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Sahl Hasheesh .

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Morocco

Marrakesh .

- Savoy Le Grand Hotel
- Pickalbatros Aqua Fun Club Resort

Marsa Alam .

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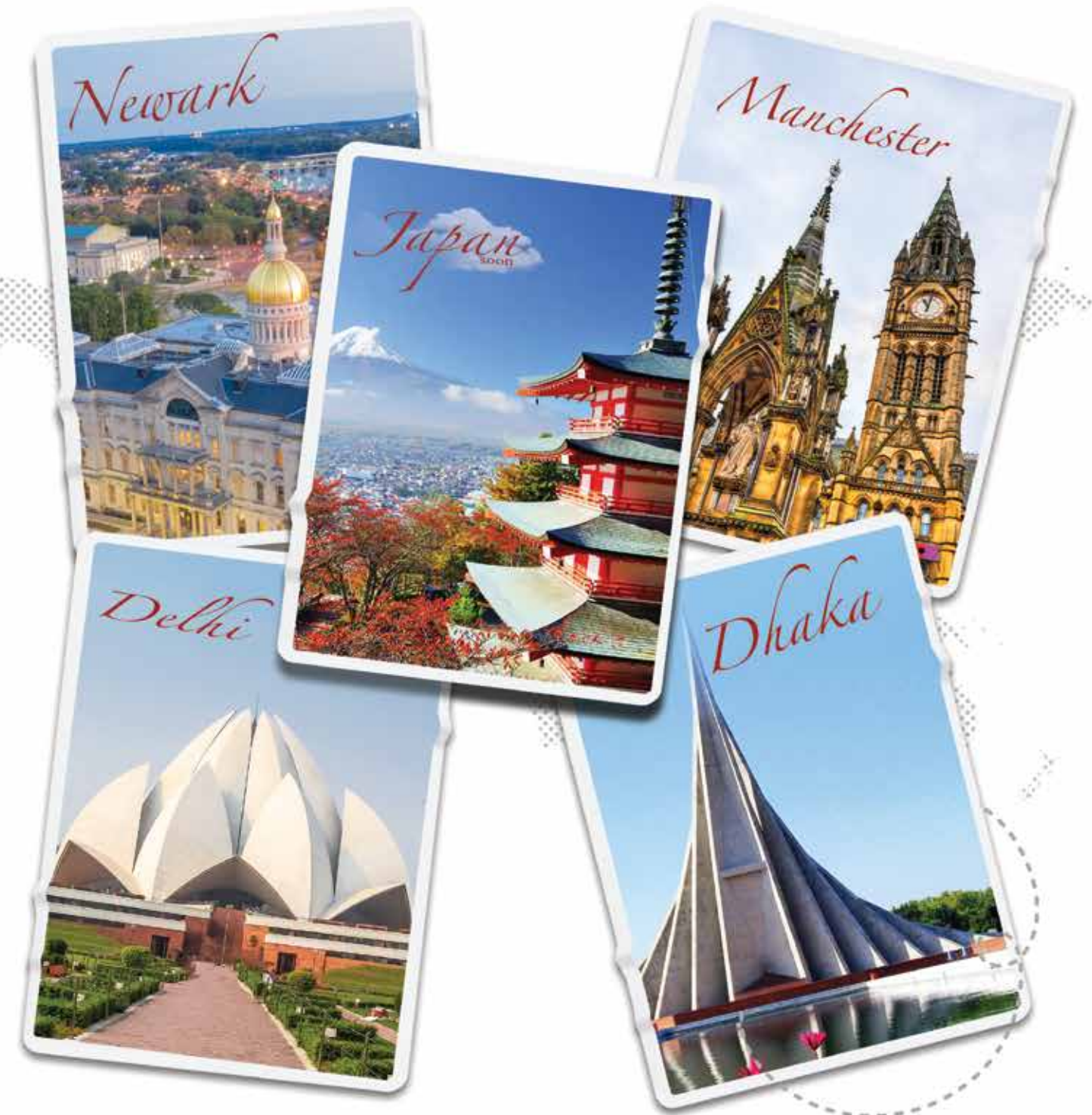
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Moving Forward: Embracing the Challenge

In the world of business, reaching the pinnacle of success marks a significant achievement. However, it's not the end of the journey; rather, it signals the beginning of an even greater challenge. It's a moment when you realize that your pursuit of excellence has just entered a new phase. At HE Magazine, we recently celebrated our 25th Anniversary with a spectacular event that left the city buzzing with excitement. While the success of the party was a testament to our commitment to delivering exceptional experiences, it also brought a fresh set of responsibilities.

We made promises to our readers and patrons at the event—promises of delivering more unique and successful editions and projects. One such promise was the introduction of our first digital edition, a significant step forward in our journey. Today, I'm thrilled to present this inaugural digital edition, a testament to our dedication to evolving and adapting to the ever-changing media landscape.

Our cover story features the remarkable Kamel Abou-Aly, a multifaceted businessman with a wealth of experience in various fields, including tourism, cinema production, and football. In this edition, he shares his invaluable insights and ideas, offering readers a glimpse into his world.

Furthermore, we delve into several engaging articles that touch upon some of today's most pressing topics, including Artificial Intelligence, the high divorce rate in Egypt, the Afrocentric controversy, and men's fashion. These subjects are not only relevant but also thought-provoking, sparking conversations that matter.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the creative and business development teams at HE Magazine. Their hard work and innovation have made this digital edition possible and accessible to our loyal readers through various channels, including our state-of-the-art HE Magazine mobile app.

As we move forward, we embrace the challenge of maintaining our market position, meeting our audience's high expectations, and continuing to provide exceptional content. The journey is far from over; it's an exciting path filled with opportunities to inspire, inform, and entertain. Thank you for being a part of our story, and we look forward to the exciting chapters that lie ahead.



