,830-2,465m

Known as Mzaar Ski Resort, Mzaar Kfardebian is 46km from Beirut, a drive of around one and a quarter hours. The resort has 42 slopes and 80km of ski tracks.

Kfardebian, Ouyoune Al Simane
09 341034

ZAAROUR CLUB

Altitude 1,700-2,000m

At 38km from Beirut, approximately a 50 minute drive, Zaarour is the closest ski resort to the capital.

Zaarour's ski slopes are north-facing, offering an excellent quality of snow, with a panoramic view across the famous Valley of the Skulls and Mount Sannine. An elevator takes you from parking to slopes level. Many outdoor winter activities in addition to skiing are available.

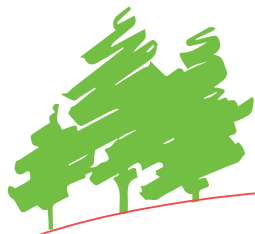
04 310010; zaarourclub.com

CEDARS SKI RESORT

Altitude 2,000-3,086m

At 120km from Beirut, the Cedars is reached in about two hours from the capital. The resort is located on the highest range and offers the most scenic landscapes, making this a great option for nature lovers and an ideal getaway destination.

Laqlouq (altitude 1,650-1,920m) and **Qanat Bakiche** (altitude 1,910-2,050m) are known for their family-oriented, friendly atmosphere, as is **Faqra-Kfardebian** (altitude 1,735-1,980m), which is a private ski resort reserved for members.



Travel Lebanon

4th edition

23-27 May 2017

4-10 pm

Beirut Hippodrome

Discover Rural Places, Heritage & Culture

DISCOVER

LEBANON'S UNIQUE
BEAUTY SPOTS &
COUNTRYSIDE
ESCAPES



EMBRACE

THE CULTURE,
HERITAGE,
FOOD & MUSIC



PLAN

AN AMAZING
SUMMER IN
BEAUTIFUL
LEBANON

ENJOY

MEMORABLE
EXPERIENCES
AROUND THE
COUNTRY

f lebanontraveler

ig lebanontraveler

tw @lebanontraveler

lebanontraveler.com

With the support of



In partnership with



Official magazine



Held concurrently with



AN EVENT BY



T: +961 1 480081 | F: +961 1 482876 | E: travel@hospitalityservices.com.lb | W: hospitalityservices.com.lb







SAKI RICHMAYA ROAD, BYBLOS CAZA, MOUNT LEBANON

"Photo taken at 6am of Saki Richmaya, a village perched at an altitude of 900 meters in the Byblos caza mountains. The road leads to the famous Annaya village, where the Convent of St. Maron resides, the holy pilgrimage destination and sanctuary of St. Charbel."

Photo by Ramzi Semrani

✉ livejah28@gmail.com,  [ramzi.semrani](https://www.facebook.com/ramzi.semrani)

Abayas à la m'odè

LT looks at how traditional wear has been preserved and brought into the modern day

Assyla, a designer boutique in Saifi Village, is breathing new life into traditional designs of abayas, creating a collection fit for the most sophisticated events.

Adorned with golden flecks of metal, known as tark, a beautiful white abaya hangs from the ceiling in the center of Assyla. It's so splendid it could be a wedding dress. Its metallic embroidery is rooted in tradition, while its design is contemporary.

Assyla is lined with beautiful abayas born out of old embroideries, antique silks and woven fabrics, brought together on a high-quality new fabric with a modern cut. "Assyla is like a melting pot of Oriental culture and what comes out are patterns, models and new clothes, that look more like art pieces," says owner AL Hares Haidar.

TARK OF BAALBEK

Decades ago, when Haidar and his business partner Najwa Sinno were children growing up in Baalbek, they were surrounded by the traditional clothes of Lebanon that bore the influence of the 'Silk Road' on which Baalbek sat. While abayas are often thought of as an Islamic or Gulf-based invention, their basic design is found from Morocco to Pakistan, according to Haidar.

It is this connection with Baalbek that is the basis for the high-end ornate work you see in Assyla. "Really the passion is Baalbek, the first importance for us is Baalbek and its people," says Haidar. It was in the streets of Baalbek, the markets, and closer to home in their grandmother's closet, where they saw the abayas that would be their inspiration, and where the actual materials sat that would later form the basis for their pieces.



White abaya. Photo: Maria Kabbaj

Assyla is like a melting pot of Oriental culture and what comes out are patterns, models and new clothes, that look more like art pieces

”

During the Lebanese Civil War in the '70s, Haidar and Sinno began designing new clothes based on these old designs. What started as a hobby slowly grew into a business. The first step of the production process is finding the original materials to use in their pieces, or more accurately, "the material finds us," Haidar says. This could be a part of an old dress, embroidery, shreds of silk, or in one case, a cushion cover. Then they design the clothes, and pick the new material they will use to pull it all together – it could be French or Italian linen, tulle or silk. Finally, the stitching is done in Baalbek.

A feature of their designs is tark. Looking closely, each stitch is a separate piece of metal placed on the material to create a pattern. The patterns are usually angular as the metal lends itself to these shapes more easily. "We realized that the problem with tark was the motifs: the motifs were few and the material used was always the same. So we introduced new motifs that we invented from traditional ones. Let's say they had the traditional spirit, the Oriental spirit, but they looked like nothing before," says Haidar.



Black gold tark abaya. Photo: Maria Kabbaj

DESIGNERS AND ARTISANS

Modernizing the abaya is the only way Haidar can see that it will stay alive. "When we came on to the scene, the demand was falling and few women were still working and keeping this tradition alive. We realized artisans cannot go on without designers," he says.

"The artisan takes a pattern and works it and works it. He makes 100 or 500 [of this pattern] then it becomes banal, so the people don't want it any more, even though it is beautiful. So then its price falls and the artisan doesn't know what to do. Then when a designer comes onto the scene and works with the artisan,

there is renovation," he explains. And this ultimately opens it up to a new generation. "We are half artisans and half designers. You take the artisanal out of its old history into a new era, but the history stays where you can feel it."

And this is what Haidar has done with the abaya. A few other designers in Beirut have taken on a similar project to preserve this traditional craft: Orient 499, Waw Designs, and L'artisan du Liban's founder Nadia Ayoubi El Khoury, who recently passed away, have each brought their own unique take on the abaya that keeps it alive in the 21st century.

