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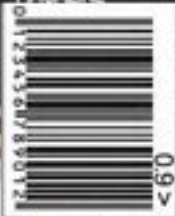
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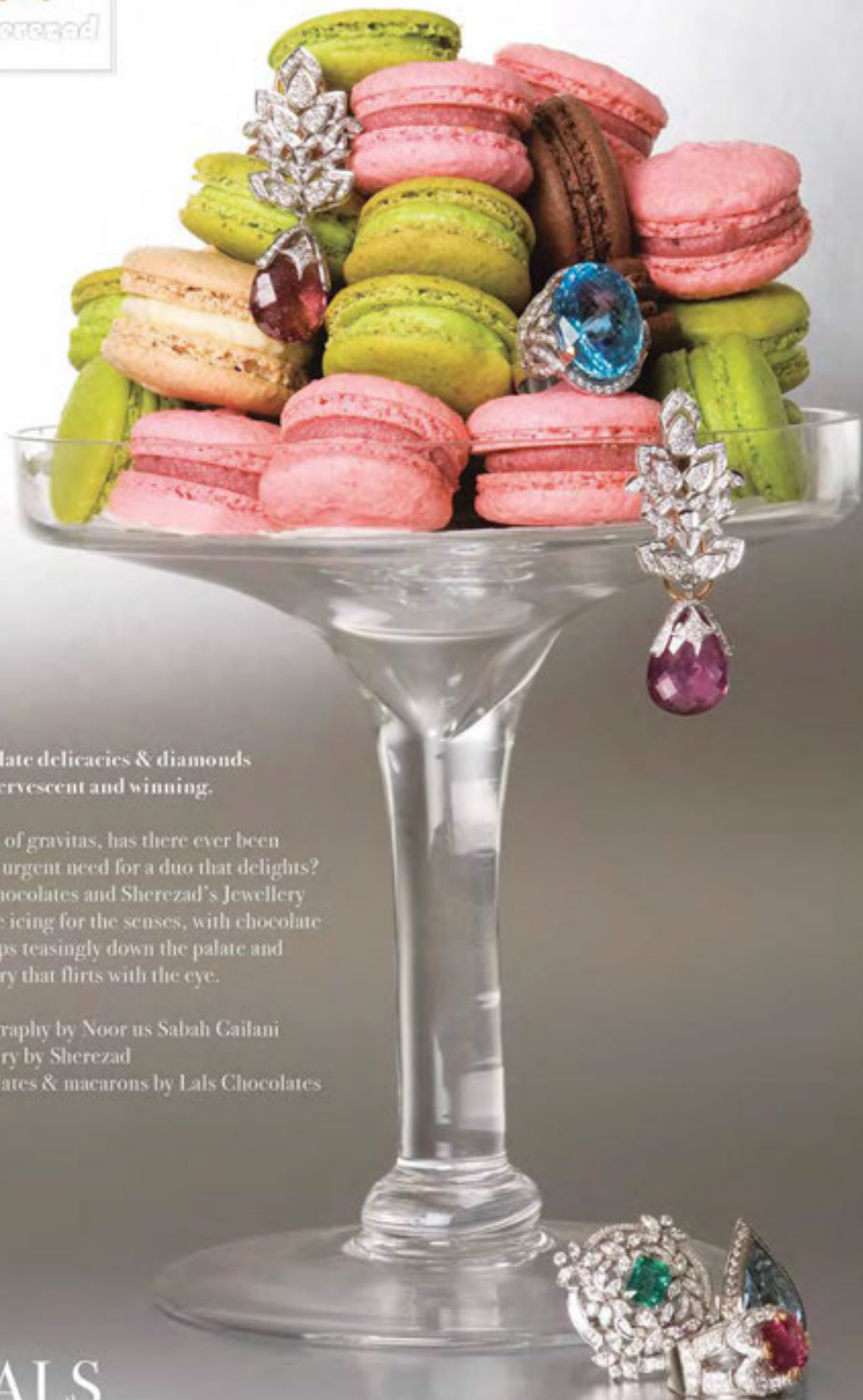
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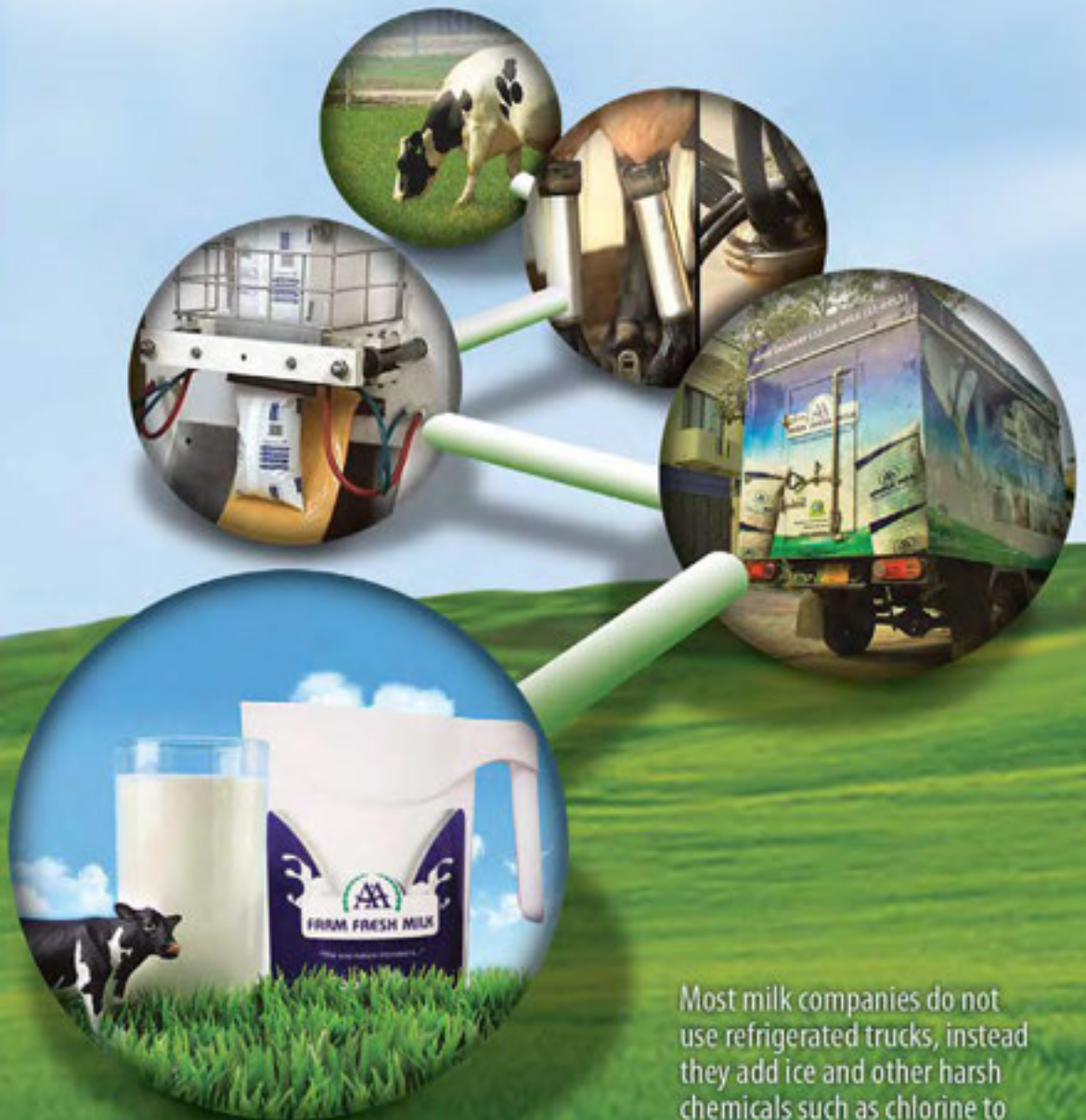


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Redah Misbah is the director and head creative stylist for Deplex. She graduated from the London School of Fashion in 2008 and attained professional degrees in hair and cosmetology from renowned institutes such as Vidal Sassoon and Ray Cochrane Beauty School. She also acquired a professional diploma in special effects makeup from Joe Blasoo in Orlando, Florida. Redah strives to take Deplex to new levels with innovative management and techniques to maintain its standing in Pakistan and increase its international presence.



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Manahil Bajwa is a graduate of Amherst College and is the Manager of Marketing and Funds Development at the Non-profit Organisation, Humanity First USA. She loves writing about political and social issues, particularly concerning Pakistan.



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Editor's Letter



Dear Readers,

With the first issue of 2012 we look forward to new beginnings and hope this year will be better and brighter than the last. But forgetting the past is also to forget its lessons. Raza Rumi looks back at the events that will haunt us as a nation and what we might learn from them (Pages 58-62).

Last year we lost one of our bravest women- Nusrat Bhutto. Fatima and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto give a loving tribute to their grandmother, Joonam (pages 64-67).

Working in Pakistan poses so many unique challenges that achieving something here is harder than most countries. However, when one does, it's truly remarkable. This year Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy became the first Pakistani filmmaker to be nominated for the Oscars. We feature Sharmeen and 10 other extraordinary Pakistanis who have made a mark in 2011, despite the tribulations, in our shoot - Great Inspirations (pages 136-143).

How this year pans out will depend in large part on our politicians, especially with possible elections looming. Imran Khan has attracted many political heavyweights to his party. Will his 'tsunami' fizzle out, or sweep away its opponents and usher in a new era? Wajahat S Khan grills Shah Mahmood Qureshi about his controversial move to Tehreek-e-Insaf (pages 144-151).

Our cover shoot features Kiran Chaudhry, Asmaa Muntaz and Mehreen Raheal. These women are talented, beautiful and entrepreneurial. We find out the hurdles these trailblazers overcame to become the success stories they are today; in our cover story- I'm Every Woman (pages 120-133).

From novel to script, Mohsin Hamid tells us how 'The Reluctant Fundamentalist' is making the transition to the big screen and about his visit to India (pages 178-179). We are proud of Meesha Shafi for being a part of this historic amalgamation of literature and film between Pakistan and India. We also feature the Beygairat Brigade, who gave voice to the silent majority (pages 174-176). These artists have crossed borders to show the potential that exists in Pakistan.

Mehreen Akbar opens up her spectacular home to us and speaks candidly about her life in our feature, Bold and Beautiful (pages 154-163).

As always the fifth edition of Paper is packed with the season's latest trends (pages 76-85), hottest parties and coolest places. We give you a look at our top five Spring/Summer collections from PFDC Sunsilk Fashion Week (pages 113-118) and our favourites from PFDC L'Oreal Paris Bridal Week (pages 105-112).

We are excited to announce that this issue marks our international debut, in India. This is a tremendous opportunity for us and we are excited about the possibilities that lay ahead. We would be thrilled to continue receiving your feedback. Feel free to contact us on facebook.com/papermagpk, twitter: papermagpak and email at papermagazine2010@gmail.com.

May you all have a happy and successful new year.

Samina Khan

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automatic movement with its Pellaton winding system is protected against strong magnetic fields by a soft-iron inner case. And, needless to say, envious glances. **IWC. Engineered for men.**

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PAPERAZZ

HIGHLIGHTS OF ALL THE RECENT EVENTS



Kemier Rehaj
Aamina Sheikh
Aale Monjee



Waleed & Fatima
Zaman walk the red
carpet



Iqraa
Mansha



Sharez
Khan



Sanya
Kamil

Fawad Khan was the
star of Umar Saheed's
show as he surprised
us walking down with
Mahirah Khan
Ashari.



Saima
Mohsin &
Sikander
Rizvi



Hiba Sher
& HS4

Aysha Raja &
Mohsin Hamid at
the Mohammed
Hanif book launch



Nida Azwer



Nazli
Majeed
& Noor
Muneer



Saira Shamoon accessorises black with gold statement jewellery and a metallic gold clutch



Mahirah, Nina and Aale pair classic red lips with black outfits



Iman Ahmad looking chic as ever in a black and white Body Focus outfit and her favourite Chanel



Mathira wears a black dress with gold snake embellishment



Mehru looks super hip carrying a black Alexander Wang



Maheen Kardar keeps it simple in a black and white printed dress and barely there make-up.



Feeha Jamshed in a body con black dress statement earrings and a gold clutch



Mohsin Ali



The newlyweds engrossed in conversation wearing black outfits by Rizwanullah



Umair & Sarina



Sabere Saigol



Daper Loves
Mahen Khan
Irtazah After
Hours clutch

PYTHON CLUTCHES WERE ALL THE RAGE.



Nabeela glows in her signature minimalist look

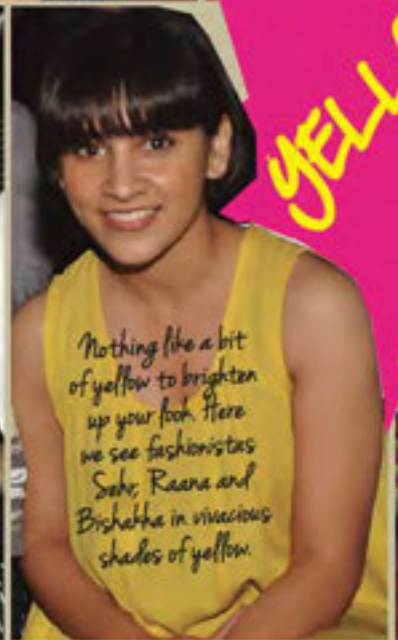


Kiran Aman adds a pop of colour with a green Mahin Hussain Flag clutch



Neutrals

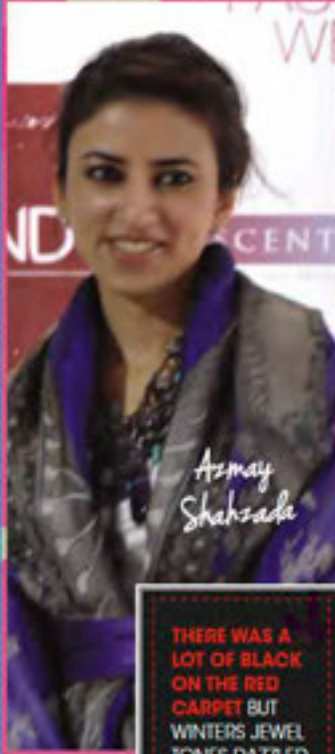
AYESHA HASHWAR! LOOKS ELEGANT AND GRACEFUL IN A LONG NUDE GOWN



Nothing like a bit of yellow to brighten up your look. Here we see fashionistas Saba, Raana and Bishakha in vivacious shades of yellow.



YELLOW



Asmay Shahzade



Nazafreen Saigol



Kamran Rahn



Vaneesa Ahmed



Mohsin Ali

THERE WAS A LOT OF BLACK ON THE RED CARPET BUT WINTERS JEWEL TONES DAZZLED.

Amethyst



Nabila

Citrine



Nomi Ansari



Frieha Aftab



Maira



Zaheer Abbas



Yousaf Bashir Qureshi

Jewel Intentions

Ruby



Frieha Aftab



Noorjahan Bilgrami

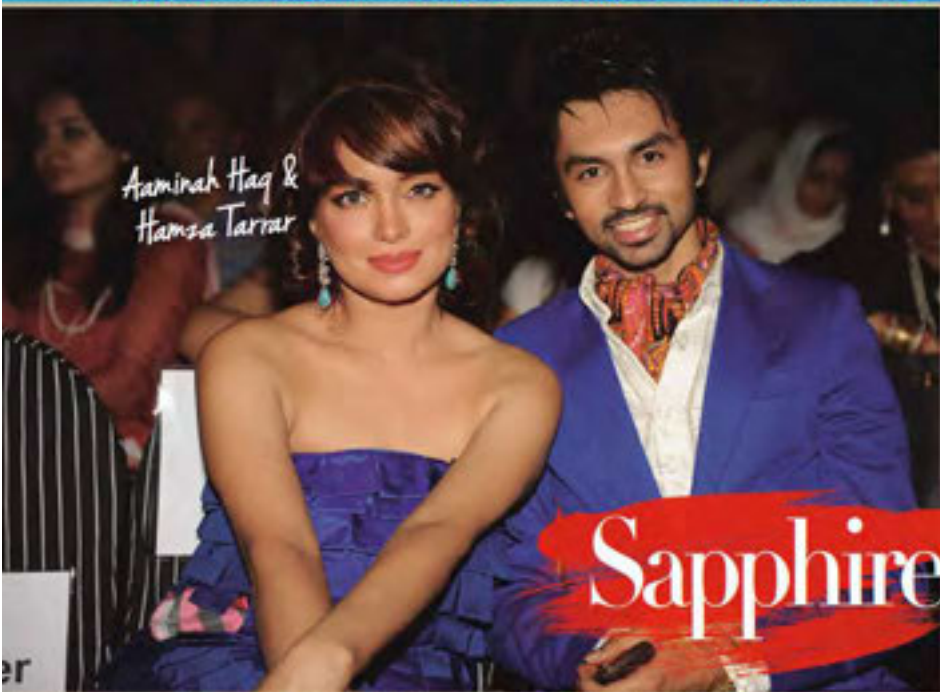


Andleeb Rana



Zeha Husain & Shehraz Husain

Emerald



Aaminah Haq & Hamza Tarrar

Sapphire



Shehla Chatoor



Neeni Rafi



Ronak Lakhani



Kiran Haroon



Mariam



Sania in her own label. Our cameras caught a lot of people wearing Sania Maskatiya on the red carpet at PFDC Sunsilk Fashion Week.



Aamina Sheikh



Friehe Altaf



Hamama Malik

Mad for MASKATIYA



ASMA JAHANGIR



SAAMI SIDDIQUI



MUNIZAE JAHANGIR

WHEN HARRY MET SULEMA



HARRY & SULEMA

Recently Sulema Jahangir and Harry Ali Rao got married. The occasion was filled with lots of friends, fun and dancing.



SONYA EJAZ & JAMAL RAHMAN



RAFAY ALAM, SOHAIL SALAH-UDDIN, AYSHA RAJA & MARIAM MANI



AMINA KARDAR & NOOR BHATTY

The model is wearing [02 - Imperial grandeur] Satin matte eyeshadow palette

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WAJAHAT & SARA KHAN



MAHAM NAGSHBAND



AYAZ KHAN



MUMRAIZ NAGSHBAND & SIDRA KHAN



LOVE ACTUALLY

Mumraiz and Sidra recently got hitched in a colourful ceremony sprawling over two cities. PAPER was there to capture this joyous occasion.



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KIRAN & ADNAN



FRIEHA ALTAF

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Recently Adnan and Kiran played an acoustic set for Saifi Khan's birthday. Needless to say people had a great time with everyone dancing and singing along to great tunes with an ambience to boot.



AMNA HASAN



SAIF & MEVISH KHAN



BASHIR SHEIKH



JENNY & HAMILTON LIU



ZARA SHAHJAHAN, SAIF REHMAN, SHAZIA DEEN & TANIA HATIB



SHAMYL & ERUM ALAM



MEHR BUTT



ZAHRA KHOKHAR, ADNAN HAYAT & SAIF AHMED



SEHR LONE & ZAINAB ALAM



YANAL & MAHA KHAN



IMRAN MALIK & GUBILAJ ALAM



ISBAH HASAN, MAHLIA LONE & NATASHA HUSSAIN



HASAN TAHIR



DANIAL RAHEAL & MISHAAL RAHMAN



SAANIYA & SARA

MEERA

NATTY, ASIM & GYI

CAUGHT

PAPER CAMERAS CAUGHT THE FASHION GLITTERATI IN THE ACT. HERE IS A LOOK AT WHAT YOU WONT SEE ANYWHERE ELSE.



MAHIRAH KHANASKARI



MATHIRA



SARA BELAL



AYESHAH ALAM KHAN & FAIRHA KHAN



ALI AZMAI & AMJAD MOHEN



AMNA EYAS



IRAJ CYBI & RABIA



MAHA KHAN & SARA IANVEER



NAMOOS ZAHEDI



NEHA & MARA BUTT

ON PAPER



MEHREEN SYED



SHAMYL ALAM, KIRAN CHAUDHRY & ADNAN SARWAR



AAMINAH HAQ



MUNEBA KAMAL & SARA SHAHID



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THE YEAR

RAZA RUMI GIVES US HIS INSIGHT INTO 2011, A YEAR THAT WILL HAUNT US

IN REVIEW

BY RAZA RUMI 



A journalist recently remarked that 2011 was the year that no one will remember. Alas, this will not be the case, as the year will haunt us for some time to come. The process of forgetting will not be effortless. Pakistan has undergone several such moments in the past. However, 2011 brought it all together in a chaotic fashion, exposing the blood-lined fissures within the society and the long-term crumbling of the state.

The year started with the gruesome murder of Salmaan Taseer, governor of Pakistan's largest province as he championed the cause of a poor woman booked under the blasphemy law. His death was a shocking event in multiple ways: the murderer Mumtaz Qadri was a man supposed to protect him, the killer was garlanded and elevated to the status of a hero by many segments of the society especially the clerics. A tragedy of this proportion at one level appeared to be an epitaph of a society that had buried its humanity. Even worse the political parties, civil society and media remained cautious in the aftermath of the assassination; and the hope for a collective resistance was missing.

It took several months for an afraid judge to deliver a verdict against this heinous act and now the judge lives outside Pakistan to escape the wrath of clerics who find

his act of sentencing Qadri abominable. The executive did little to punish errant officials who had allowed for things to come to such a pass; and the Parliament could not even offer prayers for the slain governor. Pakistan has never appeared so unkind and insensitive to murder, and that too in the name of a faith that preaches peace.

Bruised by this ghastly incident, the country displayed another kind of a collective neurosis when a trigger-happy CIA contractor Raymond Davis killed three Pakistanis in Lahore. Davis' act was despicable and he ought to have been punished. But Pakistan's right wing and media manifested a rare kind of blood thirst against this operative of a notorious agency. The calls to hang Davis without a due examination of international and domestic laws came as another affirmation of a society, which has abandoned rule of law in favour of chaos and paranoia. It is a separate matter that the state bailed out Davis applying the Islamic laws introduced by General Zia ul Haq by paying blood money to the families of the victims. The executive was in overdrive and the judiciary also delivered a speedy judgement. The incident left Pakistanis more xenophobic and resentful of its long-time patron and ally, the United States.

Nothing has been more turbulent than the trajectory of Pak-US relations during the year. The two allies turned into

frenemies by the end of the year. The Davis saga set the stage for stranger things to come.

**NOTHING HAS BEEN MORE TURBULENT THAN
THE TRAJECTORY OF PAK-US RELATIONS
DURING THE YEAR.**

"FLYING ABOVE US, IN THE POLLUTED SKIES, IT IS DEADLIER THAN THE DRONE OF THE NO-WHERE-LAND, SPAWNING MORE OF ITS KIND IN OUR WATERBODIES, LEAVING OUR LUSH PLAINS PLAGUED, IN PREPARATION FOR NEXT YEAR'S ATTACK." SABA KHAN



SABA KHAN DENGUE-DRONE, 2011 ILLUSTRATION MADE EXCLUSIVELY FOR PAPER

THE LOCATION OF OBL'S HIDEOUT WAS MOST EMBARRASSING. THE CHIEF PATRON OF A GLOBAL ISLAMIST MOVEMENT WAS LIVING APPARENTLY FOR YEARS NEAR A GARRISON TOWN IN ABBOTTABAD, CLOSE TO A PRESTIGIOUS MILITARY TRAINING ACADEMY.

On May 2nd, a special team of US Navy seals almost invaded a part of Pakistan in a surgical strike to capture and kill the leader of Al Qaeda, Osama Bin Laden (OBL). The location of OBL's hideout was most embarrassing. The chief patron of a global Islamist movement was living apparently for years near a garrison town in Abbottabad, close to a prestigious military training academy.

There was uproar in Pakistan and the earlier shock and unanswered question - what was OBL doing there - was replaced by a nationalist outrage. The US had violated our sovereignty and if our security forces were negligent or complicit there was an issue. The contradictions within Pakistan's policy and its domestic civil-military relations were at once laid bare under international spotlight.

The domestic crisis which emanated out the May 2nd strike on OBL's hideout deepened by the end of the year when the civilian and military power-wielders were playing out their conflict in the courts. The memo-gate affair, as it is now known, finds its roots in the writing of an unsigned memo allegedly written by Pakistan's Ambassador to the US calling for US intervention and support for the attempts to establish civilian control of security and foreign policies. By the end of the year, the Ambassador had resigned, faced a court petition, which culminated in the formation of a judicial commission to probe the charges, and been placed in virtual imprisonment because of fears for his safety.

Between these events, there were two other acts of violence. One against the state by a well-planned attack on a major naval base in Karachi in May 2011, and the second, the abduction and murder of a journalist Syed Saleem Shahzad around end of May 2011. Both acts disparate in their intensity and nature underlined one thing in common: the power of militant groups, a reality to be reckoned with. The naval base attack by the militants (or non state actors) apparently had inside support while the slain journalist was reporting regularly on the activities of extremist non-state actors as well as the operations of Al Qaeda in Pakistan.

These organised groups also abducted the son of the late Salman Taseer from Lahore and an American aid worker Warren Weinstein in August. On the issue of latter, a video was released by the current Al Qaeda chief claiming that his network had the American citizen in their custody. For the release of Weinstein, Pakistan and the US have to meet

several demands of the militants.

Instead of co-operation or meaningful engagement, the US and Pakistan have been busy vilifying each other thereby muddling the prospects of regional peace close to the withdrawal of NATO/ISAF troops from Afghanistan in 2014. The outgoing US military chief Mike Mullen accused Pakistan of harbouring militant groups such as the Haqqani group and held it indirectly responsible for attacks on NATO troops in Afghanistan. The statement offended many Pakistanis given the sacrifices made by Pakistan Army and its citizens. Later in the year, the attacks on Salala checkpoint on the Pak-Afghan border aggravated Pakistanis again and this time drastic steps - such as the blockade of NATO containers - were taken by the government.

Amid this political instability, the weak civilian government remained under pressure from the foreign policy imperatives, continued terrorism and a melting economy. Its capacity to focus on domestic issues and 'govern' the country dwindled. Good governance becomes a daunting goal when two powerful unelected institutions of the state operate outside the ambit of parliamentary control (over the armed forces) and advice (as in the case of courts). Thus the Prime Minister had to say that he was facing a state within a state whilst complaining of conspiracies against the government.

The real impact of the political instability and slide into chaos remained the poor and middle classes of Pakistan who dealt with inflation, power outages and a winter with limited supplies of natural gas. This is perhaps the first year when Pakistanis had to confront the reality that supplies of natural gas from the troubled province of Balochistan was less than the demand. In the short term there are bound to be more outages and limits to its use, as was the case in the past.

December 16 marked the fortieth anniversary of the fall of Dhaka when the Pakistan Army surrendered in East Pakistan, giving way to the birth of Bangladesh. Sadly, this historical marker was underplayed by all except the usual conspiratorial rants in the mainstream media. The country has not quite understood or internalised the shock and continues to tread the familiar path - denying a viable federalist, democratic space to its plural citizens in Balochistan and elsewhere and blaming external actors for its internal problems.

"WHEN THE LEADERS HAVE SKELETONS IN THEIR CLOSET AND ARE NO BETTER THAN THE THUGS THAT ROAM THE STREETS THREATENING TO TAKE YOUR CAR, MOBILE OR JUST YOU." SABA KHAN



SABA KHAN AN EXPENSIVE WALL HANGING, 2010. THREAD, SEQUINS AND CRYSTALS ON FABRIC 3X6'

In the meantime, Zia ul Haq's project has come to fruition. Generations of young Pakistanis, especially in the urban areas, unaware of their own histories and indoctrinated by an ideological education system, and the faith-centred public discourse, are now looking towards a messiah in the form of ex-cricketer Imran Khan. Mr Khan is clean and presents a sophisticated version of Islamic nationalism, which warms the hearts of young men and women fed on the diet of xenophobia and Pakistan's past and future glories. The larger political parties have not made things easier by their compromises and tainted records in office. The conception of a faux revolution has been touted around Khan's political mobilisation. It is unclear whether this will turn into votes at the polls let alone a vehicle for

structural change.

Nothing is more symbolic than the emergence of the idiot box - the television revolution in Pakistani homes, especially in the urban centres. It has opened up avenues for public accountability but at the same time initiated newer possibilities of controlling the public mind. Pakistan in 2012 and beyond will be a country ruled by the younger population and media barons and the guardians of a decaying post-colonial state. This is why the 'new' Pakistan remains an idea fraught with possibilities as well as the scary lessons of history telling us that the future remains beholden to the past. ■

"MADE BY A CRAFTSPERSON WHO WAS SEEN LYING ON A BENCH IN HIS DARK, HOT SHOP DURING LOAD-SHEDDING HOUR, BECAUSE HE DID NOT OWN A GENERATOR BUT COULD MAKE ONE FOR ME." SABA KHAN



SABA KHAN MORE PROSPERITY, 2010. THREAD AND BUTTONS ON FABRIC "60X58"



LIVE LIFE AT **Speed**

JOONAM

A loving tribute to Nusrat Bhutto

(1929-2011)

by

Fatima & Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

She was beautiful because she was brave beyond earthly measure. We called our grandmother Joonam, my life in her native Farsi, because she was the beginning of how we began to see the world.