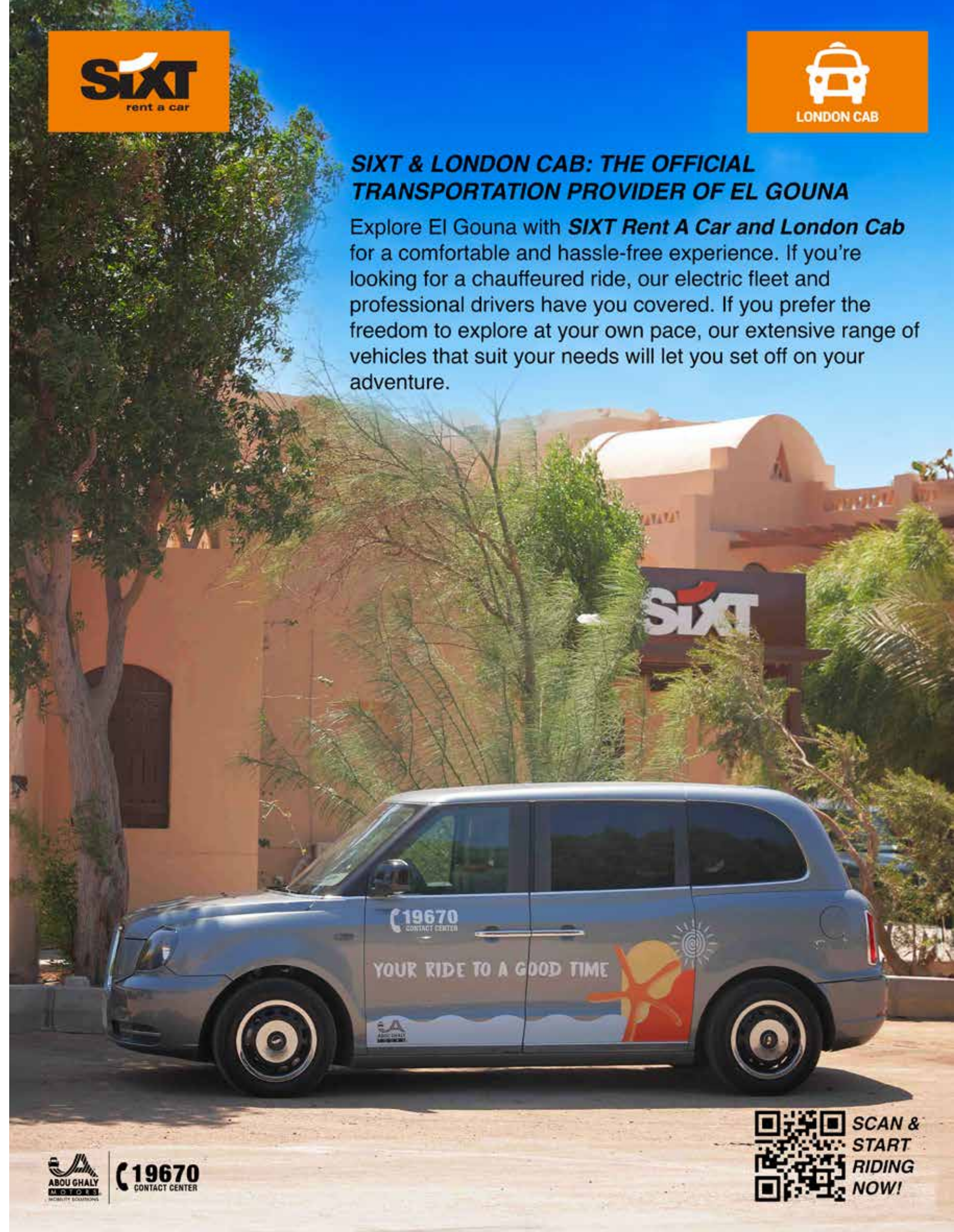
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THE MAN BEHIND EGYPT'S FLOURISHING
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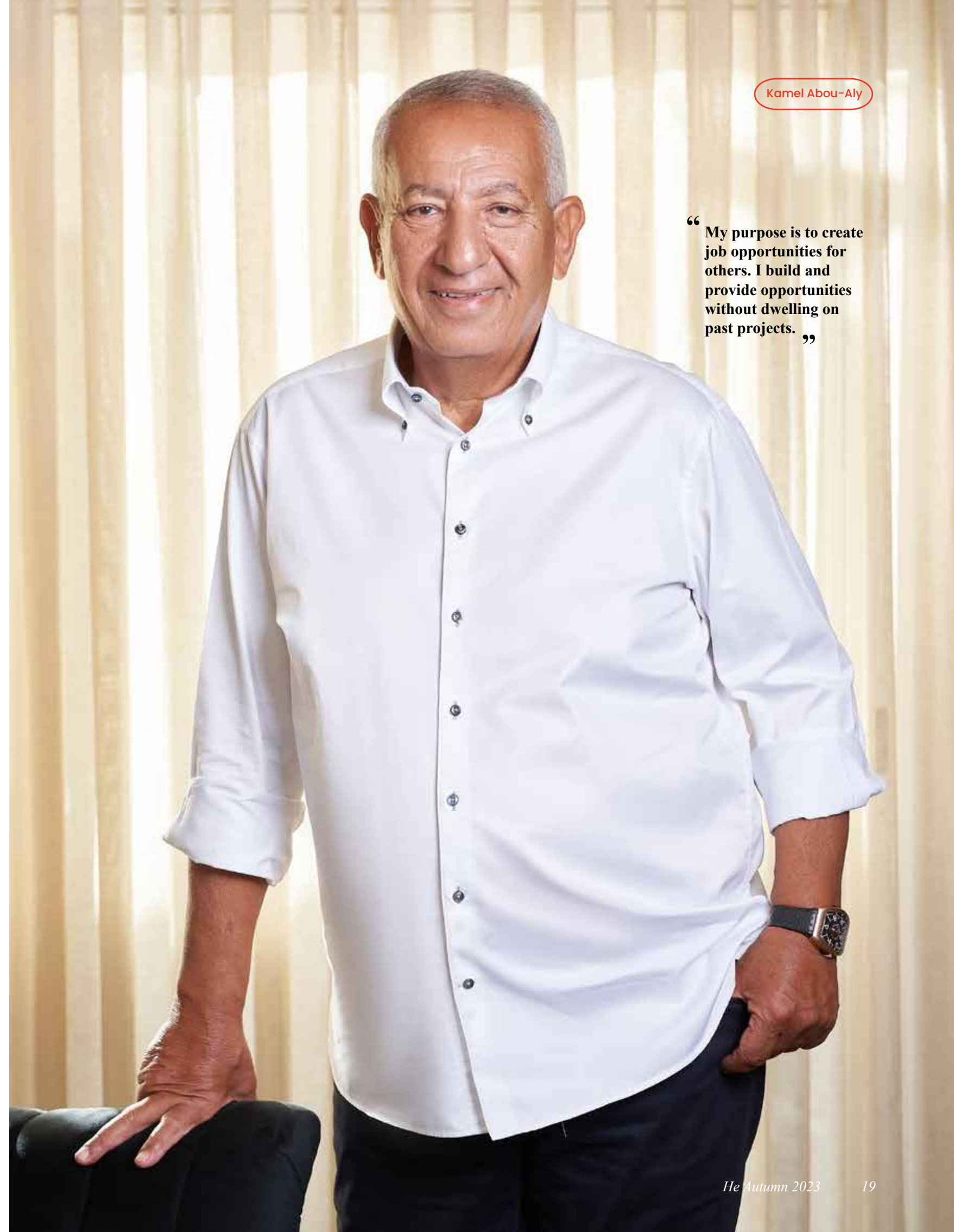
KAMEL ABOU-ALY

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In the bustling intersection of Egypt's dynamic tourism, cinema, and sports industries, there exists a visionary figure who has left an indelible mark on each. Meet Kamel Abou-Aly, a name synonymous with innovation, ambition, and unwavering dedication. Join us as we delve into the life and experiences of this remarkable businessman, film producer, and sports enthusiast. From humble beginnings to international acclaim, Kamel Abou-Aly's story unveils a fascinating narrative of challenges overcome, dreams realized, and the enduring spirit that drives him to shape Egypt's cultural and entertainment landscape.

In this exclusive interview, we explore the personal and professional facets of Kamel Abou-Aly, shedding light on the man behind the successes and the legacy he continues to build.

“ My purpose is to create job opportunities for others. I build and provide opportunities without dwelling on past projects. ”



THE TOURISM EMPIRE

Can you share your journey from the beginning, starting after the war when you moved to Switzerland? How did this experience impact your professional success and personality?

My childhood in Port Said was a simple and cherished time, marked by football games in the streets that held a unique charm in their simplicity. My family didn't have a background in tourism or hospitality, and my journey was serendipitous. Encouraged by a friend, I ended up in Switzerland in search of work. After picking cherries and finding a job at a motel, I landed a position at a 5-star hotel in Geneva. It was a small, classy establishment by the lake that served as my real education.

Despite making mistakes, my time there pushed me to learn and improve. I had an Italian manager who influenced my career a lot by then, and although I disliked them, I later appreciated what he'd done. He left a lasting impact on me. At 25, I reached a good position at the

Mid Hotel. Then, a chance encounter with a guest led to my first restaurant venture, MOCAMBO, in November 1980. With only 15,000 from the asked price of 180,000 Swiss francs, I started my journey, taking a loan and paying in installments. The restaurant quickly excelled, and I managed over 70 restaurants in Switzerland between 1980 and 1993, favoring challenging projects over established ones, a principle I uphold even in Egypt and Morocco.

Can you share why you chose the challenging business model you did; choosing struggling projects?

Certainly, it's a combination of factors. I enjoy the challenge of building something from scratch or turning around a struggling venture.

Optimism and hope are ingrained in my personality. Even during tough times, I maintain a positive outlook. If I encounter setbacks, I don't dwell on them; I analyze the situation and start over.

In 1994, I never thought I'd return to Egypt, but I did. I was already

the first Egyptian, and possibly the first Arab, to be the president of an ice hockey club in Switzerland, a sport I'm passionate about. I promised the team a trip to Egypt if we won a tournament. During our visit to Hurghada, we had a terrible experience at a hotel, and that trip was a disaster. It was then that I decided to build my own hotel there. So, in early 1990, I opened my first hotel, Beach Albatros. We faced various challenges, including the impact of an earthquake on tourism. Later, we opened Alf Leila w Leila. Coincidence played a significant role in my journey.

Your hotels have consistently performed well, even during economic crises and the COVID pandemic, where tourists exceeded 12M guests at your resorts. What's your secret to maintaining this success?

Success is not a solo effort. It's about having a strong team. My phone isn't ringing right now because I have a capable team managing things. Effective management is key—what



I call "ABC management." I have a knack for bringing out the best in every team member. Despite having around 13,000 team members, we consider ourselves a small family. Many of them have been with me since the beginning, and they all share the mindset of continuous improvement.

We believe in learning and sharing knowledge throughout the organization, creating a global community of excellence. Our guests, some of whom have been with us for 20 years, appreciate the high-quality service we provide. Even when they travel to our hotels in different countries, they know what to expect in terms of service and hospitality. We've built a reputation for consistency, and our guests appreciate that.

Let's talk about room prices in Egypt in 2023. Are they fair, considering the quality of service and location? Is the industry selling at the right rates?

The pricing in our industry is driven by demand and supply, and it's not always perfectly aligned with

the quality of service and location. The tourism industry is dynamic and subject to various factors. Unfortunately, recent incidents both in Egypt and globally, such as the shark incident and the impact of COVID-19, have greatly affected our industry.

We could benefit from having a crisis management committee in place to better handle such situations. For instance, Dubai's response to the fire incident is often taught in marketing as an excellent example of crisis management. In our case, there is often a lack of coordination, with everyone intervening independently, which can have a significant impact on our business. While crises are inevitable, we need to learn how to handle them more effectively.

What can you tell us about the major projects you're currently working on?

