

Making dreams come true

FILM REPORT
By RIMA ALHADDAD
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BAHRAINI director and filmmaker Maryam Abdulghaffar's short film *Dark Forest*, which premiered at the Emirates Film Festival this month, has won the award for Best Documentary, and encourages young creatives to follow their dreams.

The 16-minute film tackles the story of Czech painter Tina Palu, who pursued her passion for art despite challenges and resistance from her family.

The project is named 'Dark Forest' after the painting that Tina creates in the film.

Maryam, who is based in Bahrain and has her gallery in the kingdom, was visiting Prague when she met Tina. The painter's life and experiences inspired her to share her journey with viewers.

"While I was in Prague, I was hunting for documentary stories that I can tell,"

Maryam told *GulfWeekly*.

"My mom is a painter and so, the first thing that came to my mind were painters who had interesting stories," the 34-year-old added.

"So I talked to them directly and met with them and found that Tina had a great story to tell. She faced many challenges from her parents and had to leave her family to pursue her passion, which showed she had a strong character. I gathered with a group of friends, Karan Singh Thapa from India, Paola Proietti from Venezuela and Nouf Yarub from Saudi Arabia, and we all worked together on this film.

"We had a lot of meetings and a lot of pre-production planning before shooting the film. We didn't have any challenges or obstacles as we did our proper work beforehand," she added, crediting her cast and crew and commending their work ethic.

Dark Forest was shot in a day and edited over a week. In it, Maryam has explored a different style of storytelling, unlike most of her work,



BEHIND THE SCENES: Maryam with the crew

which follows an interview pattern.

"This documentary is actually showing Tina's life with her friends and her paintings. So it's more of seeing her life than just question-answer documentaries," she explained, stating that she wanted to provide an authentic feel to the audience.

"I normally like to do documentaries or films in general that relate to me

or something that would touch my heart," she said.

The director from Hamad Town began her professional career as a photographer and filmmaker during her studies at Toledo University in the US. During this time, she was selected to complete a photography programme that provided her the opportunity to land three projects in Ohio, and eventually trained to become a director.

Maryam's previous work includes the film *Noor Al Ezla* ('The light of isolation'), which earned an honourable mention at the prestigious Egyptian Aswan International Women's Film Festival (AIWFF) last year. She was the only Bahraini to be shortlisted by AIWFF and to receive a grant to produce her film.

The artist is currently in the process of submitting her latest creation to more film festivals. However, she hopes

to eventually make them accessible for everybody to watch.

She is also working on two new projects, a narrative short film and another documentary, the details of which will be announced at a later date.

In addition to exhibiting a creative streak, Maryam harbours an entrepreneurial spirit and is the founder and chief executive of Imprint Production, which offers marketing consultancy and visual content production services.

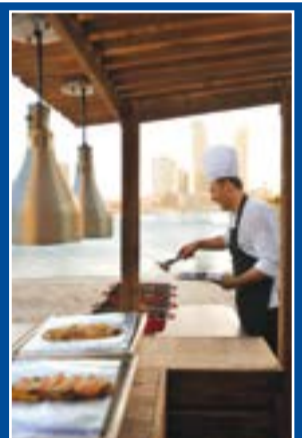
For more information, follow @maryam.abdulghaffar on Instagram.



UNVEILED: The movie poster



GOLDEN GIRL
Les Clefs d'Or Award
SEE PAGE 2



ORIENTAL DINING
First anniversary
SEE PAGE 3



LEISURE SCENE
Food and culture
SEE PAGES 4-5



PULSE OF POP
Movies, music & more
SEE PAGE 6



WINNER: Maryam with the best documentary award

PROUD MOMENT: Saleha at the Les Clefs d'Or UAE chapter meeting in Dubai, in November where she was announced as a finalist for the international award



BRAIN-BUSTERS

Quizmaster and *Radio Bahrain* host Shannon Crockett, who has been entertaining people across the island with his brain-teasing quiz night sessions, has offered to put *GulfWeekly* readers' general knowledge to the test. Join in the fun every Thursday with Shannon's seven brain-busters.



1. A grilled, toasted or roasted marshmallow sandwiched between chocolate and Graham Crackers is called what?
2. The Dong is the currency of which country?
3. What is the iron-containing protein which gives our blood its red colour?
4. In which sport does '27 up, 27 down' refer to a perfect game?
5. Along with Ancient Egyptian, the Rosetta Stone was a key to the deciphering of hieroglyphics, because it featured which other

1. S'mores
2. Vietnam
3. Haemoglobin
4. Baseball
5. Greek
6. Cob
7. Dr Drake Ramoray

ANSWERS

'Key' player



COMMUNITY REPORT
By MELISSA NAZARETH
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BAHRAINI hotel concierge Saleha Al Wazzan has been selected to represent Bahrain and the UAE at the renowned international Les Clefs d'Or Award 2025, coinciding with her completing 10 glorious years in hospitality.