Where to shop

Assyla Said Akl Street, Saifi Village

Monday-Friday, 10am-7pm

Saturday, 10am-6pm

(01 970333; saifivillage.com/shops/assyla)

Orient 499

Aida Kawas is behind the abayas at Orient 499. She focuses on traditional cuts but uses modern material, from French and Italian linens, to wool and cashmere, stretching all the way to Indian fabrics, which results in colorful creations, ornate

with embroidery and sequins.

499 Omar Daouk Street, Mina El Hosn

Monday-Saturday, 10.30am-7pm

(01 369499; orient499.com)

Waw Designs

Waw Designs has a collection of different cuts, varying from Gulf style with huge sleeves, to the Levantine style, which has a much smaller, square cut for the sleeve. Maysaa Sultan is the woman behind the designs.

John Kennedy Street, Clemenceau

Monday-Friday, 10.30am-8pm

Saturday, 10.30am-6pm

(01 379099; wawdesigns.com)

L'artisan du Liban

Considered by some as the godmother of the modernized abaya, Nadia Ayoubi El Khoury founded L'artisan du Liban in 1979. Her boutique, now run by her daughter, sells a range of abayas.

Rafik Hariri Avenue, Ain El Mreisseh

Monday-Friday, 11am-7pm

Saturday, 11am-3pm

(01 362610;  Lartisan-du-Liban)

EMBROIDERED STORIES

Storyteller **Salim Azzam** connects the people and memories of his village to the outside world through design



Storyteller. Illustrator. Graphic designer. That's how Salim Azzam, a rising star in Lebanon's fashion world, describes himself. Azzam is from the town of Bater, a small Druze community nestled in Lebanon's Shouf Mountains. He grew up "surrounded by stories," shared by villagers who often gathered together.

Azzam left Bater for Canada, where he studied visual communication design, and realized he wanted to find a way to "use design for social change." For his master's thesis, Azzam returned to Bater to collaborate with 10 low-literacy elders, developing their stories into comic-strip-style visual narratives. Now he is documenting more rural tales and sharing them with the world, through a fashion line featuring his embroidered illustrations.

"Both of my parents left school [at a young age] because of the Civil War in Lebanon, and most of my relatives have low literacy because of it," Azzam recounts. "I said, 'let's draw your stories.' That was the project that changed my perspective on graphic design. I didn't want to do graphic design only for consumption... I felt that I have a responsibility towards my country, my community, and the people around me. I returned to Lebanon from Canada because I felt my work fit here, and could have a greater potential impact here than in Canada."

After dabbling in comic books and advertising, Azzam was selected as one of STARCH Foundation's 2016 designers. Founded by Lebanese designers Rabih Kayrouz and Tala Hajjar, in collaboration with Solidere, STARCH selects three to five emerging Lebanese designers plus an architect each year, helps them to design and launch a collection or project, and grants them use of the STARCH shop in Saifi Village for one year. Azzam's first collection, which debuted in April, evokes the people and flora of the Shouf. "I never imagined that I would step into fashion design that quickly, but when you have everything aligned, it becomes possible."



I didn't want to do graphic design only for consumption... I felt that I have a responsibility towards my country, my community, and the people around me

”



Azzam has taken the memories of his village and childhood – from the romantic story of the bride Em Atef, who rode to her wedding on a white horse, to the ritual of collecting delicate herbs that Azzam’s mother describes as “the language of the land” – and turned them into colorful embroidered motifs on white blouses and dresses. The blouses are paired with full skirts in navy and black reminiscent of the dark skirts local village women wear, or with cropped navy pants.

Embroidery is a traditional local craft and Azzam carefully selected the women of the Shouf who produce the finest, most precise handiwork to stitch the embroidery for his collection. “The most exciting part of this project is working with the women,” says Azzam.

Bater is a predominantly Druze village, and Azzam’s craftspeople include sheikhas (female religious leaders), who don’t normally spend much time outside of their homes and lack opportunity for employment. Azzam pays all his embroiderers “more than fair wages” to reflect the value he places on their time and talent.

“You can feel the empowerment,” Azzam says. “The women had never before done something that went outside of the village and represented them. I showed them the runway video [of STARCH’s March 2016 show in Dubai], and they felt like the ‘hidden stars’.” Azzam decided to organize an embroidery workshop for the village women to share their knowledge with women in Beirut. Sixteen participants were given embroidery starter kits, and guided through the process of sharing, drawing and embroidering their own stories. “Even if I didn’t want to continue in fashion after STARCH, I could never stop working with these ladies,” Azzam adds.

Azzam’s second collection, launched in October 2016, included menswear.

Where to shop

STARCH is located on Akl Street in Saifi Village, and is open Monday-Saturday, from 11am-6pm (01 566079, starchfoundation.org). Azzam’s pieces are LL375,000 to LL555,000 for embroidered items, and LL210,000 for pants and skirts. Embroidery starter kits, complete with instructions and a Salim Azzam design to embroider, are priced at LL37,500.

Give the gift of wellbeing
Buy it online at www.leroyal.com



There's nothing better than the gift of health and wellbeing. The Royal Spa treatments and massages will instantly make anyone feel better. They make a warm, original gift that shows you really care about that special someone, be it a friend, partner or family member. Go ahead and get the card to make someone really happy!



+961 4 555 444 - www.leroyal.com







BEIRUT'S MAN WITH A MESSAGE

Over the past five years, **Yazan Halwani** has covered Beirut's gray concrete walls with beautiful works of art. From Hamra to Karantina, his decorative work brightens up the city

While most would consider his creations graffiti, Halwani is not your traditional graffiti artist. In fact, he considers the portraits he has made murals. He mostly uses wall paint rather than spray cans, and sees what he does as constructive for society.

Halwani's work has garnered attention across Lebanon and further afield, but, perhaps most importantly to him, it is treasured by residents in the areas where it is situated. For Halwani, it is this connection with the public that he is looking for; with each piece he aims to "start a dialogue."

This work is in response to what he perceives to be a lack of public art in Beirut, where walls and billboards are often filled with election posters emblazoned with the faces of politicians. "A lot of the urban identity of Beirut is related to politics for some reason, some people say Hamra is [under] the ownership of this political party and we have Ashrafieh as [under] another political party," says Halwani.