Currently, I'm involved in four significant projects. I often tell myself I should slow down, but every time I achieve success, I find myself investing in something new. I once answered a question about my job by saying that:

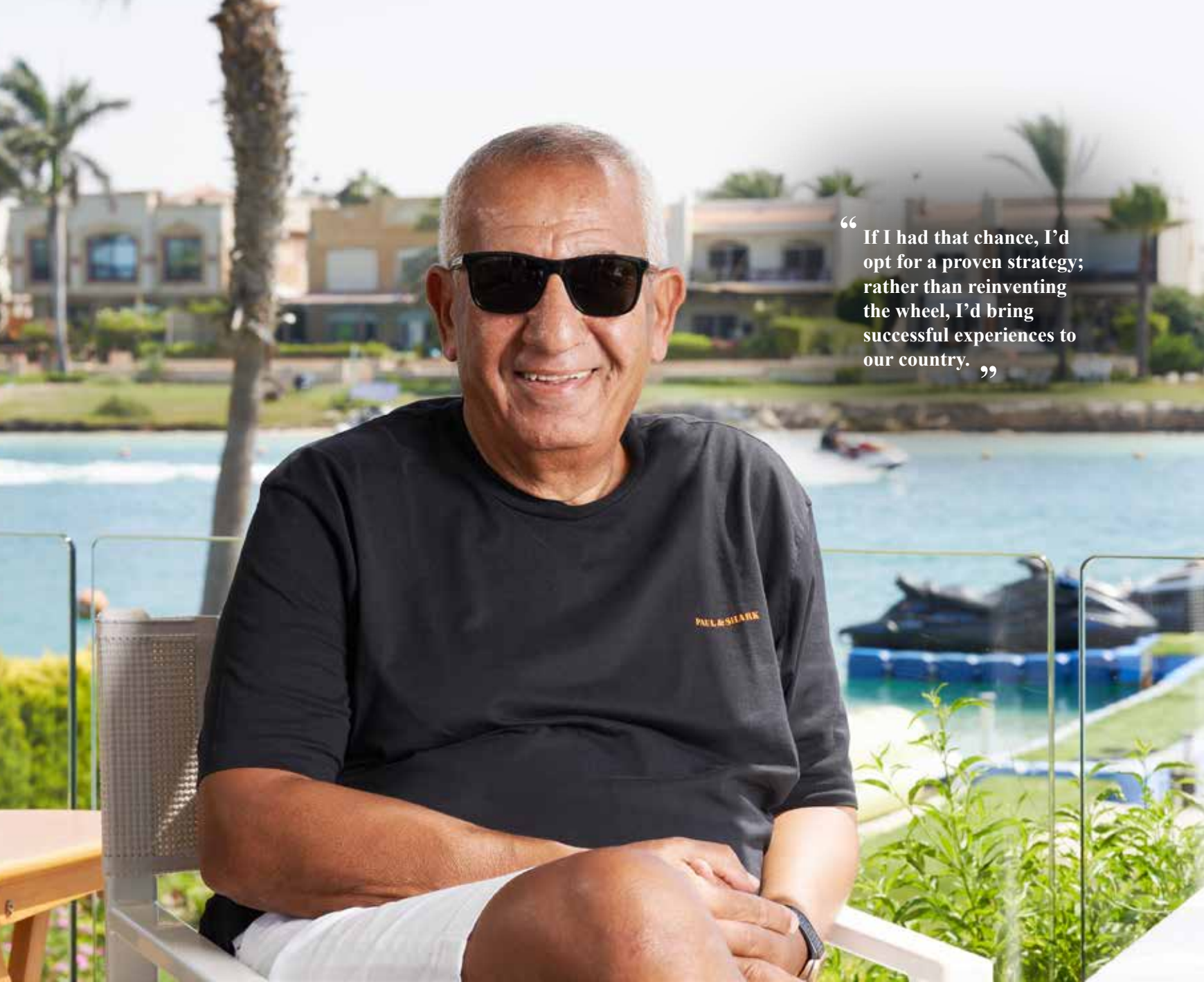
My purpose is to create job opportunities for others. I build and provide opportunities without dwelling on past projects.

One of the main projects is "Neverland" in Hurghada. It's a massive undertaking with 1,500 rooms and boasts the title of having the world's largest aquapark. We measure its scale not only by the number of games but also by the overall space it occupies. In April next year, it's set to open with a fresh concept. We've assembled an entertainment team representing more than 55 nationalities, offering various sports and even a museum. It's destined to become a premier destination in Hurghada, and it primarily caters to families and kids. This year has seen tremendous success for this project, and the momentum is still going strong.

You have substantial investments in Morocco. Could you tell us about your personal and professional connection to Morocco?

My wife is Moroccan, and we've been married for 27 years. We have three children, and we're fortunate





“ If I had that chance, I’d opt for a proven strategy; rather than reinventing the wheel, I’d bring successful experiences to our country. ”

to lead a peaceful and happy life, thanks to God’s blessings. After the Muslim Brotherhood assumed power, and the situation became increasingly unstable, I felt compelled to pursue a long-held ambition to invest in the Maghreb region. I acquired the Royal Mirage in Marrakech, which faced numerous challenges at the time. I not only purchased it but also built a mall. This property boasts 450 rooms and features the largest Buddha Bar, vibrant nightlife, and a magnificent fountain. Since then, it has experienced significant success.

I also ventured into creating the best Aqua Park in Marrakech. Another

project, the White Beach in Agadir, involved obtaining land from the government, and we completed this hotel two years ago. There’s a fourth project on the horizon that we’ll be embarking on soon. Morocco is a country I hold in high regard, and I genuinely love its people and culture. I feel very comfortable there, and I’ve always wished they could be our neighbors.

Could you share some details about the number of operating rooms in both Egypt and Morocco and the diversity of nationalities that visit your hotels?

In Egypt, we have approximately 14,000 rooms. Last year, we welcomed around 1,125,000 tourists, and we anticipate reaching 1,300,000 by the end of this year. The majority of our guests come from Germany. I often say that those who fail to attract Germans aren’t truly tapping into the tourism market. Russians used to constitute a significant portion of our guests, but now, visitors from Eastern European countries like Poland, the Czech Republic, and Romania have become prominent. Ukraine used to send 1,600,000 tourists to Egypt in the past, but the situation has changed after the war.

What does the Albatros trademark signify, and what inspired its creation?

I wanted to establish my own brand to oversee all my projects. I was deeply impressed by Movenpick and their approach. The name “Movenpick” has an interesting story; it originates from a bird in Zurich called “Moven,” which means “bird.” The owner was sitting in Zurich, and a bird picked a piece of bread from his table, inspiring the name. I used to travel to wherever they opened a hotel and learn from their success. I wanted to replicate something similar. Therefore, Albatros, a bird found in South America, became the core of our brand. This bird can spread its wings up to 1.5 meters, is known for its loyalty, and has the unique ability to fly while sleeping. I then added “Pick” to the name, as seen in “Movenpick” before “Albatros,” creating “Pickalbatros.”

Could you give us a glimpse of the awards and recognitions your ventures have received over the years?

We’ve been fortunate to receive more than 100 awards to date, each signifying a specific aspect of our success. These awards cover a wide range of categories, from environmental excellence and

quality to exceptional hospitality and more. Interestingly, these prizes are often better recognized abroad. Every year, we’re proud to secure approximately 4-5 prestigious awards, highlighting our commitment to excellence.

What, in your opinion, is the major touristic project that Egypt should consider undertaking?

I believe Egypt should focus on initiating 5-to 6 key projects. Firstly, Aswan is one of the most beautiful cities to visit during the winter season. We need to revitalize Aswan by planning and restoring it to its former glory.

Secondly, Sharm El Sheikh requires a strategy to attract guests through appealing restaurants and entertainment options that encourage spending.

The North Coast needs to evolve into a genuine year-round destination. This entails constructing proper hotels that can accommodate guests from around the world. We need to expand the number of rooms and enhance services. We must take action before it becomes too concentrated with villas and only attracts visitors for a short period. The government has already invested in essential infrastructure, making it feasible for year-round operations.

Additionally, Marsa Allam should be viewed from a different perspective. To accommodate the growing number of hotels, we need to provide a plethora of services. Currently, there are several gaps that need addressing. With the right investments, Marsa Allam has the potential to attract 15 million tourists annually, particularly during its unparalleled winter season. Similar opportunities exist in Hurghada and Safaga. We’ve already submitted a proposal that involves supplying water to the mountains and creating projects around them. This innovative approach can lead to significant developments in these areas.

If you were the Minister of Tourism for 10 minutes, what approach would you take?

If I had that chance, I’d opt for a proven strategy; rather than reinventing the wheel, I’d bring successful experiences to our country.

Take Bodrum, for instance, it’s surpassed Ibiza, Saint Tropez, and Monaco in importance. I’d thoroughly analyze what makes it successful and replicate those elements. And of course, I’d create original projects and add the elements that would make it different than any other thing.



THE ARTISTIC ASPECT: FILM PRODUCTION

Moving on to the film industry, did your entry into this market also happen by chance?

Yes, it was a pure coincidence. We had the High Institute for Tourism at that time. One day, a friend of mine informed me that there was a movie that needed to be entirely produced in the institute – “Ezai Tekhali El Banat Tehebak.” They were in search of a producer, and after some discussions, I decided to take on the role. This marked the beginning of my journey in film production. I realized that it wasn’t as complex as it may have seemed. It’s a domain filled with creativity, requiring a touch of sentimentality, and it’s genuinely fascinating to

work in. While the movie might not have been a blockbuster success from a business standpoint, it resonated well with the audience. I found myself deeply engaged in this field. Subsequently, I produced “Ayez Ha2i” in collaboration with the Arabian Company, led by Mrs. Esaad Yunis. After that, “Asal Eswed,” “Zaki Shan,” and “Alf Mabrook” followed. I think I’ve produced about 8-9 movies starring Ahmed Helmi. I also ventured into producing TV series, such as “El Gama3a 1,” written by Wahid Hamed, a dear friend whose soul may rest in peace. I consider this a meaningful endeavor, and contributing to it is truly rewarding. After 2011, things slowed down a bit. I produced “El Feel Al Azrak” and “El Gama3a 2” afterward.

