

Gourmet Abu Dhabi Returns With More Venues & Stunning New Line Up...

15 Day Celebration Attracts 'Who's Who' Of Gastronomic World

Returning February 2010 for its second edition, Gourmet Abu Dhabi, the culinary event presented by Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA), has been extended to 15 days, from 5-19 February, will take in 14 venues, including some of the UAE capital's latest and most exciting restaurants and feature a stellar line up of master chefs boasting 22 Michelin stars and many other accolades between them as well as celebrity and guest personalities.

"The cast this year reads like a 'Who's Who' of the international gastronomic arena being garnered from 13 countries across Australasia, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Sub-continent and the Americas," said Ahmed Hussein, Deputy Director General, ADTA. "This is a cross-cultural experience which will enlighten, enliven, enthuse, engage and entertain.

"Following the inaugural Gourmet Abu Dhabi earlier this year we have heeded feedback from all participants and have extended the programme both in timescale, from an original 10 days, as well as venue outreach and built in additional elements to appeal to the widest possible audience."

Joining the Gourmet Abu Dhabi family of venues are the newly-opened five star Fairmont Bab Al Bahr, and signature The Yas Hotel – the only hotel in the world overlooking a Grand Prix race track.

"The increased number of hotel and restaurant partners underlines the expansion of Abu Dhabi's hospitality infrastructure witnessed this year," said Ahmed Hussein. "All our hospitality partners are keen to demonstrate their culinary prowess and Gourmet Abu Dhabi diners can look forward to evenings of the finest food, in the best of company and with the highest quality of service – signature values we wish to see the destination be immediately associated with."

With a packed programme of events ranging from chateau dinners, free-to-attend culinary masterclasses, including for the first time ladies only classes, a celebrity evening, gourmet safari, kitchen party, chef's table luncheon, royal dinner, chocolate and pastry workshops, a gourmet golf experience and gourmet barbecue, Gourmet Abu Dhabi 2010 is set to raise the region's gastronomic bar.

"We are taking the event to a whole new level with some of the finest talents in the culinary world being hosted here in the UAE capital," said Peter Knipp of the Gourmet Abu Dhabi organising committee.

“This event is fast making its mark on the international culinary scene as evidenced by its ability to attract the higher echelons of the gastronomic world.

“A huge range of tastes is being catered for including vegetarian, a special dinner given over to game cuisine and another to the much-heralded Cuisine Vitale with its expansive use of herbs and the freshest of ingredients. We have also, for the first time, chefs from Turkey, Lebanon and Japan expanding the educational and cultural impact of the event.”

Bringing a touch of the Middle East to Gourmet Abu Dhabi next year will be Turkish Chef Mehmet Gök –currently executive chef of the Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul – the only Turkish executive chef in the city. Raised in Turkey’s agricultural province of Amasya, Mehmet developed a lifelong appreciation for simple, seasonal food and the effort that goes into producing it.

Chef Gök will be serving up a gastronomic discovery at Atayeb restaurant at the five-star Yas Hotel.

“There are huge Turkish culinary influences in the food of the Arab regions which are a result of a historic context,” said Chef Gök “I am looking forward to exploring these links further and perhaps forging new ones.”

Avant-garde Canadian chef Bob Blumer – whose popular television show ‘The Surreal Gourmet’ is now aired in 30 countries – is to headline a one-night only Gourmet Abu Dhabi signature event.

“Given Bob’s reputation as having penned what the San Francisco Chronicle has described as ‘possibly the wittiest and most sensible how-to cookbook of the decade’, guests at this special dinner should expect a night of laughter as well as inspiring cuisine,” said Knipp.

Bob Blumer, known for televising his extreme epicurean adventures, is renowned for being able to transform common ingredients into wow-inspiring dishes through whimsical presentation. His one-night Abu Dhabi date will take place at Crowne Plaza Abu Dhabi Yas Island, on 7 February.

“While he is in the UAE we hope to introduce this self-confessed action-adventurer to some of Abu Dhabi’s own culinary traditions which we believe will spark his enquiring mind to delve deeper into the heritage and potential of Middle Eastern cuisine,” added Ahmed Hussein.

The Gourmet Abu Dhabi 2010 programme also includes an industry forum comprising specialised workshops designed to function as knowledge transfer platforms between internationally recognised industry experts and their local and regional counterparts.

Another initiative aimed at spurring the local industry on to ever great heights - the Abu Dhabi Gourmet Stars Awards is also back in an extended format. The prestigious programme, which recognises individuals and organisations who contribute to the UAE capital’s evolution into an internationally-acclaimed gastronomic destination, will next year feature a tenth honour.

Public voting in the annual honours programme – which now features a ‘Pastry Chef Of The Year’ award – is now open online at www.gourmetabudhabi.ae and will run until the end of this month.

“This time around, we have raised the bar higher, following input from the local industry,” said Knipp. “The additional award will recognise a person who has an exceptional talent in pastry creation, and driving the successes and quality of pastry and dessert products offered at a single outlet or various outlets.”

The award categories are: Executive Chef of the Year; Food & Beverage Manager of the Year; Regional Cuisine Chef of the Year; Regional Cuisine Manager of the Year; Regional Cuisine Restaurant of the Year; Restaurant of the Year; Restaurant Chef of the Year; Restaurant Manager of the Year; Restaurant Host of the Year and Pastry Chef of the Year.

Results of the public voting for the 2010 edition will be evaluated early in the New Year with the top three nominees from all 10 categories being assessed by a panel of UAE and international industry judges. These will include: Jeremy P. Weeks, Balli Delege, Membre du Conseil Magistral and Association Modiale De La Gastronomie, Bailliage National de Abu Dhabi; Nasser Al Reyami, Tourism Standards Division Director, Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority; -Patrick Willis, CEO of Marlon Abela Restaurant Corporation (MARC), London and Susanne Drexler of Gourmet Connection GmbH, Germany.

The awards will be presented at a the Gourmet Abu Dhabi Gala Dinner which will be held on February 15

The Gourmet Abu Dhabi enhancements are aimed at moving the emirate along in its campaign to be a global culinary destination which will leverage Abu Dhabi’s renowned hospitality credentials.

“We have discovered that the impact of Gourmet Abu Dhabi lingers on long after the immediate taste sensation has passed. We have received strong international media, travel trade and visitor interest in the event, which has gone a long way to reinforce our renowned reputation for refined hospitality,” said Ahmed Hussein.

“We are convinced that our goal of becoming the Arabian Gulf’s gastronomic destination of choice is now well within our grasp.”

Bookings for Gourmet Abu Dhabi can be made by emailing info@gourmetabudhabi.ae

Gourmet Abu Dhabi 2010 is privileged to have the support of the following sponsors: Etihad Airways as airline partner; RAK Porcelain as premium partner – fine porcelain tableware; Aqua Panna & San Pellegrino as the Official Still & Sparkling Mineral Waters; Betterlife, Siematic and Gaggenau as the Premium Partner for Complete Kitchen Solutions; Classic Fine Foods as its premium partner – gourmet products; Spinneys and African + Eastern as beverage partner; .PCB Creation as the Official

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About ADTA:

Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA) was established in September 2004. It has wide ranging responsibilities for building and developing the emirate's tourism industry. These include; destination marketing; infrastructure and product development and regulation and classification. A key role is to create synergy in the international promotion of Abu Dhabi through close co-ordination with the emirate's hotels, destination management companies, airlines and other public and private sector travel-related organisations.

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