Fairuz was a figure that transcends sectarian identity for people and creates a unification, a common cultural element for most Lebanese

”

To counterbalance this sectarianism, he started painting his murals on the streets of the city. "I tried to release Beirut from these connotations, to express its real identity and create a common identity for most Lebanese," he says. To this end, he has decorated Hamra with the face of Sabah, Gemmayze with Fairuz, and some other lesser known national treasures.

SABAH

The mural of legendary Lebanese singer Sabah at the beginning of Hamra Street is Halwani's most recent, and possibly last, mural in Beirut. Unlike his previous work, Halwani first chose the location and then decided what he could paint that would resonate with the residents. "I researched by talking to people living around the wall; regular people. Basically the thing about Hamra is that before the Civil War, it was really a cultural hub with a lot of cafés on the streets. You had the theaters, the cinemas of Hamra, which are now closed. Hamra has this connotation that it's not the same as it was before the Civil War."

Halwani chose a building in Hamra as his canvas, which had a café where Nizar Qabbani, the famous Syrian poet, used to write some of his poetry. "The spot [now a Costa Coffee] was a place for cultural happenings, but has become more commercial, according to the residents."



In response to this, Halwani settled on a mural of Sabah: "The people of that street actually suggested Sabah. They were talking about the golden era of Hamra and one of the elements they used to mention is Sabah. They used to hear her music on the corner of the street and see her movies in the cinemas that are now closed down."

So is Halwani indulging in nostalgia in his celebration of Sabah? He says not: "It's not nostalgia, it's creating cultural identity."

"What drove it was that she was such a nice symbol. She was kind of a hedonist who married seven times and at some point to a man in his twenties, even though she was around 70. These things were really frowned upon by sectarian or conservative society. Yet, she was still considered part of the cultural identity and this is something that is so impressive. She transcends the dogma of Lebanese society."



ALI ABDULLAH

While all of the other murals Halwani has painted in Beirut have been famous figures, his portrait of Ali Abdullah was something different. Abdullah was a homeless man who lived on the street for 15 years, usually seen around Bliss Street near the American University of Beirut.

"Ali Abdullah had been living for 15 years on the street in Hamra. And basically he was part of the culture and identity of that street. People really loved him. He didn't talk much to people directly, but people would put money at Abu Naji café to buy him coffee, cigarettes and food."

After he passed away, there was a surge of initiative to help the homeless in Beirut, which died out after a few months. And because basically there was nothing to commemorate him, the mural came as a way to tell people you don't need to just help the homeless when you see a sad story on the news. This is the mirror that tells you the story. It was a documentation of his existence on the street."

FAIRUZ

With surprisingly few tributes to Fairuz in the city, Halwani created this beautiful one in Gemmayze. This is perhaps one of his most famous murals, finding its way onto a book cover and into a Nancy Ajram music video, a Coca Cola advert and the design of a passport holder.

“Fairuz was a figure that transcends sectarian identity for people and creates a unification, a common cultural element for most Lebanese,” says Halwani, explaining why he chose to paint her. In this case, Halwani made the decision without speaking to any locals, though they fell in love with the mural instantly. “The people living around it kind of own it. Once someone scribbled on it, so I got this call saying, we want you to come fix it. I never met the guy, they got my number online, and so I did,” says Halwani.



GIBRAN KHALIL GIBRAN

The Gibran Khalil Gibran mural has a satirical edge, created as Halwani’s response to a 50,000 lira commemorative bank note made by the Banque Du Liban, which contained spelling mistakes.

“What I decided,” says Halwani, “was to use that event, as it is quite scandalous to have a bank note that had a few mistakes. So I drew this LL100,000 note and I stylized it in a way that makes it more of a cultural platform, to educate people about their history and art.”

Halwani chose the poet and painter Gibran Khalil Gibran, Lebanon’s most well-known cultural export, who Halwani believes should be considered a public, not sectarian figure. “Cultural figures should be celebrated publicly for all the Lebanese,” he says.



MAKING SENSE OF THE CITY



LT meets filmmaker **Philippe Aractingi** at his production studio in the up-and-coming neighborhood of Badaro. The Lebanese director shares his memories of growing up in Beirut and how the city's chaos can be a catalyst for creativity

To a foreigner, navigating Beirut can seem daunting. The city, chaotic and changeable, can be a challenge to get around.

Finding the offices of Lebanese filmmaker Philippe Aractingi was a timely reminder of that.

What had at first seemed like a simple *service* ride, ended up with a phone call outside the Ministry of Justice - wrongly pinned as the office of Fantascope, Aractingi's production company - along with a series of instructions that would have baffled those unfamiliar with the city.

After finally locating Aractingi - in the building with the green windows and the statue of Mary outside - LT sat with the award-winning director to discover more about his connection with Beirut.

"There is a feeling of constant change, which is exciting when you come to Beirut and worrying when you live there," says Aractingi.

Born in 1964, the director grew up near the Green Line, the divide between East and West Beirut, and was just 10 years old when the fighting broke out.

The Civil War would be the catalyst for his own career. Dreams of being a poet were cast aside as the harsh reality had a stronger pull.

He began as a stringer for foreign journalists before taking his own photographs of the conflict. Aractingi made his directorial debut at 21. After a year in London and having also worked as a documentary filmmaker in Lebanon, he moved to France in 1989, at the age of 25, to continue his career.

"I always wanted to become a filmmaker, and I started filming what was in front of me. This is why I am often in documentaries. Reality was more present, more strong, than fiction," Aractingi explains.

Aractingi is forever documenting the world around him. He points to a case for his camera on his belt, joking it is like a holster for a gun. The camera is Aractingi's constant companion - he goes nowhere without it.

"I take a lot of pictures of Beirut because what you see today maybe won't exist tomorrow," he explains.



Philippe Aractingi on the set of "Heritages"



"The city is always changing, it's a moving place. The ground is moving underneath you all the time."

Through his work, Aractingi has seen the cycles of change that have evolved and shaped the Lebanese capital. Due out next year is an installation he has been working on - with images of Beirut before, during and after the war, as well as images of the city today.

The director's relationship with Beirut is one familiar to many Lebanese - a cycle of flight and return. He stayed in France from 1989 to 2001, traveling the world and producing films on topics as varied as Buddhist archeology in Sri Lanka to acrobat children in Morocco and giraffes in South Africa.