These days, your production output isn’t as prolific as before. Is there a specific reason for this?

There are several reasons for the change.

Art is all about feelings, so, it is often influenced by one’s mental and psychological state.

Right now, it’s not conducive for me. Additionally, the overall atmosphere in the industry has evolved. In the past, there were around 20-30 films produced annually, but it’s not the same anymore. There used to be intense competition among production houses, which is different now.

Do you believe that Egypt still leads the film industry in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf region?

The landscape has indeed changed. We no longer hold the same prominent position as before, but the film industry is indeed a vital sector and a source of strength for any country, a great example is the U.S. Therefore, we need to put more emphasis and focus on nurturing this industry here in Egypt. This applies not only to cinema but also to music. In the past, we used to know the singer, composer, and lyricist behind a song. Today, it’s often not the case. I hope we can bring back this level of recognition and appreciation for the artists behind our music and films.

What are the challenges of the film industry nowadays?

The new generation is impatient. Many actors —although talented— after taking a role or two, just get too impatient to take a leading role and star in their next movie.

However, it doesn’t go that way; this thinking creates an unhealthy environment and instability. Unlike the golden era, when there were a lot of talented and successful actors who were very well-known for their secondary roles; like Omar El Hariry and many others.

How do you perceive the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the film industry, given its many potential uses?

No one can precisely predict what the future holds. Currently, technology worldwide is advancing rapidly across all fields, and you can’t stand in its way. I believe that both traditional methods and AI will coexist. It ultimately depends on how you utilize and market them correctly. The key is in your hands to embrace both and make them work harmoniously.

Is there a particular significant project you’d like to produce in the future?

I can’t say that I have a specific project in mind. I’m the type of person who enjoys receiving good ideas and projects and then taking them from there. However, for me to proceed with a project, it must have substantial worth and value. This is a message I’d like to convey through HE Magazine – I am open to receiving offers for projects that carry a meaningful message.

If you could choose any actor or actress to produce a movie for, who would it be?

I’ve always had a desire to produce a movie starring the superstar Adel Emam, but I haven’t had the opportunity yet. Adel Emam is a living legend who has made us proud on a global scale.

If I were to ask you to rank the components that make a project successful, which would come first among the following: The story/script, direction, acting, or production?

All these elements are undeniably important, and they complement each other in creating a successful project. Personally, I look first at the script because it’s the foundation – it’s where the story begins. After that, production takes precedence. If

the producer makes poor decisions, even a great script may not work. The producer works closely with the director to bring the project to life, so direction comes next in line, followed by the actors.



SPORTS INDUSTRY

Moving on to the sports aspect of your career, Kamel Abou-Aly, can you tell us about your beginnings in this field?

I was born in Port Said in a generation that celebrated football champions. We were passionate supporters and ardent fans, always following and cheering for our favorite teams. However, my professional involvement in sports began when I was in Switzerland, where I became the president of a football club in 1984. In the 1990 World Cup match between Holland and Egypt, our club's president expressed interest in acquiring Hani Ramzi. Consequently, I contacted

the president of Al Ahli Club to negotiate for Hani Ramzi's transfer. They demanded a substantial sum, and we successfully brought him to Switzerland. The following year, we also brought Ibrahim and Hossam Hasan, marking the beginning of Egyptian players' transition to European clubs.

I later assumed the role of president of El Masry Club. Subsequently, I took a ten-year hiatus and returned. During this period, my primary focus was on the stadium project rather than holding the presidency. Now, with the stadium built and promising developments underway, we aim to further enhance our sports infrastructure.

You are renowned for your ability to attract international celebrities to Egypt. Could you share some names of international players you've invited to Egypt? How do you leverage your sports connections to promote tourism?

I maintain a strong connection with Real Madrid. I have a personal rapport with Cristiano Ronaldo, and they visited us in Marrakesh. Our friendship began there, and we continue to visit each other from time to time. Through Cristiano Ronaldo, I got to know Karim Benzema, who



“Football is part of the country's security. We all need to work so that the organization as a whole comes back to its original state like before.”

stayed in our Hurghada hotel. We also welcomed Vinícius, the Real Madrid goalkeeper. Sergio Ramos visited Hurghada three years ago. Courtois was scheduled to come last year but couldn't make it. These international players visited, enjoyed their experiences, and shared their stories about Egypt with millions of their followers on social media. This positive exposure significantly benefits Egyptian tourism.

What are the challenges the Football industry is currently facing in Egypt?

Football is part of the country's security. We all need to work so that the organization as a whole comes back to its original state like before.

What is the point that today the tournament involves 12 teams of companies and 6 local popular teams

including Al Ahly, Al Zamalek, Al Ismaeily, Madinat Al Mahala, and Al Masry. We could never create a tournament with only the mentioned 6 clubs. By the end, when we started mentioning sponsorships, the issue of equality arose; I object to that because as a club, I cannot afford the budgets of sponsorships like the other teams of companies; I can never compete with those; companies can afford that, clubs cannot.

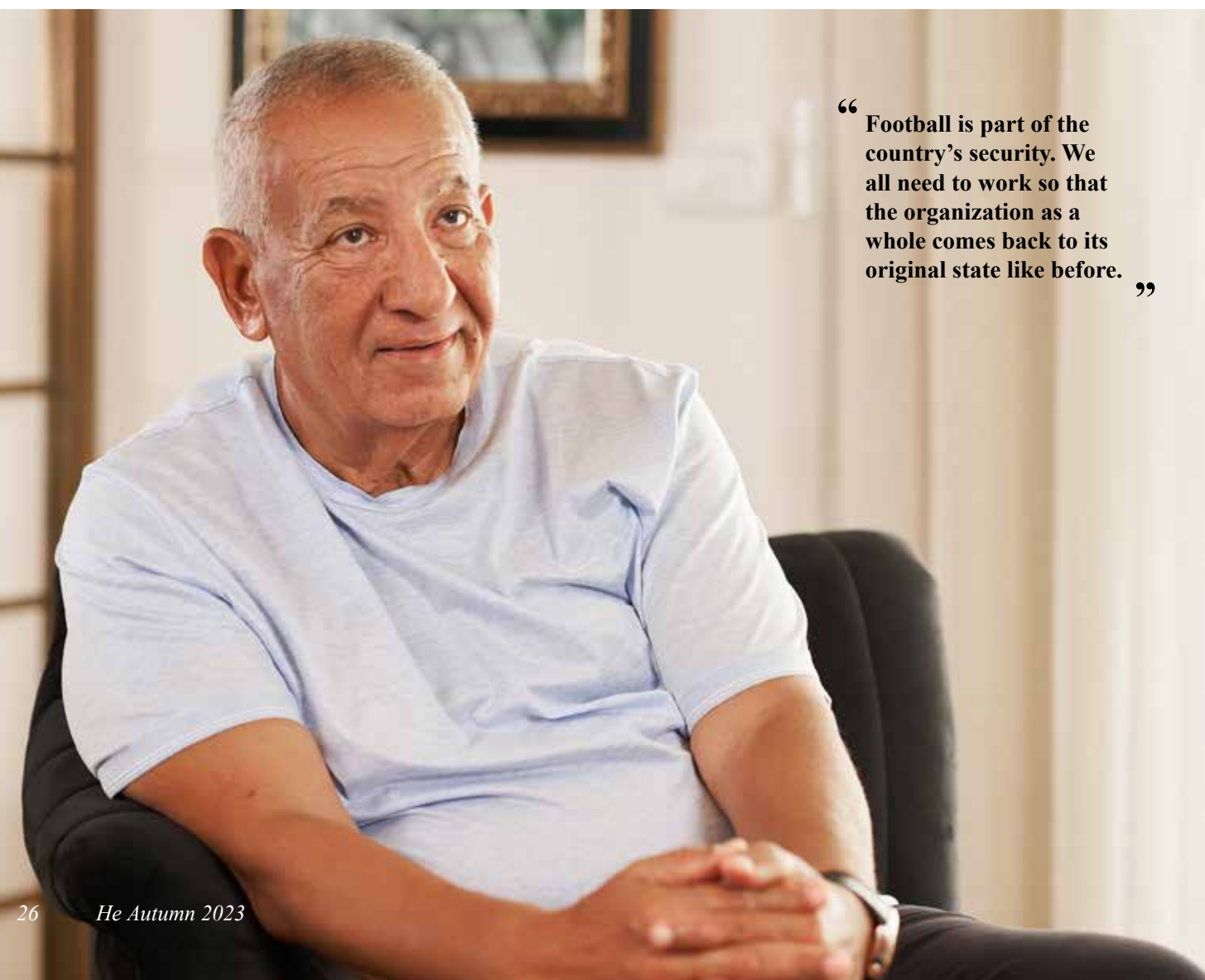
Is Egypt gradually losing its leading position in the football scene in the Arab world?