The 34-year-old is up against 16 other contenders from across the globe in the 'friendly competition', also known as the Young Concierge Award.

The event is part of the prestigious Les Clefs d'Or international congress, the 69th edition of which is set to be staged in Madrid from March 30 to April 4. It will bring together top hospitality professionals from around the world under one roof.

Les Clefs d'Or ('the golden keys') is a professional association of hotel concierges, with approximately 4,000 members working in more than 80 countries and 530 destinations across the

globe. Easily identified by the golden crossed keys on their lapels, members are an elite fraternity, globally connected, committed to professional development, and driven to setting new standards for guest service perfection.

"We received an email from Les Clefs d'Or UAE

"Believe in and love yourself, have the ability to be open-minded, and keep an open heart to new opportunities."

(chapter) to nominate ourselves and so, I did as I fit the criteria," the Al Noor International School alumna told *GulfWeekly*.

"I also submitted a four-page essay about myself as it was part of the process. Later, I received the news that I had to fly to Dubai to attend their meeting, where they would announce the candidate who would be representing the award," she added.

Those under 36 years, who are participating for the first

time in the congress, holding the title of 'concierge', and are fluent in English can nominate themselves for the award.

Saleha was also the first Bahraini woman to become a Les Clefs d'Or member in 2018, just five years after launching her career in the field.

The marketing graduate from Assumption University, Thailand, who presently works as Chief Concierge at Hilton Bahrain, might have carved a career in hospitality by chance but, over the years, has proved that it's where she was always meant to be.

"I had just completed my final exam and there was an opening at the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay, and I took it up. It changed my idea of hospitality completely and ever since, it all came as an instinct," she reminisced.

Saleha started her career as a concierge agent and two years in, she earned her 'golden keys' and became an official Les Clefs d'Or member.

She moved to Hilton

Bahrain two years ago, where she got promoted to assistant chief concierge and a year later, to chief concierge.

At the same time, she was appointed as the public relations in-charge for the Bahrain Hotel Concierge Group – the local representatives of Les Clefs d'Or – and is currently president of the group, comprising around 40 members.

The winner of the Young Concierge Award will be declared during the event in Madrid. While Saleha is a confident contender, she believes she will always have a passion for hospitality regardless of the outcome.

In a message to young hoteliers, she said, "Believe in and love yourself, have the ability to be open-minded, and keep an open heart to new opportunities. Like today, we have witnessed a huge transformation in hospitality – I take our kingdom (Bahrain) as an example of change, where the Tourism Ministry is committed to promoting the country, with diversified offerings, like new cuisines and (dining) outlets."



THE holiday season festivities have come to an end and most of us are back to the office. Getting into work mode after an extended break can be tough, especially when we don't space it with relaxation and recreation. Striking work-life balance is essential throughout the year, which brings us to the first topic of 2025 for *GulfWeekly's* 'Speak Your Mind' feature series: 'How does work-life balance affect your mental health?' We invite you, our family of readers, to share your views in no more than

100 words by emailing gdnnews@gdnmedia.bh or @gdnonline on Instagram by January 28. Please share some anecdotes of when and how you set boundaries between your professional and personal lives. We will publish a selection of the comments received in *GulfWeekly* - only 'original' entries will be considered for the top submission and win a box of Raw Candy vegan chocolates as a token of our appreciation. Together, let's keep the conversation going!

AMBIENCE: The Manama skyline provides the perfect backdrop at Byblos



GOURMET REPORT
By NAMAN ARORA
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MARKING a major milestone in its journey through the kingdom's palates, the Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay's beachside restaurant Byblos celebrated its first anniversary last week.

To commemorate the journey, the *GDN Media* team visited the Lebanese restaurant to sample some of its all-time favourites and get a taste of what's to come.

At the helm of the restaurant is the property's Oriental Specialty Chef Tony El Khoury, who gave us a tour of the live cooking stations, showing us a blend of traditional and modern Lebanese dishes.

When a restaurant positions itself as that of a specific country, one of the first questions it gets is around authenticity, and this has become a hotly debated topic within the food world. Some wonder whether something like saj with warm delicious Nutella qualify as authentic Lebanese cuisine.

