

Hospitalitynews

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F&B IN HOTELS • TOURISM IN LEBANON • ORGANIC MEAT & SYRUP TRENDS

ANNUAL HOSPITALITY FORUM IN REVIEW



The 26th annual HORECA Lebanon trade exhibition, the country's largest hospitality and food service annual gathering, took place at Beirut's Seaside Arena from April 2-5, which was also the venue of the Hospitality News Middle East Annual Hospitality Forum (AHF). This year's program was held in collaboration with Hodema consulting services. Throughout the course of the four-day trade exhibition, several panel discussions took place with key industry stakeholders, taking account of this year's theme: 'For a Better Industry'. Here's just a snapshot of the insightful topics and the personalities that explored them

HOSPITALITY VISION IN LEBANON

The first of nine discussion panels was titled, Hospitality Vision in Lebanon featuring:

Speakers

H.E. Avedis Guidanian, *Minister of Tourism - Lebanon*

Pierre Achkar, *President, Federation for Tourism and Hotel Association in Lebanon*

Jean Beyrouthy, *President, Syndicate of Balnear Tourist Establishments in Lebanon*

Yahya Kassaa, *President, Lebanese Franchise Association*

Tony Ramy, *President, Syndicate of Owners of Restaurants, Cafes, Night-Clubs and Pastries in Lebanon*

Moderator, Nada Alameddine – Hodema

AG: This sector remains Lebanon's most promising despite past difficulties during 2011-2017. However, based on the data we have, 2019 is forecast to limit the losses previously incurred. I also hope and to a degree believe that in the coming couple of years, this sector will return to enjoy the prosperity it once did.

PA: The eight-year slump that the various hospitality establishments have experienced, today sees them at a serious disposition, one that is difficult to break free from despite our desire to do so and the resources available to us. However, the travel ban, which a while back KSA lifted, signals great promise. To better achieve this, we urge the local media, politicians and financial institutions to provide assistance, as the growth of the hospitality industry will benefit everyone.

JB: We need to remember that there is great strength in unity and the belief in our ability to once again win over the regional tourism industry. To achieve this, we need to position Lebanon as an all-year-round touristic destination, not just a summer retreat as has been the case. This can be achieved by mapping out a host of activities and destinations that offer something to everyone visiting from the region, irrespective of how small or lengthy the timeframe may be.

TR: The tourism industry has three main components, the first is internal tourism comprising 50 percent of the revenue. The restaurant sector, during the golden years grew to account for a 25 percent share of the sector, which translated to 10 percent of GDP valued at USD 8.7 billion. Back then, there were roughly 6,000 F&B outlets, a number

that by 2017-18 had doubled. However, revenue of those establishments fell by 45 percent. Coupled with reduced purchasing power, a travel ban and other challenges, we found ourselves in a very difficult position. I nonetheless am of the firm conviction that together, with the help of various ministries and organizations, we can, based on a new plan for the tourism industry that we have laid out, work together on revitalizing and even growing the sector, which has suffered far too much for far too long.

YK: Based on data available to us, the tourism industry is the one sector that is promising growth. Compared to a 2012-to-2018 benchmark of that sector, we witnessed a decrease of 4.6 percent. The hospitality sector, pertaining to dollar-spend, has fallen 6 percent. These figures

however should not be alarming when compared to the 53 percent decrease in the franchise sector of luxury items and 46 percent decrease in the clothing category. In that respect, tourism is doing well.

As for Brand Lebanon, last year, a reputed British rating agency, listed us in 95th place out of 100. That result contradicted people's view based on a survey we conducted during Expo Paris this year with 95 percent of respondents rating Lebanon as a highly sought-after destination with tourism, food, creativity and emotion being the words used the most. This brings me to the point that what we still lack is the confidence in our ability to effect change, change. I am confident we will, so long as we work toward realizing a shared vision. [Go to *hospitalitynewsmag.com* for more AHF highlights.](http://hospitalitynewsmag.com)

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THE GUESTHOUSE TREND IN LEBANON



Rafic Bazerji - Bouyouti, Peri Cochin - Les Ateliers de Tyr, Kamal Mouzawak - Souk El Tayeb, Faysal Saab - Al Haush Agro Guesthouse, Maroun Sfeir - Beit Trad, Moderator: Nagi Morkos - Hodema

THE ART OF CATERING



Karim Audi - Nicolas Audi, Cynthia Bitar - Nazira Catering, Nicolas Cattan - Cat & Mouth, Hussein Hadid - Hussein Hadid Catering and Food Consulting, Julien Khabbaz - Noura

THE NUMEROUS FACES OF LEBANESE TOURISM



Leila Badre - Archeological Museum at the American University of Beirut, Rasha El Haddad - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, May El-Khalil - Beirut Marathon Association, Roland Khoury - Casino du Liban, Nada Sardouk - Lebanese Ministry of Tourism

IS LEVANTINE CUISINE THE NEW TREND?



Reem Azoury - Maryool, Meat the Fish, Skirt and By Skirt, Alan Geaam - Alan Geaam Restaurant, France, Wassef Haroun - Mama Restaurant Group, US, Chef Yasmina Hayek, Tony Kitous - Comptoir Libanais Group PLC, Barbara Massaad - Slow Food Beirut

LEBANESE TALENTS AT HOME AND AROUND THE WORLD



Karim Asmar - USJ-IGE, Mohamed Azakir - IHG Hotels in Lebanon Dr. Tanius Kassis - Sagesse University, Emil Minev - Le Cordon Bleu, UK, Gaelle Zaarour - Four Seasons Hotel Beirut

THE RISE OF F&B FUNDS



Nadim Majdalani - Eathos, Rabih Saba - Venture Group, Khaled Zeidan - MIC Ventures

THE ABCS OF FUNDING A HOSPITALITY PROJECT & FINANCIAL SOURCES



Yolla Sarieddine - Kafalat, Elie Aoun - Banque Libano-Française, Douglas Griffith - USAID Lebanon Enterprise Development (LED) Project, Huda Saigh - EBRD

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY



Ziad Abi Chaker - Cedar Environmental, Ronald Diab - EEG, Antoine Kaldany - Yellowblue, Mario Massoud - Biomass, Makram Rabbath - Le Petit Gris, Moderator: Toufic Akl - Hodema