

Fine dining in the Kingdom



Mohammed Taleb, owner, 16HUNDRED prime steak restaurant, spills the beans on the objectives and challenges of investing in a high-end restaurant concept in Jeddah. The restaurant will be the first of its kind in the Kingdom offering clients aged Halal USDA Prime and Australian Wagyu Beef cuts under one roof.

How would you describe the restaurant market in Jeddah?

In my opinion, the “fine dining” market in Jeddah has room for newcomers. While many young creative Saudis thrive to open such new concepts, they might not realize how difficult and expensive it is to sustain high standards of quality, innovation and service.

How has consumer behavior changed in the last decade?

I believe that today’s consumers are highly educated. Thus, it is much easier to introduce a new cuisine to the market than it was before. However, the market needs creativity. Many Saudis are exposed to the best restaurants

in the world and should be able to bring back some of that exposure and added value to the industry.

What will be special about your restaurant?

Everything I hope! That’s my intention. If there is one thing that I am most proud of, it’s my team.

I believe the quality of produce and creativity of the menu created by Chef Matthew Lawson differentiates my restaurant. Our chef is world-renowned and has worked in some of the best restaurants in the United States including the first Michelin star rated steak restaurant, Wolfgang Puck’s Cut. Our manager combines local and international experience and has been instrumental in the restaurant’s creation. Also, the atmosphere is not similar to other typical steak restaurants; my mother, my wife and my sister designed it.

What advice do you have for Saudi young entrepreneurs?

If you don’t have experience in the industry, get help. Don’t assume this is an easy business to get into. My consultants helped me immensely with their experience. Don’t rent a location without having your contractor check it. Hire your manager as soon as you can. And don’t hire the kitchen staff without the executive chef’s approval.



Margherita pizzeria opens first franchise

The month of February saw the arrival of Margherita, another Lebanese born brand, to Jeddah. Located in the up and coming Bin Sulaiman Center’s food and beverage cluster in Khaldiyyah, it offers a long awaited dine-in experience. Its lively atmosphere reproduces the experience of the original outlet located in Beirut’s Gouraud Street. Margherita also introduces bar dining, a premiere in Jeddah, where customers are invited to enjoy their meals while witnessing pizzaiolos mastering the pizza dough and working the burning oven. The management’s policy is to utilize fresh ingredients only, to the extent where you could consider yourself lucky if fresh mozzarella and bresaola are available. Giovanni Casa, the Italian chef owner, has ensured a smooth launch of the outlet and quality operations at the first stages of opening.

IN BRIEF

Semsom expected to open in March At the end of March, Jeddah’s food and beverage scene is expecting the opening of another Lebanese born brand, Semsom, a restaurant offering modern Lebanese cuisine. Featuring a wide range of Lebanese dishes, some of which are prepared and served “with a twist”, Semsom will be the first contemporary Lebanese restaurant to open in the city.

Makkah international urban and infrastructure development event In June, Jeddah’s Hilton Hotel will host the Future Makkah event, where infrastructure will be the topic at hand. After announcing investments reaching to almost USD 375 million for this long-term project, Makkah is expected to have one of the world’s most efficient infrastructure networks.

Mayrig opens its doors

Long awaited Mayrig has recently opened its doors to Jeddah’s thriving food and beverage scene. Nested in a newly refurbished villa on the cross road of Tahliya and Andalus streets, the restaurant is a haven of colors, scents and tastes. A blown glass chandelier hanging from the only high part of the ceiling sets the tone of the restaurant. The setting is traditional made of stones, oriental arcades, comfortable seating and the color green, while the culinary experience suggests innovation and creativity. Mayrig aspires to reproduce its original experience shipping most food related items from Beirut. Spread over two floors, the restaurant caters to singles and families alike, with the option of terrace seating on the ground and mezzanine floors.