In a time ruled by violence, Joonam was not unafraid - but she was unbowed by fear. As a young woman she buried her husband, killed by the bloody regime of General Zia ul Haq. She was denied the right to see her husband's body. She received the news of his murder in a rank jail cell she herself had been confined to. She fought the dictatorship that would claim, not only her husband, but also her youngest son, at the cost of her safety and her liberty because she believed in something better for her country.



*To paint her as
simply a beauty...
would be to diminish her.*

WITH OUR FATHER MURTAZA AT HOME IN KARACHI



As First Lady she represented a different imagination for Pakistan - one that was tolerant, was just and was open to all, regardless of faith or fortune. She was, in spirit and in kind, the very opposite of the present.

Two resounding tragedies did not stall her. She fought, it was her nature to fight. She fought election campaigns, she fought against corruption - the very same corruption that would tarnish and slowly but monstrosly eat away at her family - and she struggled untiringly against injustice on behalf of those who could not fight alone.

To paint her as simply a beauty - to view her only through the lens of what she wore and how she carried herself as many are wont to do - would be to diminish her. She was a warrior. Clothes were an expression of her independence, of her liberal politics. But they do not define her.

What defines her is this: The ease with which she stepped outside the confines of her class and her privilege to be a voice for the voiceless.

The refusal, the adamant refusal, to give in to oppressive power (and isn't all power oppressive at the end?)

Hope. She never lost hope, even in the most troubled moments of this young country's history, that Pakistan deserved more. Something more free, more just, more inclusive.

The suffering that she endured, not only in life, not only towards the end of her life when she was made a prisoner of unwanted exile, but also in death, do not touch her. She is far too strong to be unmade by suffering. It is difficult, even now, months later, to speak of her using the past tense.

She buried another child, her eldest son, our father, and it was a death that no mother should bear. After two years of her struggling to bring him home to Pakistan, of knocking door to door in the campaign that would elect him to parliament, of guarding him fiercely and paying for it, she lost him to a violent death. It was a specter that would follow her. Eleven years later, her daughter was killed. Three children she lost and she lost them all violently.

But before that last killing, we lost her. Pakistan was denied her presence as she languished unseen and unheard of, far away from home.

In death, Nusrat, our Joonam returns to us. Though we who loved her will tell you that she never really left. ■



NUSRAT ON TOUR

Time after time

FROM HER OWN 80'S MUSIC MADNESS TO HER DAUGHTER'S TEENAGE DREAMS, LIFE COMES FULL CIRCLE FOR ZAHRA HAMEED.

BY ZAHRA HAMEED



It was the summer of '88 when I first laid eyes on Cyndi. Bright, bold and beautiful, she seemed to tantalise me with her defiant stare, her punk hairstyle and those hot pink lips. She looked so cool in the summer heat, hanging casually on the sidewalk row of posters on the Mall Road, that my elder sister, Meenu, and I begged for. Mom being a Madonna fan gave in, much to our delight.

We proudly took Cyndi home and stuck her on our Laura Ashley wallpaper. She made our girly room 'funky' and so grown up. Till then life had been a red and white blur, the colours of our regimented Convent school, with a 'Papa Don't Preach' and 'Thriller' soundtrack on the way. Then everything changed. Cyndi arrived and we knew our lives would never be the same again.

So who was this girl? We worshipped Madonna, whose 'Like a Virgin' Tour was on top of our VHS list. But Cyndi had a brand new aura. Afternoons were spent staring at the poster from our bunk beds and analysing her clothes; that neon skirt, the jewelry, the make-up, that wild mane. All we had was her name printed on the side of the poster. A clue, but we wanted more.

We were a musical family. From mom's love of pop, to dad's classical *ghazals* and Bollywood hits; we knew by heart and sang with gusto anything that came our way. A trip to Off Beat, the coolest music store in town, was a sacred ritual. Rows upon rows of cassettes in a gleaming glass box that we were allowed to see but not touch. If one was lucky and dad was in a good mood, we got to listen to some new music and perhaps bought a selection to play on our bright red tape recorder. Just imagine our glee when we first saw her name, 'Cyndi Lauper - Girls Just Wanna Have Fun' printed on a Top Billboard Hits tape. We squealed and screamed until we finally heard the track. As the catchy music filled the shop we knew our anthem had arrived. Cyndi Lauper rocked!

That summer break we decided to go full force, Cyndi style. We convinced mom to ditch the pastel chicken frocks and let us design our own clothes. We bought purple, hot pink and neon lawns and teamed them with polka dots and the wildest prints we could get from Rana Cloth House in Main Market. I remember the look of horror on the Baby Needs tailor's face as we sketched the multi-tiered frill skirts with bright piping and sleeveless tanks. We tie-dyed school stockings with markers, and even found some coloured hair spray for streaking our hair. We paraded up and down Dupatta Gali buying the biggest hoops, bead necklaces and plastic bangles. We were ten and on top of our game.

The afternoons were always a time of illicit fun and frolic. As our unsuspecting mom took her daily nap, it was show time next door. The AC's loud whizzing drowned the music as we swiftly changed into our gear. Meenu teased our hair, tying it into a high ponytail and spraying on some strategic neon strands. Then we'd pile on the jewellery, wear our Ray-Bans and sneak downstairs. With Cyndi playing on our walkmans, off we went on our BMXs for a three o'clock jaunt in sleepy Garden Town.

Jane Fonda's fitness video was hugely popular in the '80's. It was great fun doing the routine with our mom and aunts. Then one day we had a brain wave. Why not have our own Cyndi Lauper aerobics class? So we set to work, drawing fliers by hand of the 'Funtastic Aerobics Class' where you could 'dance your burn off to Cyndi Lauper' and distributed them on our afternoon rounds.

The day of the first class, we stood in our lounge surveying its mod new studio look. The furniture had been moved out. The towel rolls, water and handy chairs for sit-ups were ready. Standing there in our purple tights, hot pink T-shirts with matching tennis headbands, the question on our minds was: 'Is anyone going to come?'

We watched in anticipation as the clock ticked past three. Our ever supportive aunt and pesky cousin arrived. Soon Mom joined in. Determined to make it a success, we started our routine. As the music filled the room, we lost ourselves in the moves. Suddenly I turned and saw some new faces. Wait a minute, wasn't that the fatty aunty from next door and her sulky daughter? Smiling inwards, I pushed myself harder, 'flex...point...flex...point...now double time...' As far as we were concerned, the class was a hit. By the end of the week, word spread about the Cyndi aerobics being led by two kids. Soon we had a decent group of exercisers and a whole new bunch of friends. Meenu even managed to showcase her abilities at the school's PT class, creating Convent history with her frantic aerobics routine.

Now that we were whipping the neighbourhood and school into shape, next on the agenda was a music concert. Our *phuppo* had just bought us the coolest doll from Paris. She had the ultimate streaked blonde crop with dark makeup, a drop dead gold jumpsuit and boots. We nicknamed her Cyndi and

fought over it endlessly, until the day we agreed to collaborate for the biggest rock concert ever. So we got to work creating a giant cardboard stage, handmade paper instruments and outfits for our Barbies with silver tapes and foils. The music lineup was of course a host of Cyndi, Madonna and Kylie songs. The lighting was a clever mix of torches and emergency lights. We even managed to gather a small crew of friends to help out. Every evening we had a practice run.

The idea was to end our aerobics classes with the concert as a grand finale - the ultimate way to end the summer break. Dressed in our all black backstage uniform, I felt proud to see how our huge dressing table with mirrors had been transformed into a glam rock stage with silver foils, shards of painted black Plaster of Paris stalagmites and little disco balls. The Barbies looked fantastic in their silver outfits, hair teased, plenty of black lipstick and their cool instruments, all poised to jam. In the dark shadows I could make out my friends, our aerobics gang and family all sitting on the floor waiting for the show to start.

As the lights went out, the torch crew went into full swing and Cyndi took centre stage (with Meenu handling the music on the tape recorder). It was a wild lineup starting with 'Holiday' by Madonna, Kylie Minogue's 'Locomotion', 'I Wanna Dance With Somebody' by Whitney Houston, 'I've Had the Time of My Life' from the Dirty Dancing Soundtrack, and ending with 'Girls Just Wanna Have Fun'. The crowd went wild, dancing and cheering. It was the best night of the summer.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS, CONFIDENT & CAREFREE, THEY NEVER PREPARED ME FOR THE GRUNGY GLOOM OF MY 90'S TEENS.



Those were the days. Confident and carefree, they never prepared me for the grungy gloom of my '90's teens. My body was changing, my face was under a spot attack and I hated my school. So I traded my bright glory for colourless, cool minimalism. Cyndi was forgotten in a sea of angry Nirvana and Alanis Morissette songs. I became a sullen girl, the poster child of rebellion in my black 'mourning' clothes (as dad called them) and Kohl rimmed eyes.

A misfit and mystic in my mind, I sought out a whole new gang of like-minded people and together we trooped through the decade like riders in the storm. Each one of us from Mazi, Jamie, Malzy, Kami, Ghazi, Anna and Sheru were survivors of our own demons. A hugely talented bunch of misunderstood

but in-the-making musicians, actors, models, designers and hangers-on amongst whom I finally felt at home. What amazing times we had, going on drives, partying every weekend, watching movies, listening to music, reading, acting, getting dressed, travelling and just being together. Those were times of infinite hope and pain and yet it was always the music that saved our souls.

Then one day Mr Sunshine arrived. He had an unnerving calm and charm for someone who was only fourteen. We bonded over music and the mountains in Nathia Gali. Sarah McLachlan, Seal and Dave Matthews entered my life and with it the brightness and tenderness that is Usman. He floored me with a quiet persistence and poetry, selections of the most meaningful songs and an ease of conversation and camaraderie that I never imagined sharing with anyone. Slowly I shed my pupa skin; the nose ring, the black clothes, the anger and tears were all left behind. The pinks and reds crept back into my wardrobe and my life. I was in love.

And now eighteen years later, as I sit here and remember all those amazing times, I can't help but wonder about the season and soundtrack of my remaining years. I am now married to Usman and a mother of two beautiful babies, Raaya and Raayid. Nothing could prepare me for the greatest role and challenge of my life; for here are two souls who hold a mirror up to me, every single day.

So imagine, when one day, my three-year-old, Raaya, decides it's time to take things into her own hands. "Mamaaa..." she says (in her sweetest girly voice), "I only wear pink and purple skirts and tights. Ponytails are for babies!" 'Damn,' I sit there wondering, 'have I been blind to her Hannah Montana watching, the word-for-word rendition of 'Teenage Dreams' and her 'Bad Romance' with Gaga? Just how did my little baby girl go straight from three to twelve? When had this monster rock princess emerged? And why was she so achingly familiar that even I couldn't suppress a laugh followed by a tough face. I guess life really does come full circle, and girls (even the little ones) just wanna have fun! ■



USMAN & I

**THOSE WERE TIMES
OF INFINITE HOPE &
PAIN AND YET IT WAS
ALWAYS THE MUSIC THAT
SAVED OUR SOULS.**





We've
Got The
“Moves
Like
Jagger”

Splitends
EXPRESS

Coming soon
Spring 2012

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DO THE
DEW



*Wake up
to a better day*



...get up get up & go go go

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MoltyFoam



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OUTFITTERS
RED JEANS
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QUIZ PYTHON
TOP RS. 3,000



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RS. 6,000



KHAADI PRINTED
COTTON TOP
RS. 1,800

OUTFITTERS
BLUE COR-
DUROY PANTS
RS. 2,190



DOLCE & GABBANA
BLACK PYTHON BAG
AT MENS STORE
RS. 145,950

STUDIO 5
GOLD PLATED
CRYSTAL AND CHAINS
BRACELET RS. 18,000

QUIZ STAR
TOP
RS. 4,050



MANTRA STAR
SCARF RS. 1,250

PRET a PAPER

PAPER PICKS THE
BEST FASHION BUYS
THIS SEASON



AYESHA KHURRAM
BURGUNDY KAFIYAH
AT LABELS RS. 13,000



KHAADI KHAAS
PURPLE TOP
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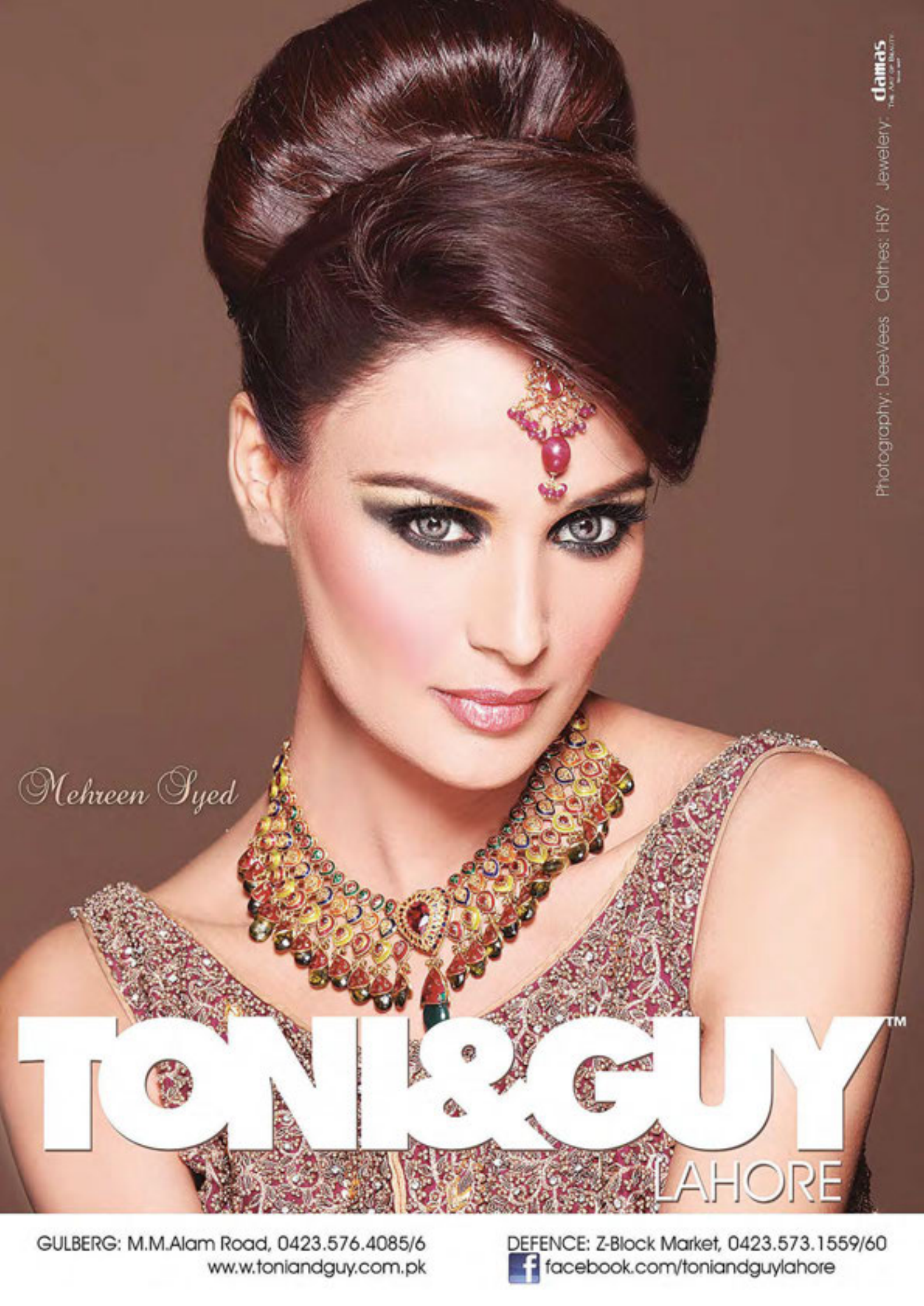
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RS. 6,500



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Photography: DeeVeas Clothes: HSY Jewellery: **dama's** The Art of Beauty

GO GREEN

GREEN IS THE HOTTEST COLOUR THIS SEASON. WEAR JADE, EMERALD OR DEEP FOREST GREEN FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT.



JANIA BHATTI



SANA HASHWANI



FREIDA PINTO



THE DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE



SANAM TASEER



ELEANORA CARISI

We love Eleanora's subtle take on the trend. She wears a green python pencil skirt with an understated nude top and classic pumps. Super chic.



Dolce & Gabbana



Valentino



KENNETH JAY LANE 22-KARAT GOLD-PLATED CRYSTAL SNAKE BRACELET \$425



GUCCI PYTHON PLATFORM PUMPS \$1,100



STUDIO 5 GOLD-PLATED ONYX & CRYSTAL EARRINGS RS. 7,500



VALENTINO STUDDO TEXTURED-LEATHER WALLET \$525



CHLOÉ MADEIRNE LEATHER DUFFLE BAG \$2,130



Diane Von Furstenberg



SHOAIB SHAFI



FARYAL ATIF



REHANA SAIGOL



ALI ZAFAR & AMMARA HIRONANI



Louis Vuitton Fall 2011

BORDEAUX

Embrace the rich, earthy, scrumptious shades of bordeaux from merlot to cabernet. Seen on the runways of Celine, Emilio Pucci, Akif and AYESHA HASHWANI.



SANA SARFARAZ



Zaher Abbas

Celine Fall 2011

**FOR
MAXIMUM**
impact wear
different shades
of bordeaux in
one outfit



Akif



Sana Safinaz



Ralph Lauren Fall 2011



SARA SHAHID



JONATHAN SAUNDERS FOR SMYTHSON \$515



KHADIJAH SHAH



RAANA KHAN



Yasir Waheed

STYLE TIP

IF YOU PREFER TO BREAK-UP THE RICH RED HUES, ADD BLACK LIKE KHADIJAH AND RAANA



CRUMPET CASHMERE SWEATER DRESS \$300



AURÉLIE BIDERMANN DO BRAZIL 18-KARAT GOLD-PLATED BRACELET \$380



Tory Burch Fall 2011



FNK Asia



Ayesha F Hashwani



ELAN BOW TUSSEL BURGUNDY AND PYTHON KURTA RS. 16,000



ISABEL MARANT GAISY ZEBRA-PRINT SUEDE PUMPS \$680

BRIAN ATWOOD FRINGED SUEDE PLATFORM PUMPS \$780

J BRAND 511 MID-RISE CORDUROY SKINNY JEANS \$175

LANVIN PATENT-LEATHER BALLERINA FLATS \$495

ALEXANDER MCQUEEN WCCA MINI LEATHER SATCHEL \$1,095



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Balmain Fall 2011



Versus Fall 2011



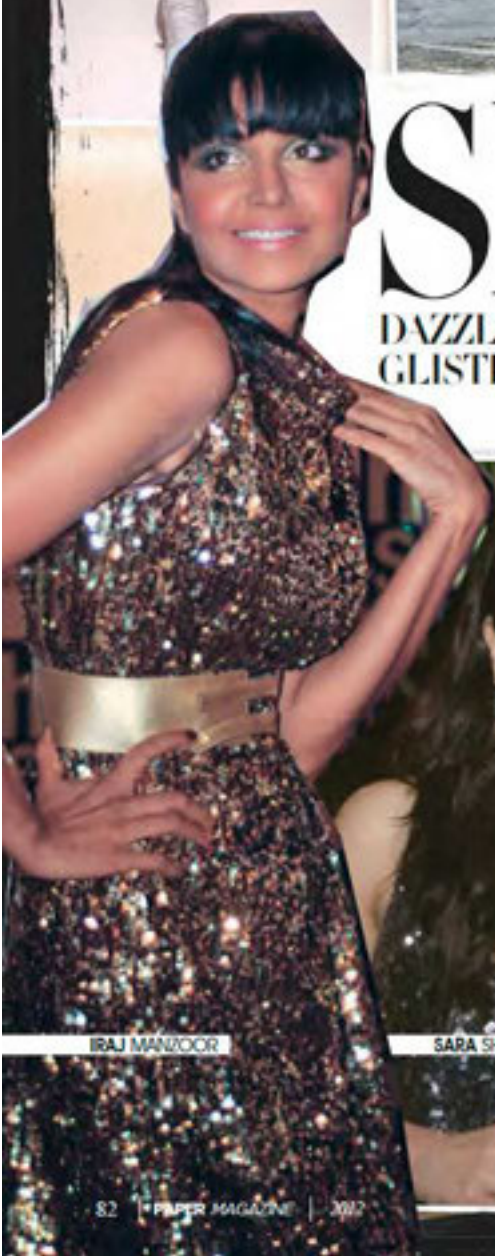
Muse



Dolce & Gabbana Fall 2011

SHINE ON

DAZZLE IN SHIMMERING METALLICS, GLISTENING LAMÉS AND LUXURIOUS SILKS.



IBRAJ MANZOOR



SARA SHAHID



KATE MOSS



ALEXA CHUNG IN A CHRISTOPHER KANE DRESS



HSY



STYLE TIP
WITH THIS LOOK
IT'S IMPORTANT
TO KEEP YOUR
ACCESSORIES
SIMPLE AND
UNDERSTATED



ZONG
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FABULOUS *forties*



Miu Miu Fall 2011



GIOVANNA BATTAGLIA IN THIS SEASON'S POWER PIECE, THE PENCIL SKIRT.



Preen Fall 2011



ALEXA CHUNG IN A 40'S STYLE POLKA DOT DRESS CARRYING A RED STRUCTURED BAG



Marc Jacobs Fall 2011

HOW TO WEAR IT: THIS TREND IS ALL ABOUT THE PERFECT PROPORTIONS. THE EMPHASIS IS ON THE WAIST WITH NIPPED-IN WAISTLINES. ADD CHUNKY HEELS FOR ADDED OOMPH.

SENSE & SENSUALITY
CHIC AND UNDERSTATED THE 40'S ARE BACK WITH LONG PENCIL SKIRTS, DRAPED BLOUSES, FLORAL PRINT TEA DRESSES AS WELL AS OPULENT FURS, SLEEK GLOVES AND ELEGANT STRUCTURED BAGS.



Marni Fall 2011



FATIMA HASSAN WEARS A SHEER NUDE BLOUSE WITH CRIMSON LIPS. VERY 40'S.



SCREEN SIREN AVA GARDNER EMERGED AS ONE OF THE BIGGEST HOLLYWOOD STARS OF THE 40'S. AVA EMBODIES THE GLAMOUR AND FEMININITY SYNONYMOUS WITH THE ERA.



Sportmax Fall 2011

MIU MIU WOOL- FELT TOTE \$1,350

GUCCI MARY JANE PATENT-LEATHER PUMPS \$550



THE EDIT

TOP TRENDS

10 STEPS TO UPDATE YOUR WINTER WARDROBE WITH THE SEASON'S KEY PIECES

1 LUXURIOUS LOCKS



EMBRACE THE END OF HIGHLIGHTS WITH ONE LUXURIOUS COLOUR FROM ROOT TO TIP AS SEEN BACKSTAGE AT BLUMARIE FW 2011

SANA SHAH

2 LEATHER LEGGINGS

LEATHER LEGGINGS AND SKINNY PANTS (BOTH FAUX AND REAL) ARE BACK WITH A BANG AS SEEN ON RIHANNA, VICTORIA BECKHAM, SARAH JESSICA PARKER, LEIGHTON MEESTER, MAHIN SHAKH AND EVEN MARTHA STEWART!



JOSEPH LEATHER AND STRETCH-CORDED LEATHER LEGGINGS \$485

GLUC LEATHER TIGHT LEGGINGS RS.2,300



LEIGHTON MEESTER

MARIUM NAZI

3 STAR STRUCK



MEHVISH KHAN WEARING HER OWN LABEL



SODANGE AZAGURY PARTRIDGE LONESTAR BABY 18-KARAT GOLD STAR EARRINGS \$4,400



DOLCE & GABBANA BRASS & GLASS CRYSTAL STAR CUFF \$755

D&G BROUGHT BACK STARS WITH THEIR FALL 2011 COLLECTION AND SINCE THEN THE FASHION SET CAN'T GET ENOUGH. INJECT A LITTLE CHEERFULNESS INTO YOUR WINTER WARDROBE WITH THIS TREND.

BURGUNDY BAG



OLIVIA PALERMO



MULBERRY SUEDE CLUTCH \$700



CHANEL BOY BAG APPROX \$3000

4

BURGUNDY IS BACK IN A BIG WAY. WHETHER YOU OPT FOR A CLUTCH, SACHEL OR TOTE, THE BURGUNDY BAG IS A FASHION ESSENTIAL THIS WINTER.



MAHEEN KARDAR ALI

THE CARDI-COAT

COMFER THAN THE COAT AND CHICER THAN THE CARDIGAN THE CARDI-COAT IS THE PERFECT COVER-UP THIS WINTER.



AMIL MANSHA



CRUMPET MADISON DOUBLE-BREASTED CASHMERE CARDI-COAT \$760

POP OF PYTHON



RABIA KHAN



D&G PYTHON PUMPS AVAILABLE AT MENS STORE ON SALE FOR RS. 32,475

GUCCI BROADWAY PYTHON BOX CLUTCH \$1,500

BOTTEGA VENETA PYTHON WALLET AT MENS STORE RS. 92,950

ADD A FIERCE TOUCH OF GLAMOUR TO YOUR WINTER WARDROBE WITH A STATEMENT PYTHON PIECE. FROM SCARVES TO DRESSES, BAGS AND SHOES, THE MIGHTY PYTHON IS THE SEASON'S MOST COVETED BUY.



MARIAM SHAMS

THE KNEE HIGH BOOTS



ALEXANDRE BIRMAN LACE UP-EFFECT SUEDE KNEE BOOTS \$625

WITH THE NEW MEDIUM LENGTHS KNEE HIGH BOOTS HAVE BECOME A FASHION STAPLE. CHOOSE A SOFT ALMOND-SHAPED TOE FOR A TIMELESS INVESTMENT.



Michael Kors

MAHIN SHAIKH

Isabel Marant

Mahin is spot on in luxurious fur, leather leggings and classic pumps



KARL DONOGHUE SHEARLING COAT \$1,945

8

FALL FOR FUR

FASHION FEELS AS GOOD AS IT LOOKS THIS SEASON. FROM CHIC FAUX FUR TO GOAT HAIR, CURLY MONGOLIAN LAMB, LUXURIOUS RABBIT, WHITE FOX AND SHEARLING, THIS WINTER STAY WARM AND LOOK STYLISH IN FUR.

THE CAPE CRUSADER

THE CAPE MAKES A STRONG COMEBACK. WE LOVE ITS DRAMATIC AND ELEGANT EFFECT. REMEMBER TO KEEP PANTS SLEEK AND FITTED AS THE KEY WITH THIS LOOK IS TO BALANCE PROPORTIONS.



Michael Kors



ATTIYA NOON



STELLA MCCARTNEY WOOL AND CASHMERE-BLEND CAPE \$1,395



Yves Saint Laurent

YVES SAINT LAURENT GOLD PLATED STRINGRAY-EFFECT CHAIN NECKLACE \$1,595

MAKE A STATEMENT WITH A CHUNKY CHAIN CHOKER FOR A TOUGH, MODERN AND EDGY TAKE ON THE SEASON'S FONDNESS FOR ALL THINGS FETTERISH.



FEENA JAMSHED

10

STYLE FILE

IMAN PASHA

DAY 1 LONDON FASHION WEEK at Somerset House. Wearing Mary Katrantzou AW 2011 dress, Mul Mul shoe boots, YSL bag and Lei Van Kash jewellery. She's one of my favourite up coming young jewellery designers.

IMAN PASHA is a Fashion Consultant, Stylist and Journalist. Founded in 2010, her company offers clients a truly unique range of services as well as a deep understanding of the cultures and fashion industries in both London and The Middle East.



DAY 2 OF LONDON FASHION WEEK wearing Markus Lupfer AW 11 T-shirt and skirt, Chanel Mademoiselle bag, Drome leather jacket, and Lei Van Kash ring.



AT THE ISSA OF LONDON TRUNK SHOW I co-hosted with luxury Dubai retailer, Boutique 1, in Abu Dhabi. Wearing a Mary Katrantzou jacket, YSL Tributes and bag, Topshop skirt and H&M top.



AT THE ARTS NIGHT IN DIFC'S FAMOUS VILLAGE GATE Wearing Celine python box clutch, Topshop blouse and Isabel Marant trousers.



DAY 3 OF LONDON FASHION WEEK Heading to the epic Mulberry show on Brooke street at the Claridges. Wearing a Roksanda Inicic dress, Mulberry bag and shoes from AW 2011.



DAY 4 LONDON FASHION WEEK Wearing Henry Holland AW 2011 runway dress and Mulberry bag. This was taken right after the Antonio Berardi show, which for me was the highlight of LFW with a strong, beautiful and versatile collection.



