



A MUSCAT DAILY COLUMNIST

**MY TAKE****Sunaina Serna Ahluwalia**

Long time Oman resident Sunaina is a writer and communications consultant who loves photography, painting and travelling

The weather in Oman is changing by the day and before we know it, it will be back to the regular 'warm', followed by the 'hot' days. But in the meantime we've really made the most of all the action here in Muscat and certainly intend to continue that for as long as possible.

For one, I made it to Muscat Festival last week and really enjoyed the experience. Never mind, if I've seen it right from its inception, there's always something unique and special every year. Buzzing with action ranging from entertainment to children's shows and plays, the village is a showcase of traditional Omani art and crafts. Designed to replicate a traditional fort, the village includes a working 'souq' with a variety of stalls to buy woven baskets, pottery and silver to enable visitors to watch experts in traditional Omani occupations.

This time I focused on the 'Heritage Village' in the Qurum Park and found it to be much more alive and vibrant than ever before! For one, this time there was no problem in clicking photographs and almost each one of the participants were extremely amenable to the prospect of being photographed, much to the delight of all the 'pros' as well as the amateur photo-enthusiasts out there. For another, there was a lot more going on at the venue and it seemed to be perfectly synchronised - one dance finished and another one began.

Then on the 13th evening, we drove to the Al Felaj Castle theatre just off Barka for the inaugural show. The Royal Oman Orchestra gave a scintillating performance for over two hours that evening and it was a real treat for all present. Coincidentally, it was one of the coldest evenings of the season, but that certainly didn't deter large numbers of warmly wrapped up music lovers from being there and well in time at that! For the next two odd months, this famous castle theatre, which transforms into a major hub of Omani cul-

tural and arts activities during the tourism season will once again reverberate with major activities so make sure that you check the season's calendar and try and make the most of this cultural festa being so beautifully brought to you by the Tourism authorities.

On another note and for all those who are looking for some great books at extremely reasonable prices, you have a really great opportunity to make sure that you will be able to get your hands on some great deals. The third SQU 'Used Book Charity Fair' will be held from March 28 to 30 from 9am till 9pm at Muscat City Centre. The organisers have put in their best efforts in making this event fruitful for everyone who attends by trying to bring in books of all genres. Promising to have a wide range of books such as biographies, classics, sports, travel, science and technology and children's books. Do keep in mind the fact that this is a charitable cause as all proceeds from the fair would go to a non-profit organisation in Oman.

If you want to help in another way, you can drop books anytime from now until March 25 at one of the drop-in points. For details, e-mail [icg.cce@gmail.com](mailto:icg.cce@gmail.com).

Before I close, a quick mention of the super weekend brunch at the National Hospitality Institute. The Classroom restaurant is the venue for this one and showcases all that the students in the chef's course have learnt. Believe me when I tell you that going there on a Thursday from 12:30 to 3:30pm is a win-win situation for all. Priced extremely reasonably, you get a complete meal from soups to dessert and coffee. The icing on the cake - the very real fact that the same students who laid out this feast are on hand, waiting for your comments and feedback, which will help them get better at their job.

Here's wishing all of you a great fortnight and happy days ahead!

**A HAPPENING WEEK**