Football, like any other sport, has its ups and downs. I believe that the upcoming generations will impress us in the next three to four years and contribute to the national team's success. However, we need to look

at the bigger picture and focus on strengthening the organization itself. Building a team capable of performing under pressure, whether in front of a crowd or in an empty stadium, is vital.

How do you view the developments in Saudi Arabia's football scene?

I'd say it's a brilliant strategy! Now, the entire world is talking about Saudi Arabia. Their approach is a genius marketing move. While they are making substantial investments, it's undoubtedly paying off in terms of marketing. Their global image is undergoing a transformation, which will benefit them in various aspects, including investment opportunities. This underscores the significance of football and the need for us to pay more attention to it.



THE FAMILY MAN

Behind every successful man, there's often a great woman. Today, we have the pleasure of speaking with Mrs. Fayza, the wife of Kamel Abou-Aly.

Is Kamel Abou-Aly the same person at home as he is in his business life?

At home, Kamel is a very simple, genuine, and calm individual. He is optimistic, just like he is in his professional life. Kamel makes a conscious effort to leave all his business problems at the door and not bring them home. He always tries to highlight the positive and ambitious aspects of his work. Of course, there are times when we discuss challenges at home, but he usually endeavors to keep them separate from our family life.

With his busy schedule, does he manage to spend enough time at home?

Yes, he does his best to be present as much as possible. For instance, we make it a point to have breakfast and dinner together regularly. Even during the two summer months, he prioritized spending time with the family, even if the kids wanted to have other plans; they learned that it is a ritual to spend it together.

Did you expect to marry an Egyptian man, or was it purely a coincidence?

It was purely a coincidence. We met by chance. However, in Morocco, we always had an affinity for Egyptian culture, language, and people. The Egyptian language was particularly attractive to us, which made things easier in our encounter. I consider myself fortunate to have met Kamel.

Regarding your fluency in the Egyptian dialect, how long did it take you to reach such proficiency?

It did take some time because I wasn't initially in contact with many Egyptians. However, after our kids started attending schools, I gradually built a community here, and my language skills began to improve. While I still retain elements of the Moroccan dialect, there are times when I forget about it, and I feel more like an Egyptian. This transformation bothers some of my Moroccan friends and family, but it's the reality of my life now.

Have there been any conflicts at home due to the differences in Egyptian and Moroccan thoughts, traditions, or other aspects?

Well, as I mentioned earlier, because of the distance and my life here in Egypt, I find myself embracing more

of the Egyptian way of life. My mindset, interests, and preferences have become more Egyptian over time. Any conflicts that do arise are mostly related to football games; I still cheer for Morocco during those matches. I try not to show bias, but some things are hard to change.

What, in your view, is the most important trait that the wife of a successful businessman should possess?

The most vital quality is not to be selfish and not to demand too much of his presence. We all desire a happy life filled with luxury and prestige, but each of these things comes at a price. He bears the responsibility for all the work and challenges. My role is to work on other aspects to complement the life we desire. This includes ensuring our home is a place of calm and is well-equipped, with no additional internal stress to compound the external pressures he faces.



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I-CONTRACTING MEP SMART SOLUTIONS



Transforming Egypt's Construction Horizon with MEP Expertise

WRITTEN BY: MAHMOUD DEMERDASH

In the ever-evolving landscape of Egypt, a nation on the path of rapid development and growth, construction projects are shaping the horizon. This growth symbolizes our collective vision as a society, driven by the ambition to ascend to the ranks of leading nations across all fronts. Those responsible for transforming this vision into reality include numerous individuals and enterprises working tirelessly to construct the buildings that will define our future.

However, these modern-day builders are more than paying homage to our architectural past. They are infusing innovation and contemporary sensibilities into their projects, aiming to showcase both ingenuity and sophistication as we march forward into the future. Standing at the forefront of this transformative journey, I-Con Solutions contributes its expertise in MEP, which stands for Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing services, to various firms established within the Middle East region. Headed by Managing Director Ahmed Shawky, a dynamic leader with a decade of experience, the firm has been gaining notoriety in the industry since its inception in 2012.



AHMED SHAWKY
ICON CEO

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Emerging from modest origins, the company initially focused on serving offices and residential villas by designing comprehensive structural MEP designs. Based in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and The United Arab Emirates, I-Con Solutions takes pride in its unique installations tailored to complement each project's interior design and practicality.

The firm offers a comprehensive suite of services for construction projects. They actively engage in the design phase, collaborating closely with design consultants to create efficient and code-compliant plans for MEP systems. By doing so, they simplify project management as their coordination services eliminate the need for clients to manage multiple third-party contractors. This coordination not only saves time but can also lead to cost efficiencies. In addition to their design expertise, they take charge of material procurement, sourcing everything needed for the systems they develop, including electrical components, plumbing fixtures, and

HVAC equipment. After designing and acquiring the suitable material, the team of engineers excels in the installation process, ensuring precision and safety. Prior to project completion, rigorous testing is conducted across MEP systems to verify their functionality to ensure client satisfaction by fine-tuning and calibrating to optimize performance for operational readiness.

I-Con Solutions' priorities are achieving the most significant possible impact on energy savings while delivering top-notch mechanical and electrical services in adherence to safety regulations. This priority is in reflection of the ever-growing global demand for sustainability and ensuring projects are efficient and environmentally responsible. One of the cornerstones of the firm's success is its expertise in incorporating ecologically friendly systems integrating renewable energy solutions, such as solar panels and wind turbines, into construction projects, promoting sustainability and utilizing the right

amount of energy. Examples include projects like the Sahara International School in the New Administrative Capital, the defining Capfloors that outline the new city of New El-Alamein, and the Sax Restaurant situated at Cairo Gate. These projects were impeccably powered and designed by I-Con Solutions in critical areas of development within Egypt, as both the New Administrative Capital and New El-Alamein are locations with a significant amount of priority within construction. It further reflects the company's collaborative efforts, as the Sax Restaurant project was in cooperation with and executed by the architect Hussam Aboufotouh.

I-Con values its numerous partnerships with various big corporations through a commitment to collaboration, mutual respect, and shared success. The company recognizes the significance of partnerships in achieving its goals and delivering top-quality services. I-Con maintains open lines of communication with its partners,



**FULL SYSTEMS
COORDINATION**

fostering transparency and the free exchange of ideas. This practice ensures that both parties are on the same page and can effectively address any issues or opportunities. The company further values its partners' expertise, contributions, and unique perspectives. Respect for each partner's knowledge and capabilities is fundamental to productive collaboration. The company aligns its goals with its partners, creating a common purpose and vision. By



doing so, the firm ensures that the cooperation works towards a shared objective, whether delivering a successful project or achieving a specific outcome; this leads to long-term partnerships as I-Con aims to nurture these relationships as they create a foundation of sustained success. As mentioned, the firm is committed to quality in all aspects of its work, including upholding high standards in its partnerships. They enhance their partners' reputations and trust by delivering quality services and products. Through their practices, the company adheres to fair and ethical business practices; this includes transparent contracts, fair compensation, and ethical behavior throughout the partnership.

I-Con Solutions distinguishes itself as an essential company within the growing landscape of the Middle East. Its expertise in MEP designs enables the firm to set itself apart with its consideration of renewable energy systems. The company's exceptional project management capabilities allow it to handle multiple projects efficiently, meeting deadlines while upholding a dedication to using high-quality materials for seamless execution, essential to erect megaprojects around the



MENA region. Moreover, the firm's collaborative spirit is imperative for its success and exemplified through its support for partners, providing technical expertise, and fostering problem-solving efforts. Committed to continuous improvement, the company actively seeks partner feedback and adapts strategies to enhance the partnership experience. These facets collectively position I-Con Solutions as a dynamic and forward-thinking player in the industry, ready to meet the evolving needs of the Egyptian people. ●



VILLEROY & BOCH TAKES OVER IDEAL STANDARD

and joins the ranks of Europe's
biggest manufacturers of
bathroom products



Villeroy & Boch AG has today signed binding agreements to acquire operating companies in the Ideal Standard Group. The two companies are a strong strategic fit given their regional presence, sales strategies and product and brand portfolios, laying the foundations for a stronger market position and additional growth. In an industry with global growth potential, the integrated company will, after completion of the transaction, join the ranks of Europe's biggest manufacturers of bathroom products. The Ideal Standard shares are being sold by corporations under the management of Anchorage Capital Group and CVC Credit.

The revenue of the Villeroy & Boch Bathroom & Wellness Division will double as a result of the merger including the Dining & Lifestyle business. "This merger means that we will now catch up with the largest players on the European market in the bathroom sector in terms of turnover," explains Frank Göring, CEO of Villeroy & Boch. Our complementary strengths also make us more competitive and significantly improve our starting position for achieving additional growth."