But while the diversity of these films helped shape him as a director - he sees himself as one who "loves playing with different styles because he has been influenced by the differences in the world" - it was his feature films that were the projects he really wanted to make.

His return to Beirut in 2001 facilitated this new phase of his filmmaking, with feature films "Bosta" (2005), "Under the Bombs" (2008) and "Heritages" (2013) all based in Lebanon.

It was "Under the Bombs," partially shot just days after the end of the 2006 war, a war that saw Aractingi and his family leave Beirut for Paris once again, that garnered the director critical acclaim.



The film, like most of Aractingi's work, is a journey. Following a mother desperate to find her son in the aftermath of the war, and shot with a mix of scripting and improvisation; it has the actual destruction of south Lebanon as its backdrop.

"I grew up in chaos and in a way, I have used my creativity to find a way to get out of chaos. So 'Under the Bombs' was a typical way for me to be creative, or to overcome the war. To be more resilient within what was going on with my life," he explains.

This resilience is shared by most Lebanese. At times Aractingi eschews his motorbike - helpful for weaving in and out of Beirut's congestion - and travels by *service* to keep an ear to the ground. "I work a lot and work is not very useful for inspiration. You need to know people, you need to listen to them, you need to hear them speaking," he says.

Hearing Beirut is the focus of his latest feature film due out in 2017. "Listen" is billed as "a journey through sound," following the story of a sound engineer who sends messages to his love.

The film is a way to really listen to Beirut, a "way of discovering through the ear."

He moves out onto the balcony from his office, pointing to the cranes in the distance. "You have the churches, the minarets, the cranes," he says. "The sound of construction, the sound of prayers, and each one preaching his own religion."

Like many who grew up before the war, he remembers a greener, quieter city, and is critical of the high rises spreading out from Downtown and forever altering the shape of Beirut and its communities.

"Funnily enough, the Green Line was often very silent," he says, remembering the ambiance of trees and birds that hid silent but deadly snipers.

"It was quite amazing because I was in an environment that was very deadly, very dangerous but at the same time, very calm."

Beirut itself has been the focus of several of Aractingi's works. After the Civil War he rushed home to take pictures of the city as it was, before Solidere's reconstruction. The 1993 film "Beirut of Stone and Memories" paired his images with the words of Lebanese poet Nadia Tueni.

A photography series, "Night on Beirut," first displayed in Paris in 2011, was a project he

I grew up in chaos and in a way, I have used my creativity to find a way to get out of chaos

”

undertook in between films that saw him photographing the nocturnal face of the city.

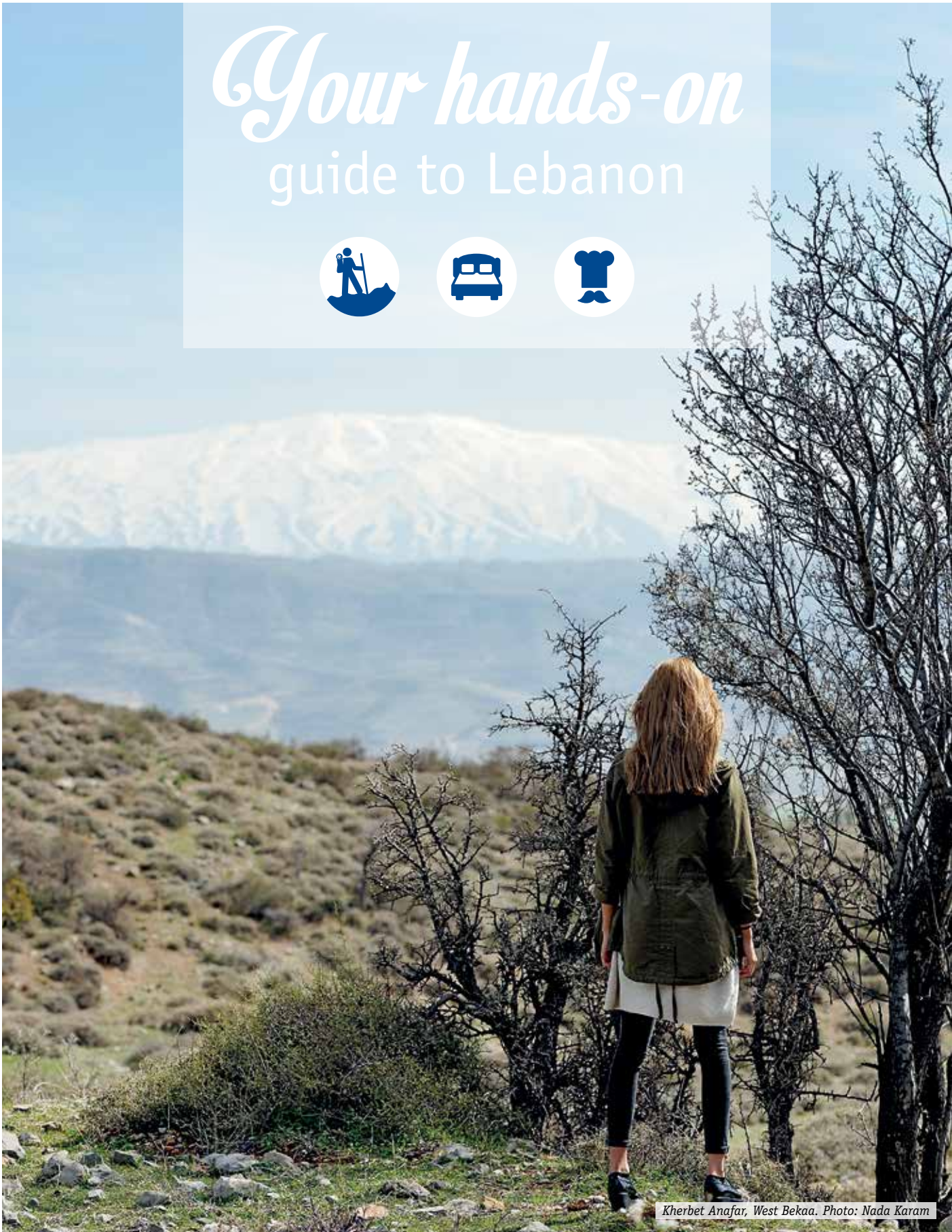
"It is quite interesting to see Beirut by night because of its light and the way it's calm," he says, describing the differences in colors and light in different neighborhoods - the ever present "madness" of the city.