AT THE HERMES SUMMER PARTY Wearing an Adam maxi dress, Camilla Skovgard ankle flats and a YSL ring.



HEADING OUT TO MY 28TH GIRLY BIRTHDAY DINNER AT HAKKASAN Wearing an Alexander Wang blazer, H&M Dress, Topshop clutch and Christian Louboutin shoes with a rose gold clutch from greek jewellery designer My i 4D.



HEADING OUT FOR DINNER WITH MY MOTHER AND SISTER IN LONDON
Wearing Whistles trousers, Joseph blazer, Zara top, Chanel 2.25 bag and Christian Louboutin pumps.



FROM THE ANA ZAHRA SHOOT The make-up was done by Basma from B. beautiful. I am wearing a Mary Katrantzou dress.



AT DIFC AFTER DINNER AT ZUMA
Wearing Topshop one shoulder jumpsuit, Chanel medium bag, Camilla Skovgard shoes and Topshop necklace.

Paper Bags

FALABELLA

BY STELLA MCCARTNEY

The "IT" bag this season is the Falabella by Stella McCartney. Stella has been the leader in **Eco-fashion**. As a life long vegetarian she has always maintained that she will not use leather, animal skins or fur in her designs. **Edgy** and **chic**, the Falabella comes in many different shapes and textures. With its signature **chain trims**, the Falabella has become an instant hit with fashionistas. Fans include **Rihanna**, **Jennifer Lopez**, **Kim Kardashian**, **Leona Lewis**, **Eva Mendes**, **Zoe Khan** and **Kate Hudson** amongst others. Eco fashion has never looked or felt better.



KIM KARDASHIAN

ZOE SALDANA



* FAUX LEATHER SHOULDER BAG \$1,095

THE BUCKET TOTE

Totes have room to stuff anything under the sun. With the Falabella bucket tote, McCartney has created a spacious yet stylish bag that is perfect to use for shopping or travel.



LEONA LEWIS



SOPHIA BUSH

THE SHOULDER BAG

This is the most sought after Falabella. Available in faux leather, faux suede, faux python and more; it is the perfect fashion statement.



MICHELLE TRACHTENBERG



EVA MENDES

THE CLUTCH

Small and stylish we love the Falabella printed clutch. The perfect size to inject some fun to your wardrobe.



* BOTANICAL PRINT CLUTCH \$645

THE FOLDOVER

This can be worn two ways, folded over as a shoulder bag like Zoe Khan or carried as a tote.



* LARGE FAUX LEATHER SHOULDER BAG \$1,095



* CITRUS PRINT FOLDOVER BAG APPROX \$995



ZOE KHAN



REFRESHING NEW TREND



CHANEL



KATIE HOLMES



ALEXA CHUNG



MEHAK GURESH



HANNEU M. BARWALA

CHIC AND LIGHTWEIGHT, DOWNSIZE NOW TO THE MINI BAG.

FASHION FORWARD

This season PAPER recommends the BVLGARI SERPENTI bag to stand out from the crowd.



KRISTEN DUNST



GIOVANNA BATTALIGA



EVAN RACHEL WOOD



THE BVLGARI SERPENTI WAS FEATURED ON THE GOSSIP GIRL, ON BEATRICE GRIMALDI.

FOR FALL 2011 BVLGARI INTRODUCED A HANDBAG COLLECTION INSPIRED BY ONE OF ITS MOST ICONIC JEWELLERY AND WATCH COLLECTIONS, THE SERPENTI, WHICH HAS BEEN A BVLGARI SIGNATURE FOR SIXTY YEARS. IT HAS BECOME AN INSTANT HIT WITH THE FASHION SET, LIKE GIOVANNA BATTALIGA WHO LOVED THE BAG SO MUCH, SHE BOUGHT IT IN AMBER AND GREEN! PRICE RANGE APPROX \$2,250

PAPER [STARS]

PAPER is always on the lookout for people with individual style. Here are the chosen four.

SASHA SALAHUDDIN ALWAYS LOOKS SUPER TRENDY. HERE SHE PAIRS LEOPARD PRINT PANTS WITH A BLACK TOP, A BOY FRIEND BLAZER AND A BIG SMILE. SHE WEARS FLATS WITH CONFIDENCE AND IS DEFINITELY A TRENDSETTER.



ALIYA MONNOO IS ALWAYS IMMACULATELY DRESSED AND PERFECTLY GROOMED. SEEN HERE IN A SCRUMPTUOUS BLOUSE, HIGHWAISTED BLACK PANTS AND A FUR STOLE, ALIYA NEVER GETS IT WRONG.



SANA HASHWANI HAS AN EXCEPTIONAL SENSE OF STYLE. WEARING A PRINTED DRESS WITH CHUNKY GOLD AND SILVER BANGLES, SHE MAKES A STYLE STATEMENT WHEREVER SHE GOES.



FATIM GONDAL LOOKS CHIC IN A BLACK BLAZER, DARK SKINNY JEANS AND PLATFORM PUMPS. ON TREND WITH HER PRADA FOX FUR BAG, FATIM IS UNDENIABLY A PAPER STAR.

La Maison

HOME ACCESSORIES



Irum Rawjee 0300 8240 600 - Mehreen Ghouse Akbar 0300 8224 333
SHOP NO. 1, PLOT6-C, BOKHARI COMMERCIAL LANE NO. 1, PHASE 6, DHA, KARACHI-PAKISTAN.

REPUBLIC  REPORTS

DRESS TO KILL

★ THIS WINTER ★

This winter dress to impress. No matter which trends you work into your wardrobe, the key is to wear them with confidence. Make sure that your individual style shines through.

BY HIRAH SADIQ 

OVERCOAT

RULES OF THE OVERCOAT:

The long overcoat looks slick, but a man should always dress according to his height and physique. It can make one look taller or shorter—so go for what suits you.

HEIGHT:

If you are tall it's best to wear a knee length overcoat. If you are average height, choose a pea coat that falls mid-thigh or slightly below your hip. If you don't want to show what you are wearing inside, a duffle coat can be worn.

THE COLOURS:

Camel and black are classic and always look great, but the colour of the season is grey. It can be worn with earthy tones. Whether you're sporting a casual look or a business suit, grey is the go to colour this winter.

PEA COAT
RS. 14,950DUFFLE COAT
RS. 19,950

EVERY SHADE OF GREY: GREY IS CLASSIC. IT CAN BE WORN WITH ALL KINDS OF EARTHY TONES, WHETHER YOU'RE SPORTING A CASUAL LOOK OR A BUSINESS SUIT.



OMAR FAROOQ

SINGLE BREASTED COAT

DOUBLE BREASTED COAT



The Casual look ★

- ★ VARSITY JACKETS
- ★ HOODIES
- ★ COLLEGE SWEATSHIRTS

★ CASUAL TAILORING CAN BE A MATCHING SUIT, OR CLASHING SEPARATES.

★ YOU CAN TUCK IN THE SHIRT AT NIGHT, BUT LEAVE IT OUT DURING THE DAY (EVEN WITH FORMAL TROUSERS) FOR THE SMART CASUAL LOOK.



FOR THE GROOM

»»» ALWAYS WEAR A TIE

IT'S ABOUT LOOKING your best since you will be under the spotlight. Always wear a tie as it completes the look. Opt for a snug-fit suit or a tuxedo with a bow tie.

Last year was all about the black tux, this season, **THINK BLUE.** Navy and royal blue.

For the groom's brother, if you're feeling bold, polka dots have made a comeback in ties even though the groom should stick to a classic.

DO NOT WEAR WORK SHOES. Wear tuxedo shoes; they should not be too square, or too pointy. Round toed are classic. They should be brand new and shiny so they look crisp.

"THE SUIT SHOULD NOT WEAR YOU, YOU SHOULD WEAR THE SUIT."



DENIM ON DENIM:

DO'S:

- FOR WINTER, OPT FOR DARKER SHADES SUCH AS INDIGOS
- THE COLOUR SHOULD BE OF THE SAME FAMILY.

DONT'S

- NEVER WEAR SKINNY JEANS, IF YOU'RE NOT SKINNY
- STICK TO SLIM-FIT AND STRAIGHT AND STORE AWAY YOUR BOOT-CUTS!



THE LOOK OF THIS SEASON IS ALL GREY WITH A NICE BEIGE CASHMERE BLAZER JACKET.

Shop Republic ACCESSORIES



THE CAVE MAN LOOK is hot this season; it's about facial hair, so grow that beard, it's the easiest and fastest way to freshen up your look!

GOING OUT AT NIGHT

- **WEAR TUXEDO BLAZERS** with denim. Pair with skinny jeans and a button down white shirt.
- **NEVER WEAR** a T-shirt on a night out. That is so over.
- **WEAR A PULL-OVER** or a roll neck sweater with a blazer. A black velvet blazer always looks good. Try colours like robin blue and burgundy this season.

SOCKS:

This season show your playful side and inject some fun into your wardrobe with funky, **coloured socks.**

SHOES:

Boots are really in. **Chunky, industrial strength boots** are hitting runways. Tough looking leather shoes with plenty of attitude, such as **military boots**, worn with formal rather than casual trousers. It's all about the oversized, chunky shoe with thick soles.

SCARVES:

Opt for knitted scarves or the trendy woollen snood, which can also be worn as a **hoodie.**



JIL SANDER MEN'S CALF LEATHER BOOT \$273.00





REPUBLIC
by Omar Farooq









REPUBLIC
by omar ferood

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[FEATURE]



Vacation in Koh Samui



A Quote from M4D magazine
'A family that eats together, grooves together.'

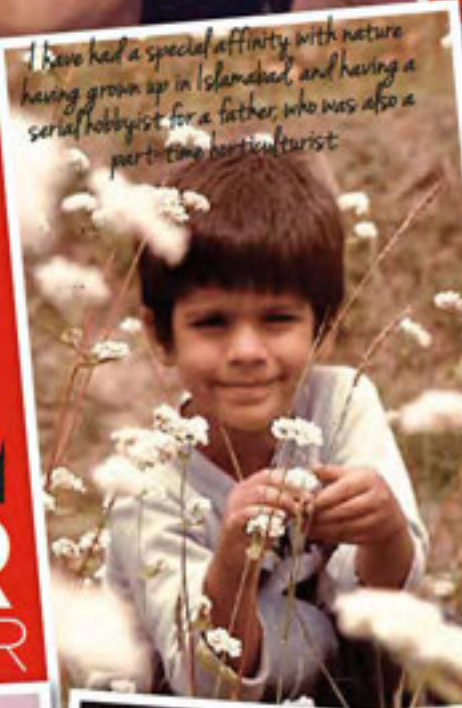


Playground adventures in Reykjavik

ADNAN MALIK

LIFE ON PAPER

ACTOR & DIRECTOR



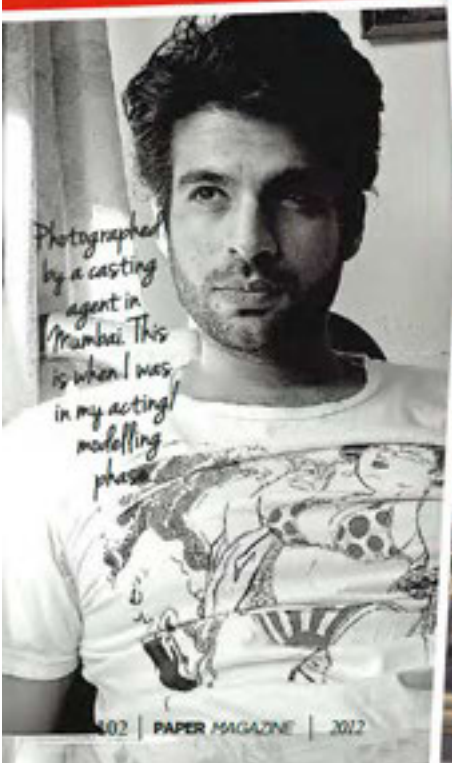
I have had a special affinity with nature having grown up in Islamabad, and having a serial hobbyist for a father, who was also a part-time horticulturist



One of my favourite pastimes was cuddling with my nani. She passed away earlier this year.



The modelling days.



Photographed by a casting agent in Mumbai. This is when I was in my acting/modelling phase.



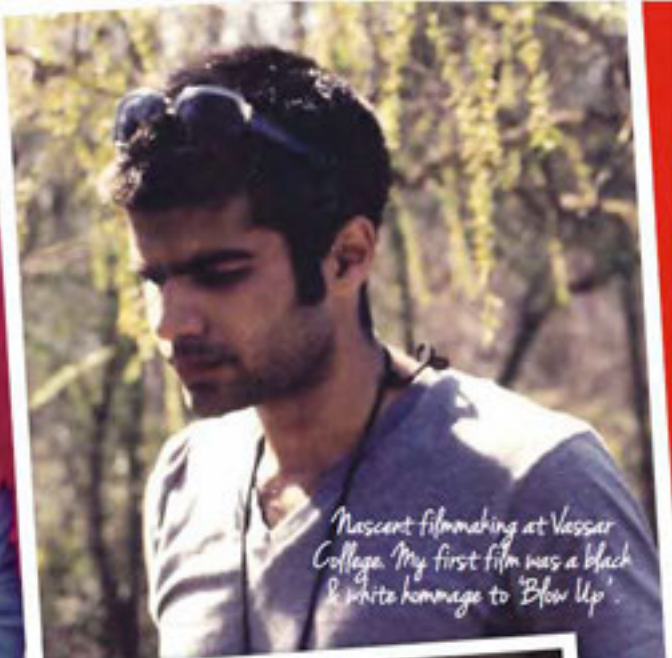
One of my dearest friends, Manish and I had a radio show on fm 87 called 'In the Loop'.



Momma's Boy



Most of our family pictures don't have my dad in them because he was always behind the lens!



Nascent filmmaking at Vassar College. My first film was a black & white homage to 'Blow Up'.



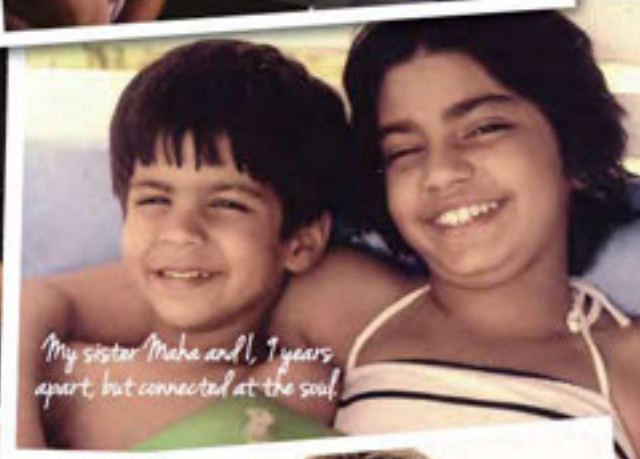
All of us are adventurous travellers, with strong personalities. Our family vacations are always a riot. This was in Capetown recently.



Deeply immersed in Video Production at Coke Studio. One of the best things to happen to my life.



Maha, Saqib and I in Budapest



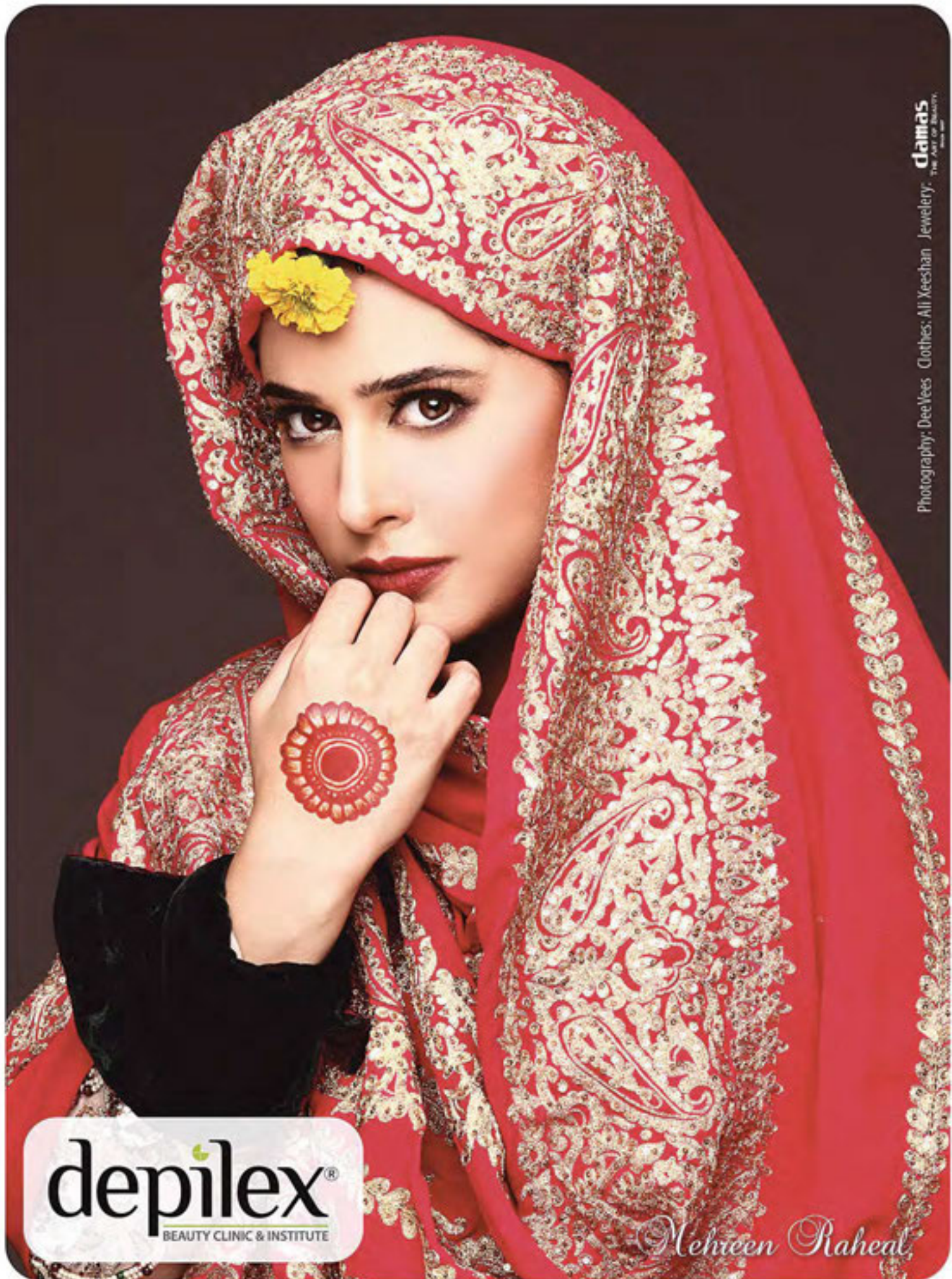
My sister Maha and I, 7 years apart, but connected at the soul.



My adventurous parents drove back from Denmark to Karachi a couple of years after their marriage.



A photoshoot for my T-shirt company 'Urban Turban' in Williamsburg, New York.



Photography: DeeVees Clothes: Ali Xeeshan Jewellery: **damas** The Art of Beauty

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Mehreen Raheel

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PFDC L'Oréal Paris Bridal Week

The week brought the glitz and glamour back into fashion, with a four day star studded event with superb collections and surprise elements such as Josh, Qurat-ulain Balouch (QB), Mahirah Khan Askari, Fawad Khan and Meesha Shafi walking the Ramp. We could not have asked for a better fashion week. Here we pick the best and brightest of Bridal Week.

HSY

Ali Xeeshan

Nida Azwer

Fahad Hussayn

Gold by Reama Malik

Rouge

Umar Sayeed

Karma



ALI XEESHAN

Bright and Beautiful

WE'RE ALWAYS EXCITED TO SEE ALI XEESHAN'S COLLECTIONS. HE TAKES THE EXTRA STEP TO LEAVE THE AUDIENCE CRAVING FOR MORE. THE HEADGEAR, VOLUMINOUS LENGHAS AND THE JEWELLERY ADDED TO THE DRAMA OF THE SHOW. WE LOVE HIS NEW COLLECTION.





GOLD BY REAMA MALIK

Delightful Debut

REAMA SHOWED A TIMELESS COLLECTION OF TRADITIONAL JEWELLERY LIKE KUNDAN, POLKI AND MEENAKARI AS WELL AS MODERN PIECES MADE FROM DIAMONDS AND PEARLS. A BRILLIANT DEBUT.





HSY

The Game of Kings

THE HSY SHOW WAS NOTHING LESS THAN GRAND. A VERY POLO INSPIRED COLLECTION, TOO BLACK PERHAPS AND NOT VERY BRIDAL, NONETHELESS A GREAT SHOW. THE MOST UNFORGETTABLE MOMENT WAS MEESHA SHAFI WALKING DOWN THE RAMP WITH HER GREAT DANE, JINN.





NIDA AZWER

Back to Tradition

NIDA AZWER WOWED THE AUDIENCE WITH HER COLLECTION THAT USED TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP WITH MODERN SENSIBILITIES. THE ZARDOZI AND ARI EMBELLISHMENTS WERE TO DIE FOR.



FAHAD HUSSAYN

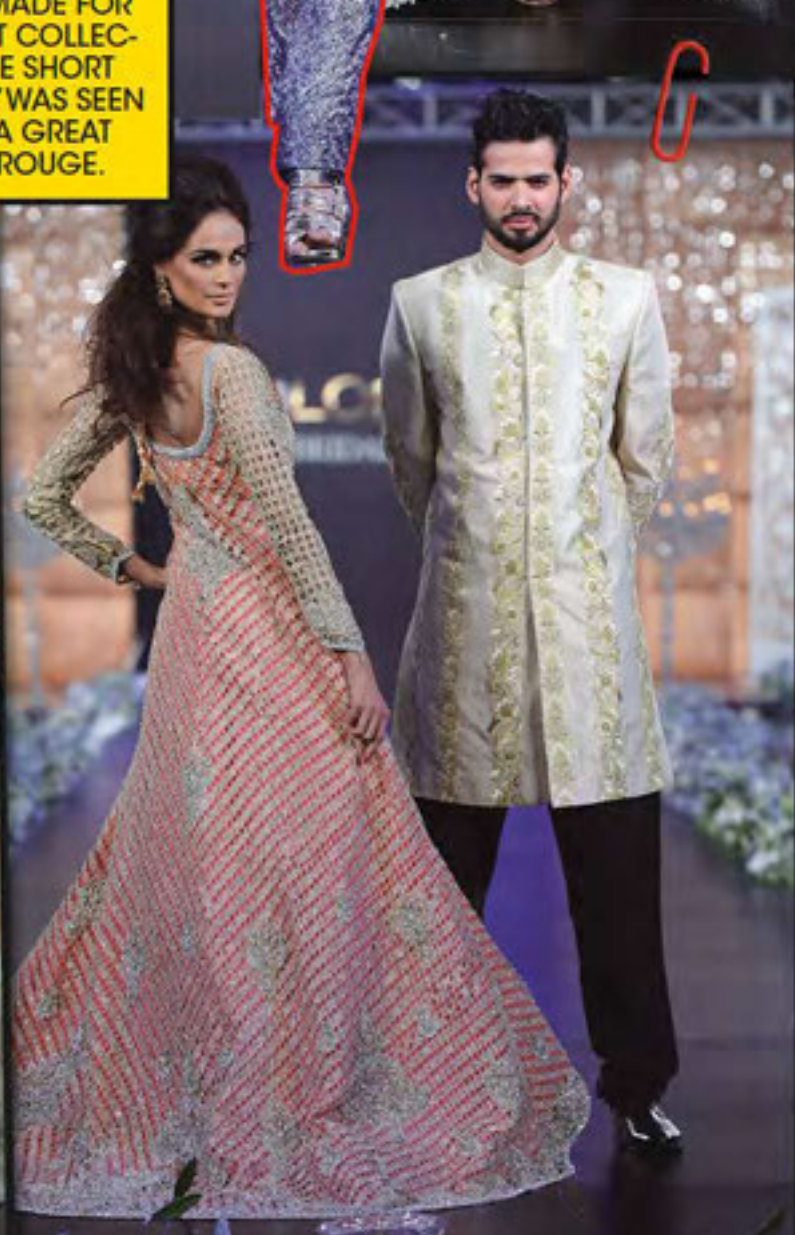
The Night Traveller

THE SHORT KAMEEZ MAKES A COME BACK. WE LOVED THE DARK LOOK, THE EXTRAVAGANT JEWELLERY, THE DRAPED SARIS AND LENGHAS. OVERALL A GREAT COLLECTION.



ROUGE

Loving the Blues
FABULOUS CUTS, PRETTY COLOURS AND INTRICATE WORK, MADE FOR A GREAT COLLECTION. THE SHORT KAMEEZ WAS SEEN AGAIN. A GREAT JOB BY ROUGE.





KARMA *Simply Fantastic!*

KARMA JUST GOT IT RIGHT THIS TIME. WE WERE ENCHANTED BY THE COLOUR COMBINATIONS, THE SARIS AND THE LENGHAS. EACH OUTFIT SPOKE VOLUMES AND LOOKED STUNNING ON AND OFF THE RAMP.





UMAR SAYEED

Wowed the Audience

WITH THE COMBINATION OF BEAUTIFUL CUTS AND INTRICATE WORK, (NO OTHER DESIGNER CAN MATCH) UMAR WOWED US AS EXPECTED. HOWEVER, SOME OF THE CUTS AND WORK SEEMED TO BE FROM PREVIOUS COLLECTIONS. WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOMETHING NEW NEXT TIME.



PAPER

reviews
THE TOP
FIVES/S
2012
COLLECTIONS

FROM PFDC SUNSILK FASHION WEEK 2011

Kamiar ROKNI

*Bright &
Cheerful*



KAMIAR & TIA MADE A STATEMENT WITH A MODERN AND BOLD SPRING/SUMMER 2012 COLLECTION ENTITLED 'THE MODERNIST'. THE DUO WOWED THE AUDIENCE WITH THE USE OF A MAGNIFICENT COLOUR PALETTE. IT WAS A COHESIVE COLLECTION WITH SIMPLE CUTS, COLOUR BLOCKING AND THE USE OF GEOMETRIC PATTERNS. THE SILHOUETTES WERE SHORT AND FITTED WITH SILK CREPE VISCOSE AND STRETCH JERSEY CHOORIDAAR PYJAMAS AND WRAP AROUND BELTS. A GREAT COLLECTION THAT HAS US YEARNING FOR SPRING.



Khaadi

KHAAS

Absolutely Original



SIMPLICITY & COMFORT CAN MAKE ANY WOMAN LOOK SEXY BY BEING COMFORTABLE IN HER SKIN. WITH THEIR FLOWY SILHOUETTES AND JUMPSUITS, KHAADI MADE THIS POSSIBLE. KHAADI KHAAS' COLLECTION, "THE CITY WITHIN", TOOK INSPIRATION FROM THE CITY OF KARACHI, AND SHOWED VARYING THEMES IN PRINT, PLEATED FABRIC AND IRREGULAR HEMLINES. GRAPHIC COMPOSITIONS OF ASYMMETRY WERE Juxtaposed WITH CULTURAL AFFILIATIONS TO CHALLENGE THE NATURE OF THE FABRIC AND BRING OUT THE TEXTURED COMPLEXITY INTRINSIC TO TODAY'S LIFE AND STYLE. AN EXTREMELY ORIGINAL AND WELL EXECUTED COLLECTION.



MUSE NEVER LETS US DOWN. FEMININE CUTS AND LUXURIOUS FABRICS MADE EACH OUTFIT COVETABLE AND WEARABLE. THE SPRING SORBET COLLECTION WAS RELENTLESSLY MODERN AND SHOWCASED THE AUSTERITY OF BLACK AND WHITE COMPLEMENTED WITH THE FRIVOLITY OF CANDIED CORAL, ICE BLUE, FLOSS PINK, SPRINKLED WITH POLKA DOTS. THE COLLECTION COMPRISED OF FLOOR SWEEPING PLEATED JUMPSUITS AND BELTED TUNICS. THE FABRICS USED FOR THIS COLLECTION WERE BASED IN CREPES AND THE COLLECTION WAS EMBELLISHED WITH SEQUINS. VERY CHIC. VERY MUSE.



MUSE

Feminine, Sexy and Chic



Hot, new and very now!

ONE OF OUR FAVOURITES THIS FASHION WEEK WAS SANIA MASKATIYA'S DEBUT WITH "THE DILKASH COLLECTION". THE PRET COLLECTION WAS A BREATH OF FRESH AIR AS IT LAID EMPHASIS ON CUTS AND DRAPING. IT COMPRISED OF BRILLIANT SILHOUETTES IN EYE CATCHING PRINTS AND EXCITING COLOUR COMBINATIONS. THE COLLECTION EXHIBITED THE USE OF BLOCK PRINTING, SCREEN PRINTING, DIGITAL PRINTING, COMPUTER EMBROIDERY WITH CRYSTAL AND METAL EMBELLISHMENTS IN PURE CHIFFONS, CHARMEUSE, SILK AND CREPE.

Sania

MASKATIYA



Zaheer ABBAS

Draperly at its best!