Regional strengths, sales channels and product ranges interweave

The merger will create a powerful combination of complementary established brand and sales strategies. Villeroy & Boch has a strong geographical basis in Central and Northern Europe as well as Asia, while Ideal Standard enjoys an excellent reputation with its brand portfolio in the UK, Italy and the Middle East / North Africa region in particular. While Villeroy & Boch's sales strategy focuses primarily on a high-end private customer base, Ideal Standard possesses particular expertise in the project business, including for the public sector, the healthcare sector and for developers of large residential, hotel and commercial properties. In addition, alongside a broad range of ceramic bathroom ware and other products, Ideal Standard comes with an established fittings business, which generated more than a third of its revenue last financial year.

Jan Peter Tewes, Ideal Standard CEO, says "Villeroy & Boch and Ideal Standard complement each other, in terms of products but also in terms of brands, and will gain mutual benefit from their different sales channels. Both companies will play a key role in charting the future course of the industry. We look forward to this development!"

In addition to the strategic fit, Frank Göring points to the cultural similarities between Villeroy & Boch and Ideal Standard: "We are characterised by strong brands steeped in tradition and share similar values. These include a pronounced service orientation, a flair for good design and a constant striving for innovation. We are delighted that the employees of Ideal Standard will become part of our global organisation after the closing of the transaction. Our clients will benefit from this combined expertise and an expanded offering."

New expertise opens up prospects for growth

With this merger, Villeroy & Boch is not only elevating its bathrooms business to a new level in terms of volume, but is also gaining access to significant additional growth potential. Ideal Standard's manufacturing base in the fittings business, expertise in the project business and strong market positions in the UK, MENA and Italy will grant Villeroy & Boch improved market penetration and coverage of specific regions and product segments. These long-standing brands are now combining their strengths.

"The bathrooms sector remains a fast-moving global growth market, but it is a market in which scale effects will be increasingly important to remaining competitive and attracting future investment. For this reason alone, the acquisition represents the right strategic step for Villeroy & Boch. In addition, Ideal Standard is an excellent extension to our own business model. This heralds a new era for the Bathroom & Wellness Division and for Villeroy & Boch as a whole," states Andreas Schmid, Chairman of the Supervisory Board at Villeroy & Boch. ●

A Glimpse into the Electric Excellence:

THE MERCEDES-BENZ EQS 450+

TEST DRIVE BY: AMR SELIM
ART DIRECTOR: NOURELDIN SELIM
DIRECTOR/PHOTOGRAPHY: ABDELRAHMAN EL DASH
VIDEOGRAPHY: FADY SAMIR
VIDEO EDITOR: AHMED HOSSAM
LOCATION: DISTRICT 5 BY MARAKEZ



“The EQS 450+ is more than a car; it’s a guardian that dances gracefully in response to its surroundings. It anticipates other cars and obstacles, maintaining a serene cocoon of safety and peace, ensuring you’re always at ease on the road.”



Explore the future with the excellence of the EQS 450+ – it’s luxury, electrified, and reimagined like never before. The EQS 450+ is a true icon that redefines luxury, performance, and sustainability, representing a bold leap forward in EV technology and luxury automotive design. This stunning masterpiece from Mercedes-Benz boasts a sleek design, unique interior exterior, and cutting-edge features meticulously crafted for the discerning driver. He Magazine had the honor of experiencing this automotive marvel for several days, rigorously testing its features. Our very own Amr Selim, publisher and owner of He Magazine, was so impressed that he put the EQS 450+ to the test and shared his exhilarating experience in a captivating video on our social media channels.

The EQS 450+ redefines luxury, performance, and sustainability, representing a bold leap forward in electric vehicle technology and luxury automotive design. A visionary masterpiece of luxury electric vehicles, the Mercedes-Benz is characterized by its sleek ‘one-bow’ design, a revolutionary MBUX Hyperscreen that seamlessly blends three displays, including a massive 17.7-inch central screen, an advanced digital light headlamp system, a potent electric engine delivering 330 horsepower and rapid acceleration, and a high-capacity 107.8 kWh battery providing an astonishing 770-kilometer estimated range. Its superlative fast-charging capability, up to 200 kW at DC stations, ensures convenience on long journeys, while rear-wheel steering enhances maneuverability.

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GLAMOUR AND PRESTIGE UNVEILED

He Magazine's Spectacular 25th Anniversary Soirée

WRITTEN BY: MAHMOUD DEMERDASH

On Tuesday, the 13th of June, a remarkable evening at Le Lac Du Caire was illuminated as He Magazine, a hallmark in the world of English publications in MENA, marked its 25th anniversary with a red-carpet soiree to match the elegance and sophistication of the venue chosen. A glorious sea of black and red tuxedos, complemented by an array of regal dresses, transformed the scene into a symphony of colors harmoniously melded with the occasion's atmosphere. A star-studded gathering of luminaries from the realms of film, art, and business graced the occasion. Guests were ushered into the evening, and as they disembarked, a sprawling red carpet spread out, serving as a pathway for the attendees as they headed to the seating area. Dozens of cameras, top social media influencers, and TV representatives flanked them, setting the red carpet ablaze, evoking the essence of cinema's most iconic moments.

The seating arrangement was a study in finesse, with the main seating area exuding an aura of matte black elegance, where film stars and many famous figures took their seats. Flanked on either side were high-top pavilions designated as VIP zones for He Magazine and its partners of success. The ambiance was electric, as rays of light perfectly illuminated the digital poster displays commemorating the magazine's previous editions and cherished friends, both past and present. At the back of the venue was a large wall showing each edition of He Magazine in chronological order, and at the front was a massive stage where the main event would take place.

The menu was an ode to gourmet craftsmanship, an orchestra of flavors and textures in bite-sized seafood creations that delighted the senses. Amidst the jubilant mingling and laughter, a cart offering treats by Dolato Gelateria emerged as a sweet interlude that added a touch of whimsy to the night's abundant affairs.

Once everyone had reached their seats, the dimming of lights signaled the start of the main event. On-screen, a countdown began to showcase a welcome message featuring founder Amr Selim alongside brand ambassador and celebrated actor Amr Youssef in dedication to the event. Following the video, Mr. Amr Selim, the founder and publisher of He magazine, presented the event with the support of experienced TV hostess Dima Allam and a professional interviewer in the architectural world, Hazem Rasmy. An illustrious group of attendees received well-deserved recognition for their invaluable contributions. Among them was Amr Youssef, the face of He Magazine's new branding and magazine cover, who brought a magnetic charm to the publication. Mohamed El Samman, the accomplished Managing Director of LongeBlack, a prominent branding agency known for its innovative strategies and the brains behind He Magazine's new logo. Eng. Mohamed Talaat, MTA's visionary founder and CEO, graced the cover of the freshly branded He Home issue. Omar El Husseiny, the Head of Treasury at CIB, stood as the event's main sponsor, showcasing the institution's dedication to fostering creative endeavors. Amr Osman, the Marketing Director of EgyptAir, played a pivotal role as an event sponsor, aligning the airline's image with He Magazine's milestone. Mohamed Amin El Hout, the Executive Director of GLC Paints and CEO of Dolato Gelateria, lent his support as a sponsor, reflecting the companies' innovation. Saad Safwat, the founder and CEO of Financak, who offers brilliant solutions for financing, also extended sponsorship. Mohamed Mostafa Adel Rassoul, Managing Director of Orient Takaful Insurance, contributed as a sponsor, reflecting the company's commitment to safeguarding dreams. Mohamed Shaheen, the enterprising CEO of Logistics and Mobility Business Units at EgExpress, FedEx, and Enterprise, upheld the event as a sponsor. Fakhry Gamal, the discerning Marketing Director of Hub Furniture, the proudly Egyptian manufactured brand harmonized style and comfort. Mousa Abou Taleb, founder, and CEO of Event House, orchestrated the entire affair with finesse, crafting an unforgettable night for all attendees. Dina Dash, the founder of Dash Management, directed event





PR and media coverage, infusing every moment with captivating storytelling. Ahmed Hegy, founder and CEO of ESCA Hospitality, curated a delectable feast as the event's catering partner. Editors-in-chief Salah Attia and Mohamed Salah Attia steered the magazine with their continuous support. Mohamed Helal, the Managing Director of International Printing House (IPH), played an integral role at the helm of the operation, manifesting our thoughts into the physical realm throughout the magazine's 25 years. Each honoree and contributor brought their unique identity to He Magazine's 25th-anniversary celebration, culminating in a remarkable milestone.

An array of distinguished celebrities who have been either on the magazine's main cover or featured in past issues received accolades for their strong friendship and partnership with He Magazine. Renowned names like Hussein Fahmy, an icon in the world of Egyptian cinema, and Mohamed Sobhy, a versatile actor with a rich portfolio, were some of the first to step onto the stage. As mentioned previously, the captivating Amr Youssef is known for his performances, capturing the essence of He Magazine's celebration. Among the attendees was Eng. Ahmed Sabbour, a prominent architect whose innovative designs have garnered acclaim. The charming Ahmed El Fishawy, known for his exceptional acting prowess, Dr. Ashraf Reda, a respected figure in the media and fine arts field, graced the event with his presence. The celebrated Sherif Mounir, whose performances have left an indelible mark on Egyptian cinema, joined the festivities, as did the talented actor Ahmed Shaker, known for his dynamic roles. Abbas Abul Hassan, a respected name in the entertainment industry, added his unique charm to the celebration. Mohamed El Shakankeiry, an actor with a captivating on-screen presence, Abbas Abo El-Hassan, a talented writer, podcaster, and actor, and Ahmed El Tohamy, known for his versatility, were also present. Nour Khattab, a personal trainer to many actors, alongside Karim Sobhy, also received recognition during the event. The event witnessed the attendance of other superstars, such as the beautiful actress Nermin El-Fekki, the talented actress and singer Maiss Hemdan, and plenty of young rising stars. With their diverse talents and remarkable achievements, these esteemed celebrities brought an extra layer of excitement and elegance, marking an unforgettable celebration of creativity, entertainment, and culture.