A Beirut at heart, he hesitates to say chaos is what keeps drawing him back, but there is no denying that the changeable nature of Beirut is one that inspires creativity among its inhabitants.

"I would say Beirut has to be written with an 's'. Many Beiruts," he says. "It is what makes it interesting. It is what makes it undefinable."

For more on the work of Philippe Aractingi see: fantascopeprod.com

Your hands-on guide to Lebanon



Kherbet Anafar, West Bekaa. Photo: Nada Karam



Winter Getaways

Founder of NEOS Tourism consultancy and author of *Eco Lebanon: Nature and Rural Tourism*, **Nour Farra-Haddad** gives her eco-friendly tourism tips for the perfect local getaways of the season

1 FAMILY SKI ESCAPES TOWARDS ZAAROUR

Zaarour is the closest ski resort to Beirut (38km) and a newly developed road connects you with the slopes in just 50 minutes from the capital. Although it is one of the country's smallest ski resorts, it offers a wide range of outdoor activities including many for children, and has a strong reputation for its cross-country skiing. (04 310010; zaarourclub.com)

SLEEP Stay at **Le Grand Chalet** (04 310300; legrandchalet.com.lb), a luxurious boutique hotel in the heart of the mountains, or rent a chalet. Alternatively sleep in a traditional house in the village of **Hayda Lebanon** (78 887222; haydalebanon.com).

EAT On the way up to Zaarour a number of restaurants offer typical mezze style meals, including **Sobhi** (04 296960) and **Al Bouhayra** (04 296200). Alternatively, try the international menu at Zaarour's **Le Grand Chalet** or an authentic local meal at **Koukh El Sabaya** (03 658734).

SEE The village of **Hayda Lebanon**, located on Zaarour main road, is a project that embraces Lebanese heritage through its food, entertainment or ambiance. It's the place to soak up a traditional atmosphere and ideal for Lebanese expatriates wanting to rediscover their cultural roots.



2 THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS IN JOUN



A few kilometers past the village of Joun lies a Greek Catholic monastery known as Deir el Moukhalles (Monastery of the Holy Savior), which overlooks fragrant orchards and forested hills. Its church, dedicated to the transfiguration, is a masterpiece in itself and is home to a wooden iconostasis, a chandelier gifted by Napoleon III, and the tomb and sanctuary of the Venerable Father Abou Mrad. Special celebrations take place in the monastery during the festive season and a huge Christmas nativity scene is installed in the underground floor of the school drawing visitors from across the region. (07 975064/5)

SLEEP You can sleep in the **Deir El Moukhalles monastery** or its school dormitories, or head on to Deir El Saydeh convent. (07 975070)

EAT Enjoy a stop by the **Bisri river** to sample traditional Lebanese mezze.

SEE In Joun you can also visit the site of the former residence of **Lady Stanhope**. Now in ruins, the remains of this legendary heroine's home are located on a hill to the north east side of Joun. A few kilometers from Joun, **Bisri village** is home to a beautiful church dedicated to **Our Lady of Bisri**.



3 SHOWSTOPPING SNOWSCAPES IN FAQRA-KFARDEBIAN

Located at 54km from Beirut, Faqra is part of Kfardebian village set at an elevation of between 1,735 and 1,975m above sea level. Two Faqra landmarks – the Roman temples and natural bridge - take on a new look during the winter season when they are resplendent in the pure whiteness of the snow. In winter the Roman temples can only be observed from the main road, but the view is definitely worth the stop. In the upper part of the site visitors can stroll around the ruins and the two Roman altars covered with snow. Faqra’s natural limestone bridge, shaped over the centuries by wind and water, lies just a few kilometers from the Roman site and beneath it gushes the Nahr El Laban stream.

SLEEP Choices range from high-end hotels, such as **L’Auberge de Faqra** (09 300600; faqraclub.com) or **Terre Brune** (09 030301; terrebrunehotel.com), to the cozy and friendly **Troy Hotel** overlooking Faqra’s Roman site (03 058476; troyfaqra.webs.com), or the budget-friendly **Auberge Beity** in Kfardebian village (03 214871; beity.org).

EAT Enjoy a Lebanese meal at Troy Hotel’s restaurant, at the famous **Chez Michel** (09 300614), **Al Kanater** (09 300818), **Chez Chaker** (09 341800) or at **Massaya** (70 122414; massaya.com).

4 NATURAL EXHILARATION IN THE SHOUF

The largest of Lebanon’s nature reserves, Al Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve stretches from Dahr Al Baidar in the north to Niha Mountain in the south. Blanketed with oak forests on its northeastern slopes and juniper and oak forests on its southeastern slopes, the reserve’s most famous attractions are its three magnificent cedar forests: Maasser el Shouf, Barouk and Ain Zhalta - Bmohray. Al Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve is a popular destination for hiking and trekking, with trails matching all levels of fitness. In winter the landscape can be particularly stunning. Guides are available at the reserve, where you can also rent equipment for snowshoeing (05 350250, 05 350150; info@shoufcedar.org; shoufcedar.org)

SLEEP A number of guest houses are available, including **Beit Salim Al Achkar** in El Khreibe (03 354558), **Nazih Baz Guesthouse** in Baadaran (03 702944), **Houssam El Eid Guesthouse** in Ain Zhalta (03 217299), while other options include **Hotel Calmera** (03 382940) and the **Tourist Guesthouse** (03 630056), both in Barouk.

EAT Lebanese restaurants in the area offer a warm mountain ambiance with cozy fireplaces: **Baytna** (05 240540), **Shallalat Al Barouk** (03 387228), **Al Mamlaka** (03 865143; 05 241666), and the **Tourist** in Barouk (03 630056).

SEE **Assaf Museum** recently opened its doors in the village of Bossail close to Ain Zhalta. The museum is dedicated to the art of construction and sculpture, and is set amid beautiful gardens. (Contact Mansour Assaf 03 737528)





Best beds at altitude

With the snow season running from around mid-December to early April, Lebanon's ski resorts in Kfardebian, Faqra, Cedars and Zaarour come alive in the winter months. Here's our selection of hotels that will keep you comfortable and close to the action

MZAAR & FAQRA KFARDEBIAN

INTERCONTINENTAL MZAAR MOUNTAIN RESORT & SPA

This five-star hotel allows you to ski directly from the resort, with access to an 80km trail. The hotel has a pool, games rooms, a sauna and a spa, as well as six restaurants and bars, ranging from casual to fine dining.