ZAHEER ABBAS BLEW US AWAY WITH HIS COLLECTION ENTITLED "MYTH". GETTING A CUT RIGHT IS NOT EASY BUT ZAHEER ABBAS NAILED IT. ALONG WITH PERFECT USE OF **COLOUR** AND **DRAPERLY**, HE SHOWED AN ELEGANT COLLECTION THAT DREW **INSPIRATION** FROM ELEMENTS OF **ART** AND **ARCHITECTURE** ALONG WITH **ROMAN SCULPTURES**. BASED IN PURE CHIFFON, THE COLLECTION PRESENTED A TRUE SYNTHESIS OF **INVENTIVENESS** AND **PRACTICALITY**. ZAHEER ABBAS HAS GAINED CRITICAL ACCLAIM IN A SHORT SPAN OF TIME AND IS BEST KNOWN FOR THE GRACEFUL **SIMPLICITY**, **FLAWLESS CONSTRUCTION** AND **ARTISTIC** APPROACH IN HIS DESIGNS.



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I'M EVERY WOMAN

Three dynamic women on a path of self discovery share their success stories.

PHOTOGRAPHY & MAKE-UP BY DEEVES by MEHER TAREEN



W

e often hear the term “woman of substance” for iconic women like Fatima Jinnah, Oprah Winfrey, Jane Austen and Nazia Hasan: all accomplished in their own right and a symbol of strength and inspiration to their kind. Although these women demand veneration and awe, I can’t

help but wonder if they fought with their families to pursue an unconventional career. Did they live through heartbreak and bounce back believing in love? Was there a time in their lives when they felt aimless and lost? Since history often cloaks unglamorous realities such as these, we never quite know if these women had issues that are real to us. But we are the sum of our experiences and our mistakes shape our lives just as much as our triumphs. Paper speaks to three diverse, talented and beautiful women who believed in themselves and had the courage to follow their dreams, no matter what the obstacles. Kiran, Mehreen and Asmaa are worth celebrating as they refused to be confined by conventional stereotypes and instead, dared to tread the road less travelled.

They told her she was too short and stocky to be a model, yet Mehreen Raheal stuck her ground to become one, and has been instrumental in fighting against the concept of size zero models in Pakistan.

For musician and thespian, Kiran Chaudhry, her whole life was about academics, climbing the corporate ladder, and living up to the expectations of a tough and ambitious father who wanted to see her become the prime minister. Yet one day she dropped it all to pursue her true calling, music.

Asmaa Mumtaz overcame a painful divorce and emerged stronger than ever as a superb stylist and entrepreneur. Asmaa found focus and a platform for creative expression as she launched ‘The Dresser’ and became the only woman in her strictly patriarchal family to run her own business.

In each of these three young, enterprising and unique women, there is a story and struggle that mirrors our own, giving women everywhere a reason to keep trying and to keep following their heart.

The path to self-discovery

If there’s one thing that all three women are dead clear about, it’s that you must allow yourself to be who you are instead of being enslaved by others’ expectations. All three have taken paths of their own choosing and are nothing short of a success story.

“In terms of music, the *keera* was always there,” asserts Kiran, who spent her early years at the Convent of Jesus and Mary in Islamabad. The school offered ‘a movement to music’ class that was considered a crucial aspect of early development and from the age of six to ten Kiran thoroughly enjoyed being able to sing and dance in that class. “We just used to put the music

on and dance. It was surprising that the nuns were so hip!” she says as her laughter fills the room. Kiran has such a rich, hearty, from-the-gut laugh that the pleasure of any moment she is describing is almost palpable. It’s something with which any woman can empathise. When her family moved to Lahore, Kiran joined Lahore Grammar School, which offered singing classes with the eminent Ustad Fateh Ali Khan, a maestro of the Patiala Gharana, who became Kiran’s mentor, both musically and spiritually. After four years of intensive vocal training, Kiran completely disconnected with music as her academics took priority.

From always coming first in class to attending the prestigious United World Colleges on a scholarship and then acing it with an undergraduate degree in Philosophy, Politics & Economics at Oxford, followed by a postgraduate degree in Law, Kiran’s entire life was geared towards her father’s dreams for her. “My father toughened me up. At nine, I was afraid of the dark, so he made me go out alone and lock the house gate every night. He challenged me all the time, as he wanted to push me to reach my full potential.” Yet soon enough she began feeling like she was living someone else’s life. “Working in a top firm in London for four years, I found that I had totally become embroiled in the corporate world but did not have a life. I’ve got a freedom bug so it felt great to finally be financially independent, but I wasn’t truly happy,” she admits. So one day, after she had gathered together some savings and made some sensible investments, freeing her up to have more control over her life, Kiran left her lucrative corporate life and returned home to Pakistan. Even after completely overhauling an unfamiliar business and generating a massive increase in turnover for her family’s textile business, Kiran couldn’t shake off the feeling that this was not her true path. So, once she felt that she had made a considerable contribution to the business, she turned again to her first love: music. “Ultimately you have to be true to who you are,” advises Kiran.

It may seem natural for someone like Mehreen Raheal, daughter of popular media personality and activist Simi Raheal, to have forayed into the media, but Mehreen reveals incidents of how she was turned away by photographers for being “too fat”. “They would say you don’t have what it takes, you’re not going to make it. But my mother kept telling me every single day of my life that I was beautiful and I made up my mind to pursue my dream of modelling and acting. I thought to hell with all of you who want to put me down. I believe in myself. I believe in God and whatever will come to me, will come.” And so in 1998, Mehreen joined Nabeela’s advertising agency and got her first project with ICI. Using that as the first step, she embarked on advertising campaigns with Prestige communications that kindled her ambition and motivated her to work harder. Now as one of the most recognisable faces in the fashion industry, Mehreen represents some of the biggest brands in Pakistan.

As Asmaa Mumtaz began to deconstruct her life, she extrapolated the idea of creating a den for women where they could feel their best and so came ‘The Dresser’. “I wanted it to be a quirky little spa/studio space which feeds your soul and reflected a certain positive way of life,” Asmaa says. With a mother who is known for her unique sense of style, Asmaa tapped into her genes and all her art training at NCA, to con-



Mehreen wears burnt orange cocktail dress with metal detail by **SHEHLA CHATOOR**. Price on request. White and brown diamond necklace with moss green south sea pearls and polki studs by **GOLD**. Price on request. **LANVIN** metallic mini pop bag \$1,450.

Kian wears orange grecian gown by **ZAHEER ABBAS**. Price on request. Polki necklace, diamond and columbian emerald necklace, polki bracelet, diamond and south sea pearl earrings all by **GOLD**. Price on request.



Kiran wears jumpsuit by MUSE Rs. 30,000. Gold bracelet and turquoise ring by GOLD. Price on request. ALEXANDER MCQUEEN clutch approx \$1,500.

Asmida wears dress by KAMIAR ROINI, CHARLOTTE OLYMPIA black velvet pumps \$ 875, Diamond bracelet, diamond and mother of pearl earrings and ring by GOLD. Price on request.

Mehreen wears black sequin dress by SADAF MALATERRE RS. 25,000. ALEXANDER MCQUEEN clutch \$1,495.20 carat emerald surrounded by pink necklace and ring by GOLD. Price on request. MANOLO BLAHNIK pumps Mehreen's own.



• I still believe
in marriage.
It's a celebration
of love and
commitment.

Asma wears
ballerina blouse
RS. 8,400 and
orange silk pants
RS. 8,400, both
by MUSE. Tweed
CHANEL bag.
Necklaces,
rings, earrings
and bracelet
by GOLD. Price
on request. Belt
Asma's own.



I sat down with my
Dad's lab guys who
once created
products for
Elizabeth Arden
and created a
whole line for the
studio.

Areeza wears
top and pants by
KAMAR BOKNI.
BOTTEGA VENETA
knot clutch \$ 1,380.
Bracelets and rings
by GOLD.
Price on request.

jure up a chic studio of personally crafted organic treatments, where ingredients are grown and freshly prepared for each customer. It helped that she was the scion of the famed Fazal Din pharmaceutical empire as that provided her the space to develop her products with her father's lab technicians. Asmaa researched thoroughly to come up with all the recipes. "I sat down with my Dad's lab guys who once created products for Elizabeth Arden and created a whole line for the studio. I really wish I had done chemistry, too," she sighs. The Dresser not only offers a delicious array of facials, manicures and pedicures, it also has a closet to actually play dress up in; something you can utilise when you enlist for Asmaa's personal styling services, which is her true passion.

The leap of faith

Kiran started out making music with friends she had met at an informal jam session, 'Brian and Rashid', and then began jamming with every musician in Lahore that would entertain her. It was during one of these jam sessions that she heard Adnan play. "I was like, 'Oh my God! This guy is really good.' He had soul," she says. Kiran had been looking for a guitar player. "Adnan came up to me and said, 'If you ever need help with your music let me know,' and I said, 'I would really like to jam with you.' So we did and it was so magical. On the journey you always intuitively know the 'this is it' moments. We both felt it," she says. After landing a jazz gig at Cosa Nostra's soft launch, Caramel was born. Kiran's mother has been critical to her success. She says, "As a trained classical singer, my mother used to play music in the house all the time. Every Sunday her Ustad would come and I used to just absorb it all. When I came back to Pakistan and first formed a band, my mother was so supportive; she came with me to the first few gigs, and always cheered me on. I don't know if I could have made this career choice without at least one parent supporting me wholeheartedly."

Mehreen is one of Pakistan's top models with innumerable commercials to her name. What sets her apart from other models in the fashion industry is that not only did she refuse to change her body in order to be accepted; she was one of the first models who challenged the cliques in the industry (where models are groomed by photographers and then only allowed to work with them). As a principle, Mehreen worked with every photographer in the industry as her emphasis was on the quality of work. Mehreen did her first television series at the age of sixteen and never looked back. "The camera and I have had a rip roaring affair for so many years now. I just love it," she says. Recently she starred in the Indo-Pak collaboration, Virsa. The film may not have done well at the box office but her acting was appreciated immensely. "I love that film and I am really proud of it. It was my first opportunity to work in India and I learnt so much from that experience," she says.

NCA was a reality check for Asmaa, who came from the Lahore American School, "My first year at NCA, I cried everyday like a Kindergartener. It was a bit of a culture shock for me. There were so many different people from different walks of life and I really didn't fit in. I was a pampered (and severely arrogant) little LAS girl that was used to the good life, thrown

into a sea of weird artsy types who really weren't very nice. It was a bit like being in jail - I carried around cash and cigarettes to get out of all the ragging. As painful as that first year was, the next three years grounded me and brought me back to earth. I met my best friends and mentors that helped me become who I am today. So in retrospect going to NCA was one of the best possible things that happened to me." Asmaa graduated with honours from NCA with a Bachelors in Fine Art and went on to study Make-up and Styling at the London College of Fashion. Despite doing something as niche as personal styling, business is rolling for this budding stylist with styling collections at fashion weeks for Maria B and Maheen Kardar of Karma, both retail queens in their own right. "I've been blessed to have so many great professionals believe in me. Nickie, Nina, Maria, Maheen and HSY, just to name a few. I really couldn't have gotten this far without them," she says. Asmaa loves to paint and she plans to introduce an element of a painter's workshop at The Dresser, as she believes, "It's not just about beauty. It's about art at the end of the day."

Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end

Kiran and her guitarist, Adnan Sarwar, slowly fell for each other as two similar souls on a mutual journey of self-discovery; shunning old cloaks and donning new ambitions. Kiran gives Adnan credit for helping her on the path of self-actualisation and honing her talent. "If it hadn't been for Adnan, maybe things would not have happened for us in the way that they did. He is an entrepreneur with a very clear vision. He made me realise that Caramel needed to be commercially viable and sustainable. We bring very different skill sets to the table and really compliment each other. He used to tell me I needed vocal training because my singing wasn't up to the mark and that used to drive me wild, but if it weren't for him, I wouldn't have taken my vocal training so seriously. He's really guided me through everything and been nothing short of a mentor. I'm really indebted to him for helping me become who I am today and for believing in me and taking a chance on me when everyone else thought I was gambling my life away on a whim. This partnership has survived through testing times because of the great deal of love and respect we have for each other," she says.

As their band grew, so did their relationship, but after being with each other for just over a year and a half, they felt that their work had to take precedence over their relationship. "As two fairly opinionated and strong personalities, we clashed

"ULTIMATELY YOU HAVE TO BE TRUE TO WHO YOU ARE," ADVISES KIRAN.

constantly and while that made us excel creatively, creating a fiery mix, it was not the best thing for a personal relationship," admits Kiran. When Kiran and Adnan broke up, they decided to part ways professionally as well. She says, "We went through six months of hell, because

when emotions are involved, it's painful. Of course there is a grieving process but then eventually you come out of it." Kiran tried going solo for a while and did well but realised Caramel was strongest when Kiran and Adnan were together. "It was just no fun without him; I missed the creative process we would go through together, I missed having a guide and a collaborator, who would see things differently from me.



Amiaa wears black sequin dress by **STUDIO S**. Diamond and ruby bracelet, diamond and south sea pearl earrings, south sea pearl and pink necklace all by **GOLD**. Metallic **CHANEL** bag and **CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN** pumps.

Mehreen wears navy blue lace jumpsuit by MEHVISH KHAN. Rs. 16,000. Diamond, ruby, aquamarine earrings by GOLD. Price on request.

“The camera and I have had a rip roaring affair for so many years now. I just love it.”



Kiran wears red jumpsuit by MUSE Rs. 18,000. Gold Alexander McQueen clutch approx \$1,500. Rings and pearl studs by GOLD. Price on request.

Things started to become stale.” So, they decided to bring Caramel together again even though their personal relationship was over. “I thought to myself why should we let go of something that works so well? We were such a great team so we thought, why lose that? As adults we really have to learn to get over things and move on. Not every relationship is forever, and most are there to teach you something about yourself. So, ‘learn the lesson’ and move forward. I think it’s weird to harbour ill feelings against anyone; it shows that you haven’t actually learned from the experience and are still stuck in a limited mindset. Adults should be able to make rational decisions, and set appropriate boundaries. Hate is just a primitive response by a bruised ego. I’d like to believe that we are more evolved than that,” she says. It is so commendable and refreshing to see two people who were mature enough to stay together professionally, even after the end of their personal relationship. Kiran makes a very interesting and thought provoking point. She says, “We have to get over this ‘the one’ mindset. You really can’t expect one person to fix everything. It’s too much pressure. You’re ‘the one’ for yourself. Other people just reflect that self-love that you generate internally and give to yourself.”

For Asmaa Mumtaz ‘the one’ did exist. “He was my whole world,” she concurs. So when that relationship fell apart, she did, too. “When I got married, I believed without a shadow of a doubt, that this is the man I would spend the rest of my life with. Divorce is one of the most traumatic experiences one can have, and I wouldn’t wish it on anyone. There are so many people involved and they all get hurt in the process,” says Asmaa with painful candour. She met her ex-husband, the drummer Farhad Humayun, at NCA while she was in her second year and he returned for a project after graduation that required a woman with long nails. “I starred in his stupid churail movie,” she recalls. Asmaa and Farhad dated for three years, were married for four, and after seven years of deep association, the relationship fell apart. “Marriage is a commitment, it was never an option for me to leave but we realised that there was really nothing else we could do.” Even with six months of seeing a therapist together, they came to the same conclusion. “It’s not an easy decision to make, but once you do, it’s liberating.” Asmaa is an optimist and continues to believe in love and marriage. She says, “I still believe in marriage. It’s a celebration of love and commitment. It’s reassuring to see my parents who have been married for over forty years. I am sure they must have had ten years that were really tough but ultimately they make each other happy and respect each other. It is beautiful to see that.”

Mehreen has always been a hopeless romantic. “I wanted to get married since I was five. I was always in search of true love. For somebody to come and sweep me off my feet,” she says. When Mehreen and Mohammed fell in love, she realised they had struck the perfect balance and tied the knot. “We spent the first year fighting like mad and then things just fell into place. We have the craziest relationship. I’m like a jack in the box and he’s very laid back so we are complete opposites but he’s allowed me to be who I am, and it works both ways,” she says. Mehreen confesses that life has altered her idea of “that fairytale love”. She says, “I am such a romantic soul, but

I have become so practical. Of course we have those magic moments but what I cherish most about our relationship is that we are there for each other through the good and bad times.” Mehreen is candid about having “manic mood swings” and says, “I am not an easy person to live with. When you meet me for ten minutes, you will think ‘Oh! She’s so bubbly and fun’, but when things are not going my way I am a mess. Mohammad has loved me and understood me at my worst and that’s what makes our bond so strong. That is why I respect him so much. Now that I am in a good place in my life, I want him to have me at my very best because he deserves it,” she says.

It’s always darkest before the dawn

In a society where we are taught to hide and cover up, where revealing your problems is a sign of weakness at best, and ammunition for retribution at worst, all three women are unabashedly open about their personal dilemmas. “In a society like Pakistan, we are encouraged to lie,” bemoans Kiran. “You become a good liar just to hold on to your sanity. Especially as women, we are encouraged to lie about our boyfriends for instance, because parents or society, don’t want to know the truth. But the worst thing about lying, in any way shape or form, is that it cuts you off from who you really are; you lose yourself in your desire to please or pacify other people. I had to ‘unlearn’ everything and stop lying to everyone, including myself,” she says.

Even though life was at an all time high for Kiran during her period abroad where her career as a lawyer was soaring, something kept chipping away at her soul until a colleague at her London law firm (whom she had always thought was a particularly empowered woman) suggested a ‘life coaching’ course. She says, “At first, I was so skeptical. I was thinking self-help is so lame! I don’t need to do this. I’m way smarter than this. But it’s unbelievable what it did for me. It’s remarkable how you can accelerate your own personal development so much in just one weekend; I can safely say that the person that walked into that course was a completely different person from the one

ALL THREE HAVE TAKEN PATHS OF THEIR OWN CHOOSING AND ARE NOTHING SHORT OF A SUCCESS STORY.

that walked out. All in one intense weekend.” Talking about things in a group forum and sharing other people’s issues and dilemmas, was truly a life-changing experience for Kiran. She realised that her story was no different from anyone else’s; that we all yearn for the same things, we all crave living a life that is authentic and fulfilling; we all face the same social pressures that lead us to make choices that may not be the best for us. One particular assignment in the course was a ‘happiness exercise’, where she had to remember the last moment in her life that she was truly, ‘ecstatically happy’ and then repeat the activity that she had been involved in at that time. This took her back to her fondest memories of holding a hairbrush (as a mock microphone) in front of the mirror and belting out songs, as a child. From there on, the pursuit of happiness was clear.

When Asmaa’s marriage fell apart, not only was she devastated, her parents fell apart as well in the collateral damage that accompanies any divorce. The best thing that she did, she says, is to seek therapy, not just as an individual but also as a family, with her parents, too. “In a lot of relationships there is so much

baggage and bitterness that you need an intermediary to sort you out. There are patterns of behaviour that we have since childhood and we don't realise how damaging they are to us. A lot of forgiveness happens in therapy that sets you free. We really need to let go of the stigma attached to seeing a therapist, and understand that it helps us be stronger, happier people.

Bless my mother for dragging me to one and kudos to my family for actively engaging in therapy," she says. Apart from this personal emancipation, therapy also strengthened her as a person that allowed her to let go of preconceived notions about marriage. "You have to be a complete human being before you get married and not hope for another human being to complete you because that is unrealistic and cannot happen. That said, I still believe whole heartedly in marriage and committing your whole life to another person, I just have a more realistic view of it," Asmaa says.

Mehreen was a rebellious teenager. She recalls, "Adolescence was a very difficult time for me because my father was away most of the time and my mother and I didn't get along as we were constantly at loggerheads. I had lost track of who I was. There was a turning point in my life; I was out late with my friends and when I came back I saw my mother on the prayer mat, crying. She used to worry about me and wait up for me every night, but she never uttered a word, as she was scared of how I would react. That was the moment I decided I could not put my mother through that. I realised I was trying too hard to fit in and I didn't like the person I had become. Slowly but surely I started spending more time with my family instead of phony friends and found happiness in taking care of my family, which was extremely rewarding." It was during the same tumultuous period that Mehreen was trying to get a break in the fashion industry. In order to appease the fashion and modelling industries, she embarked upon a grave quest to shed weight. "It came down to the point where I stopped eating completely because everybody said I was fat. The lightest I have been is 79 pounds, which made me look sick. When I wasn't working I was sleeping since I had no energy. I was going through bouts of severe depression. My mother sent me to a psychiatrist who prescribed medicines which actually triggered off a worse reaction than before." Eventually Mehreen learnt that success comes only with knowing and accepting oneself and her career is proof of that.

The future is bright, the time is now

One of the first things one notices about Kiran is her positive energy. "The world is my oyster and it feels great," she exclaims. "It's a far cry from the corporate law world and I'm glad I pursued my passion. Learning new things is challenging but it always excites me. I think we, as adults should never let go of that childlike wonder and curiosity. I feel like I've squeezed all I could possibly have out of life thus far. That has been the underlying aim for me, to squeeze all the juice, the sweetness and goodness of out of life and really savour it," she says. Although Kiran's talent could lead her anywhere in the world, her immediate future will most likely take her to India. "We would love to do more work in India because they actually have an industry and it is booming. Also, they understand and appreciate quality. There's also this curiosity about Pakistan. So, you're going to see a lot more international collaborations, and I see myself as part of that movement," she says. Kiran is committed to being a singer, but knows that she has just gotten started and that her

path could take her in many directions. "This is just the beginning of a long journey," says Kiran, "and I am happy to walk that path in a natural way and not over-plan it." Club Caramel's first album is yet to be launched, as they are releasing it single by single.

With an enviable portfolio of television commercials, plays and films, Mehreen's set her eyes on opening up her own restaurant. "I want to start a restaurant which is like a little knowledge factory with tons of books so people can read while being spoilt by yummy food. I have started working on developing my own recipes, as I love to cook." While that is Mehreen's long-term goal, for now she is thoroughly enjoying her time in the media. "I love being in front of the camera and don't want to give it up right now," she admits. Mehreen advises young girls to live their dream but "think about where you are heading. Modelling is not going to be a permanent thing so you need to have a back up plan."

Asmaa is optimistic about the future. "Life has been great, I don't have any regrets, nor can I complain. I'm super lucky to have a great support system of amazing family and friends. I've learnt from my mistakes and become a lot stronger as a person. I have realised I must stand on my own two feet. When you are in your twenties, you are in the process of finding yourself; who you are, what you want, what you want to be. There are a lot of external factors and people that can play on your feelings. After thirty and after therapy, you gain a confidence and belief in yourself which equips you to deal with people and situations better," she says. Asmaa advises young women to accept and embrace themselves. She says, "Ultimately your attitude towards life determines your success and happiness and how good or bad you look and feel. Your way of life, what you eat, what you think, all shows on your face. This is something my mother has always taught me. If you harbour negative feelings, those negative feelings will show on your face, corrupt your aura and energy and just make you feel horrible. So you must always remain positive, work hard at whatever you do and give it your best. If it doesn't work out – let it go. Learn from it. Believe in yourself. Be patient and just keep working. That's what people overlook because they do everything in a rush for the money or the fame. At the end of the day your target should be to produce good work and make a difference." Asmaa is working on offering her delicious organic products for retail soon and we can't wait.

Meeting these dynamic women, it is clear that if you are afraid of failing, if you are not prepared to be wrong, you won't come up with anything original. If none of them had ever made the mistakes they made, if they hadn't loved and lost, if they hadn't swayed off course, they wouldn't be who they are today. The secret to their success has been to learn from their mistakes and emerge even stronger than before. Each of these three divergent journeys embody essentially the same pursuit and the story of every young woman: a discovery of the self, being comfortable in one's own skin, having a dream and no fears of where the pursuit of true happiness would take them. Kiran, Mehreen and Asmaa dared to take a leap of faith, they believed in themselves and followed their hearts. These three girls are an inspiration to all women as despite the odds they worked hard to make a success of their lives and live life on their own terms. Here's to hoping more women can be like these empowering role models, who are proof of the fact that hard work paves the way for success and the journey is most definitely worth it. ■



Mehreen wears
printed blouse
Rs. 9,500, pants
Rs. 10,500
both by SANIA
MASKATTA.
Pakistani pendant in
a funky blue cord
by GOLD.
Price on request.

MEN BEHIND THE CURTAINS

IS THE US GOVERNMENT THE BIGGEST FINACIER OF IT'S OWN ENEMY? ISFANDIAR KASURI GIVES US AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

BY ISFANDIAR KASURI

In 1982, Ronald Reagan declared, "Just as the Columbia (space shuttle), we think, represents man's finest aspirations in the field of science and technology so too does the struggle of the Afghan people represent man's highest aspirations for freedom. I am dedicating, on behalf of the American people the March 22nd launch of the Columbia to the people of Afghanistan." Hollow words, these were not. By 2001, the US government had admitted that during the 1970's and 1980's, \$6 Billion in military aid and weaponry had been provided to the various fundamentalist Islamic groups in Afghanistan. Today, according to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the US is fighting the same people that "we funded 20 years ago because we were locked in this struggle with the Soviet Union." Such acknowledgements of past lack of foresight might be reassuring if, in fact, a policy correction had been made. Unfortunately for the war torn people of Afghanistan and now Pakistan, the US government along with its client governments in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Pakistan, continue to bankroll the Taliban war effort at an alarming rate.

The largest financier of the Taliban, much to the "alleged" chagrin of its US allies, is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the country that provides America the oil it needs to run its V8 engines. As Stuart Levy, a Treasury Undersecretary told a senate hearing committee back in 2008, "Saudi Arabia today remains the location where more money is going to terrorism, to Sunni terror groups and to the Taliban than any other place in the world." Clearly US support for Saudi Arabia, and

thereby indirectly the Taliban, was troubling Stuart Levy. This could not be farther from the truth though, as is evident by US financial dealings with the Taliban through the guise of "nation building" in Afghanistan. A young



Afghan neo-conservative by the name of Hamed Wardak, owner and CEO of NCL Holdings had, as acclaimed investigative journalist Aram Roston described, "hit pure contracting gold". A graduate of Georgetown, Wardak was a recipient of American Enterprise Institute indoctrination. The son of the sitting Afghan Defence Minister, Abdul Rahim Wardak, was busy turning Kabul into his own little Wall Street. In short, he was one of six US contractors that were paying protection money (in the multi-millions of dollars) to the Taliban in order to secure safe passage for US supply convoys (everything from toilet paper to assault rifles) on their way to Forward Operating Bases from the north. On NCL Holdings' Advisory Board sat Milton Bearden, described by Senator John Kerry as, "a legendary CIA case officer and a clear headed thinker and writer". Indeed, the company profile illustrates USAID's notion of the credentials a "local" implementing partner in Kabul should have.

In 2009, reports finally began to surface that suggested as much as 10% of the Pentagon's logistics contracts had made their way into the hands of the insurgents. The amounts are staggering. Even the US Military has confirmed in a report it released in August 2011 that a not so paltry sum of \$350 Million has made its way into Taliban coffers. On this basis alone, the US Government is now unequivocally one of the largest financiers of its own declared enemy. In fact, to add salt to Stuart Levy's wounds, the country he identified as the most important financier of the Taliban (above his own country), is also on the receiving end of a \$60 billion dollar arms deal, only the largest in US history. Quite obviously, the Saudis' must be doing something right by Washington.

Enter Pakistan. A perennial recipient of US military and civilian aid,

**GOLDMAN SACHS,
BANK OF AMERICA,
CITIGROUP, AND
WACHOVIA ET AL HAVE
FINANCED EVERYONE
FROM ENRON TO
OBAMA**



and whose stocks are traded on Wall Street.

A Wall Street that was bailed out by the White House no less. A White House whose own Chief of Staff Bill Daley's previous job was to serve as Vice Chairman of JP Morgan Chase, a financial institution that, besides financing WMD manufacturers like Raytheon, Lockheed Martin and others, was Col. Qaddafi's own personal banker to the tune of some \$500 Million. Goldman Sachs, Bank of America, Citigroup, and Wachovia et al have financed everyone from Enron to Obama to Mexico's drug cartels, again in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Wall Street lobbyists on K Street financed the election campaigns of both John McCain and Barack Obama in 2008 - almost half of their top 20 campaign contributors were the same financial institutions. Clearly there is ample precedent for funding both sides of an election or even a conflict.

the country's ruling elite, military and civilian, have nurtured the Taliban from its infancy to adulthood. They have also covered before US officials since Pakistan's inception. Whether in power or not, political leaders spend much time shuttling back and forth from Washington, either begging for money or for another opportunity to take power in Islamabad. The "Deep State" is no exception. It should come as no surprise that the US Government is the Pak Army's largest external source of direct investment. According to a Times of India report dated August 17th 2011, Pakistan's military is scheduled to receive \$1.3 Billion in 2011 and \$1.6 Billion in 2012. The money continues

Senator Prescott Bush, the grandfather of President George Bush, profited from business dealings with the Nazis until his company was shut down under the Trading with the Enemy Act in 1942. Around the same time, US Standard Oil (now Exxon-Mobil and Chevron), in conjunction with another German company named I. G. Farben, provided the Luftwaffe the synthetic oil it needed to put its Blitzkrieg, or "Lightning War" to the test in Europe. More than 60 years on and more than 60,000,000 dead in World War II, a state of perpetual war continues.