But ultimately, in my opinion, trying to pigeonhole a cuisine to a fixed box of what may have been the 'traditional' meal at one time in history is the real affront to authenticity and the culinary

Byblos turns 1



CREATIVE: Chef Tony

arts. Tastes vary across borders, and often, when foods from abroad are adapted to local tastes, creativity finds its flavours evolving by leaps and bounds.

Take for example, the samboosa, which travelled from the Ottoman Empire to India and then came back to the Arab world with the Indian diaspora, reshaped, evolved, spicier, and much more delicious, in my biased opinion, of course.

Or the shawarma, which has umpteen variants across the Arab world (and now, the six inhabited continents as well!)

And like the fillings within your favourite samboosa and shawarma, enveloped in the first year of Byblos' operation was this evolution of its menu, as it found new flavours, learning from its diners and teaching them a bit (and a bite) about Lebanon's culinary journeys, with many ingredients sourced from the country itself. And the special moments it fostered for its diners were the real friends made along the way.

"This first year has just flown by!" Chef Tony told us. "We have hosted many private dinners, corporate events and more, and it has been incredible."

"Our Saj night every Wednesday has been an amazing success, and we are kicking off our Lebanese barbecue nights, featuring entertainment and lots of live cooking stations."

"Of course, our menu has evolved along the way, and we are always finding new ways to surprise our guests with something truly special on their plate every night."

At the media dinner marking Byblos' first year, we had a number of sublime surprises, marrying the familiar with the unfamiliar.

And right off the bat, the colde mezzes that floated over to our tables gave us unique twists on dishes that have become ubiquitous across the island. From pesto hummus to a fantastic beetroot mutabal, mafroukit tajen (diced and spiced chunky vegetables turned into a hearty dip), pumpkin mutabal, muhammara (a spicy dip made of walnuts, red bell peppers, pomegranate molasses, and breadcrumbs), warak enab (vine leaves) and tabbouleh salad, each appetiser was unique, yet also comfortingly familiar.

Not ones to be left far behind, the hot mezza including kibbeh balls, fatayer spinach and batata harra also made it to our tables soon (and our stomachs a few seconds later).

The real stars of the show were to be found at the live cooking stations, donned by members of the Four Seasons and Byblos team, serving up saj options ranging from Zaatar with vegetables, Akawi and mozzarella cheese as well as Nutella and halwa in addition to the Levantine retort to the pizza – Manakish, with flavour options ranging from sujuk and cheese to chicken shawarma and halloumi pesto.

As we got a live show of



MANOUSHE: A variety of options, from chicken shawarma to Za'atar



THUMBS UP: Chef Imad Boukli and Executive Chef Leonardo Di Clemente at the anniversary celebration

traditional intermingling with modern, we turned to the most popular item on Byblos' menu – its grills, including lamb chops, meat tikka, shish tawouk, lamb kebab and seabass harra.

With the succulent meat, delectable mezze and sumptuous Manakish marinating in our stomachs, we were just about ready to call it a night, but of course, that's when our second stomachs growled for an offering of dessert.

And just in time, the dessert menu made its appearance, the highlights of which included possibly the best Um Ali I have ever tasted, flavoured with floral undertones, courtesy of a subtle rose infusion.

Not to be left behind, the Kunafa came in strong, with its perfectly crispy vermicelli complementing the soft melting cheese, bringing its

absolute A game to the texture league.

On a final sweet note, Chef Imad Boukli put a modern culinary twist on the evening with a selection of handcrafted chocolate creations, for us to take home, which included Pistachio Kunafa (which, in my humble opinion, far superceded its Dubai viral counterpart), EarlGrey and Caramel Cardamom.

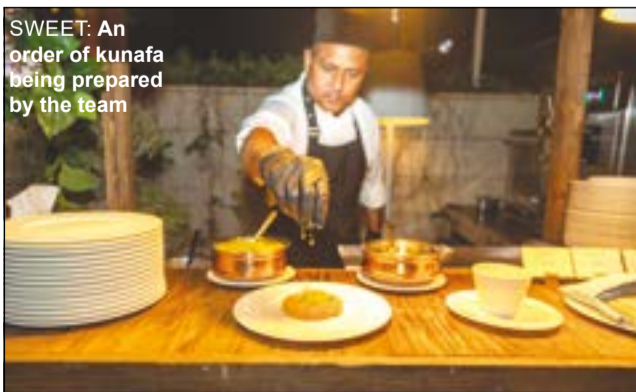
As the Byblos team waved us goodbye and we walked by the beach, we couldn't help but marvel at how popular this restaurant has quickly become, while our stomachs already started dreaming of what kinds of dishes Chef Tony would be conjuring up for the upcoming Ramadan season.

