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(<https://www.hospitalitynewsmag.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Saif-Eddin-Mohammed-picture-1-scaled.jpg>) In an interview for Hospitality News ME, Hodema hospitality consultancy sat down with Saif Eddin Mohammed, general manager of Safir Fintas Hotel (<https://www.safirhotels.com/hotel/fintas>), Kuwait, to discuss the evolution of Kuwait's hospitality scene and get the lowdown of Safir Fintas Hotel's sustainable strategy.

1. How would you describe the hotel industry in Kuwait?

The hotel industry in Kuwait is witnessing an improvement in performance compared to the past two years, which were characterized by Covid-19. Most activities are almost back to normal. Many conferences and sport tournaments have resumed in the country, which have positively impacted the hotel industry on all levels. Social events are considered among the most important segments for hotels in Kuwait. Safir Fintas Kuwait Hotel has seen an increase in its performance in 2022 as well. We enjoyed an outstanding Ramadan this year, to the point that we can say the results were close to the achievements of 2018 and 2019. In terms of room revenue, things are going very well thanks to long-stay travelers, project teams and sporting tournaments,

in addition to leisure business. Social events are back to normal, especially in the post-Eid Al Fitr period. We are glad to see a positive trend, and we believe it is going to continue.



2. What differentiates Safir Fintas from other hotels in Kuwait?

Safir Fintas Kuwait is located on the coastline to the south of Kuwait City. The strategic location of the hotel grants proximity to the oil and gas district and to the commercial hubs. The property offers a wide range of room types that cater to and meet the requirements of all kinds of travelers, residences (hotel apartments) for families and long-stay travelers, as well as rooms and suites for business travelers. The location of the hotel on the Arabian Gulf provides an excellent getaway for leisure travelers, and its proximity to the commercial hubs and the oil and gas district makes the hotel a preferred choice for business travelers. The hotel is home to Al Roshinah Kuwaiti Restaurant, the only restaurant offering Kuwaiti cuisine in a five-star setting. The personalized service offered at Safir Fintas is based on true Arabian hospitality, which differentiates us from others.

3. What can you tell us about Safir Fintas' sustainable development strategy?

"We love our planet" is our green mission statement. An important part of our mission and commitment is to continue with the sustainable development program. We started the energy-saving program in 2016, and we received an appreciation certificate from Kuwait's Ministry of Electricity in 2018 in recognition of the hotel's energy-saving efforts and for the role in the MEW's program in rationalizing the consumption of energy in 2018 – 2019. Safir Fintas Hotel has the Environmental Impact Assessment License 2021 issued by The Environment Public Authority – Kuwait. The following initiatives are being implemented and followed by our Green Team

committee: energy and water to improve energy efficiency, upgrade lighting, cooling and maximize natural light and airflow wherever possible; healthy food options for guests and colleagues, waste management, supply chain and procurement; commitment to the community through the participation and the involvement in environmental causes, events and associations; and ongoing training in sustainability to create a green culture in the hotel.

4. How do you think the hospitality industry in the MENA region will pivot post Covid-19? Do you believe we will witness new trends?

We attended ATM in May 2022 in Dubai, and we had many discussions and group engagements about the future of the hospitality industry in MENA post Covid-19; the outlook looks very promising, and all projections appear optimistic. In Kuwait, as I mentioned earlier, the business started to go back to normal in many sectors, especially the hotel industry. The dynamics have changed, and we have to adapt to new business trends, travel behavior and requirements. Digitizing and personalizing the guest experience, capitalizing on the leisure market and offering F&B venues are key to meeting guests' expectations. The local market (staycation) represents a significant share of the pie, in addition to the other basic segmentations, and sustainability will have a bigger impact on strategies and future planning for any industry, especially hospitality.

5. Do you have any projects in the pipeline?

Yes, we do. We just completed upgrading our IT system and TV sets with the latest technology. The plan is to enhance the beach garden area to include more facilities, such as new swimming pools, an additional kids' club, a larger gym and health club, and an extra ballroom. This plan was postponed due to Covid-19.

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ABOUT AUTHOR

Rita Ghantous ()

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Rita Ghantous is a hospitality aficionado and a passionate writer with over 9 years' experience in journalism and 5 years experience in the hospitality sector. Her passion for the performance arts and writing, started early. At 10 years old she was praised for her solo performance of the Beatles song "All My Love" accompanied by a guitarist, and was approached by a French talent scout during her school play. However, her love for writing was stronger. Fresh out of school, she became a freelance journalist for Noun Magazine and was awarded the Silver Award Cup for Outstanding Poetry, by The International Library of Poetry (Washington DC). She studied Business Management and earned a Masters degree from Saint Joseph University (USJ), her thesis was published in the Proche-Orient, Études en Management book. She then pursued a career in the hospitality industry but didn't give up writing, that is why she launched the Four Points by Sheraton Le Verdun Newsletter. Her love for the industry and journalism led her to Hospitality Services - the organizers of the HORECA trade show in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan, as well as Salon Du Chocolat, Beirut Cooking Festival, Whisky Live and other regional shows. She is currently the Publications Executive of Hospitality News Middle East, Taste & Flavors and Lebanon Traveler. It is with ultimate devotion for her magazines that she demonstrates her hospitality savoir-faire.

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