THE WINDS OF HOPE FOR CHANGE HAVE BLOWN THROUGH THE US AND ARRIVED IN PAKISTAN. FOR THE MOMENT, IMRAN KHAN PERSONIFIES THIS HOPE.

to pour in, despite the persistent allegations being hurled at the ISI for playing a double game in Afghanistan. This view is crystallised by the specific, yet unsubstantiated allegations of ISI involvement in the attack on the US Embassy in Kabul and for providing sanctuary to Osama Bin Laden. Clearly, this notion was lost on Time Magazine, when it named ISI Chief Shuja Pasha as one of the 100 most influential people on earth earlier this year. But then, why shouldn't it be. Underneath the smoke screen of accusations, the people at Time Magazine understand that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (albeit at a much smaller level) are merely playing the same double game that their benefactors in Washington are. Benefactors who are not beholden to the American people as envisioned by Thomas Jefferson but rather to the "military industrial complex" and the financial institutions and multinational corporations that support it.

Major General Smedley Butler put it succinctly in 1935 when he wrote, "War is a racket. It has always been." Referring to himself as a "Gangster for Capitalism", Smedley was awarded the Medal of Honour twice and fought on behalf of the war profiteers in Cuba, Honduras, Haiti, World War I and China. That he self admittedly "helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street" should be quite alarming given the continued trajectory of "defence spending" a decade into the 21st Century. Since 2006, the US government has offered almost \$1.4 Trillion to defence contractors, all of which require substantial finance capital

The Taliban, viewed in this corporatist light, and the three decades of perpetual warfare they have guaranteed in the region, have made elite sectors of society in each country that is a party to the conflict, wealthier than ever. One thing is clear. If there is ever to be an end to a state of perpetual warfare, the greedy capitalists that Smedley Butler spoke of, the ones that funded the Nazis and now the Taliban need to be stopped. That this disease has spread to every imperial nation on earth, including Pakistan, makes this task that much more herculean.

Two wise men once presented a problem, "stark and dreadful and inescapable: shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war?" Bertrand Russell's and Albert Einstein's choice is as relevant today as it was when WMDs were first invented. The winds of hope for change have blown through the US and arrived in Pakistan. For the moment, Imran Khan personifies this hope. Let us hope then, that unlike President Obama, his brand of "hope" accounts for the aspirations of the people he aims to lead and not the war profiteers in Ayesha Siddiqi's "Military Inc." or Eisenhower's Military Industrial Complex. Let us also hope that he can stand up to this juggernaut of multinational corporations that have, as Major General Smedley Butler put it, ensured that, "the few prosper and the many pay." The now worldwide Occupy Wall Street movement is a step in the right direction. In the meantime though, make no mistake: the men behind the curtains love the Taliban and for good reason. Whatever else you might have heard, money does grow on trees in Kabul. ■

★

GREAT

INSPIRATIONS



PAPER CELEBRATES 11 INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE WON OUR HEARTS AND CAPTURED OUR IMAGINATIONS IN 2011.

by **MOBEEN ANSARI**



Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy

The investigative journalist and documentary film maker received the 2011 International Emmy Award for her documentary 'Pakistan's Taliban Generation'. She is the first Pakistani to receive an Oscar nomination for 'Saving Face', a documentary chronicling the work of a British Pakistani plastic surgeon aiding victims of acid attacks in Pakistan. Rooting for Sharmeen to win the Oscar!



Imran Khan

Cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan has emerged as a strong contender in Pakistani politics after two highly successful rallies in Lahore and Karachi which were attended by hundreds of thousands of supporters from all age groups and socio-economic backgrounds. Imran Khan has become a symbol of hope for a nation tired of suffering at the hands of one corrupt government after another.



Abdul Sattar Edhi

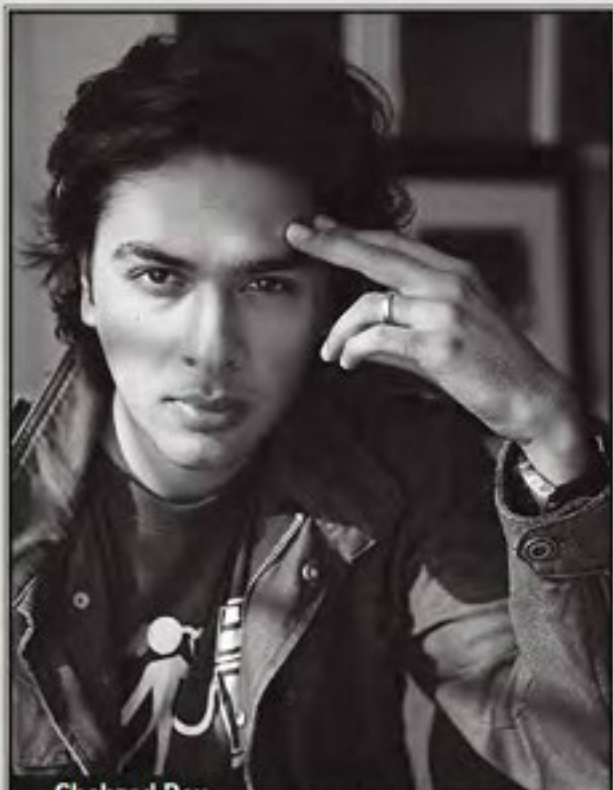
A man all Pakistanis are unanimously proud of, Abdul Sattar Edhi has spent his life in the service of others. In November 2011, Edhi was recommended for a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. He truly is one of the most inspirational figures in the world today.

Meesha Shafi

Talented and versatile, this model, singer and actor is set to star in Mira Nair's new directorial venture based on Mohsin Hamid's novel 'The Reluctant Fundamentalist'. Meesha will also be lending music to the film along with her husband Mahmood Rahman.



PHOTOGRAPH: ATHER SHAHZAD



Shehzad Roy

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY SHEHZAD ROY

Shehzad Roy started his career as a musician and used his popularity to raise political and social awareness. In 2002 he established Zindagi Trust, a non-profit education foundation working to provide quality education to underprivileged children in Pakistan. He is one of the youngest-ever recipients of the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz and has also been awarded the Sitara-e-Eisaar.



Ali Zafar

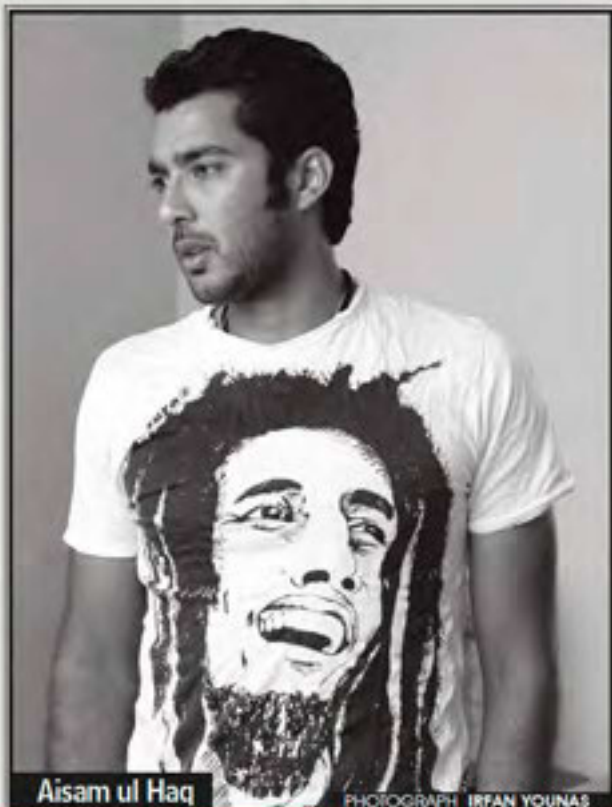
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY AMMARA HIKMAT

His versatility is unmatched. He has pursued interests in painting, modelling, singing, and has gained much recognition for his acting ability with his Bollywood film 'Mere Brother Ki Dulhan' alongside Imran Khan and Katrina Kaif. He is currently composing music and lyrics for his new upcoming Bollywood film, 'London, Paris and New York'.



Omran Shafique

This talented musician, composer and guitarist plays guitar/vocals in the Pakistani band Mauj and co-Yen, and also plays guitar for Pakistani rock-star Ali Azmat. Mauj won the award for Best Artist at the Lux Style Awards 2011 for their album 'Technicolor'.



Aisam ul Haq

PHOTOGRAPH IRFAN YOUNAS

Pakistan's top tennis player is the only Pakistani to reach the final of a grand slam (both mixed doubles and men's doubles at the US Open in 2010). In 2011, Aisam and his doubles partner Bopanna (The Indo-Pak express) won the ATP World Tour in Paris and the Thailand Open. Aisam was also nominated for the Stephen Edberg sportsmanship award alongside stars like Federer, Nadal and Djokovic.



Moin Khan


Tired of the negative portrayal of Pakistanis in the international media, 25-year-old Moin Khan decided to do something about it. So began his solo motorcycle journey from the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California to Lahore, Pakistan. On his 6-month adventure, Moin Khan travelled over 20,000 miles and persevered through accidents and broken ribs, and successfully completed his 'Different Agenda'.



Mahirah Khan Askari

PHOTOGRAPH: FAYYAZ AHMED

Mahirah began her career as a popular video jockey on MTV and went on to star in Shoaib Mansoor's 'Bol' v v . In 2011 Mahira's much-acclaimed lead role in the hit drama series 'Humsafar' was arguably her best work yet. Mahirah shines at everything she does.

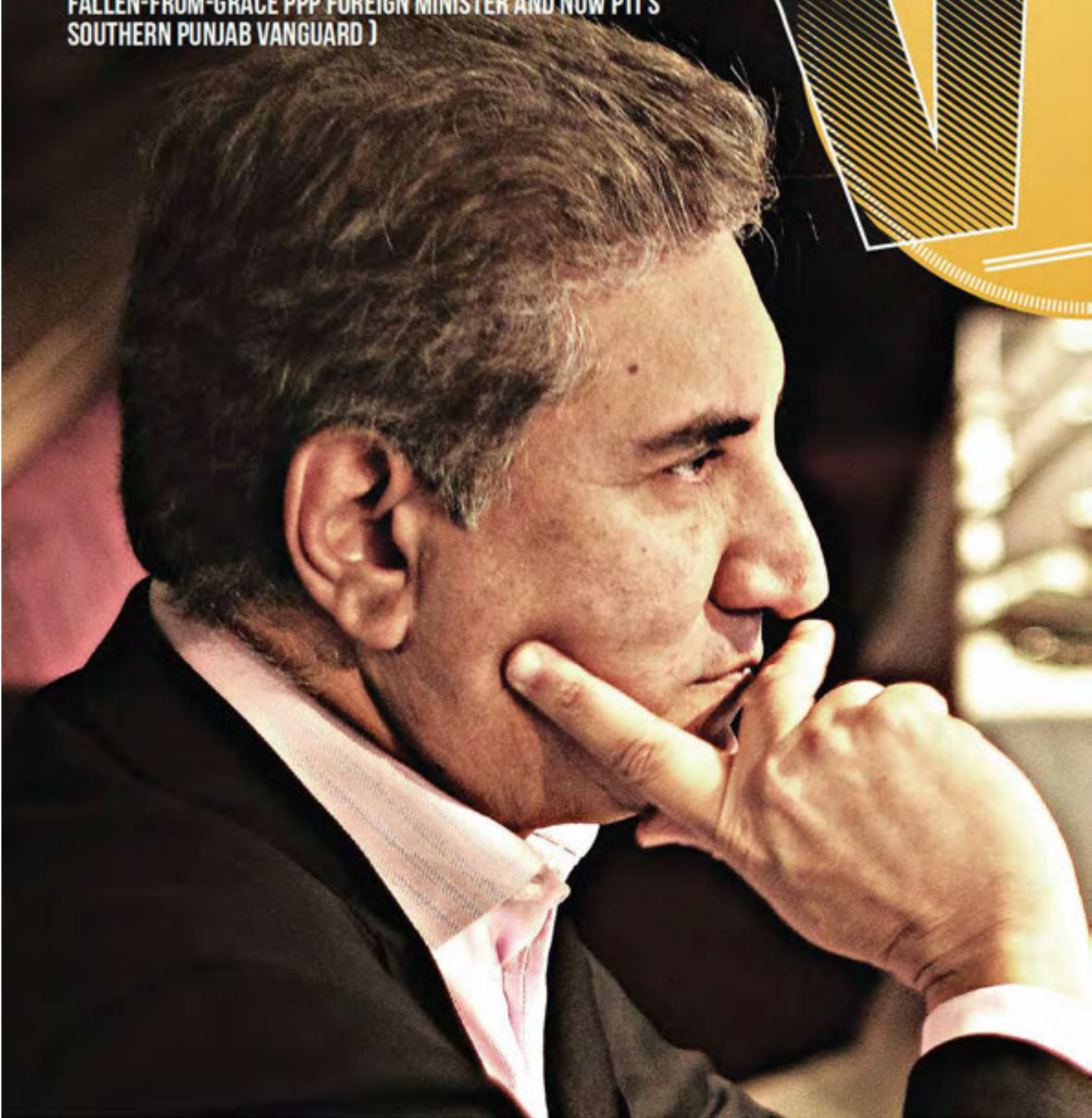


Shehrbano Taseer

One of the bravest young women in Pakistan, Human Rights First honoured Shehrbano in 2011 "for her courage in carrying out her father's legacy of religious tolerance." Speaking out against the growing extremism in the country, she has become the voice of reason representing progressive Pakistanis.

SHAH MAHMOOD QURESHI

(MULTANI PIR, LAHORI POLITICO, AITCHISONIAN OLD BOY, GOVT. COLLEGE AND CAMBRIDGE GRAD, FORMER PML-N NUMBER CRUNCHER, FALLEN-FROM-GRACE PPP FOREIGN MINISTER AND NOW PTI'S SOUTHERN PUNJAB VANGUARD)



TWO HOURS. TWO ALPHA MALES. ONE DEBA



WAJAHAT S. KHAN

(QUETTA-KHWA PASHTUN, HARDCORE KARACHIITE, GRAMMARIAN EDITOR, MICHIGAN WOLVERINE, HARVARD FELLOW, INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALIST, AND THE TOUGHEST INTERVIEWER IN THE BUSINESS)



TE. AND A VERY, VERY POWERED UP LUNCH.



PAPER REVIEWS THE COMBATANTS' ARMOUR

WARRIORS DRESS FOR BATTLE, BUT GENTLEMEN DRESS FOR DINING.



WSK WAS THE ACADEMIC HIT-MAN

Blue flat-fronts, dark tan dress-boots, and a V-cut grey corduroy jacket on a self-patterned white button-down shirt with a powder blue tie, all (except the boots) from Republic by Omar Farooq. But his deep blue Superman socks were his mojo. Very professorial thug meets Clark Kent.

SMQ WAS THE CLASSIC ENGLISH-ARISTOCRAT

Dressed for a short morning of work and a long afternoon of tennis-watching: Single-breasted blue blazer with pleated khakis, tan Oxfords and a pink button-down shirt. His cufflinks were sterling and impeccably mute. Very basic, very impressive, very old school, and very solid for a power lunch.

The Logic: Why go Versus SMQ?

Because SMQ is debatable, and I love debates. Because SMQ was the first major 'electable' to cross over from the 'dark side' of the PPP to Inman's crusade - but only AFTER Khan's magic show of October 30th - which makes me not doubt, but at least question his intentions.

The Battlefield: Where We Huddled

Opium. The latest Thai haunt in Lahore. Imagine Bangkok's upper-middle tier family resto, but create it in Gulberg III and throw in some classy, hand-etched architecture (Note to reiterate: architecture and NOT interior design, which we found randomly brilliant but also slightly distasteful, especially their gridded out central table-and-chair ensemble

that looked like a cross between an airport waiting-lounge and a classroom). SMQ and I indulged in a three-course meal, for that's the type of Rocky diet it takes for a 15-round encounter when you're facing off against the heavyweight champion of Southern Punjab.

The Arrival: How He Made an Entrance

SMQ was late. By 40 minutes. And he didn't apologise. I would exact revenge by stretching the sit-down by an hour.

The Order: Who Ate What?

As the host, I deferred the order to SMQ, and Qureshi dodged judgment by asking the Maitre d' his recommendations. The suggested soup and Firecracker Prawns for starters were quite forgettable, but impressively complimented by six (soy, chill-garlic, sesame, fish etc.) delicately procured sauces.

The most fun we had was sharing our ooh-and-aah moments over the beautifully wrapped Chicken in Toya Leaves and the curiously constructed Wasabi Crusted Prawns. The Chilli Basil Rice needed more chilli and basil, but had its heart (or is it starch) in the right place. However, the Chilli Garlic Chicken was a bad call from a yet-to-learn-how-to treat-restaurant-reviewers Maitre d', for it was nothing more than the sort of sticky stir-fry college students can churn out at the last minute if they see munchy-time approaching and a bottle of Kikoman lying around.

We couldn't comment on the fish and/or noodles because the chicken-loving Maitre d' failed to recommend any. Still, our bottom-line is that we like Opium, but order at your own risk, be creative, and don't take all the recommendations of the staff seriously. SMQ maintained that "everything was very good" but then the restaurateur is also an Aitchisonian Old Boy, and Old Boys - as all Lahoris well know - watch out for Old Boys.

VERSUS PIR OR PATRIOT

BY WAJAHAT S. KHAN

Prior to lunch, I had never met him, personally. Of course, I had seen him walk like a disdainful, smiling Moses through the sea of correspondents at the Foreign Office during his hey day as Pakistan's envoy to the world from '08 to '11, but I was expecting the handshake to be stronger, and was pleasantly surprised that it was not a pump of over-compensating machismo. Still, Shah Mahmood Qureshi reminds me of a sharp, trusted friend from school who was smart, even nerdy enough to be a physician, but ended up going to Wall Street to become a hedge-fund manager. He still made a killing, because he was rock solid, intellectually, and tactical enough to survive in a battle space different from the one we always thought he would choose to find his challenges in. Upon meeting him recently however, it was clear that everything about him now is simply contrived. He has the well-heelled, polished finishing of the cool Upper West Sider, but he's not cool.

He's a piece of installation art in animation and the flesh. He's not supposed to be doing what he's doing or looking like he's looking. And he's not really the man he has become.

SMQ is that guy. He could be the Perfect *Pir*, but I can't say if he is the Perfect Leader. And it isn't because his Aitchison/ Cambridge background, compounded by brilliant Urdu debating and sheer Multani prowess, gets spiked by the party-switching practicality of a thoroughbred politico who survives because he has to. Rather, the construction of his self-willed polity is so super-glued by effort, by trying, by overdoing the act and over-preparing himself, that one is forced to admit that SMQ might be a damn good politician, just not a natural one. Thus, he's not a serious contender, but a very able co-pilot. A solid backstop. A dependable wingman. A grand vizier. But not a Moghul Emperor. Consider.

WSK: NOW THAT THE GIG WITH THE PPP IS OVER, WHAT'S THE NEW AND IMPROVED, 2012 MODEL, UPGRADED AND WISER SMQ - THE NEW HOPE OF THE PTI'S PUNJAB STRATEGY - UP TO NOW?

SMQ: Well. One is in politics for a purpose. Not just to be in office. And I was closely associated with *Mohatma* Benazir Bhutto. She was very kind to me and I had a very good rapport with her. I felt this time she wanted to make a change. This time, she was very keen to do something for posterity. Not just become Prime Minister for the third time. Unfortunately, the way she went, it was very tragic, and she was not given the opportunity, you know, to do so. The people who succeeded her, unfortunately, have no vision. No agenda. No plan.

See, this was my problem with SMQ from the very first question. I threw him a soft ball and he could have said anything he wanted to. He could have said that he's humbled by power. He could have said that he wants real change, from the grassroots (which his PTI is pushing for). He could've said he's a grandfather now and finally sees the light. He could've even said that he was never going to climb higher than he got in the PPP. He

was headed in that direction, it seemed, after his first sentence. But then he went into campaign mode. He took potshots at Zardari and Co. Futile potshots, because I wasn't hosting a TV show. I was having lunch with him. He should've gone for impression, not votes. But he's so mechanical in his approach, so over-prepared in his demeanor, that he didn't do what you do with a soft ball: nudge it anywhere you want, not slam it for an over-kill. So I changed gears. He wanted to be on a talk show? Fine. We would do a talk show.

WSK: BACK UP A BIT. FOR A CAMBRIDGE GRAD, FOR ONE OF THE MOST POLISHED MEN IN THE BUSINESS, WHERE DOES THE WHOLE *PIR-MUREEDI* ANGLE STILL COME IN? WHAT IN THE WORLD IS A CHAP FROM CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE DOING SELLING *URS*-BASED POLITICS OUT OF MULTAN?

SMQ: Accident of birth. Born into a family, which has a spiritual following. As the eldest son so I inherited that responsibility. I want to use that to promote a moderate Islam because what my ancestors did was that they preached Islam, but it was an Islam of tolerance, of understanding, of moderation. My ancestor, Sheikhul



Islam Hazrat Bahauddin Zakria, came and sat next to a *Mandir*, one of the older *Mandirs* in the subcontinent, in Multan, one of the oldest living cities in the subcontinent. Without touching upon it, without uprooting it or destroying it, he set up a *Masjid*, and converted people through persuasion. That I think was a message that needs to be very strongly projected because today one fears there is a fundamentalist element that is trying to take over society. And they are trying to prescribe a version of Islam that we do not subscribe to. I think the Sufi order of this country, and the *Mashaikh* in Pakistan, can play a very significant role in taking on the extremes and reversing extremism in Pakistan, and in protecting Pakistan from Talibanisation.

Wow. The thing about politicians – good politicians – is that they know the secret of interviewing: Don't answer the question to admit, but answer it to win. And if you can't win, then change the framework of the question. Make it bigger. Make it critical. Make it existential. Fight the big fight. SMQ, with his beautiful conversion of what is a no-brainer critique (that he's using his dynasty/religion/cult base in Multan to basically, well, survive as a political entity – which means that he takes clear advantage of the fact that his constituency essentially worships him, perhaps literally) did just that.

As political hardball depends on the pre-requisite to disarm your opponent, and as my opponent is considered the most articulate public speaker of his generation, I did what I was supposed to do: change the conversation, again.

WSK: THEEK HAI. BACK UP A BIT. GO TO CAMBRIDGE. WHAT DID YOU READ THERE?

SMQ: Law and History, '79 to '83.

WSK: ANY ADVENTURES?

SMQ: (Silence)

WSK: GIRLFRIENDS? FAST CARS? DRUGS? ROCK AND ROLL?

SMQ: (Controlled laughter) Believe you me, I went from Pakistan, and the pace (he checks himself), the academic pace over here, I mean, there was no comparison. So there was a lot of slogging involved and just to hand in your tutorials in time was a lot of work. And sports.

WSK: WHAT DID YOU PLAY?

SMQ: I played squash and hockey over there and a bit of rowing. But it was too cold to get up in the morning and row, so I gave it up. But the deal with my parents was that I had to be back every chance I got. So my Christmas vacation, I was in Pakistan. My Easter vacation, I was in Pakistan. My summer vacation, I was in Pakistan. So I stayed in touch.

This is why you have to love journalism. You get the country's former foreign minister to admit that he was a good boy on campus because school was tough. You get Southern Punjab's premier alpha-male to complain that it was the tough winter of England that caused him to drop out of crew practice. Finally, some personality!

WSK: THE YEAR YOU WENT TO CAMBRIDGE, '79, WAS THE YEAR BHUTTO WAS HANGED. SOME ADHERENTS OF YOURS COMPARE YOU TO BHUTTO. HELL, EVEN I'M STRETCHED ONCE IN A WHILE TO COMPARE YOU TO ZAB. BUT IS IT FAIR TO SAY THAT YOU ALSO LOOK UP TO HIM?

SMQ: One felt that we had a lot in common. He was from a rural background from Larkana. I was from a rural background from Southern Punjab. There is a cultural similarity between the south of Punjab and Sindh. Language. Traditions. You know *bohaz see cheezen*. Then, Oxbridge. He went to Oxford and [had] a passion for politics. So yes, one was impressed, and one idolised him. Aur public oratory. *Aur unka apnaa andaaz: baat karnay ka*. He was very different.

WSK: SO DID YOU START MODELING YOURSELF, CONSCIOUSLY OR SUBCONSCIOUSLY AROUND HIM?

SMQ: Subconsciously, yes, I did.

I see an opening, and for SMQ, it's a big one.

WSK: LET'S GO BACK TO '79. BHUTTO IS KILLED AND YOU'RE IN COLLEGE. WAS THERE ANY SORT OF ACTIVISM? ANY PROTESTS? ANY WRITING? ANY REFLECTIONS? AS A PAKISTANI STUDENT, DID YOU END UP ENGAGING IN PAMPHLETEERING, PROTESTING, POETRY, VIGILS ON CAMPUS FOR A POLITICAL CAUSE? AFTER ALL, YOU WERE IMPRESSED BY BHUTTO.

SMQ: Honestly, no. I didn't get involved.

WSK: THAT'S STRANGE, ISN'T IT? I MEAN YOU ARE FROM A POLITICAL FAMILY. YOU'RE IN CAMBRIDGE. YOU'VE SEEN BHUTTO. YOU'RE MESMERISED BY HIM AND HE IS HANGED. AND YOU SIMPLY COMPLETE COLLEGE AND HAND IN YOUR TUTORIALS? AND THEN YOU KEEP COMING BACK WHEN ZIA IS KICKING INTO GEAR. DIDN'T YOU THINK CAMBRIDGE WAS THE RIGHT PLACE TO GET POLITICALLY ACTIVATED?

SMQ: (Pause) As I said, I had gone with an objective that here's an opportunity that God's given me. So that's where I got involved. And frankly, it was challenging. For example, one had been to college here and there was never a need to go to the library [in Pakistan]. *Wahan, library kay baghair guzara hota naheen tha*.

For me, this is where his veneer cracked. For a moment - I couldn't believe it. For much of the PPP's leadership from ZAB, BB and down to even the GT Road warriors like Babar Awan - student politics is the beginning of the beginning. It is the *raison d'être* of their socialism, the genesis of their *jiyala* DNA, the hallmark of their ingrained center-leftism. They start young, those *Piplis*. That's what makes their passion and naiveté so adorable. But here's SMQ, at a pivotal point of history i.e. 1979 - the year the Old Pakistan ended and Different Pakistan began - and he's in a unique position to pull a Chaudhry Rehmat Ali off in Cambridge, of all places, and all he does is huddle in the library. The good Chaudhry, if one recalls, also at Cambridge five decades before Qureshi, coined the term Pakistan, fighting the frigidities of winter that SMQ complains about, and engaging in heated debates that led to imagining the critical mass that we are living in today. That's where the doubt set in. It was clear that SMQ went to Cambridge to study for a degree, not to change as a social thinker. As a romantic for politics, I was disappointed. That's where the heat seemed to turn itself on.

WSK: AND THEN YOU CAME BACK, AND CONTESTED THE 1985 ELECTIONS UNDER ZIA, WHO WERE YOUR PATRONS IN THAT ELECTION? OBVIOUSLY, THERE WERE NO PARTIES.

SMQ: We were fighting on our own steam.

WSK: BUT THE CRITICISM IS THAT THE ZIA REGIME ONLY LET AN APPROVED LOT OF FOLKS IN, ONLY THE PEOPLE IT HAD GIVEN A THUMBS UP TO GOT ELECTED.

SMQ: No.

WSK: SO NO ZIA BACKING AT ALL?

SMQ: *Naheen*.

And here's where his weakest defense came through. SMQ could have admitted that back in the hell that was 1985, the initial approval of Zia and his henchmen was essential to play the game, and he could have complicated that admission by saying that one has to be in the system to change the system, and that would have been enough, because it's the truth. Instead, SMQ weaved an over-civilised, under-cooked argument, and hid behind the fact that he was not the only green-lit combatant of the '85 elections.

SMQ: *Us zamaane main un kaa interest tha kay nae log aen, aur nae logon ko encourage kar rahe thay*. A lot of new people came in '85. And a lot of those people are now the senior political leadership of the country. *Nawaz Sharif ko lay lain. Nisar Ali Khan ko lay lain. Bohat say aisay log hain jo aaj aap ko dikahee day rahay hain. Q-league ko lay lain. Chandhries ko lay lain. Sindh may lay lain. Frontier may lay lain*. So a lot of people who came in '85 are now the senior political leadership of the country. *Tan, dikkat mahsoos naheen hoee*. One contested the non-party election and won.