For more details, follow @fsbahrain on Instagram.



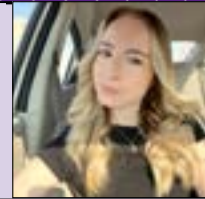
PLATTER: The cold mezza options

SWEET: An order of kunafa being prepared by the team



Leisure Scene

What's on guide by
Julia Cassano



FARMERS MARKET IS BACK AT RITZ-CARLTON

INDULGE in a range of special dining experiences at The Ritz-Carlton Bahrain this weekend.

The annual Farmers Market is back, showcasing the finest local flavours and craftsmanship tomorrow and on January 31, 8.30am to 2.30pm. It's also available on February 7 and 14.

Explore a vibrant array of fresh produce, artisanal goods and unique handcrafted goods, while savouring traditional Bahraini breakfast. Entrance is available at the Royal Beach Club for free.

- Enjoy La Med's spectacular Big Ben Brunch, tomorrow, from 1pm to 4pm.

Guests can devour a delightful selection of British classics, all the while enjoying replicas of the nation's most iconic sites such as Big Ben, the London Bridge and red phone booths.

It costs BD33, inclusive of soft beverages, BD44



LUXURY: Winter Chalet at Ritz-Carlton

with selected beverages and BD60 for a bubbly brunch. Children aged four to 12 dine for BD16.500.

- Visitors can also indulge in a 1kg croissant, paired with two hot beverages and a selection of spreads at The Ritz Gourmet Lounge.

It's perfect for sharing among six to eight people, and is available everyday

from 8am to 11pm, for BD35. Orders must be placed 24 hours in advance.

- Gather your loved ones and escape to the Winter Chalet for a magical evening. The charming beachside retreat offers a range of delicious dishes and a truly unique experience, until February 28, from 6pm to 11pm. It's closed on

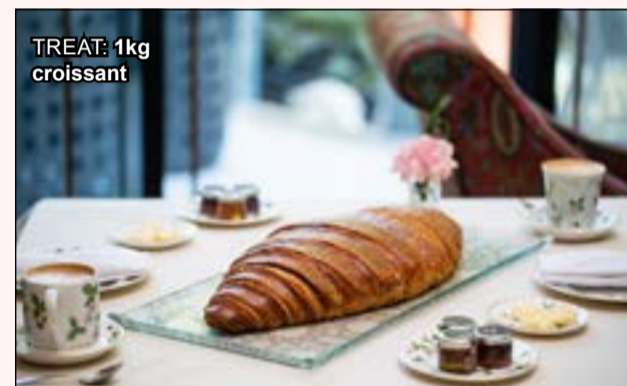
Sundays.

- Dive into a taco extravaganza at Cantina Kahlo's Taco Tuesday, where savoury meats, marinated chicken and flavourful vegetarian options will leave you wanting more.

It costs BD25 per person on Tuesday, 6pm to 10pm, inclusive of two glasses of a special beverage.



LOCAL FLAVOURS: Farmers Market is set to feature a vibrant array of fresh produce



TREAT: 1kg croissant

- Redefine your Thursday at La Plage's Salsa Nights, from 8pm. Delight in exquisite gourmet delicacies, captivating rhythms and

refreshing beverages. For more information, call 17586425 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com.

CULINARY ADVENTURE UNLIKE ANY OTHER!

GET ready for a week of good food and fun vibes at Hilton Bahrain.

Enjoy delicious dishes and entertainment at Origin Kitchen and Culture's Australian Brunch tomorrow, from 12.30pm to 4pm.

It's being held to mark Australia Day, celebrated on January 26. Hosted by *Radio Bahrain's* Shannon Crocket, the event costs BD28 with unlimited soft beverages, and BD39 with unlimited selected beverages.

- The restaurant will also

host its Pan Asian Night, which features a feast of Asian favourites from all corners of the continent, on Wednesdays, from 7pm to 10pm. It costs BD22net with unlimited soft beverages and BD28net with selected beverages.

- Origin Kitchen and Culture has lined up a culinary adventure as part of Seafood Night. Explore the freshest catch and live cooking stations tonight from 7pm to 10pm. It costs BD28 inclusive of unlimited soft beverages and BD32 with



FEAST: Taste the best of Asia at Pan Asian Night

unlimited selected beverages. For the ultimate breakfast spread, enjoy the restaurant's breakfast buffet, from Sunday to Friday, 6.30am to 10.30am, at BD13net per person.

