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November

Bibi Hayat, a rising star in the Kuwaiti event planning world, and entrepreneur, has broken new grounds with her November company. Encompassing a bakery, an event planning arm, and a gift-store, November is a one-stop place for any occasion. Already possessing her own signature design trademark and having planned many high-end successful events Bibi Hayat has carved a name out for her locally and regionally.

Khaleejesque had a one-to-one with Bibi to discuss November, local tastes when it comes to events planning, and the latest when it comes to Ramadan "Ghabgas."

On how she started event-planning and how November was created:

I started this project because of my love for creating and having fun with design, it started off small and, with a lot of hard work and effort, we have thankfully grown to be a well established medium sized company with many events under its belt. I have nurtured a productive design environment that heavily studies our past events and constantly searches for new forms of inspiration in order to always be on the cutting edge of our field. I can definitely say we have planned about eighty to ninety events since starting November, and more during my freelance and other work experiences.

On how November is different from other event planning companies in the region:

At November, we aim to evoke an innate sense of design style in all our events no matter how diverse they may be. Our boutique sensibility allows us to be a lot more involved with our clientele, allowing keen awareness of detail to ensure that every event fulfills its particular needs. As flexible as we are precise, we focus on creating a unique sensibility in each of our events by relying on our experience and innovation as well as our backbone of support teams.

On November's design philosophy:

November's work is a reflection of a well developed design philosophy

which strives to offer a comprehensive and coherent approach to event planning and management that considers its social context, encompassing tradition and modernity as part of the creation of one-off experiences for the discerning individual or organization.

On favorite events that she has planned:

I would have to say that my favorite events are those that are truly unique, non-conforming, and where client relationships were pleasurable. I have found that when dealing with open-minded clients that respect my professionalism and have let go of the reins a little bit, we have always gone above and beyond the contract details. Since we do so many kinds of events, from traditional to mixed weddings, and small receptions to grand corporate events, its very difficult to pinpoint and choose the most memorable, they are all my favorite in some way or another, or else I would never have been part of the process. Each event has evolved November somehow, and each client has given us the opportunity to grow.

On Ramadan “Ghabgas” (Ramadan gatherings that are high on the month’s social calendar):

When working for Lenotre i was very into helping the banqueting department with “Ghabga” decorations, table linens, flowers, and possibly some interesting serving dishes and food presentation. It is only been a trend in the past two years to do total transformations for “Ghabgas”, where we set up tents, or enclose gardens and garages to create a completely new environment to host the event. Last year was very different than this year, budgets were sky high and of course that made our work easier. This year however people are being more conservative with their budgets, so we are being extra creative with materials and ideas; which is actually a treat for me, because I am a firm believer that less is more.

This year we are modernizing and minimizing Ramadan, with no shades of burgundy or reds, and not a crescent or "Dellah"(Arabic Coffee pot) in sight; I don't believe in just replicating the cliché motifs of the season, what's new about that? The colors that we are focusing on are silver, purples, ice blue and yellow with touches of glass and metallic elements. Clients don't come to us to just do what everyone else is doing, they come to us because they like our ability to always make people feel comfortable, and feel that they have been transported into a chic and elegant setting.

For example one of the events we planned this year involves mirror inlaid “Mashrabiya” boxes with a simple Phalaenopsis Orchid planted inside

placed on modern Plexi glass tables with a multitude of jasmine scented candles. White material was suspended from the ceiling with panels of Arabesque patterned wood placed in strategic points, with the seating being white leather sofas decked with turquoise cushions and bordered with "Marshrabiya: puffs lit with LED's.

On how the art of entertaining is deep-rooted in Arab culture:

I believe that people in the Arab world love to entertain and love to be known for their events; people like to out do each other all of the time, so year after year they add more and more elements to their events. Like I mentioned before, "Ghabgas" used to be simple receptions at home with a gorgeous table setting and flowers everywhere, but now are similar in scale to small weddings at home. Who knows what we will think up for next year's parties? In a couple of years Ghabags could be held in gorgeous chalets (beach houses) on the sand, or on the patios. They could be casual with multicolored Indian umbrellas, or could resemble "Nikki Beach" events. There are so many choices and ideas, that anything is possible.

- Fatmah Al-Qadfan. Images: November Boutique