Although unable to physically attend the festivities due to their travel commitments, their presence was felt as they thoughtfully sent heartwarming videos presented during the main event. Amr El Ganainy of CIB, the esteemed actress Youssra, and talented actors Mostafa Shabban and Hany Ramzy shared warm wishes and congratulatory messages. Additionally, the event was honored with a video contribution from jazz legend Yehia Khalil.

A heartfelt special thanks extended to Ahmed Fouad of Mr. Tuxedos, who attended in a magnificent purple tuxedo and played a significant role in ensuring that the He Magazine staff and numerous guests were impeccably dressed for the occasion.

As the clock neared midnight, the main event drew to a close, filling the venue with anticipation and excitement. Amr Selim, the founder and publisher, graced the stage one final time to offer a visionary glimpse into He Magazine's future. With a dynamic flourish, he revealed exciting expansions: He Properties, venturing into real estate and architecture; He Business, exploring commerce and entrepreneurship; and He Health, dedicated to wellness. In a historic move, Amr Selim introduced a fully digital edition of He Magazine, set for release by late September, embracing the digital era. Alongside the classic He Magazine and He Home editions, these additions showcased Amr Selim's commitment to innovation. The audience left inspired, ready to join He Magazine on this journey, redefining creativity and media. Mr. Selim expressed gratitude to the HE magazine staff, with a special mention for his wife and business partner, Engineer Mona Ismail, the interior designer behind He Home.

The evening reached its crescendo as Amro & The Big Bang Boogie band took the stage, their rhythmic melodies captivating the crowd. Amidst the music and merriment, attendees exchanged heartfelt congratulations, reflecting on their journey. Conversations flowed freely, touching on a myriad of topics, profound and lighthearted. This gathering celebrated 25 remarkable years and set the stage for a bright and promising future for He Magazine, guided by a visionary team, esteemed partners, and passionate attendees. As the night concluded, it was evident that this event not only marked a 25-year journey but also ushered in a captivating and inspiring path ahead. ●









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An Interview with Mr. Tuxedos

AHMED FOUAD

Tuxedos & Suits

Wear Them Anywhere

WRITTEN BY: MAHMOUD DEMERDASH

Trends continuously reemerge and transform over time in the world of fashion as the cycle is perpetually in motion. In the present, there has been an emphasis on comfort, space, and uniqueness in clothing. This preference has seen various garments undergo shifts in usage and styles, including tuxedos and suits, with these timeless garments constantly carving a place for themselves, no matter the time period. He Magazine was able to delve deeper into the surge of formal clothing for more everyday wear by conducting an interview with one of Egypt's leading fashion designers, Ahmed Fouad.



The mastermind behind the brand, Mr. Tuxedos, Ahmed Fouad, is the designer of countless iterations of suits and tuxedos, with his designs gaining international acclaim. With a career spanning over a decade, Mr. Fouad's journey in the industry began in 2011 when he joined the multinational clothing company H&M, seeking to deepen his understanding of the industry's nuances. Reminiscing, he remembers, "During that period, opportunities for learning about fashion design in Egypt were rather limited. Thus, I pursued work in the field to acquire valuable experience." This early exposure to fashion laid the foundation for his future endeavors. Mr. Fouad reminisced on his early experience. "It was an excellent start, honestly, and it gave me a good insight into colors and how to match items, what worked with what," he further explained the reasoning behind starting this journey, "From an early age, I sought to gain experience and develop my passion for creating unique items. My love for crafting and designing extended to my friends, where I would help them by meticulously choosing colors and fabrics. Although my work was quite amateur, it became a cherished hobby, allowing me to utilize my imagination." This love for fashion led to the eventual creation of his trademark, Mr. Tuxedos. A luxury menswear brand established in 2017, it quickly rose to prominence. The brand successfully carved a niche in the Egyptian and international fashion scene by offering its unique style along with a blend of classic elegance and sophistication, ensuring that each piece exudes refinement and a measure of prominence.

Suits and tuxedos have adapted and transformed with each turn of the fashion cycle to align with prevailing styles. Notably, there has been a noticeable surge in demand for these elegant attire options, a testament to their enduring appeal and versatility in today's fashion landscape. The prevalence of formal wear in contemporary fashion isn't bound by a specific start or end date. Instead, it's part of an ongoing cycle where trends continually evolve. In Mr. Fouad's perspective, men's fashion choices historically appeared limited. He believes, "The standard male wardrobe often consisted of shirts, pants, or shorts," offering little room for self-expression or

variation. However, the evolution of suits has disrupted this narrative. According to Mr. Fouad, "Suits and tuxedos have undergone a significant transformation, becoming highly customizable in terms of fabric, fit, and design." This adaptability has empowered individuals to make a statement with their attire. Notably, contemporary suits prioritize comfort in ways that previous generations may not have, thus increasing their flexibility. According to Mr. Fouad, this added ease has enabled suits to be used as an item for people's fit. "Nowadays, you have the freedom to mix and match various elements, such as different shirts, sneakers like Nikes,

and different pants, creating a lot of good-looking fits." He further mentions, "The level of comfort is so exceptional that it almost feels like you're not wearing one at all."

This rise in demand and a world dominated by fast fashion has increased the popularity of tuxedos and suits in everyday attire. "Fast fashion" refers to a business model and approach to clothing retail that prioritizes quickly producing and delivering affordable, trendy clothing to consumers. In this model, clothing brands and retailers rapidly create new designs and collections, often taking inspiration from the latest runway trends or celebrity styles. As a result, this phenomenon has accelerated the cycle, leading to more frequent innovations. Mr. Fouad recognizes the current climate and points out, "In today's world, fast fashion has reshaped our preferences. People are no longer inclined toward tight-fitting clothes. Instead, fast fashion has redefined the traditional landscape, allowing for a shift in the way we perceive and wear suits." This shift in fabric has expanded the occasions for which men can comfortably don suits, making them suitable for less conventional events. Mr. Fouad points out, "You can confidently sport it practically anywhere, whether it's an elegant fine-dining affair or any other setting, without the need for a strictly formal occasion." As we step into a new era, formality gracefully yields to versatility.

The origins of this change exhibit the evolution of men's fashion influenced by the elements of culture, society, and various dynamics. When asked about this trend's spread, Mr. Fouad said, "Every designer is actively promoting this trend internationally, so am I within Egypt along with

other Egyptian designers embracing the "comfy" trend." Each designer's unique additions spark curiosity about the dynamic between the artist and their art. Mr. Fouad provided insight by stating, "We aim to enhance people's comfort and relaxation while keeping them fashion-forward in Mr. Tuxedos. To achieve this, we carefully select fabrics that allow individuals to move effortlessly while taking a walk, driving their car, going out with their friends, etc., without compromising their sense of style. We draw inspiration from the ever-changing trends but selectively incorporate elements harmonizing with Mr. Tuxedos' distinctness. Trends may ebb and flow, but we blend them into our brand's identity, ensuring our designs remain true to their core, creating a timeless yet trendy fusion." This was evident in the brand's collections such as "The Pharaoh's Oracle," which ingeniously fused elements of pharaonic heritage with the latest fashion trends, and "Euphoric," which showcased the vivid and vibrant colors in a statement summer collection.

Eras often occur without clear demarcation, leaving us ambiguous about when one era concludes and the next one begins. Fashion preferences among men in the region are rising, marked by a growing appreciation for designs that balance gravitas and wearability. Egyptians and Arabs are placing increased importance on the layers and details within their ensembles. This emerging trend aligns seamlessly with these evolving sensibilities, offering new horizons for fashion in the Middle East. Amidst this dynamic shift, we anticipate the continued presence of Mr. Tuxedos, serving as a steadfast pillar within this exciting era of fashion growth within the region. ●



The Journey from

SKINNY JEANS TO BAGGY STYLES

WRITTEN BY: MAHMOUD DEMERDASH

Fashion operates in a perpetual cycle, a mesmerizing reel of trends that resurface with each passing decade, echoing our ever-evolving preferences. Amid this rhythmic dance, the ongoing rivalry between skinny and baggy pants has emerged as a focal point, captivating fashion aficionados around the globe. As the sun sets on the era of skinny jeans and the dawn of baggy pants rises, it's a moment ripe for delving into the profound significance of this transition.