Late risers can also relish the buffet on Saturday. It features live cooking stations and a spread of continental, Asian and Arabic favourites, from 6.30am to 11.30am.

- Head to Cocoluna Lounge on Wednesday, from

7pm to midnight, for Ladies' Night.

- Tonight, the Society Club will stage the Afro Series, offering guests a spectacular night of exciting tunes and delicious beverages, from 9pm to 2am.

- Don't miss out on Lamar's offer of 50 per cent off on pastries and cake everyday after 5pm.

For more information or reservations, contact 33692013 or 33690081.

CLUB TO HOST JAM NIGHT WITH MANNY AND FRIENDS

HEAD down to the British Club Bahrain for its Jam Night with Manny and Friends.

The event, tomorrow at 6pm, calls on aspiring and seasoned performers to join in the live music and fun.

Entry for musicians is free, and other guests must be signed in by a member.

One of the kingdom's greatest bands, The Pastmakers, will host a lively evening, filled with catchy tunes and dancing, tonight at 8pm.

Non-members must be signed in by a member of the club.

The club will also host a Family Overnight Camp for children aged five to 12 years. It will include a jamming session, games and movies. It costs BD10 for children who are members, BD12 for non-members and BD10 per parent, inclusive of dinner, a snack and breakfast. It will be held on January 31, from 7pm to 7am.

For more information call 17728245.

TREATS FOR FOOD LOVERS

CHOOSE the Dilmun Club Bahrain for a weekend of delicious food and a pleasant atmosphere.

On Mondays, the club invites guests for its Curry Night, which features a curry and a selected beverage for

BD5.500.

Meat lovers can also enjoy Steak Night which offers two steaks and a bottle of a grape beverage for BD20.

The club will host a delicious Saturday roast, featuring a full carvery buffet for BD5.500.

For details, call 17690926.



SUCCULENT: Meats on the grill at Australian Brunch

Leisure Scene

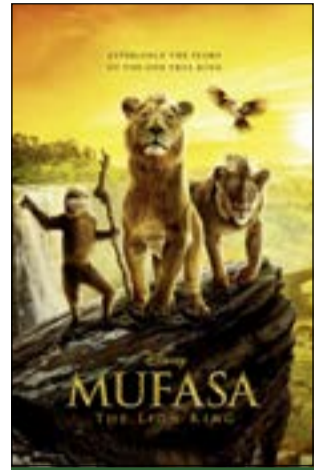
Weekly Entertainment
THE LION KING FILM POSTER



CAPTIVATING:
Members of the group, Surprise Effect



DELICIOUS: Royal tea at Links



GEAR UP FOR SURPRISES AS FRENCH TROUPE PERFORMS

THE award-winning French troupe Surprise Effect is set to stage an interactive performance, combining breakdance, acrobatics and humour, this weekend, as part of the ongoing Spring of Culture festival.

With their unique blend of styles, the group delivers unforgettable shows that captivate audiences worldwide. They will showcase

their skills tonight, at Al Liwan, 5pm and Al Aali Mall at 8pm.

Tomorrow, they will perform at Marassi Galleria at 4pm and Souq Al Baraha at 7.30pm, and on Saturday, they will stage shows at the Bahraini Farmers Market in Budaiya at 11am, and Bab Al Bahrain at 4.30pm.

For details visit springofculture.org.

SWEET SERENITY AT RGC

JOIN the Royal Golf Club (RGC) for an array of great offerings this week.

The club is hosting its iconic Weekend Roast, featuring a selection of beef, lamb, chicken, and all the trimmings at Slice and Repartee, every Friday and Saturday, from noon to 5pm.

It costs BD9.500 per person, including a selected roast plate and one soda or chilled juice, and BD13.500, inclusive of a selected roast plate and a selected beverage.

Links invites guests for its Steak Night on Wednesday, from 6pm. Indulge in a

selection of premium steaks cooked to perfection and enjoy a vibrant evening filled with entertainment.

Enjoy a luxurious tea experience at Links everyday from 11am to 7pm.

Royal Tea at Two offers guests an array of delightful treats in a relaxed setting ... all while overlooking the stunning views of the club.

Choose from two options - the gold package, including tea or coffee for BD15, or the platinum package, inclusive of tea, coffee or two glasses of bubbly for BD19.

For more information, contact 39007546.

DISCOVER A WORLD OF FLAVOURS

THE Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay invites guests for a range of delicious offerings and fun entertainment this week.

Visitors can discover enticing flavours at Bay View Lounge's Wrap Fiesta, which features a range of delicious wraps and burritos. It's available until February 18, from noon to 11.30pm. A vegetarian burrito costs BD10 while it's BD12 for adana lamb durum or a fried chicken wrap, and BD14 for a lobster Thai roll.