What a dodge: Line up the other Zia babies and act like the adult in the collective. This was a good time to take a diversion. The entrées had arrived. SMQ, I discovered to my disappointment, is not a chopsticks man. He's not a big experimenter of sauces either. Whether on-guard or not, he's a slow, deliberate eater. His napkin never came into play, and he forgot to remind his waiter about delivering his Coke, but I didn't mind intervening. As we moved through our Siamese maze, opting out of the mainstream of over-prepared arguments seemed like a good idea: We would go fishing on the banks of the tangent.

WSK: LETS COME BACK TO '85. YOU'RE A DAD. YOU'VE GRADUATED. YOU'RE A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT. YOU'RE REORGANISING YOUR CONSTITUENCY. WHAT'S THE NEXT BIG EVENT?

SMQ: My mother's illness. She was a very strong personality and I was extremely close to her. When she was diagnosed with cancer it was quite a shock. And then her treatment. One had to, you know, run around hospitals, radiation, treatment. I spent a lot of time in England because of her treatment. So that was an additional preoccupation and the realisation came that she was not going to be there for long.

WSK: HOW WAS THAT?

SMQ: That was tough (and this is where he came across as being very honest). I spent as much time as possible with her. I had other siblings as well, but fortunately, she gave me a lot of time, and a lot of love and attention. She has played a pivotal role in making me what I am today. When she was suffering the pain and the disease, I was suffering the emotional trauma.

WSK: SORRY ABOUT YOUR LOSS. REALLY. BUT BECAUSE YOU'RE A PUBLIC FIGURE, I'M GOING TO MAKE A POLITICAL CONNECTION HERE. THAT STORY...THOSE DETAILS...SOUND, ALMOST EXACTLY LIKE THE PLIGHT OF...YOUR CHAIRMAN. LIKE KHAN SAHIB.

And here's why I have to like SMQ. On hearing the Imran reference, on seeing the chance to go political from the personal, he switched on. Transformed. Upgraded his energy levels. From genuine introspection and damning pathos, the campaigner was back. In a millisecond, with the perfect answer.

SMQ: Yes. Sure. That's why, when we [him and Imran] met, before he even entered politics, one knew his family and his situation. He knew mine.

WSK: DID YOU INTERACT IN THE LAHORE PARTY CIRCUIT?

SMQ: (Blushes!) No, we were at Aitchison. He was senior. One knew of him in Aitchison. There was a very strict senior/junior hierarchy at Aitchison. But then, his family and mine, his sisters and my wife, they were very close friends. And one knew the family. That's how one got involved in the Shaukat Khanum drive. I remember Khan Sahib coming to Multan, staying with me in Multan, going around different schools, addressing students and raising funds.

WSK: AND THE COMMONALITY OF LOSS?

SMQ: *Commonality aik din hum baithay discuss kar rahay thay*, with one of his sisters, who's a very close friend. We realised that we've been to the same schools: Aitchison. Been to similar universities: Oxbridge. Both extremely close to their mothers. Both suffered cancer. Both died of cancer. Both rural backgrounds and yet urban upbringing (laughs).

WSK: HAVE YOU HAD THIS CONVERSATION WITH HIM?

SMQ: Not directly with him, but with his family.

WSK: DO YOU FIND IT UNCANNY? BECAUSE IT IS DEFINITELY UNCANNY.

SMQ: It's interesting that we have so many commonalities.

He wants to talk about Imran at this point. It's obvious. He asks me if my voice recorder is working. I confirm that it is.

WSK: OK. ENOUGH HISTORY. LETS GO CONTEMPORARY. LETS TALK ABOUT THE PTI VERSUS YOUR OTHER CHOICE AFTER LEAVING THE PPP: THE PML-N. THERE'S A SERIOUS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES, A BIG IDEOLOGICAL DIVIDE THERE. YOU'RE LOOKING AT TWO VERY DIFFERENT TYPES OF POLITICAL MANIFESTOS. YOUR CHOICE FOR THE PTI, AS YOU HAVE SUGGESTED, CAN'T BE JUST ABOUT A CHANCE FOR 'INTERESTING' POLICY MAKING. WHAT ABOUT IDEOLOGY? OR DOES THAT NOT MATTER TO YOU?

SMQ: Mian Sahib's [PML-N] is an established party. This is a party in the making. *Is nay tau aik shape layna hai.* There was initially a PTI movement, yes. But that movement, 30th October onwards, is now being converted into a party. *Abhee is kee restructuring honae hai. Iss kay constitution ko review kiya jaa raha hai.*

There is an opportunity for creation. That [PML-N] is already created. *Aik model bana hawa hai.* You accept it or you just live with it. Here, it's like being in the lab, you can create something, and *uss ka aik challenge hai, aik opportunity hai,* and it's far greater. *Abhi you know yahaan we are putting together a manifesto, a program and policy planning cell. As we expand and go into places, which we did not exist in previously, there are opportunities of new inductions, creating structures, rewriting the constitution, putting a program together. Building a team of like-minded people, it's more exciting.*

OK, Shah Sahib. Nice touch on dodging the PML-N vs PTI flip-flop critique. Time for a loyalty question, one that brings manhood into play.

WSK: ON THAT NOTE, ABOUT TEAMWORK: YOU'RE AN ALPHA MALE, RIGHT? ZAB WAS AN ALPHA. IMRAN'S AN ALPHA, TOO. USUALLY IN EVERY JUNGLE, IN EVERY SYSTEM, THERE IS ONLY ONE ALPHA AND EVERYBODY ELSE, INCLUDING LESSER ALPHAS, ARE FORCED TO BECOME THE 'LESSERS'. THERE'S ONE KING. ONE LEADER. ESPECIALLY IN THE REALM OF POLITICKING WHERE THERE IS SO MUCH CANNIBALISM AND SO MUCH AT STAKE. HOW IS THAT GOING TO WORK BETWEEN YOU AND IMRAN?

SMQ: (Thoughtfully, slowly and very deliberately) *Jo badshah hota hai na, us ko bhi apni vision compliment karnay ke liya piyaday bhi chahiye hotay hain, bashir bhi chahiye hotay hain, wazir bhi chahiye hotay hain, dost bhi chahiye hotay hain.* There's plenty of room for everyone. No one can deliver alone, and Imran has often been quoted as saying, 'I was the captain of a team, but I couldn't have lifted the cup if I didn't have the support of the team with me. I needed the other ten to be equally committed. If I was bowling and I was bowling well, I needed somebody there to catch in the slips.'

WSK: FAIR ENOUGH. SO YOU WANT TO STAND IN THE SLIPS FOR KHAN. IS THAT OK WITH YOU?

SMQ: It's a team that's required.

WSK: BUT IMRAN KHAN IS GLOBALLY FAMOUS FOR BEING... OVERBEARING! IMRAN KHAN IS, WELL... IMRAN KHAN! IMRAN KHAN IS USED TO GETTING HIS WAY. NOW HERE HE IS, FINALLY WITH A POLITICAL HEAVYWEIGHT. ONE CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT - EVEN AS FAR AS THE PURPOSES OF GENTLEMANLY AND POLITICAL, CONSTRUCTIVE DISCOURSE AND DEBATE ARE CONCERNED, EVEN WHEN TWO PEOPLE DIFFER - THERE HAS TO BE SOME EXPECTED FRICTION?

**THERE'S
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(IN PTI). NO
ONE CAN DE-
LIVER ALONE**

SMQ: Well. There is such an impression. But he told me that 'I am very domineering in my approach but when you work with me you will see we are a very democratic party. We have a very open and heated debate and people are allowed to say what they want to say.' In me, he will have a friend, a colleague and supporter to run with him, who will have the confidence to say, 'No Imran, we have to change course' if need be. *Buhoth log nahi kethay,* and it's so important so chances of making mistakes are minimised.

More loyal than the king, eh? How about another monarch. From another time, not too long ago.

SMQ: When I left the [Foreign] Ministry and returned to Multan, people saw what the [People's] Party did to discourage them to participate in my rally. They saw how the banners against me were put up. They also saw in Ghotki on the 27th of November, how the administration was blocking people. How my venue was changed three times. And yet people defied it. It was the first, major public rally in Sindh, openly challenging Asif Zardari.

WSK: BUT YOUR RALLY, SHAH SAHIB, WAS IN GHOTKI: A TOWN WHERE YOU HAVE A LOT OF MUREEDS.

SMQ: *Dekhiye.* In that town, everybody is not a *Mureed*. And everybody in that jalsa was not a *Mureed*. There are *Mureeds*, and there are sympathisers. There are those who took a liking to me because I took a bold stance on the Raymond Davis issue. There are many who were attracted, who felt that they saw that I kicked the ministry off and walked away. I said fine, if it's not working out with the PPP, then I have a larger national responsibility. This seat was not given to me by Zardari. It was a ticket given to me by Benazir Bhutto. And Zardari had nothing to do with it. I was made president of the Punjab [People's Party] by Benazir Bhutto, despite Zardari's opposition.

WSK: TELL ME ABOUT THAT. WHAT WAS THE FRICTION ABOUT?

SMQ: (Chews, but doesn't mull) There was no friction. He just wanted somebody else.

WSK: THEN WHY DID GILANI, OF ALL PEOPLE, GET IT? HE WAS LOWER DOWN THE PECKING ORDER COMPARED TO YOU. THEY SCREWED YOU, IF YOU PARDON MY FRENCH. DIDN'T THEY?

SMQ: (Stops eating and frees his hands) I could not have done what Mr. Gilani was ready to do.

WSK: THIS IS INTERESTING. PLEASE EXPLAIN.

SMQ: (Laughs) I couldn't have been 'his master's voice' like Mr. Gilani. No opinions. No personality. And he's the Chief Executive of the country. Under the 18th Constitutional Amendment, he's responsible to the people of Pakistan. He's answerable to the Parlia-

ment, and yet all decisions are made in the Presidency. Especially in foreign policy affairs, he [Gilani] doesn't exist!

WSK: DON'T JUST GIVE ME THAT. THAT'S NOT NEWS. THERE MUST BE MORE TO HOW THE PENNY FELL?

SMQ: I think so. No, I know so. And Gilani has proved so, by accepting every *ulti-seedhi* thing Zardari says or does. If I was there, I would have put my foot down and said, "Sir, this is not on. Even in the party's interest, it is not on." Now in the Raymond Davis affair, that's what I said: it's not in the interest of the country, it's against the law, and it's going to hurt the party. Your party's image will be shattered. Why would I sink the boat I'm in? Gilani, on the other hand, would simply lie down in front of Zardari. Obviously, that means Zardari liked him more. Much more. Because Gilani bent to every Zardari whim.

WSK: THAT'S FINE. NOT EVERY KING CAN TOLERATE A BIRBAL, YET THEY WANT TO BE AKBAR. BUT HADN'T HE MADE UP HIS MIND TO FIRE YOU BEFORE DAVIS. AND WASN'T IT ABOUT YOUR TIES WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT? THAT YOU LIKE THE COLOUR KHAKI?

SMQ: Listen: A year or so ago, I was called in by Gilani, and he said the president wants to get rid of you. I asked him, what's the problem. I have no allegations of corruption. I work for eighteen hours a day. The diplomatic corps is comfortable with me. What's the problem? He said, I don't know. I said, fine, but can you arrange a meeting between yourself, Zardari *Sahib* and myself? He said yes, it's a good idea. So we had a meeting, at the Presidency, the three of us, sitting together, post-dinner.

So I asked, Zardari *Sahib*, what's the issue? Do you question my loyalty of twenty years? Having slogged and worked for the party? And how can you question that? I was here by choice, not by compulsion. I felt that I had a commitment to Benazir Bhutto, who was extremely nice to me, and in the last few years, developed a tremendous rapport with me. And she had trust and confidence in me. And had a place for me in her mind, in her scheme of things. Unfortunately, she's gone. And if she were there, then where would Zardari have been? If BB was there, then would Zardari have been president? If BB was alive, would Gilani have been prime minister? He wouldn't have been into policy-making, brother. He would have been in Dubai. But *theek hai*. It happened. We accepted it. In that meeting, nothing concrete came out.

WSK: SO IS HE PARANOID? SCHIZOPHRENIC? WAS HE IMAGINING THINGS?

SMQ: Sir, *guzarish yeh hai*, that when you don't have a formal education, when you don't have your own experience or stature, then you're even scared of your own shadow. Unfortunately, he's not Benazir Bhutto. He wants to step into the shoes of ZAB, but he doesn't understand what that takes. ZAB was a man who was sophisticated, a man who was educated. EDUCATED! Whatever my pedigree may be, if I'm not educated, then it's just not right, is it? Where is the polish going to come from? Education, Sir! He doesn't have it!

WSK: SO ZARDARI'S DEMON IS NO SCHOOLING?

SMQ: I remember his address to the UN. I mean, he was preparing all night, and then he was skipping sentences. I've seen him operate on international forums, and the quality of interaction. My God. Believe you me, *Wajahat*... I used to get scared. ■

I COULDN'T HAVE BEEN 'HIS (ZARDARI'S) MASTER'S VOICE' LIKE MR. GILANI. NO OPINIONS. NO PERSONALITY.





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Mehreen Akbar runs the successful home accessories label, *LA MAISON*, with her older sister Irum Rawjee. She is an entrepreneur, doting wife, loving mother, daughter and sister and a fiercely loyal friend. PAPER gives you an exclusive peak into the life and style of Mehreen Akbar and her beautiful Karachi home.

by **AYAZ ANIS** | **MEHER TAREEN**



I would only have
made a house with
Habib Fida Ali
He is a true visionary





◆

We enter the large white mansion Mehreen and Ghouse Akbar call home through French colonial teak doors to find ourselves standing in a grand entrance with ceilings 16 feet high. At our feet glistens the perfectly polished white marble floor. We stand frozen at the entrance, intimidated by the grandeur of the house. We can see the outdoor terrace and pool in the vast distance that flows into the pavilion, with French Foo Dogs standing tall at 6 feet. As we soak in the awesome surroundings Mehreen

walks in texting furiously on her BlackBerry. She's wearing black juicy tracks and no make-up and while she looks glamorous we start to panic as we expected her to be ready. "Girls I need thirty minutes. Let me show you what I have picked out for the shoot," she exclaims. She is confident and cool.

We follow her to her room and into her walk-in closet (think less closet and more like a room); a shrine to Hermes (innumerable Birkins, Kellys and any other bag Hermes ever made), Donna Karan floor sweeping gowns, the latest Cavalli couture and a collection of Jimmy Choos that would put Tamara Mellon to shame. We are, needless to say, mesmerised.

Maya, her seven-year-old, strolls in wearing a pink Hello Kitty night suit. Soon she becomes the self-appointed stylist, giving fashion advice incessantly. "Mama please put on red lipstick. You always wear brown." Mehreen insists that it is past her bedtime. Maya, unfazed, picks out shoes with each outfit and is surprisingly spot on. Mehreen proudly tells us that Maya is a straight A student. "I want to go to Brown," says little Maya, "I love math and science." When we ask her the dreaded question every grown up must ask a child, "Who do you love more, Mama or Daddy?" She replies in a soft voice, "Both but Mama picks me up from school everyday." Maya pauses. Mehreen smiles reassuringly and says, "The kids love Ghouse but I am their life." Mir, their thirteen-year-old is busy on his computer tucked away in bed.

Leaving Mehreen to dress, we walk back to the study. Inside the house white orchids and scented candles are everywhere. We pass the dining room and admire the custom-made hand painted de Gournay wallpaper with its chinoiserie pattern. In the study, Ghouse Akbar is on the phone. Extremely bright and equally witty Ghouse is great company. Nervous about the interview, he is not his usual care-free self today. Constantly pausing the iPad voice recorder, wanting to censor all the "juicy bits" of the interview, he seems apprehensive and cautious. Finding that hilarious, we reassure him and start talking. (What we don't realise is that somehow he has managed to damage the file and this interview will have to be written from memory!)

Ghouse grew up in Karachi, studied at Karachi Grammar School and then attended the prestigious Brown University followed by an MBA at INSEAD. He returned to Pakistan and was the first person to bring the McDonalds franchise to Punjab. He sold the franchise in 2003 after McDonalds exited their equity position in Pakistan and then established Pakistan's first private jet company.

Ghouse then branched out into logistics with UPS, sports goods with Nike and luxury with LVMH Watch and Jewellery including Tag Heuer. Recently, he has started Pakistan's only Grain and Fertiliser Terminal in partnership with the Fauji Foundation. Ghouse spends a lot of time on social work, especially in the education sector. We



*This house is very special to me.
Everything in this house was
made with love and has
a sentimental attachment.*





ask Ghouse how difficult it is to achieve financial success in Pakistan. He attributes his success to being in the right place at the right time. "Are you trying to be humble? Or were you just lucky?" we ask. "Luck favours the prepared," he responds. "You have to work really hard and know the people you can count on." While Ghouse is exceptionally intelligent and has achieved success at a very young age, he possesses a childlike wonder and an untainted charm that sets him apart from his contemporaries. "When you are young you feel like you know everything. As you get older you realise the more you know the less you know. So I am always looking for inspiration." Ghouse loves to read biographies and likes to learn through the experiences of others. He also surrounds himself with people he admires and can learn from. "I believe in strong relationships and I have invested a lot of time and effort in developing friendships over the years. My circle of friends is very diverse and of all age groups. My friendships are my assets," he says.

As Ghouse finishes his sentence in walks Mehreen looking drop dead gorgeous. Ghouse looks at Mehreen with pride. "Have you gotten anything out of him? Tell me what he said and I'll tell you if it is true," she says as she laughs out loud. They exchange a mischievous look. Mehreen props herself on a leather arm chair in the study right next to Ghouse. She looks as comfortable in a stunning sequined number by Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla as if she were still in tracks.

Anyone who meets this dynamic-duo will realise that they are a unique couple. After sixteen years of being married they can still manage to make each other laugh. They may seem like a classic case of opposites attract but they are very close friends. They tell us that the key ingredients for a successful marriage are compatibility, trust and friendship. "My mother always says that Mehreen is the best thing that happened to me," Ghouse confesses. Mehreen smiles and says, "Yes. We have a great rapport and she has always treated me like a daughter and never like a daughter-in-law."

Ghouse's mobile rings non-stop as we try to ignore it and continue. Noticing our irritation, Mehreen says, "As you can see there are three of us in this marriage - Ghouse, his mobile and me." Ghouse puts his phone away and responds, "I hope you girls know love is spelt v.i.s.a." They laugh out loud. "Ghouseeee come on. Be serious," she says while still giggling. "Ok. Ok. I love being with her. She is my rock," he says. "My husband is a great provider. He spoils me rotten and it goes both ways. We are very fortunate that we live a comfortable life but it's the fact that we enjoy spending time together and taking care of each other that has kept us going for so many years," she says.

Mehreen recently celebrated her fortieth birthday. Ghouse tells us how all their friends came from near and far to Nathia Gali for five days. Mehreen is quite the international jet setter and style icon. Featured in Tatler, she was recently the showstopper for Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla at Dubai Fashion week. Mehreen may be high maintenance but she is equally down to earth and warm. She is candid and comfortable in her skin. After all, how many forty-year-olds in such impeccable shape would be honest about their age?

We start talking about the house. Fortunately, the couple has a shared aesthetic, but the house was the realisation of Mehreen's imagination. "Ghouse just said this is a present from me. Build what you like. He trusted me completely," she says. The house was built by the legendary architect Habib Fida Ali. "I would only have made a house with Habib Fida Ali. He is a true visionary. We had so many minor arguments while building the

house. I would come in and say sorry Uncle Habib I hate the pillars, they have to go, and we would start from scratch. He knew exactly what I wanted and gave it shape." Six years later the marvelous house was built and then there was the challenge of doing it up, and converting the house to a home. Mehreen had been collecting furniture for years, from all over the world. "Jalal and Fatima Salahuddin helped me with the house. Fatima knew my taste and really brought it together with me. I could not have done it without them. There are so many memorable moments attached to doing up the house. Jalal came up with the idea of the tallboys in the entrance (very tall chest of drawers) and Fatima was designing them for us. I flew to Lahore to supervise the making in the dead of winter. Jalal, Fatima, Satti and I spent the whole day laughing at the factory. I will never forget that trip," she says.

The house is filled with evidence of the family's adventurous spirit and love for travel. The Spanish cast iron antique urns from Gaudi and the Baccarat chandeliers were bought while holidaying in France and the moulds for the elaborate cornices were bought in London. "This house is very special to me. Everything in this house was made with love and has a sentimental attachment," Mehreen says. One of her favourite things in the house is the 8 by 7 feet oil on canvas, by Unver Shafi titled 'Dreaming of sweet things in Asia'.

Mehreen tells us that she is very close to her family, especially to her father. "When Irum and I started working together to set up La Maison he was very supportive of our work. My father believed in us and I have always felt a special bond with him. "Ghouse interrupts, "And I am your mother's favourite!" she smiles and nods in agreement. He continues, "My mother-in-law is a very cool woman. I love hanging out with her."

Mehreen confesses that she loves to drive. We ask her how that

"We don't compete with anyone and live a very self contained life. We are least interested in trivial drawing room talk."

is possible in a densely populated city such as Karachi with traffic that is enough to give anyone a nervous breakdown. She smiles and says, "I just love driving. Anywhere." Mehreen is a perfect mix of fiercely independent and completely dependable and her relationships with family and friends are a testament to that. It is refreshing to see a couple who have everything and are unaffected by it. They are one of the few people who refuse to get caught in the rat race and instead live their lives the way they want without worrying about what people say. "We don't compete with anyone and live a very self-contained life. We are least interested in trivial drawing room talk," Mehreen says.

Everything about Mehreen and her home exudes flawless sophistication. But Mehreen is not snooty, superficial or hostile as is sometimes typical of the super-hip and super affluent. She is surprising down to earth and incredibly charming. Unver Shafi Khan, the fabulous painter and a close friend describes her as elegant and very kind. "Mehreen doesn't have a mean bone in her body," he told us. The best thing about Mehreen is that she doesn't take herself too seriously and for that perhaps Ghouse deserves credit. Undeniably Mehreen Akbar and her home are nothing short of magnificent. ■





There are three of us in this marriage- Ghouse, his mobile and me.



THE DINING ROOM WALL, ADORNED WITH A CUSTOM-MADE DE GOURNAY WALLPAPER



GHOUSE & MAYA AKBAR

SIRAAT-E-MUSTAQUEEM

ART IS SUBJECTIVE AND SO IS ITS INTERPRETATION. SANAM TASEER AND SALIMA HASHMI REVIEW ALI AZMAT'S LATEST WORK AND OFFER THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVES.

BY SANAM TASEER 



A

li Azmat is a celebrated artist. Yes - the brilliance of his colours assault you, the richness of his textures excite you. But above all Ali Azmat is a hauntingly beautiful storyteller. Ali paints the human condition.

His last body of work was a series of controversial and poetic portraits of hijras. The rendering was hyper-realistic, the colours luminous, the thickness of the texture gave the work an almost sculptural quality. But that is not the best thing about his work. The best thing is that Ali has a long-standing commitment to the portrayal of love and longing. In those portraits you saw rich and diverse little glimpses into their lives. Their longings, their humanity, their stories. Each series is an emotional journey and a meticulous process.

His new series *Siraat-e-Mustaqeem* recently previewed at The Drawing Room Gallery. Ali Azmat's paintings tell a complex sad little story in the richest most lush imagery imaginable. A more ambitious tale this time - the story of a people who began their history as a nation bursting with hope and faith and belief. Of a path to hell that was paved with the best intentions. Thus the exhibited work is both contemporary and historic.

The artistic community in Pakistan has now put a self-imposed ban on what they call the 'Bombs and Burqas' syndrome; the repeated use of these images in themes such as questioning history and a crisis of faith. Ali was forced to depart from this stale imagery. He chose to juxtapose the Pakistani flag with a *Quran ka ghulaf*. A recurring metaphor in this series that is as provocative as it is poignant.

His work is highly original and each piece conveys a different mood and a unique narrative. The title piece in which roses are pouring out of the cloth seems beautiful and hopeful. An appropriate beginning to a journey titled *Siraat-e-Mustaqeem*. In his latter pieces you find pictures of grenades and jihad woven into the visual image. This shows the mood of the work slowly becoming darker and more cynical. The cloth is also a symbol of concealment. We are never quite sure what is behind it as he never actually portrays the Holy Book itself. Is it faith or is it deception? The gloved hands also add to the feeling of unease, leading us to believe that the symbols of piety contained within the image are not quite what they seem.

Rather than creating a singular, predictable story, this exhibition accentuates how the history and identity of a nation is fragmented, full of layered nuances and self-perceptions and, like human beings, always in flux. ■



The True Path

BY SALIMA HASHMI

This series signals a departure for Ali Azmat. Known as painter of substantial skill and careful observation, Azmat's past work has been engaged so far with the world as he finds it. His sensitive portrayals of the figure have established him as a confident practitioner of the representational. Now the artist dislodges himself from his comfortable position of raconteur of places and people. The prevailing situation in Pakistan has had a profound effect on Ali Azmat. He is now constrained to respond to the horrors of extreme beliefs and blood letting, that we have become familiar with. Every day our people bear the brunt of the savage zealot.

Ali Azmat takes on the challenge of articulating the collective experience in a manner which is thoughtful and takes him into uncharted waters. Perceiving the hypocrisy which underlies protestations of faith, he examines shallow ritual and empty conventions.

Azmat chooses to confront claims to piety. For him, this means evolving a set of widely understood images which have symbolic implications. But he is careful not to transgress certain boundaries. The Holy Book is never revealed in these paintings. He is oblique in his visual reference which is just as well. He refers, perhaps, to those who can never understand the inner core of The Message, instead, are content to celebrate the outer covering. The protocol of kissing, decorating, adorning, can be confused with reverence for meaning.

Ali Azmat is intent on unmasking the duplicity which is disguised as faith. He alludes to the menace of coercion, the violence that resides in compulsion. These ideas are all translated into a fresh set of images, which are not part of his usual repertoire. The cloth covering which protects the Word can itself embody pretence and insincerity. The hands which handle the sacred, are encased in plastic gloves, disposable items which can be shed in a moment. The lips which kiss the Book, can easily lie and defame. Grenades are the menacing motifs which embellish the cover.

The artist has suffered with his people who know that the religion of their forefathers is being debased. These works emerge from feelings of anger and distress, yet are strong statements much needed at this moment of our history. Ali Azmat has demonstrated his commitment to the role of artist in Society. ■





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GET Meesha Shafi's Look!

By SHAMMAL GURESHI

WE WERE EXCITED TO DO MEESHA SHAFI'S MAKEOVER AND ARE GOING TO TAKE YOU THROUGH THE PROCESS TO SHOW YOU HOW IT IS DONE IN SIMPLE AND EASY STEPS.

THE CUT:

We wanted to do something fun and different from her last year's pixie shaped cut. As her hair has grown since then, we opted for a very young and hip bob with loose layers and a slight undercut in the nape area.

The styling is easy when the cut is right; the products are readily available at our salons. For this particular style, we used the Label.m Sea Salt Spray on wet hair for that textured edgy matte finish, the hair was blow-dried through and was finished with Label.m Souffle: an uber nourishing protective cream that gave Meesha's hair instant volume.

THE HAIR COLOUR:

For Meesha's hair, we were inspired by the jewel colours very much in vogue this season. We used deep rose velvet as her base colour, highlighting the top section with tones of amethyst.

L'Oreal Majirel was used to colour Meesha's hair and platinum pink was used for the top half of the head for pre-lightening.

MAKE-UP:

We started Meesha's make up by prepping her skin with Gulnot moisturiser and her lips with Masters Colors Lip Peel and Lip Liss.

A Masters Colors concealer was used under the eye area and Perfect Finish Mineral Foundation No. 50 is used all over the face.

A loose powder was then lightly dusted over the face to take away the shine, leaving behind a healthy sheen.

Extra loose powder was then deposited under the eye area to catch any extra eye make-up fall out. This is called the "drop cloth" technique.

A neutral taupe coloured eye shadow was applied to the entire lid of the eye and a black eye pencil was applied close

to the lashes and then blended in with a blending brush to give a smudgy look. A highlighter was then applied under the eyebrows.

Lashes were curled and mascara applied to the top and bottom eye lashes.

Eyebrows were brushed and gaps in the eyebrows were filled with an eye shadow matching eyebrow colour. This is done to avoid harsh lines which can result when using eyebrow pencils. Eyebrows were then brushed again and the extra loose powder removed from under the eyes.

A peachy blusher was used on the apples of Meesha's cheeks and then dusted with powder to smooth away any harsh lines. In the end we applied a nude lip gloss to finish





BEAUTY

THE BEST PRODUCTS THIS WINTER

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO BUY? **REDAH MISBAH** LETS US IN ON THE SECRETS OF LOOKING **SUPER GLAM** THIS WINTER WITH HER FAVOURITE PRODUCTS.

By REDAH MISBAH

A POTENT EYE CREAM BY BENEFIT

There are a lot of cosmetics out there claiming to do the impossible like "close open pores" which is impossible since pores can only be tightened, they can never be closed or vanish completely. Another myth is that fine lines can disappear after applying a product once. Fine lines can be smoothed by applying collagen based products and dark circles can be brightened temporarily. The Benefit eye cream however is your best bet after a late night out.