*Kfardebian, Ouyoun El Simane, Mzaar
09 340100, icmzaar.com*

L'AUBERGE DE FAQRA

Faqra Club's boutique hotel offers its own ski slopes. Wifi is available throughout the hotel, and there are indoor activities available including PS3, Wii and a computer games network. Babysitting services are also offered.

*Faqra Kfardebian 09 300600
faqraclub.com*

TERRE BRUNE HOTEL

The four-star Terre Brune Hotel provides spacious, contemporary rooms with cable TV and views over the countryside, along with a spa offering massage services, a sauna and a steam bath.

*Kfardebian 09 300060
terrebrunehotel.com*

URBAN FAQRA HOTEL

The four-star Urban Faqra Hotel is located five-minutes' drive from the ski slopes of Faraya. The hotel offers eight spacious guest rooms with free wifi access and an elegant restaurant overlooking the snowy slopes.

*Faqra, Emile Lahoud Roundabout
76 070605, urbanfaqra@add-mind.com*

ELEVEN

Eleven is an exclusive boutique hotel with five exquisite suites and six cozy rooms within walking distance of the ski slopes.

*Kfardebian 09 341741,
info@hotel-eleven.com*

CEDARS

LE CEDRUS SUITES HOTEL

Overlooking the Kadisha Valley, and within a short distance of the ski junctions, Le Cedrus features 40 rooms and suites, which are styled to reflect the charm of the surrounding mountains. Guests can also enjoy free wifi.

Cedars 06 678777, cedrushotel.com

L'AUBERGE DES CÈDRES

Surrounded by Lebanon's Cedar forest, L'Auberge's suites and wooden bungalows offer country-style décor and include a seating area with flatscreen cable TV in each unit. The resort has a games room with billiards, and a playground for younger guests. Free wifi and private parking is available.

Cedars 06 678888

WHITE CEDAR HOTEL & RESORT

Located in the village of Becharre, just a five-minute drive from the Cedars ski slopes, the hotel offers comfortable in-room amenities including a flatscreen TV, minibar and electric kettle. There is also a terrace and free private parking.

Cedars, Bcharreh 06 678876

ZAAROUR

LE GRAND CHALET

Boasting five luxury rooms, six junior suites, three family suites and two roof suites, Le Grand Chalet is a true boutique hotel. The lounge area has a modern fireplace, and there is also a cozy dining area and a bar.

Zaarour 71 211811, zaarourclub.com

Photo: InterContinental Mzaar Mountain Resort & Spa



THIS IS LIFE ON OUR SIDE!



- Private compound at 950m altitude
- The best climate in Lebanon
- Panoramic view overlooking the sea and mountains
- High-end finishing construction materials
- 17 minutes away from Beirut
- Safety and security 24/7
- Pool and children playground



01 900 000

www.plusproperties.com.lb

Follow us on:    





New flavors to savor

Taste & Flavors, Lebanon's #1 food & lifestyle magazine brings you the freshest selection of places to dine out and drink in town



BABYLONIA

In a nutshell A chic café and pub in the hip Badaro neighborhood.

Where is it? Alam Street, Badaro

What's the number? 70 665571

Don't miss Babylonia Salad, Croque Me sandwich, Salmon Club, and the Babylonia Special, Gin Rosemary, Earl Gray Sour cocktails.

Hot seat Indoors, on the comfortable upholstered lounge chairs or the outdoor lounge area when the weather is nice.

f [BabyloniaCafeBar](#)

@ [@BabyloniaLebanon](#)



BANDIDOS RESTO & BAR

In a nutshell Authentic Latin American dishes and cocktails, and outstanding hospitality.

Where is it? Gardens Lebanon, Nacacche

What's the number? 03 416541

Don't miss The El Gordo dish and the happy hour from 5-8pm every day (but reserve your seat early).

[bandidosresto.com](#)

f [bandidosresto](#)



CASA LUCIA

In a nutshell A new tapas restaurant and bar in Byblos.

Where is it? Byblos Old Souk

What's the number? 09 949600

Don't miss The Black Paella and Casa Lucia Cocktail

Hot seat A table under the lemon tree or beside the carambola tree.

[casaluciabyblos.com](#)



FABRK URBAN LOUNGE

In a nutshell The only rooftop in Mar Mikhael, characterized by a lounge-like atmosphere and urban chic decor.

Where is it? Mar Mikhael

What's the number? 71 448800

Don't miss Salmon Ceviche, Rib Eye Steak, Shrimp Quinoa

What's new? Attractions like great music and sunset drinks will soon be joined by a game of pool.

f [fabrkbeirut](#)



GOYA BEIRUT

In a nutshell French and Spanish cuisine

Where is it? Pasteur Street, Gemmayze

What's the number? 01 570388

Don't miss Tapas, healthy salads and cocktails

Hot seat The terrace where you can enjoy Nar GOYA - the special house arguile.

[f GoyaBeirut](#)



LA CANTINE DU GRAND MESHMOSH HOTEL

In a nutshell A 'homey' canteen serving food from around the globe in a mixed international environment.

Where is it? Gemmayze, Saint Nicolas Stairs

What's the number? 01 563465

Don't miss The daily dish and the Green Hummos

Hot seat On the terrace, said to be one of Beirut's quietest, most romantic spots.

[f grandmeshmoh](#)



PROPAGANDA GIN ROOM

In a nutshell Over 40 types of international gin under one urban roof in Beirut.

Where is it? Alleyway, Hamra

What's the number? 81 616222

Don't miss The international cuisine and cocktail menu.

[f PropagandaGinRoom](#)



SAX

In a nutshell A new experience where the art of dining blends with the widest selection of spirits and groovy live music.

Where is it? Beirut Souks, Downtown

What's the number? 70 707005

Don't miss The Art Deco inspired decor.

[saxbeirut.com](#)



GARDENS NACCACHE

Combining a natural vibe with outdoor space and a Mediterranean village feel, Gardens Naccache brings some of the country's top food and beverage concepts together in one relaxing space.