● Embrace the winter spirit with family and friends at Bahrain Bay Kitchen's Chalet Brunch, including fondue served straight to your table, crafted from artisanal cheeses such as Gruyère, French Comté, and Italian Fontina.

Relish the delicacies tomorrow from 1pm to 4pm and it costs BD35, inclusive of soft beverages, or BD48 including a selected beverage package.

● Meanwhile, Byblos is hosting Saj Night, an ultimate dining experience that offers guests a sneak peek into the art of Saj bread-making. Savour the enticing aromas and flavours of

minced meat kashkaval, muhammara and more. It's available every Wednesday until February 26, from 6pm to midnight, and costs between BD8 and BD12.

Celebrate Byblos' first anniversary with its epic barbecue night. Dig into a thoughtfully curated spread of lamb chops, sea bass, sheesh tawook, lamb tikka, meat kebab and a range of side dishes until February 27, from 6pm to midnight. It's priced

at BD32 per person, inclusive of soft beverages.

● For the ultimate tea experience, head down to Bay View Lounge. The Chocolate Indulgence Tea, available everyday from noon to 9pm, offers visitors an array of irresistible pastries and warm beverages. Regular tea is priced at BD22 while it's BD26 for royal tea.

Executive chef Brian Becher and his team will showcase Cantonese-

inspired dishes made with fresh, seasonal ingredients.

● Indulge in a special menu featuring Braised Hoisin Veal Cheeks and Beef and Prawn Chiu Chow Dumplings, at re/Asian Cuisine's Lunar New Year. It takes place on January 29, from 7pm and costs BD59net per person exclusive of beverages.

For details, call 17115500 and 17115046.



FINE DINING: re/Asian Cuisine

MOVIE TIME

HEAD down to CINECO Seef to watch some of the English-language films being shown this weekend.

WOLF MAN (15+)

A family at a remote farmhouse is attacked by an unseen animal, but as the night stretches on, the father begins to transform into something unrecognisable.

Actors: Christopher Abbott, Julia Garner, Sam Jaeger

Timings: 12.15pm, 2.30pm, 4.45pm, 7pm, 9.15pm, 11.30pm

MARIA (PG-15)

Maria Callas, the world's greatest opera singer, lives the last days of her life in 1970's Paris as she confronts her identity and life.

Actors: Angelina Jolie, Kodi Smit-McPhee, Alba Rohrwacher

Timings: 10.45am, 1.15pm, 3.45pm, 6.15pm, 8.45pm, 11.15pm

BUFFALO KIDS (PG)

Two Irish orphans travel across America by train, meeting both heroes and villains along the way. They form an extraordinary friendship and search for a new home, overcoming dangers and challenges.

Actors: Alisha Weir, Gemma Arterton, Sean Bean

Timings: 11am, 3.45pm

MUFASA: THE LION KING (PG)

Simba, having become king of Pride Lands, is determined for his cub to follow in his paw prints while the origins of his late father Mufasa are explored.

Actors: Aaron Pierre, Seth Rogen, Billy Eichner
 Timings: 2.15pm, 7pm

Pulse of Pop

AROUND THE WORLD IN MUSIC, TV, BOOKS AND MORE - BY RIMA AL HADDAD

UNLOCKING THE CONSPIRACY

THE first two episodes of thriller miniseries *Prime Target* are out now on Apple TV+, with a weekly release scheduled to run until March 5.

The show revolves around Edward Brooks (Leo Woodall), a young genius math postgraduate on the verge of a major breakthrough, as he will hold the key to every computer in the world once he succeeds in finding a pattern in prime numbers.

He is accompanied by National Security Agency agent Taylah Sanders (Quintessa Swindell), who has been tasked with watching and reporting on mathematicians' behaviour, and the two find themselves unravelling a troubling conspiracy as she begins to believe that he is being targeted by a mysterious and dangerous entity.

Leo revealed that he had to take math classes to prepare for the role and understand his character.

"Our consultant did paint the picture quite well as to basically how the key works," he said in an interview.

"The whole point of the story is that he's getting close to holding the key to every computer in the world, and understanding that the key is made up of prime numbers... so long that no one could ever possibly guess it unless you have a formula. This prime finder, as he calls it, basically is that. It does the calculation for you and, bang, you've unlocked whatever you need to unlock. That, for me, was essential to understand," he added.

Quintessa said she felt drawn to playing Taylah for her strong-willed personality and rebellious spirit.