REFINING MAKEUP PRIMER BY SHISEIDO

A great primer is the secret ingredient to flawless makeup; most girls haven't discovered the absolute necessity for the primer. Trust me, this is step one. A good primer will make the application of foundation or any makeup less blotchy and easier to apply. A must have for any make-up kit.

BARE MINERALS FOUNDATION SPF 15

A mineral foundation is possibly the best thing to happen to the world of cosmetics. Bare Minerals started the revolution in the 70's. Summer or winter, it just sets in well on oily to combination skin and has medium to heavy coverage. I have even used Bare Minerals Original on clients with acne and can swear by it. This particular one also has SPF 15, which is very important since sun damage is the number one cause of premature aging.

MATTE FINISH MINERAL FOUNDATION BY GUINOT

Bare Minerals may be hard to find in Pakistan. The best alternative is by Guinot and is readily available here.

BROW FANTASY BY REVLON

Some girls tend to forget about the eyebrows. Filled out eyebrows add balance to the whole face, so fill them in and even them out. Also pencil thin threaded eyebrows are simply an eyesore. Thick eyebrows are the way to go.

DUO CREAM MEDITERRANEAN BY NARS

An international trend for the season that's perfect for Asian skins; lot's of neutrals with hints of solid colour, gold, champagne, fawn, beige with tangerine, burnt orange, red or blue. This creamy eye shadow is my favourite this season, especially in gold and orange.

AQUA CREAM IN INTENSE BLUE BY MAKEUP FOREVER AND GLAMOUR EYE PALETTE BY LUSCIOUS

Bear in mind there are very few shades of blue that suit olive skin tones. This Makeup Forever eye shadow is a winner, but after scavenging our markets for it and having no luck, I found the glamour palette in intense blue by Luscious, which has the perfect blue.

EYE DESIGNER IN CHAMPAGN GOLD BY ART DECO

I was recently introduced to this product and have been addicted to it since. I have this little cartridge in 15 colours; it can be used as an eye shadow but I usually just line the inside corners of my eye with it or use it as a highlighter under the eyebrows. Easy to carry and simply fun!

SECOND SKIN CHEEK COLOUR IN SPICED CIDER BY LAURA MERCIER

Laura Mercier blushes just glide on and this shade is the perfect balance between pink and peach. Can't get your hands on one? Try Flormar, blush no. 91.

CHEEK AND LIP STAIN IN FOXTROT BY JOSIE MARAM AND 287 MATTE LIPSTICK BY MEDORA

Lip and cheek stains are the way to go this season. This one by Josie Maram is amazing to apply and the colour is to die for. However my solution to lip colours you can't find here; try a local brand like Medora. It's amazing how this company literally has a substitute colour for every shade.





خواب دیکھا کرو



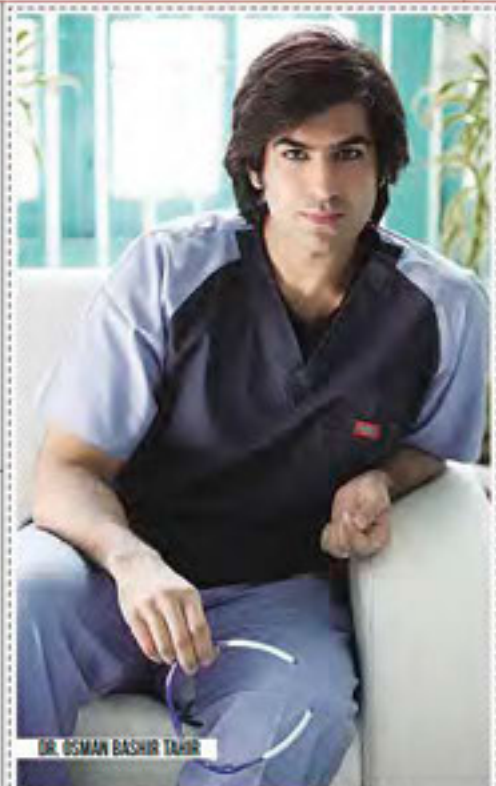
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Dr. Osman Bashir Tahir, Plastic Surgeon & CEO of Halcyon Medicare is a man inspired by beauty. Renowned as a 'surgical artist' and a 'surgical sculptor', Dr. OBT is one of Pakistan's most globally respected plastic surgeons, with qualifications from King Edward Medical College, Queen Mary-University of London, The American Academy of Aesthetic Medicine and the world's oldest and most renowned institute - The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. He is Pakistan's only qualified VASER Hi-Definition Liposculpture surgeon, and was trained by the inventor of the procedure himself, Dr Alfredo Hoyos. Dr OBT has also obtained a fellowship in Aesthetic Plastic Surgery in Singapore conducted under the supervision of Dr Woffles Wu, regarded as one of the best aesthetic surgeons in the world. Dr. Osman Bashir is in private practice, and his website is www.drobt.com.



DR. OSMAN BASHIR TAHIR

BY DR. OSMAN BASHIR TAHIR

Liposuction has evolved tremendously over the past decade. The very latest and most advanced form of liposuction in the world today is VASER. Ultrasound-Assisted 'liposelection'. VASER, which stands for Vibration Amplification of Sound Energy at Resonance, received FDA clearance for body contouring in 2002. Liposelection means that it 'selectively' targets only fat cells, and does not injure vessels and nerves. This is 'intelligent lipo', whereas the competitor, called 'smart lipo', uses laser energy and cannot avoid the possible damage to tissues.

Traditional liposuction is performed by infusion of fluid and then simply suctioning out the fat. In VASER Lipo, there is a 'magic wand' (I call it that), an ultrasound probe which liquefies the fat. Not only does the the ultrasound melt the fat efficiently, but it also gives the desired skin tightening which helps the skin to drape nicely over the area which has been liposuctioned. A better word to describe this effect is 'skin retraction' which really gives a superior result. Other advantages of VASER are that there is less bleeding and faster recovery when compared to traditional liposuction. Small areas such as love handles, saddle bags at the sides of thighs, and 'bat wings' (underside of upper arms) can all be treated by VASER under local anesthesia, in about an hour. Men often visit me to get rid of male breasts, which is due to excess fat in the chest area due to lack of exercise and very common with today's sedentary lifestyles. Larger areas such as abdominals and upper back, have to be done under general anesthesia, but recovery has been faster, with more efficient fat removal. Liposuction is not a weight loss procedure.

At Halcyon MediCare you are examined by a plastic surgeon, an anesthetist, a cardiologist if you have medical conditions, and a nutritionist. After the operation, a compression garment is worn for about a month, and exercise can be resumed in two weeks time. VASER is a body sculpting procedure and ideal for areas which are resistant to diet and exercise. Everyone stores fat differently, some men have love handles and others store fat only in the belly area. VASER is ideal for people who are already following a healthy diet

and exercise regime, and have areas which have always been stubborn and difficult to flatten no matter what.

The doctor behind the tool is most important. Choose a surgeon who has adequate surgical experience and is trained in the procedure. I am trained in basic and advanced applications of VASER at the famous Harley Street, in London. After performing the required number of surgeries to apply, I travelled to Bogota, Columbia, to learn from the inventor of Vaser Hi-Definition Liposculpture. Having been born with an aesthetic eye, my skills were honed to perfection in body sculpturing. Over a week, we performed many surgeries on models, actors and politicians who flew from all over the world to be sculpted. I performed many Hi-definition procedures on travelling patients from London and UAE, and have had very pleasing results. Hi-definition requires skill and using special equipment and I am the only surgeon in Pakistan qualified to perform VASER Hi-Definition Liposculpture.

Fat Grafting is very popular and stem cells harvested from fat can be used after removal from the body. Fat harvested from VASER has been tested and has the highest viability for fat grafting. 'Smart Lipo' or laser lipo simply burns the fat, which cannot be used for fat grafting. By separating the stem cells from fat, by special equipment, I can volumise a 'deflated' or 'gaunt' face, recreating that youthful face. I also use the fat to give a 'Colombian butt-lift' by sculpting the lower back and the back of thighs by re-injecting the fat into the buttocks. This gives the S-curve, which gives a beautiful shape to the female form.

The most advanced VASER system in the world is called VASER 2.0, and this innovative body sculpting system is only found at Halcyon MediCare, in Lahore. ■



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Having received training by the inventor of Vaser Hi Definition Liposculpture, Dr Alfredo Hoyos in Bogota-Colombia, **Dr OBT is Pakistan's only Vaser Hi-Definition Lipo-sculpture Associate** certified by the Advanced Body Sculpting Institute & also **the only 4D Sculpt certified surgeon in Pakistan** accredited by Dr Alfredo's International Centre of Artistic Bodysculpting.



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Beygairat Brigade

PAPER CAUGHT UP WITH **ALI AFTAB SAEED, DANIYAL MALIK AND HAMZA MALIK**, THE THREE YOUNG BOYS WHO MAKE UP THE BAND, BEYGAI RAT BRIGADE.

Beygairat Brigade's sensational song, "Aalu Anday," was an instant hit that struck a chord with the silent liberal majority in Pakistan. The quirky YouTube video has been viewed more than 600,000 times since it was uploaded in October 2011. The bold satirical song openly mocks the military, religious conservatives, extremism, nationalist politicians and conspiracy theorists. In three minutes, the song, with its catchy tune, highlights the many contradictions in Pakistan that we have all but become immune to and forces the audience to question the current state of affairs.

Q WHO CAME UP WITH THE NAME "BEYGAI RAT BRIGADE" AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Ali Aftab Saeed came up with the name. We feel there is a bunch of political analysts in Pakistan who are known as the "gairat brigade". They consume much of the airtime and media attention. They are the big fish in the opinion making business. We wanted to dismantle this singular source of influence for the majority. Hence we came up with the Beygairat Brigade. We don't want to impose what is right or wrong, we want open debate about the issues that affect us, and we are delighted that the song was able to achieve that.

Q WHAT IS THE STORY BEHIND THE SONG AALU ANDAY?

Aalu anday were cooked at Daniyal's place, he came to Ali's place humming the tune and singing "meri maa ney paakayay aalu anday, mein nahi khaany mano nahi lagday changay" and Ali instantly exclaimed that this is going to be the first song for Beygairat Brigade and we started working on the song.

Q WHAT WAS YOUR INSPIRATION FOR THE SONG?

The inspiration for the song and lyrics was the assassination of Salman Taseer.

★ BY MANAHIL BAJWA / PHOTOGRAPHY BY MOBEEN ANSARI ★



THE BEST WAY
LEVI'S



Q⁴ How was the response to your song?

The response has been overwhelming and it was completely unexpected, considering the controversial nature of the content; but since the song was so catchy it became an instant hit. It feels awesome to hear people humming our song. This song couldn't have gone viral without the support of our friends and family.

Q⁵ Did you expect it to be that way? What aspects about the response did you like and what caught you by surprise?

We knew that the song was controversial and we expected criticism from the ghairat brigade and co, but we got an extremely positive response from the Pakistani masses, here and abroad.

What took us by surprise was the emergence of a whole group of people who have fashioned the name beygairat with their name and people are celebrating youm-e-beygairati.

Q⁶ Did you expect it would become the sensation that it has become?

No. Not to this extent. But while the song has gone viral there has been some criticism as well. What's interesting is that along with those with anti-beygairat brigade sentiments, there are groups of people who have taken up the task of refuting their comments online, on their own accord.

Q⁷ The video was set in a classroom. Can you explain the concept of the video?

Classrooms have a conventional depiction. The classroom is where you get all your influences from; starting from the teachers, to the peers, to the environment. The classroom is the first place you are taught what to think. The other perspective is that everybody wears a uniform and looks the same in a classroom. We wanted to dismantle both these characteristics and put down the pressing, perpetuating question that we face and mock those who are party to either of the above mentioned two types, and are unable to see that they are being ambushed. The band members represented that surviving class which is aware of the brain washing and has had enough.

Q⁸ You deal with many complex issues and contradictions in the song, like the idolisation of extremists like Mumtaz Qadri and Ajmal Kasab while people like Abdus Salam, Pakistan's first and only Nobel Prize winning scientist, go unappreciated. What do you hope that will achieve?

This part of the song hit hard as many listeners realised that even though they never consciously idolised people like Mumtaz Qadri and Ajmal Kasab they never stood up against them or against those who ridiculed Abdus Salam for his sect, which blinded the nation to his contributions. People got a wakeup call or rather a slap on the face as they realised that its important to support outright what they believe is right.

Overall, if you see all the international coverage we have received, people are very pleasantly surprised that there are people in Pakistan that actually deplore extremism and support our honourable national heroes.

Q⁹ Why did you choose satire and music as the way to get your message across?

Satire is the best way to make hard facts easily digestible.

Q¹⁰ Why did you choose to sing in Punjabi and not Urdu?

Since we were going for a satirical song we decided to sing in Punjabi, as the lyrics came out wittier as compared to Urdu. But because we realised that we're limiting our audience to only those who understand Punjabi, we used subtitles in the video.

Q¹¹ What are you first: musicians or social activists?

Musicians

Q¹² Some people feel your song was too heavily loaded on insider information and might not get the message across to the masses? How do you feel you can get the masses to understand the message in the song?

Our aim was for the insider to understand and the masses to follow.

Q¹³ You've gotten a lot of international media attention through the New York Times, NDTV, and Al Jazeera. How do you plan to capitalise on that?

We don't plan to capitalise on it. What we tried to do was to present the real picture of Pakistan and break the stereotypic image of a fundamentalist society, which the world perceives us as. We represent the voice of the silent majority.

Q¹⁴ What kind of social awareness do you hope the song will bring?

We hope the song will bring tolerance and openness to different opinions.

Q¹⁵ What role do you feel the army has played in the politics of Pakistan?

We feel the army is either associated with, or the root cause of, everything that is going wrong in the country. We are in this situation because the army decides the national interests of this country.

Q¹⁶ What is the message for the political parties in your song?

Keep moving forward. We support you.

Q¹⁷ What is the message for the youth?

Open your mind and please don't believe everything you are fed. Try to filter out the biased crap and be real.

Q¹⁸ Now that you've been able to grasp the attention of hundreds of thousands of people, what are your plans for the future?

We plan to continue working on the same lines and create even more powerful work. The support and encouragement we have received has made us more responsible and we are working even harder, hoping we do not disappoint our fans. ■



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FILMING THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST

BY MOHSIN HAMID

THREE DAYS IN DELHI

NOV 12TH



My sister Nissa and I arrive in Delhi Airport. There was a time when being in Delhi Airport was a lot like being in Lahore Airport or Karachi Airport. No longer. The new version is impressive and efficient and ultra-modern and tasteful. ("Our fast bowlers are still a hell of a lot better," I console myself, "even the ones who aren't in jail.") Nissa and I exchange a glance at customs. Our suitcases are packed with props to make a Delhi film set look like a real Lahori street: posters, flags, fliers. We have a copy of a letter granting government permission to film in Delhi. But we don't relish the idea of explaining to an Indian customs officer why we, a pair of Pakistanis, are bringing in a bunch of political-looking banners in Urdu. Luckily no-one opens our bags. I turn on my phone and get an email from an Indian friend who says the local press is full of stories about the movie. She sends a photo of a newspaper as an attachment. There are pictures of Mira Nair (the director), Riz Ahmed (the lead actor), and Meesha Shafi (who plays Riz's sister, and who will be flying back to Lahore in a couple hours on the same plane that brought us in). As for the "exclusive" details about the film exposed in the article, well, they're mostly pretty far off. There is, for example, no "border-crossing-into-India scene" and Om Puri's character isn't "a village *thakur*." At least I hope not. Better get my hands on a copy of the latest script fast.

NOV 13TH

After a lovely dinner with Mira and other people from the film (at which it's confirmed that no India-border-crossings or village *thakurs* have slipped into the script), followed by a lengthy exploration of Delhi nightlife, I wake up well-rested and ready to go. Too well-rested. I've overslept the shoot's 6 am start time by three hours. Rush to the set in panic. Luckily no-one seems surprised or alarmed. They've clearly met writers before. The set itself is a revelation. To recreate the interior of an Old Anarkali cafe, Mira has commandeered a gorgeous, seedy, atmospheric, run-down little hotel opposite the Old Delhi railway station. The crew has removed the roof and replaced it with transparent plastic. Declan Quinn, the director of photography (who has shot "Leaving Las Vegas," "28 days," "Monsoon Wedding," and dozens of other films) is supervising the creation of elaborate screens, meshes, and leaf-camouflage-nets - the kind you sometimes see on military installations - in order to make sure the

light is exactly right. It finally dawns on me just how extensive film production really is, even on an independent film like this one. There are over a hundred people in the crew doing everything from rigging up bungee cables that support the camera to processing digital outputs in real time to scuffing up cafe tables with lit cigarettes to making sure every actor's wrist-watch shows the same time. Any belief I might have had that I could easily segue into doing what Mira does vanishes. Yes, being a director has similarities to being a novelist: both have to tell a story. But for me a day's work is like entering a quiet, sheltered, unhurried cocoon. For a director it's like talking on three different cell phones while riding a unicycle on the wing of an airplane in heavy turbulence.

NOV 14TH

Early call from Lydia Pilcher, the film's producer. She wants me to attend an impromptu script re-writing session in Liev Schreiber's hotel suite before today's shooting. Liev (he's been Hamlet, Henry V, and Macbeth, but here in Delhi people excitedly yell out "Sabretooth" as he walks by because of his role in an "X-men" film) plays the American character Riz who meets and tells his story to. In my book, that character has no name and no lines. In the film, he has a name, and he has lines, and some of those lines are about to change. Bill Wheeler, the Los Angeles-based writer who did the most recent drafts of the screenplay, isn't in India, so I gather with Mira, Lydia, Riz, Liev and Ami Boghani (associate producer and co-writer) to do some revisions over breakfast. Discussions are had. Lines are tweaked. Discussions are had. Lines are tweaked.

Discussions are had... Filming is pushed back. We eat lunch and keep working, except for Riz who has to go into makeup. His beard takes two hours to apply: it's done hair by hair. He must be thanking the heavens this isn't "Planet of the Apes." When filming can't be delayed any further, we stop re-writing and screech off through packed Delhi traffic to the set. Nissa has been there all morning, giving advice on making things look as Lahori as possible. She fills me in on what's been going on. Then filming starts. In between takes we look at some of the lines again. Movies are about constant readjustments, it seems. Novel to script. Script to revised script. Revised script to shooting script. Shooting script to what the actors actually say. What the actors actually say to what gets edited into the film. And so on. But for now it's phones off, lights on, beard-hairs poised, and... action. Three days in Delhi down. Two more weeks to go. ■



NOV 13 RIZ, LYDIA, MOHSIN, MIRA & LIEV



NOV 14 WORKING ON LINES (MIRA, RIZ, LIEV BEHIND ME)

Bananas **FOR** Books

HAVING A FIVE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER AND A FOUR-YEAR-OLD BOOKSHOP GIVES AYSHA SOME AUTHORITY TO STRESS THAT WHAT YOUR CHILD READS IS NOT A SUBJECT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY.

AYSHA RAJA INTRODUCES US TO HER FAVOURITE BOOKS AND TELLS US WHAT CHILDREN SHOULD BE READING.

BY AYSHA RAJA



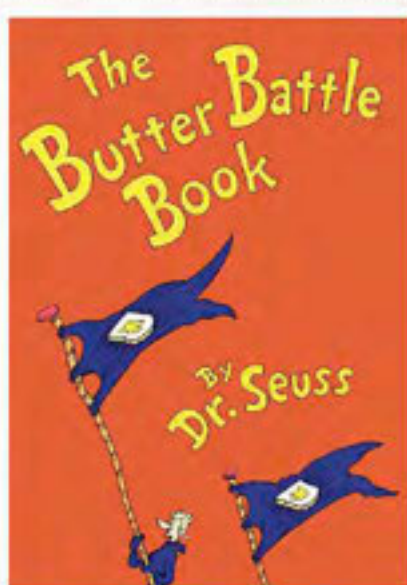
Children's literature allows the possibility of accompanying children as they explore the limits of their imaginations, and cobbling together values that will keep them in good stead. Whether you perceive the embedded messages as helpful or harmful, a child would benefit greatly from adult analysis and wisdom.

Writers of children's fiction are aware of the profundity of introducing philosophies or notions into tales. Theodor Seuss Geisel (more affectionately known as Dr. Seuss) wrote *The Lorax* (ages 5-9) in 1971 as an impassioned plea to protect the environment from the advance of big business. The story opens with the Once-ler recounting how his younger more enterprising self stumbled across the bright-coloured tufts of the Truffula trees which he promptly cuts down to knitted a threed, "a Fine-Something-That-All-People-Need".

Almost instantly, *The Lorax* - who speaks for the trees - appears out of the stump of the chopped tree and confronts the Once-ler as to the folly of his ways. Consumed by greed, the Once-ler waves away the Lorax and sets out to industrialise and plunder the plush Truffula forest for maximum profit.

The ensuing pollution and depletion of the Truffula trees in succession spells disaster for the Bar-ba-loots, Swomee Swans and the Humming Fish, who rely on the Truffula trees for survival.

The Lorax brings news of the demise of each species to the attention of the industrialist Once-ler, who despite residing in a now blighted landscape, is still bent on "biggering and biggering". The story reaches its inevitable crescendo, which whilst weighing heavy on adult readers, empowers children by placing the future firmly in their hands. ■



From environmental degradation, Dr. Seuss went on to tackle the prevailing geo-political scenario in his 1984 anti-war classic *The Butter Battle Book* (ages 5-9).

Although the depiction of an arms race across a Berlin-esque wall may appear somewhat dated, the themes of intolerance and tit for tat violence similarly characterise sectarian conflicts today.

The generational hatred of the Zooks and the Yooks, in true Swiftian manner, revolves around their differences in buttering toast. That this absurd prejudice emanates from the grandfather should give pause to any child with implacable faith in authority. If not, the consequent self-assured mutual destruction at the hands of the elders should drive the point home.

The Butter Battle Book does at times come across more heavy handed than satirical. But far be it for me to disagree with the barely veiled politics, when our children are set to inherit a more volatile and insecure world than I did. ■

To be involved in your child's reading habits when work schedules are what they are (and social media is as enticing as it is) can seem something of a chore.

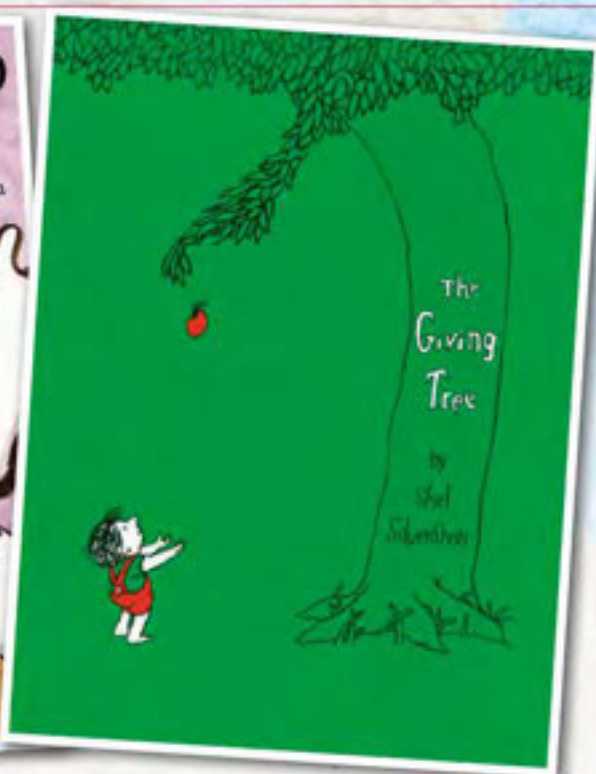
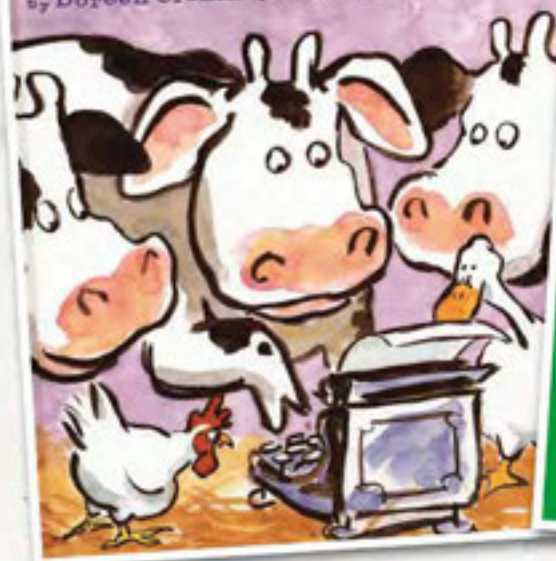
Traditionally, one of a parent's main duties is assisting with a child's homework. Efforts to inculcate reading habits in a child extend to thrusting *The Narnia Chronicles*, or anything by Enid Blyton, onto the young mind.

But I ask you: how many hours have you spent discussing the spelling of "attic" with your child or the ramifications of multiplying 6 by 6? Good plots and novel ideas are a precious reserve for nascent intellects, and can yield rewards aplenty for you and your brood.

If you still believe your child will be better off following the fair and noble Narnians into battles against the darker complexioned, desert dwelling Calormen, without an adult pointing out the crude and offensive stereotypes employed by C.S. Lewis in his allegory to the crusades, then you are doing your children a grave disservice.

CLICK, CLACK, MOO Cows That Type

by Doreen Cronin pictures by Betsy Lewin



Click, Click, Moo: Cows That Type (ages 3-5) is of a lighter vein, but equally potent. Farmer Brown runs up against opposition when the cows, upon discovery of a typewriter, take the radical step of unionising, and draw up a list of demands. Farmer Brown, incensed by the dissent, refuses to meet the demands of the cows, which results, much to his consternation, in industrial action. No Milk and No Eggs! A deadlock ensues which eventually gives way to a compromise brokered by the ducks, who harbour their own agenda.

Author Doreen Cronin wrote this exceeding charming book whilst still at law school, which probably explains the activism inherent in the tale. Whilst the implied revolutionary themes are evident to adults, children are more likely to be caught up laughing at the cantankerous Farmer Brown and the absurdity of animals tapping away at a keyboard. Having said that, there are sure to be the clever few who will develop an early appreciation for direct action which should make for interesting parenting. ■

While we pour our energies into equipping our children for life, the foundation for any healthy human being is unconditional love. Shel Silverstein's classic "The Giving Tree" (ages 3-5) charts the life of a boy and his relationship with a tree. As a child, the boy played with the tree, nurturing it all the while. As the boy grows, so do his needs. Despite periods of prolonged absence during the boy's adulthood, the tree meets the boy's changing needs by making greater and greater sacrifices. At first, she gives him her apples to sell so he may prosper, her branches so he may build a home; and eventually her entire trunk so he can construct a boat and sail away from his woes. At the end of the boy's life, he returns to the tree who has nothing left to give, but the boy requires only a place to sit which the tree, now a stump, is ready to provide.

The Giving Tree is a quiet intimate tale, capable of eliciting powerful reactions from adult readers. Some are moved by the sad inevitability of a child flying the coop and facing the challenges of life, while others find the boy's demands irksome and indicative of overindulgent parenting. Be that as it may, the tree's unconditional love is a comfort to children and a gentle reminder to parents as to their primary duty. ■

SOME OF THE BEST OF WHAT'S OUT THERE

Where the Wild Things Are
BY MAURICE SENDAK

The Gruffalo
BY JULIA DONALDSON

Offline and the Yellow Cat
BY CHRIS RIDDELL

Charlie & Lola: But Excuse Me That Is My Book
BY LAUREN CHILD

The Invention of Hugo Cabret
BY BRIAN SELZNIC

The Mysterious Benedict Society
BY TRENTON LEE STEWART

The Mr. Men
BY ROGER HARGREAVES

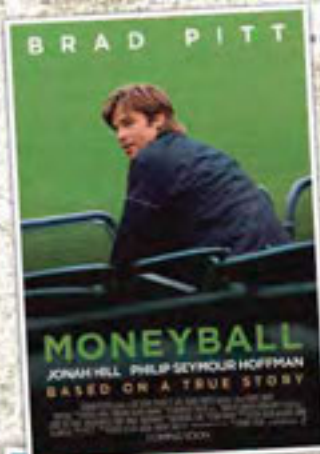
Bippolo Seed and other lost stories
BY DR. SEUSS

Emily Strange BY ROB REGER



MOVIE Reviews

BY NIDA MAQSUD



★ MONEYBALL ★

STARRING BRAD PITT, JONAH HILL, PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN, ROBIN WRIGHT
DIRECTED BY BENNET MILLER

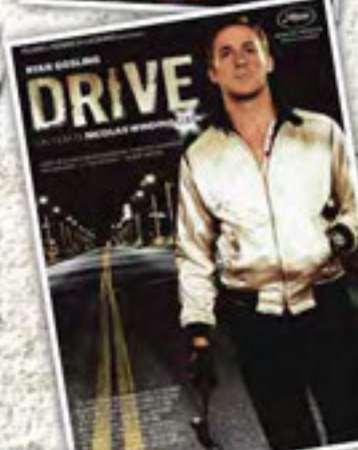
Billy Beane is the general manager of the Oakland A's, struggling to steer his baseball team towards palpable success on the tightest of budgets. While assembling his new team, Beane realises that the age-old traditions of selecting baseball players simply aren't working. With the help of a recent Ivy League graduate, Peter Brand (Jonah Hill), Beane risks his career to challenge the status quo by using a new method of statistical analyses to evaluate his players, recruiting players based on their ability to score runs and win games, not on their reputation as great athletes. You don't have to be a baseball enthusiast to enjoy one of the best films of 2011, with its intelligent screenplay based on a true story and Brad Pitt's inspired performance as the down-on-his-luck manager who isn't afraid to tell it like he sees it.