[f gardenslebanon](#)

Find your favorite hangouts at Gardens Naccache

Asafir 70 139165, **Bandidos** 03 416541, **Beit Salwa** 03 544544, **Caribou Coffee** 81 379908, **Enab** 03 868284, **Heights Bar** 81 666482, **La Petite Table** 81 666483, **La Pizzeria** 70 386386, **Smoking Bun** 81 618018, **Sud** 81 666481, **Yoshi** 04 416446, 71 416446, 04 418848



DESTINATION ADANA

The lush parks, historic marketplaces, and delicious Turkish food make Adana an ideal retreat for anyone seeking a relaxing getaway. Situated on the banks of the Seyhan River, the city is steeped in natural, historical and architectural beauty

Lebanese travelers will feel immediately at home in this welcoming city that is saturated with an undeniably Middle Eastern flavor. You can spend afternoons exploring the city's parks and tree-lined streets, unwind in one of the new luxury hotels and spas, or indulge in the delicious local food.

Adana is now a 50-minute flight from Beirut on BoraJet, which offers daily direct flights to and from the city at reasonable prices.

WHAT TO DO IN ADANA

1. MERKEZ CAMII MOSQUE AND PARK

The city's most prominent feature is the beautiful Merkez Camii Mosque, which sits along the water's edge and serves as the backdrop to the cityscape. Built in 1998, the mosque is relatively new, but its size and architectural beauty make it a true emblem of the city. The Merkez Camii Mosque is absolutely breathtaking and the enormous park surrounding it only adds to its grandeur. Spend an afternoon walking down to the river's edge, taking pictures of this incredible mosque from every angle.

2. TAS KOPRU BRIDGE

The Tas Koprü Bridge is an ancient Roman bridge that remains fully intact and in use by Adana locals today. It is located just across from the Merkez Camii Mosque and serves as the perfect viewpoint from which to admire the city.

3. VARDA KOPRUSU BRIDGE

At an hour's drive outside of the city, tucked into the green Turkish mountains, the bridge's location makes any trip incomplete without a stop at the nearby restaurant, where local women prepare handmade sandwiches filled with spiced potatoes, cheese and spinach. The sandwiches are accompanied by tea and ayran, made fresh at the restaurant.

4. OLD ADANA SOUK AND CLOCK TOWER

Walking through the narrow and winding streets of Old Adana, visitors can get a sense of the layers of history the city holds. The Clock Tower, built in the Ottoman era, is the central feature of the Old Souk. Though impressive in height, it is the old market surrounding the Clock Tower that really sets the tone in this historic area.

What to eat

Adana is best known for its kebabs, and rightfully so. Their spiced kebabs are made of ground lamb, and served in a sandwich or on a platter, accompanied by pita bread, roasted tomatoes and parsley. You can find the kebabs in upscale restaurants or as a cheap street-food option. The kebabs, and Adana's food specialties, use spices and ingredients similar to those in Lebanese cooking, including thyme, allspice, cinnamon and generous amounts of garlic—like the Turkish lahmacun, dough topped with herbs and meat, which is reminiscent of Lebanese lahmbiajin, both in name and flavor. For dessert, Adana serves up delicious fried spiced dough sweetmeats called karakush, as well as local fruits, and, of course, Turkish delight.

Where to stay

Adana has a great offering of luxury hotels. **The Sheraton** and the **Hilton** are both great choices that sit directly on the river's edge and overlook the Merkez Camii Mosque and Taskorpu Bridge. Of the two, the Sheraton has better rooms while the Hilton has a more picturesque view. Nonetheless, both offer first-class restaurants and are fully equipped with fitness centers, tennis courts, pools, saunas, and spas. **The Divan Adana** is another five-star hotel in the area that stands apart with its ultra-modern style, though it does not offer the same views as the Sheraton and Hilton.

Who to go with

Nevatur is a great tour company that organizes a selection of day trips both within Adana and to nearby sites. They offer private transportation, cultural and gastronomy excursions, and week-long cultural packages. **Chamber of Adana Tourist Guides** is another established tour group that has a wide variety of tours, and offers trained tour guides in both English and Arabic.

14th edition



PRESENTS

THE GARDEN SHOW & SPRING FESTIVAL

23-27 May, 2017
4-10 pm
Beirut Hippodrome

SUPPORTED BY



Beirut Municipality



AN EVENT BY



&



T: + 961 1 480081 | E: garden@the-gardenshow.com | the-gardenshow.com



TheGardenShowandSpringFestival



GardenShowLebanon



@TheGardenShow



AGENDA

Here's **LT's** hand picked selection of the festivals and special events not to miss this winter

Jbeil. Photo: Ramzi Semrani

Remember to keep up-to-date with the **lebanontraveler.com** AGENDA section, packed with the latest happenings across the country



**WITH YOU
WHEREVER
YOU GO**

Download
the free app



DECEMBER CHRISTMAS MARKET AT HARISSA

December 17 to 27

EXPOSURE 8: METABOLISM

November 23 to January 15

This eighth annual event showcases emerging artists in Lebanon. This year's theme is metabolism, focusing on the body and its survival in art. 01 397018; Beirut Art Center, Jisr el Wati, Beirut

THE ARTWORK SHOP CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

December 1 to 24

The Artwork Shop Christmas Bazaar is the perfect place to do Christmas shopping. Opening hours: 10am to 6pm, closed on Sundays. 01 749646, Ayad Bldg., Adonis Street, Off Sadat St, Hamra

ARNAOON CHRISTMAS VILLAGE

Weekends from December 1, Weekdays from December 23 to January 8

Get your fill of Christmas cheer at Arnaoon, including an appearance from Santa Claus. Entrance fees apply. Check the website for details and timings. 06 642111, 03 342502, Batroun Highway, Msaylha Fortress Road, arnaoonvillage.com

The Christmas spirit comes to Harissa with a magical market at the shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon, and a festively decorated Teleferique. Enjoy free rides and a special Santa appearance for kids.