"I was really adamant about trying to find a story that didn't deal with a young girl and her boyfriend, or something very stereotypical, but rather expanded on the identity and capability of a



NAIL-BITING: Plot brought alive by convincing performances

young woman. And so, this just kind of perfectly fits there," she said.

"She does stunts, she rides a motorcycle, she isn't afraid of being physically active

or reactive, for me, that was something that was really exciting," she added.



BEST FRIENDS: The Harlem cast

DELICATE BALANCE

THE third and final season of American comedy series *Harlem* is out now on Prime Video.

Starring Meagan Good, Jerrie Johnson, Grace Byers and Shoniqua Shandai, the series follows the lives of four female friends who met while attending university and are now in their 30s living in Harlem, as they try to balance personal lives with their professional careers.

The series was created by Tracy Oliver, who also co-wrote the hit film *Girls Trip* (2017). In an interview, the showrunner expressed her gratitude for how far the show has come, despite all the hardships that were faced in the process, and for the positive environment she and her crew were able to create while filming.

"When I first sold the show, we were hit with several setbacks, including a pandemic shutdown in the middle of production and a strike and, honestly, surviving all of that is already a major blessing," she said.

The project was first announced in 2019 and

filming was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 2023, the American actors' union SAG-AFTRA (Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists) went on strike over a labour dispute, which lasted from July to November and put a pause on many filming projects.

"That said, I'd go for many more seasons if it were up to me, but knowing this was the end going into it, I approached it with that in mind, I wanted everyone's stories to feel satisfying.

"*Harlem* restored my faith in this industry and affirmed it is possible to get work done in a positive, loving environment. For our leads, this was a spiritual experience, I watched them pray for each other over the years as we all experienced personal difficulties. Their friendship, the respect they have for each other, and for me, is all real," she added.

Released in 2021, season one was met with positive reviews and critical acclaim, as it earned a *Rotten Tomatoes* score of 96 per cent.

ROOT OF THE MATTER

AFRICAN-AMERICAN writer Tamara Lanier's memoir *From These Roots: My Fight with Harvard to Reclaim My Legacy* hits the shelves on January 28.

The book tackles the author's commitment to documenting the story of her ancestor Papa Renty, about whom she knew very little. However, she was motivated by his stories that she grew up hearing from her mother, whose dying wish was to tell her children about Papa Renty.

The activist's research resulted in her discovering one of the

first-ever photos of enslaved people from Africa that pictured a dark-skinned man with short-cropped silver hair and chiselled cheekbones - Renty.

"Immediately, I knew that was the man that I had heard so many stories about, my entire life," she said in an interview, recalling the moment.

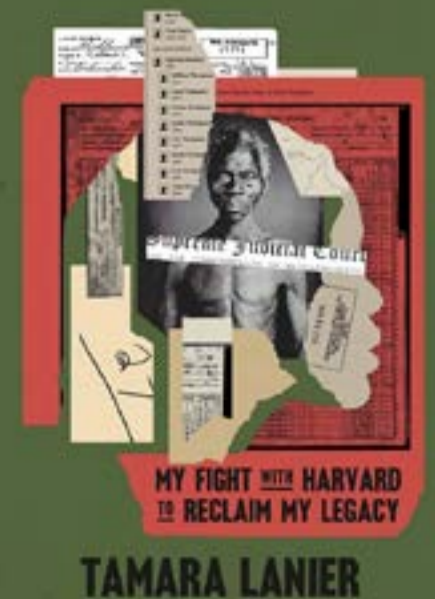
"I remember just staring, trapped in a gaze where I'm just staring and staring in his eyes, and I felt like he was staring back at me," she added.

That was the beginning of Tamara's quest to trace her

genealogical bloodline to Papa Renty, which put her in a legal battle against Harvard. She found the photo at Harvard University's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. It raises the question: Who claimed and acquired the artefacts and remnants of America's history, the institutions or the surviving descendants?

"When you read this book, you'll have an amazing understanding of who Papa Renty was. I want readers to feel with me when I'm going through these slave indexes," she noted.