★ THE IDES OF MARCH ★

STARRING GEORGE CLOONEY, RYAN GOSLING, PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN, PAUL GIAMATTI, EVAN RACHEL WOOD
DIRECTED BY GEORGE CLOONEY

This intense political drama has the feel of a thriller, with Ryan Gosling playing an idealistic press secretary for presidential candidate, Governor Mike Morris (George Clooney). Gosling starts out as a true believer of the governor, even going as far as to say he is "married to the campaign". But as the events of the film unfold, with sexual liaisons, disloyal staffers, and party politics dirtying the campaign trail, it seems every character is hiding something. The biggest secret of all is what Gosling is hiding from himself—just how far he is willing to go for his own success. This is a film which portrays the dark side of political ambition without being too preachy. It also serves as a warning that politics is no place for the pure of heart.



★ DRIVE ★

STARRING RYAN GOSLING, CAREY MULLIGAN, BRYAN CRANSTON
DIRECTED BY NICOLAS WINDING REFN

As you settle in to watch Drive, you may think you're about to watch a fast-paced commercial thriller full of violent and colourful car chases. In fact, Drive is an art house film posing as a mainstream one. Ryan Gosling plays a stunt car driver by day, wheelman for hire by night. His affection for his neighbor, Irene (Carey Mulligan), and her son, and his desire to protect them from the mafia men brought on by her ex-convict husband, leads him to take on a heist where everything goes wrong. When Gosling realises that the criminals he was working for are now the same men trying to kill him and Irene, he resorts to extreme bloodshed to extract his revenge. Although the director's artsy and noiresque style of filmmaking is effective and Gosling does an excellent job playing the quiet yet edgy antihero, you will leave this film feeling very unsettled and not necessarily satisfied.



★ 50/50 ★

STARRING JOSEPH GORDON-LEVITT, SETH ROGEN, ANNA KENDRICK, BRYCE DALLAS HOWARD
DIRECTED BY JONATHAN LEVINE

"A comedic film about a cancer patient?" you may well ask before seeing this film. "How is that possible?" But it is. Described more aptly as a comedic drama, 50/50 was inspired by a true story and hits the nail on the head trying to depict what it's like for a 27-year-old writer of radio programs to be diagnosed with a rare form of spinal cancer. Joseph Gordon-Levitt is no stranger to this kind of character, having played a morose greeting card writer who has new life breathed into him by the advances of a romantic interest in 500 Days of Summer. In 50/50, though, he delivers a much more insightful portrayal of a man at whom people look but see only tragedy, and his daily struggles interacting with family and friends while still trying to put on a brave front. Seth Rogen adds much needed humor to this serious subject as the eternally horny best friend. It won't deliver a quick laugh or have you bursting in sobs, but 50/50 is without a doubt the real deal.

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BY MARIAM TAREEN

Yorkshire Observer.

Downton Abbey is a beautifully executed Emmy Award winning period TV series with an eye for detail and a strong cast of characters, brilliantly scripted and expertly acted.

"What would be the point of living if we didn't let life change us?" says Mr Carson, who is the butler at Downton Abbey, the lavish estate that is the epicentre of the series and its unfolding drama. The story centres on the Crawley family - Lord and Lady Grantham, their three daughters, and their servants - all caught in the midst of a world on the hinge of change. Much like today, there are some who are more resistant to change than others, creating a considerable amount of drama as they adjust to shifting sands.

The series has been created and written by Julian Fellowes (who has written screenplays for Gosford Park, Vanity Fair, The Importance of Being Ernest and Young Victoria). With Downton Abbey Fellowes has proven he is a master of audience seduction. In September 2011 Downton Abbey became the year's 'most critically acclaimed TV show' in the Guinness Book of World Records - the first British show to win the award.

Jessica Brown-Findlay, Laura Carmichael and Michelle Dockery (who play the three Crawley sisters) were featured in a breathtakingly beautiful shoot in the August 2011 edition of British Vogue. With two seasons under its belt, its following of millions of fans eagerly await the third season, which will be released this coming fall.

The series begins in 1912, the morning after the sinking of the Titanic, a tragedy that has killed Lord Grantham's nephew, heir, and would-be son-in-law. With three daughters who cannot inherit, the estate passes on to a distant relative - an unlikely and reluctant recipient: Mathew Crawley, a lawyer from Manchester.

"I'll not let them change me," Mathew says, determined to resist the lifestyle of the nobility and to stay true to himself. Mathew's effortlessly good and principled nature will be tested by love, loss and war, and he must learn to go easy on himself if he is to find the happiness he deserves.

The fate of the estate is tied to the fate of many of its inhabitants, including Mathew. In this way, Downton Abbey is not only the backdrop of all the action but a character in itself. To the charmingly sober and adequately humble Lord Grantham, Downton Abbey is his life's work. "My fortune is the work of others... I am a custodian," he says, "not an owner."

Lady Mary is the eldest daughter whose life is changed by the death of her fiancé and the arrival of the new heir. The urgency to get her settled in a good marriage in light of the change in inheritance shows her being tugged and pulled towards different suitors, all the while struggling to gain some agency over her life. Mathew looms in the background of several potential suitors until she begins to see him differently too.

"Maman, not again. How many times will I be told to marry the man sitting next to me at dinner?" she asks her mother.

"As many times as it takes," The matter-of-fact Lady Grantham replies.

Those who love a good love story (secretly or openly) will not be disappointed by the emotional ups and downs of Mary and Mathew's relationship. Theirs is a relationship where missed opportunities, misunderstandings, and stupid decisions abound. Like all good love stories, their struggle to be together consists not only of external obstacles such as pushy relatives, inheritance laws, war and events beyond their control, but on internal obstacles they must resolve on their own if they are to find happiness in each other.

Downton Abbey is different from most recent period dramas (for example of the Jane Austen variety) in the equal attention paid to the household servants, who vary in their degrees of loyalty to the family. The class divide is a consistent theme throughout the series. The first episode begins with an extensive shot that starts from the servants in the kitchen to the opulent estate and instantly brings our attention to the striking difference between the lifestyle of the servants downstairs and the lords and ladies upstairs. The quick panic of preparing breakfast, cleaning up rooms preparing for the day is elegantly contrasted with Lord Grantham's leisurely walk down the staircase for his breakfast.

Further, while downstairs knows everything about what's going on upstairs, upstairs knows nothing about what goes on downstairs - yet everyone is allowed to play their part and no character is superfluous, not even the inconspicuous kitchen maid who is told to get out of sight as soon as she's done lighting the fires.

Julian Fellowes' ability to sketch the depths of a character within a few lines of dialogue is remarkable. The end of each scene leaves one wanting more, which is of course the perfect place to end. The repetitive scenes involving the evil-plotting-over-cigarettes between Lady Grantham's maid O'Brian, and the first footman Thomas, though, are an exception. But they work well

to highlight the tensions that exist between master and servant. "Friends! Who does she think she's fooling? We're not friends," says O'Brian, after a scolding from Lady Grantham. "We're servants, and they pay us to do as we're told. That's all."

Lady Edith, the second daughter, has spent a lifetime playing second fiddle to Mary and tries in all sorts of ways to gain the attention of her parents and one much older widower. One doesn't know whether to dislike Edith or feel sorry for her, but sibling rivalry between her and Mary reaches devastating consequences for both. "Things are changing, especially for women," says Lady Sybil, the third daughter, as she encourages the housemaid to apply for a job as a secretary. Sybil can be found befriending the family chauffeur and defying her father to attend political rallies and election balloting. She knows what she wants and is not afraid to do what is necessary to attain it.

The formidable but loveable Dowager Countess (Lord Grantham's mother) - Maggie Smith's award winning performance - is arguably the most entertaining character of the series. Hilariously (and often deceptively) set in her ways, she makes the most ludicrous statements with such an air of authority that one is tempted to agree with her. Though fiercely opinionated herself, a dinner table debate about Sybil's political opinions elicits the following statement from the Dowager Countess: "No, she isn't [entitled to her own opinion] until she is married, then her husband will tell her what her opinions are."



When Mathew declares his intention to keep his day job as a solicitor and to learn about the work at Downton on the weekends, the Dowager Countess asks, "What is a weekend?" The collision of her old-fashioned ideals with the interference of Mathew's more modern mother (her nemesis) is often laugh-out-loud funny. However, as the series develops, the Dowager Countess will surprise you with her aptitude for change, for above all else, she is practical. "The aristocracy has not survived by its intransigence," she says.

The second series is decidedly more sentimental than the first (even the Dowager Countess sheds a few tears, though she insists she has a cold). There is a war going on after all. Though all of Downton's inhabitants go through change in one way or another, it is Mary who has changed the most; she has grown up, and has perhaps finally decided what she wants, though it may have come too late. Downton Abbey itself is transformed

from a private house of wealth and opulence to a hospital for wounded officers.

The war is brought to life vividly. The fear and wistfulness, the nostalgia, the packed emotion of possible last goodbyes is incorporated in the plot superbly. And as Mathew says in the first episode of the second season, "War has a way of distinguishing between the things that matter and the things that don't." However, the second series was exceeding-

ly fast-paced, and needed a few more episodes for the events that occurred, for the audience to process the somewhat far-fetched drama.

The series is filled with lovely details pertaining to the time period, such as ironing the newspapers every morning to dry the ink. A historical expert was at hand throughout filming to make sure everything was done true to its time. For example, electricity has recently been installed in the living areas of Downton Abbey, though not in the kitchen or bedrooms. This attention to detail is what makes the show sparkle.

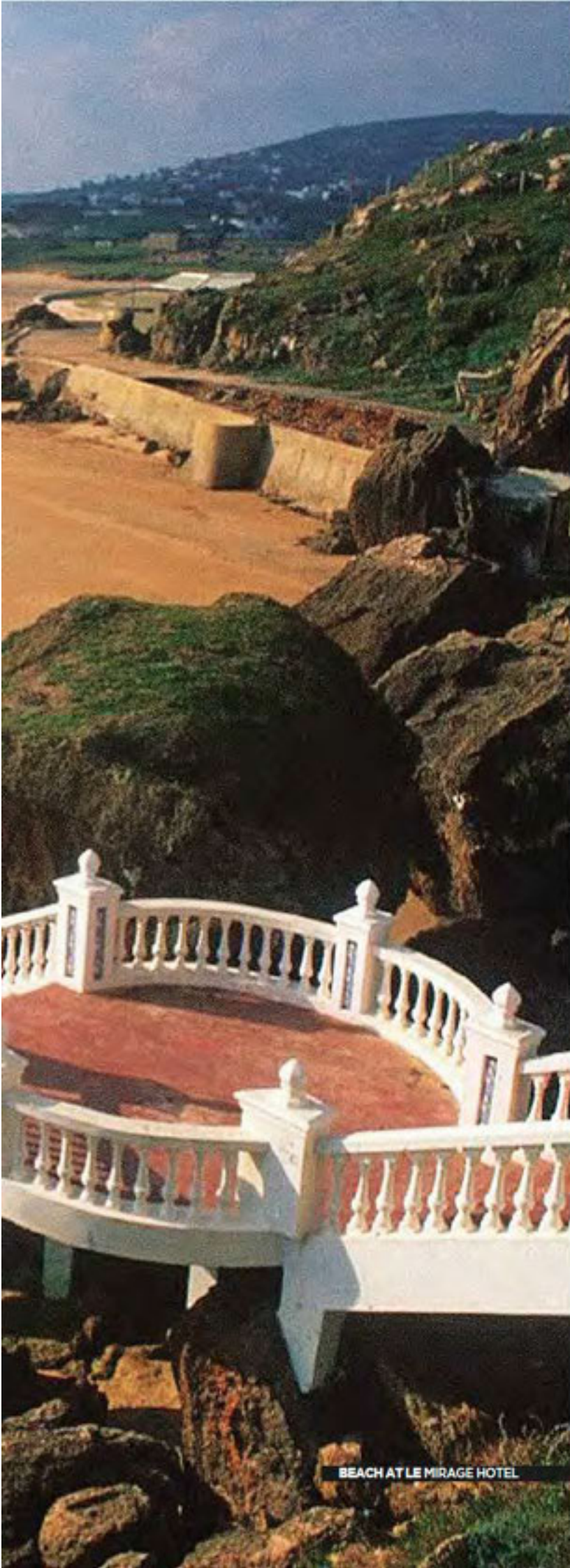
As far as period dramas go, Downton Abbey is an entertaining original piece of drama with strong characters and crisp dialogue. Whether the scene is set

in the drawing rooms and gardens of the family estate, or in the blood and dirt stained trenches of Northern France, Downton Abbey is a visual treat. Even if you have never seen (or ever enjoyed) a period drama in your life, this one is worth a watch. ■

**ATTENTION
TO DETAIL IS WHAT
MAKES THE SHOW
SPARKLE.**

T Secret Tangier

Written and photographed by Juliet Hight



BEACH AT LE MIRAGE HOTEL

Tangier suffers from an unenviable, if nowadays unmerited, reputation. The very name conjures up a world of intrigue, decadence and danger, easy to fantasise about today in the Medina, where one twisting, narrowing alley after another reveals houses separated by only a finger's length, leaning in on each other like whispering neighbours. It is the oldest continually inhabited city in Morocco, the original gateway to Africa from Europe, controlled by a rollcall of different powers down the millennia. Just 15 kilometers across the Straits of Gibraltar from Spain, and the western entrance to the Mediterranean, Tangier has always been a quintessentially tolerant, international city.

Formerly host to a glitterati of European settlers, it's now known as a package beach destination. But Tangier and its environs are in the act of re-defining themselves, with a prestigious marina along the coast, and a smattering of exquisite hotels, like Le Mirage on the cliffs overlooking an apparently endless private beach. And there's still a high-flying international community treating Tangier as home, rather than as secondary residence; inter-marrying; and in several cases, leaving their properties to Moroccans on their deaths.

A British writer, David Herbert, willed his house to Jdaoudi Noureddine, who cared for him until his death. Now Noureddine receives paying guests in a home which is a symphony of fashionable Moroccan style, with its Moorish arches revealing one vividly painted room after another, local fabrics and furniture, and one of the most peaceful gardens imaginable. We sipped mint tea outside in February, while bright little birds twittered, and pink bougainvillea already clambered luxuriantly over the coral-coloured walls.

There is a secret Tangier, a city "by invitation", of which you might not be aware, unless you know the right person, like Nourredine. "The most interesting things about Tangier the average tourist doesn't get to see," I was told time and again, and was blessed to be initiated into a few of them by hospitable residents like Anne Lambton, who gives select lunch and dinner parties for specialist travel agents in her home, the Villa Palma. Her company named 'Secret Homes & Gardens', also offers Special Garden Tours to Morocco. Real Moroccan Cuisine Terroir was prepared that day by Anne Lambton's cook, to whom Anne has already bequeathed her property.

In the heart of the Medina I visited an extraordinary house, owned by Australian Barry Stern, who has brought together antique and contemporary works from all over the world in a miniature Moorish palace. Like everyone else, I was

'doing' the Medina, though lucky to be introduced to some of the premier outlets for Moroccan crafts and antiques. At Abdul Latif's cavernous treasure trove, the 'no hassle' factor is such that I was told: "If you buy a carpet and find that you don't like it when back home, even after twenty years you will get your original purchase price back." At the Boutique Majid I found fabulous jewellery, some of the old amber pieces being so precious that they are marked "Private Collection".

Tangier's Medina is particularly atmospheric with tantalising glimpses of hidden lives, veiled women disappearing down dark alleys, reeking of antiquity and discretion, (though not with questionable smells - the fish and meat souks could not have smelled sweeter). The city is treated as a permanent souk by the people of the countryside surrounding it, and on Thursdays and Sundays the Berber women from the Rif mountains come in to trade, dressed in broad straw hats trimmed with black pompoms, and distinctive red and white striped Fouta cloths.

You see these Berber women again deep in the heart of the Medina at Tetouane, the equally fascinating and historic old centre of the elegant city east of Tangier. In the Berber language Tetouane means 'Open Your Eyes', probably referring to its rapid construction in the 15th century by Andalusian refugees. Exiled from southern Spain these Muslim and Jewish settlers brought with them a sophisticated architectural and decorative tradition, evident in the elaborate wrought-iron balconies, ornate plasterwork and gleaming tiles. Tetouanis call their city 'Daughter of Granada', and the formal grandeur of the buildings fronting wide straight streets contrasts vividly with the disorder of the minuscule alleys of the Medina, hectic with every kind of commercial and craft endeavour. Yet its inhabitants, given



MARINASMIR

by a horse fair.

Tetouan, Asilah, the lovely town of Chechaouan, and of course Tangier itself are the main lures away from hotel, pool and beach for travellers to this region. Nowadays another kind of visitor is drawn to this beautiful coastline where the Atlantic meets the Mediterranean, and Spain almost touches Morocco. The cosmopolitan yachting fraternity has begun to appreciate how different the two worlds are. For ten months

Nowadays another kind of visitor is drawn to this beautiful coastline where the Atlantic meets the Mediterranean, and Spain almost touches Morocco.

of the year Morocco's first pleasure boat harbour, Marinasmir, contrasts favourably with Marbella's in terms of peace and space. It is only during July and August that the action hots up with the (genteel) descent of Moroccan families from Rabat and Casablanca to their second homes around the Marina or the Hyatt hotel and at Cabo Negro, where there is also a yacht basin and golf course. There's even a picturesque real fishing port at M'diq.

The secret is out - the whisper is that this part of the North African coast is the new Côte d'Azur. It's no secret that the official Tangier 'season' begins on the 1st of April and ends on the 15th of November, but my advice is to go there as soon as you can, no matter what time of year it is. ■

a smile and a "Bonjour", are fulsomely warm and welcoming. Noticing that I was photographing the drums he makes, the proprietor of a little red and green painted stall proudly posed with a photo of his band.

The pace really slows down in the charming sleepy little town of Asilah, beneath which the sea laps at 16th century Portuguese ramparts. Its Palais Raisuli was the headquarters of the notorious bandit Ahmed el Raisuli, who succeeded in extracting a handsome ransom for the Times correspondent Walter Harris whom he had kidnapped and who later became his friend. The palace of the pirate-pasha is now the venue for competitions between painters, poets and musicians every August. Asilah is famous for its murals, painted on every available space during its two-week cultural festival, which is followed, very sensibly,



EXQUISITE BLEND OF MOORISH HISPANIC ARCHITECTURE AT TETOUANE



VINTAGE POSTER FOR EL MINZA HOTEL



BERBER WOMAN IN FOOD SOUK



ZELIJ (CERAMIC MOSAIC) AT HOTEL CONTINENTAL



M'DIQ FISHING PORT



FACT FILES

HOTELS

- I would recommend the Grand Dame hotel of Tangier, the quintessentially Moroccan El Minzah. Built by Lord Bute in 1930 and overlooking the port, it has all the amenities you would expect from its Five Star status. Despite the fact that it's located right in the heart of town, there are extensive gardens and a large central Andalusian courtyard. (+212 9 935 885).

- The ultimate in name-dropping exclusivity, with only 28 individual bungalows, Le Mirage has a guest list which includes designers like Jean-Louis Scherrer, and the former President of Spain, Felipe Gonzalez, and so on... Vogue magazine selected Le Mirage as one of the three most beautiful hotels in Morocco (and the only one located by the sea). (+212 9 333 332).

- Once a palace, the Hotel Continental is nowadays engagingly ramshackle and marvelously genuine, featuring the cream of Morocco's decorative arts. (+212 9 931 024).

- At the heart of Marinasmir resort, with a classic white-sanded beach (and appropriate water-sports), is the Hyatt Regency, whose lobby displays cutting-edge Moroccan contemporary art. (+212 9 971 234).

- Jdaoudi Nouredine's house (+212 9 336 846).

RESTAURANTS

- You will be told that you must eat at the Restaurant Populaire Saveur Spécialité en Poissons, where there are only four tables and no menu. You eat what's on offer, and that's as good as it gets. (+212 9 336 326).

- El Korsan at the Hotel Minzah serves classic Moroccan haute cuisine. I had been looking forward to a Pastilla (flaky pastry interleaved with pigeon) since my last visit to Morocco, and was not disappointed.

- Restaurant Hamadi, rich in kitsch decoration and cabaret, offers the traditional Moroccan menu that has inspired so many of London's chic eateries. Check out the classic Tagine de Poulet au Citron et Olives (chicken cooked in a pottery casserole with pickled lemon and olives). (+212 9 934 514).

SHOPPING

- Dar el Makhzen, a former sultanate palace, is a haven from the Kasbah's action, with its tranquil garden. It's now an atmospheric museum for antiques and crafts.

- The Forbes Museum, former Tangier residence of billionaire publisher Malcolm Forbes, and originally the palace of the Sultan's representative in International Tangier. Not just a lovely building (1920's) and garden, the interiors are glamorous, and the display of Moroccan and Western militaria worth checking out.

- Tanjah Flandria Art Gallery, an appropriate testimony to the cultural gateway between artists of European and Moroccan descent.

UNMISSABLE MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

- **Boutique Majid** for antiques, jewellery, embroidery, carpets and chests (66 rue des Chrétiens).

- **Coin de L'Arts "Berbers"** for kelim, ceramics etc (53 rue des Almohades).

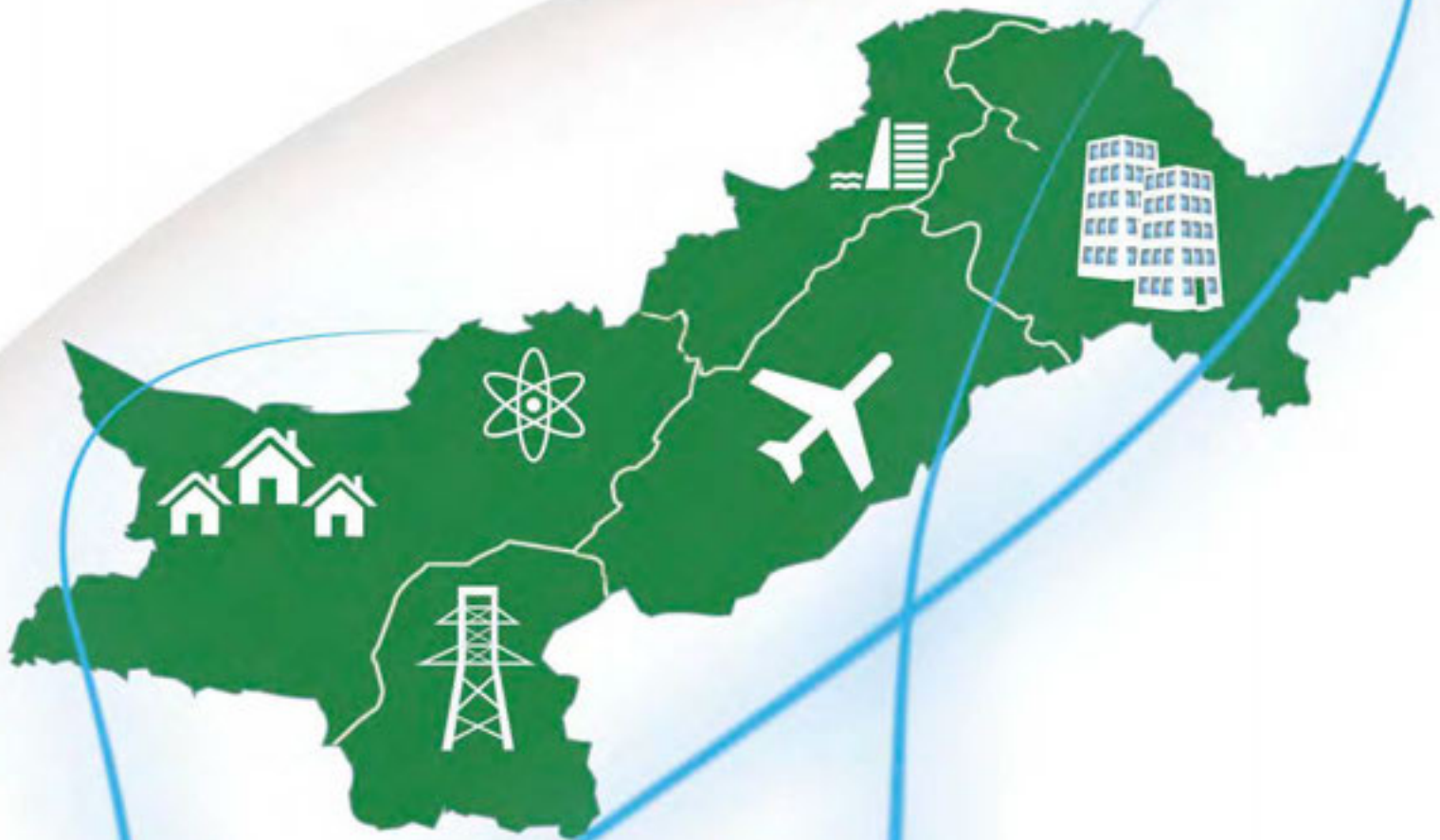
- **Andalous** for antiques and crafts (32 Place Amra, Kasbah).

- **Marrakech La Rouge** for antiques and crafts (50 rue Slaghin).

- **Parfumerie Madinie** for essential oils and copies of international scents (14 rue Sebou).



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Dear Gossip Girl,

Let's face it, we all love a little harmless gossip: who is doing what, who had a baby, who broke up with x to be with y. But Gossip Girl, what differentiates you is the malicious intent with which you spread your exaggerated sagas, without any concern for the impact your lies will have on the lives of those you are "casually chatting" about (or at least that's what you and your posse tell yourselves).

The confidence with which you claim you know information first hand is astounding. The way you talk about strangers as if you know them personally is downright scary. When will you learn that using gossip as a social currency to get noticed and move from one circle to the next is plain pathetic? People may take initial interest (because, who doesn't love a juicy story?) but no one trusts you because no one is safe with you.

Standing on the sidelines, you hope and wait for people to fail so you can feel better about your miserable existence. All this jealousy, envy and negativity you harbour is slowly eating away at you from the inside. Have you ever caught your reflection in the mirror and noticed the constant frown upon your face? That nasty frown reflects your state of mind.

Why are you the way you are, Gossip Girl? Are there some deep-seated insecurities that require you to lash out on others because you don't have the power to face your own demons? Is it too scary for you to focus on your own life, so you shift your focus to the lives of others? Can't you see that if you were happy with your own choices, you wouldn't feel the need to lash out against others? Do you think you can come out on top by putting someone else down? Does that really make you feel good? Or is it that without gossip, you would have nothing to say at the next party? Are you really so dim-witted that you can't think of anything else to talk about?

What is that you say? Where there is smoke, there is fire? Of course there is always an opening for you to build on. But Gossip Girl, you are the firestarter, you with your bitterness and ill will. You know just how to put that perfect spin on the story to make it all the juicier. No matter that it is full of lies and exaggeration.



Gossip Girl, don't forget that karma will get you because what goes around comes around. When you try to mess with peoples' lives, surely one day you will be at the receiving end. What you fail to see is that the way you dissect and demolish others, there are people out there dissecting your life as well and it's not pretty. No one is perfect and who would know that better than you?

Please understand that while you may be able to temporarily affect someone with your accusations, you will only hurt your own credibility and make a fool of yourself. The truth always comes out, Gossip Girl. We feel sorry for you, because you are looking for happiness in the wrong place and in the process you remain miserable.

There may still be hope for you depending on how low you have fallen. Analyse your life and who you have become. Find some positivity in your life, confide in a friend or better yet a therapist. Get a job; join a gym; do whatever you must to occupy your idle mind. Do something constructive with your time so you can feel productive. Count your blessings as opposed to whining about

the things you don't have and stop envying other people.

For all you enablers who love juicy gossip, the next time you hear a story you can't wait to tell all your friends, take a moment to think before you repeat it. Try to figure out the authenticity of the information and credibility of the source. Is it possible that the storyteller has an agenda or a personal vendetta? Do the facts make sense? Is it even logical? Surely you have a brain that can get the basics right.

As for you, Gossip Girl, life is short, so live your life instead of living vicariously through the misfortunes of others and for God's sake, let live!

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