Facebook icon Marché de Noël à Harissa

INTERNATIONAL BUBBLES SPECTACULAR – CHRISTMAS EDITION

December 27 & 28

Featuring acrobatic elves, artists, dancers, and Santa himself. 03 608144 for information, 01 999666 for tickets. Palais Des Congres, Dbayeh

IL ETAIT UNE FOIS BELLE NATURE

December 27 to 29

A new spectacular show from Jeanine Aoun mixes music and dancing with the important theme of environmentalism. 03 245577 for information, 01 999666 for tickets. Soeur Antonine Theater, Roumieh Main Road

QUEEN OF THE SEASONS

December 29 to January 6

Ton Amie Liliane presents Queen of the Seasons, a play by Lara Rain. 01 999666 for tickets. Platea, Jounieh

JANUARY

ANFEH HIKING TRIP

January 8

Join Dale Corazon – Lebanon Explorers for a hike in Anfeh. 70 986118, 70 997062 for information and reservations. LL40,000 per person or LL35,000 for under 18s

ULI JON ROTH - SCORPIONS REVISITED LIVE IN BEIRUT

January 14

Classical guitarist Uli Jon Roth will perform for the first time in Beirut in his Scorpions Revisited World Tour. 01 999666, 76 309363 for tickets. Metro Al Madina, Hamra, metromadina.com

SEEING SENSING: A SENSORIAL TOUR

January 14 & February 11

Led by performer Petra Serhal, this tour takes families through the Sursock Museum's permanent collection, from 11am to 1pm. Suitable for kids aged 7-12. Children must be accompanied. 01 202001 for booking (essential). LL10,000 per child and LL5,000 per extra child. Sursock Museum, Ashrafieh

PHOTOMED LIBAN 2017

January 18 to February 8

The fourth Photomed Festival of Mediterranean Photography showcases the work of international and Lebanese photographers. Venues: Byblos Bank Headquarters, Hotel Le Gray, Institut Français du Liban, Station, and D Beirut photomedliban.com

AFAC FILM NIGHT: UM GHAYEB, MOTHER OF THE UNBORN

January 18

Directed by Nadine Salib, this film offers a moving insight into life in rural Egypt. 7pm to 8.30pm. Free admission. 01 202001; Sursock Museum, Ashrafieh.

SNOWSHOEING

Get ready for a great snowshoeing season! Enjoy a unique experience in the fresh air and see nature in white.

January 15 Al Arz - Becharreh District

January 22 Laqlouq - Jbeil District

January 29 Falougha - Baabda District
 03 917190, vamos-todos.com

FEBRUARY

AL BUSTAN FESTIVAL

February 16 to March 19

Check out live performances and a Shakespearian theme at this year's Al Bustan Festival. Visit the website for the full line-up of artists, locations and dates. albustanfestival.com

MARCH

BRYAN ADAMS IN CONCERT

March 17


Bryan Adams will perform live at BIEL at 8.30pm. Hall BA. Tickets on sale at Ticketing Box Office, 01 999666, ticketingboxoffice.com



Khatia Buniatishvili performing at the Al Bustan Festival

REGULAR EVENTS

Paragliding with Walkleb

Until Feb 28
 Every Saturday to Sunday from 10am to 5pm
 Jounieh or Cedars
 Price LL180,000 (including instruction and insurance)
 Add LL45,000 to film the jump (available at Harissa only)
 Reserve minimum three days in advance
 70 353738
 Fly Over Lebanon Anytime And Anywhere You Want With WALKLEB

Diving with Gaith Adventure

Every Saturday to Sunday from 9am to 4pm
 Discovery Diving Session with professional diving instructors including 30 minutes of theory, 20 minutes equipment class, 25 minutes of underwater diving.

LL53,000 per person Tel: 71 941100
 ghaithadventure

Souk El Tayeb at The Village Dbayeh

On every Thursday from 10am to 4pm
soukeltayeb.com

Grace Zeitounian at éCafé Sursock

Every Friday until February 24
 éCafé, Sursock, Ashrafieh, Beirut
 Live musical entertainment.
 Reservations 01 333240

Indian Dance Classes by the Indian Embassy in Lebanon

On Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 6pm to 8.30pm
 Indian Classical Bharatnatyam and Bollywood dance classes at the Indian Embassy. LL15,000 per class, LL120,000 for a 10 class package.
 71 121658, 01 735922
indianembassybeirut.org

MISS LEBANON

In October 2016, **Sandy Tabet** was crowned Miss Lebanon and went on to represent the country in Washington D.C. in the Miss World pageant in December. **LT** asked her to share some of her favorite things about Lebanon

What is the most breathtaking view you've seen so far in Lebanon?

Kornet el Sawda, as it's the highest point in Lebanon and the Levant. At around 3,000 meters above sea level, the view through the clouds is amazing.

Which place in Lebanon holds the best memories for you?

My village of Bhamdoun. It's a special place that brings back unforgettable childhood memories.

Do you ski in Lebanon?

Yes, but I'm not a professional!

Name a Lebanese food you couldn't live without

Tabboule for a salad and kibbe as a main dish. The greatest versions can be found at my grandmother's house!

If you had to plan a whirlwind trip to Lebanon for the other Miss World contestants, which places would you include?

Tannourine and Arez, swimming and having a picnic at the beautiful waterfalls of Baakline and a hiking trip to the majestic Balou Balaa, a natural sinkhole carved by water 160 million years ago.

Describe your perfect weekend

The beach on Saturday morning, partying at night and a barbecue with family on Sunday.





WorldWide aims to be your “one and only” devoted leading Travel and MICE management center which is uniquely dedicated to provide you with top notch corporate as well as individual travel management solutions from Lebanon to the rest of the world.



BESIDE YOU WE CREATE WINNING TRAVEL SOLUTIONS

Managing your travel actually starts with a good understanding and analysis of your travel program where we can accordingly deliver the best travel solutions that would optimize your traveling experience.

WITH YOU THOUSANDS OF DESTINATIONS AND BACK

We would be more than delighted to plan your next trip beside your accommodation, restaurants, bars, and cultural tours to get the most out of your holiday. From relaxation to extreme thrilling activities, including city breaks, mountain sites, beaches, sports, shopping and much more... at all seasons, any place, anytime, your holiday plan is an extreme pleasure for us.

FOR YOU WE MANAGE EVENTS ALL OVER THE WORLD

We strive to create winning solutions and exceptional experience for your events. In our dynamic knowledge based company, we partner with industry leaders and leverage our extensive networks to combine business with pleasure and achieve definitive success.



Luxury at Hand



Private Jet Charter - VIP Aircraft Handling

With its professional staff, modern equipment, spacious lounges and the **new state-of-the-art Legacy 500 aircraft**, Cedar Executive brings in a new level of luxury to the corporate aviation sector.