FROM THESE ROOTS





الحداد للسيارات
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Time Out



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crossword break

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8								9				
10						11						
				12								
		13				14						
						15						
16								17	18			
								19				
20						21						
22								23				

Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

1. Hut (5)
4. Inferred (7)
8. Most (7)
9. Board game (5)
10. Charity (4)
11. Lesser (8)
13. Chilled (4)
14. Pit (4)
16. Forgetfulness (8)
17. Tail (4)
20. Interior (5)
21. Yield (7)
22. Highest (7)
23. Chop (5)

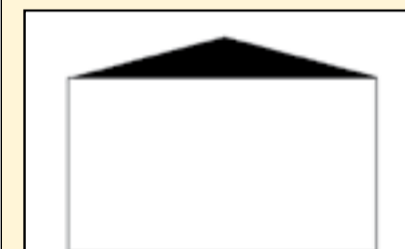
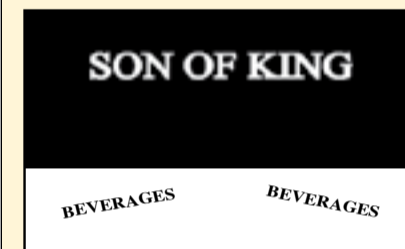
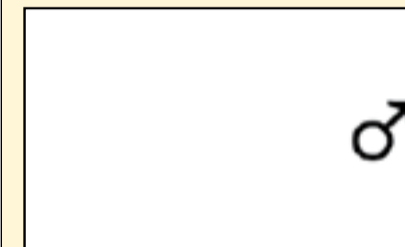
DOWN

1. Bell-ringer (13)
2. Plump (5)
3. Title (4)
4. Require (6)
5. Infirm (8)
6. Fissure (7)
7. Unworthy (13)
12. Focus (8)
13. Army officer (7)
15. Pamper (6)
18. Milk vessel (5)
19. Dross (4)

who, what, where, when

- WHAT... is hypochondria?
- WHERE... have Bolton Wanderers FC played their home games since 1997?
- WHEN... was the Gettysburg Address?
- WHO... won the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize?
- WHAT... is the capital of Australia?
- WHERE... are the provinces of Limburg and Antwerpen?
- WHEN... was Margaret Beckett acting leader of the British Labour Party?

just so



darn tough sudoku

So you think you're good enough at Sudoku to crack this baby? Remember, we were the first in the Gulf to bring you this bit of Japanese mayhem...so we don't kid around

Last week's sudoku

4	9	5	2	8	7	1	3	6
6	3	1	4	5	9	2	7	8
8	7	2	6	3	1	4	9	5
7	1	9	8	6	3	5	2	4
3	2	8	9	4	5	6	1	7
5	6	4	7	1	2	3	8	9
2	5	7	3	9	4	8	6	1
1	8	3	5	7	6	9	4	2
9	4	6	1	2	8	7	5	3

9	8	2	7	3	5	4	1	6
3	7	4	1	8	6	5	2	9
5	6	1	9	2	4	3	7	8
7	1	9	6	4	2	8	5	3
6	4	8	5	7	3	1	9	2
2	3	5	8	9	1	6	4	7
8	2	6	4	1	7	9	3	5
4	5	3	2	6	9	7	8	1
1	9	7	3	5	8	2	6	4

darn tough sudoku

3	9	1	2	4	6	8	5	7
4	6	8	9	5	7	1	2	3
2	7	5	3	8	1	9	4	6
8	1	7	4	6	5	3	9	2
5	3	2	7	9	8	6	1	4
6	4	9	1	3	2	5	7	8
1	2	6	8	7	9	4	3	5
7	5	4	6	1	3	2	8	9
9	8	3	5	2	4	7	6	1

Sudoku

4	9				3	1		8
8			9			5	3	
	7			8				6
		4		1	2	7		
	5	8				4	1	
2		9	7			6	8	
				2				
		5	6		9			7
6		2	4		1	8		9

Sudoku

	9	4		8	6			7
7							6	
8			3	4		2		
		5			3	1		
	7			1			5	
		2	8				3	
9		8		7	4			3
	6		5					4
4				2		5	8	

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

Across: 3 Mendacity; 8 Bait; 9 Perimeter; 10 Encore; 11 Bears; 14 Times; 15 Seem; 16 Exile; 18 Veal; 20 Visor; 21 Lasts; 24 Flouts; 25 Varieties; 26 Free; 27 Pestilent.

Down: 1 Objective; 2 Piecemeal; 4 Epee; 5 Drive; 6 Cheers; 7 Ties; 9 Prose; 11 Bliss; 12 Set square; 13 Impressed; 17 Evils; 19 Lariat; 22 Total; 23 Game; 24 Fern.

JUST SO: A light year, Big boots to fill, Get down to business, Girl interrupted.

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN: Silvio Berlusconi; Blinkers; The eyes; 2002; Fish; Lincolnshire; 1985.

Darn Tough Sudoku

	1			2			9	
		5					3	
3			8		4			2
		8					6	
	4		3		6		5	
		3					1	
5			4		9			7
		9					2	
	6			7				3

Your work pad space ...