The height of skinny jeans' reign arrived in the mid-2000s, characterized by denim that embraced the contours of the body, hugging snugly from waist to ankle. This tailored, sleek aesthetic stood in stark contrast to the tradition of excess fabric. This shift in preference was orchestrated by the harmonious melodies of indie and rock music, the irresistible allure of celebrity fashion, and an audacious



desire for modernity that veered sharply from the norms of the past. The era of skinny jeans remains a memorable chapter in the annals of fashion, characterized by the sweeping popularity of slender-fitting clothes. This trend profoundly influenced how people adorned themselves and provided a canvas for communicating their identities during a time looking to define the “2000s” properly. This fusion was propelled by the resonance of indie rock, emo, and punk music scenes, with musicians and bands donning close-fitting attire that harmonized seamlessly with the essence of their subcultures.

Within media, music videos emerged as potent conduits for propagating fashion's influence. Artists wove a kaleidoscope of styles, with skinny jeans finding synergy alongside graphic tees, band paraphernalia, and studded belts—a visual language that spoke volumes of unique self-expression. The likes of Pete Wentz, frontman of Fall Out Boy, and the enigmatic personas behind bands like My Chemical Romance and Panic! at the Disco metamorphosed into fashion beacons. This coincided with the Disney era of the time, where Disney sitcoms reigned supreme, giving young stars their debut as actors and musicians, all of them donning skinny jeans as part of their daily ensemble. Their influence extended beyond entertainment, weaving into the fabric of contemporary style. This audacious departure from convention resonated deeply with the youth eager to unfurl a banner of defiance against tradition. Capitalizing on the hype surrounding skinny jeans, brands swiftly translated this trend into mass production, making these stylish garments readily accessible

to a global audience. Before the era of online shopping, brands like American Eagle, H&M, and Forever 21 boasted attractive in-store experiences that attracted shoppers. They extensively promoted the trend of slim-fitting pants and were at the forefront of this movement. In skinny jeans, individuals found an aesthetic outlet to showcase their form in contrast to earlier generations. The allure of the style truly lies in its audacious uniqueness, a stark contrast to prevailing sartorial norms, thus demanding attention and providing an early identity to the new era.

Yet, as the grip of form-fitting skinny jeans loosened on the throne, a relentless revival of baggy pants took center stage in the aftermath of the pandemic. This transformation, akin to a sartorial renaissance, ushered in an era where comfort, nostalgia, and individual expression intermingled to reignite the very essence of fashion. The transition from skinny to baggy pants is more than just a shift in fit; it reflects evolving values and the dynamic nature of fashion. Baggier pants have risen in response to the extended dominance of skinny jeans, which simply become tedious with anything that lasts long enough in the cycle. It's easy to determine that baggier pants offer a counterpoint that emphasizes ease and movement without compromising style. In an increasingly multifaceted world, where lives encompass diverse activities and settings, the desire for garments that gracefully adapt has fueled the longing for relaxed fits that harmonize with modern life. With retailers experimenting with different fabrics in the market prior to the pandemic and our desire for individuality increasing further, it set the stage for this change.



It would be a disservice not to note the nostalgia revival baggy pants evoke. The echoes of the 1990s resound loudly, a decade fondly remembered for the embrace of loose-fitting jeans and shirts. As baggy jeans resurface, they evoke cherished memories among older generations and cast a spell on newer ones, breathing new life into an aesthetic that spans time while bridging the generational gap as fashion trends continue to transcend age barriers. Embracing baggier pants is akin to wielding a blank canvas for personal style and creative expression. They offer a realm of possibilities, allowing individuals attempting to stand out amidst the crowd and match newer shirt trends that skinnier jeans just wouldn't mesh with. The evolving silhouette of baggy pants, noted by James Curleigh, the CEO of Levi's,

as potentially heralding a new denim cycle, holds promise for the fashion industry's revitalization after a period of turmoil. Another factor in the rise of baggy pants is the lull in the clothing industry during the pandemic. Many outlets that saw their rise during the skinny jeans era saw a diminishment in their sales as stores were closed. People weren't spending as much on clothing as they used to; thus, when everything opened up once more, a change was required to entice the market again. The pandemic also saw more people turn to online shopping for their cravings, and with it, increased the sales of many small, unique brands. This has enabled people to buy less standardized clothing from one another as these brands look to create different aesthetics for their merchandise in comparison to larger chains.

In a world of shifting trends, the interplay between skinny and baggy pants speaks volumes about the dynamic spirit of fashion. It captures the perpetual quest for fresh aesthetics, constantly molding itself to resonate with the ever-evolving zeitgeist while reflecting the collective yearnings of humans and their interests. The change between these styles mirrors society's evolving values, cultural dynamics, and the changing ways in which we express ourselves through clothing. As we witness the ebb and flow of trends, from the slim contours of skinny jeans to the liberating expansiveness of baggy styles, we glimpse a reflection of ourselves in the ever-transforming tapestry of fashion. ●

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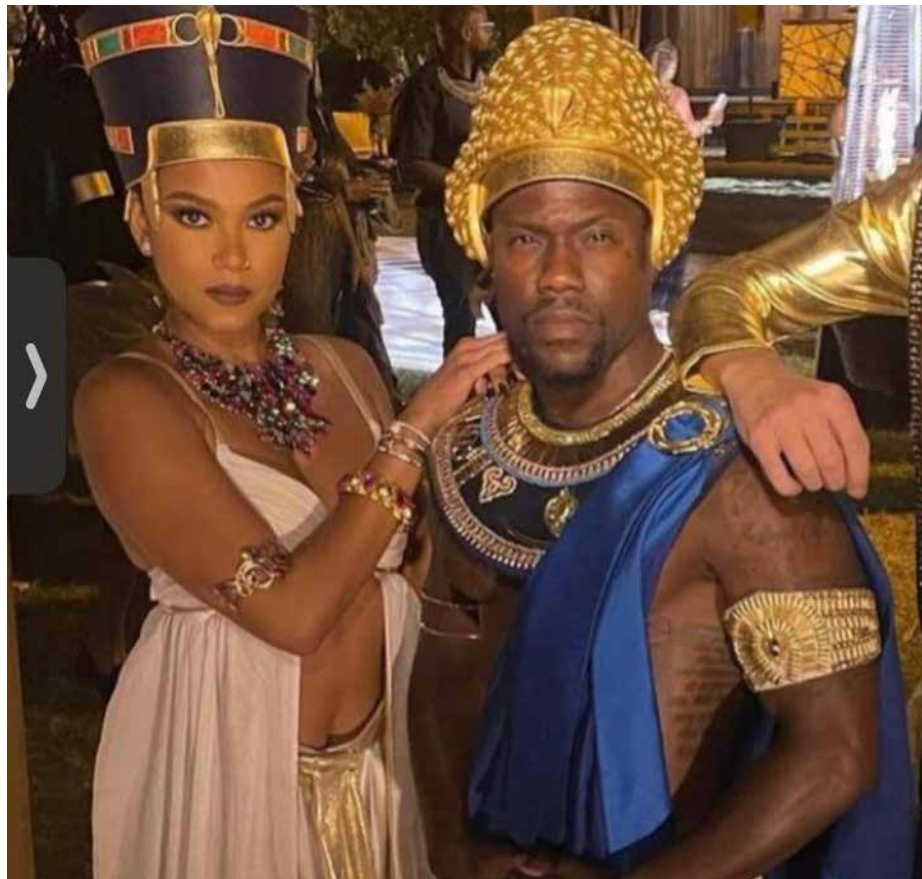
Cultural Heritage Under Siege

AFROCENTRIC

Desire upon Egypt

WRITTEN BY: MAHMOUD DEMERDASH

Since the dawn of humanity, the quest to understand one's identity and roots has been deeply ingrained in our nature. The desire to connect with our origins, to seek a sense of belonging, and to understand our place within the broader context of history and nature has been a driving force throughout our existence. Jean-Jacques Rousseau once said, "I feel an indescribable ecstasy and delirium in melting, as it were, into the system of being, in identifying myself with the whole of nature." This quote captures individuals' profound connection when they recognize themselves as an integral part of the natural world. This sentiment also applies to our search for ancestral history. Discovering the lives of our predecessors can evoke a powerful sense of connection and pride. It links to the past, allowing us to understand the trials, triumphs, and contributions of those who came before us. With its rich and storied history, Egypt is a prime example of a civilization that continues to captivate people's imaginations. Its ancient culture, monumental architecture, and significant contributions to art, science, and philosophy have left an indelible mark on human history. For those with Egyptian heritage, this history becomes a source of pride and inspiration, connecting them to a legacy that spans millennia, so it should come as no surprise that there are those who wrongfully look to claim this heritage for themselves.



They claim that Arab occupiers deliberately broke the noses of the Egyptian statues to erase any trace indicating their features, claims that have been disproven with historical evidence.

These imaginative notions lack substantive logic or historical validity, disregarding the intricate tapestry of Egypt's diverse past and the nuanced history of the Nile populace. Instead, they employ a simplistic "black and white" framework that might resonate with North American perspectives yet unjustly oversimplify the complex realities of the broader global context. The falsehood is increasingly finding itself in mainstream media and celebrity circles. One only has to look to present times to see the roots of such fallacies bearing fruit. Kevin Heart's stand-up show in Cairo was canceled following social media backlash due to his noted support for the movement. The comedian once stated, "We must teach our children the true history of Black Africans when they were kings in Egypt and not just the era of slavery that is cemented by education in America. Do you remember the time when we were kings?". Or even more recently, with the infamous Cleopatra "documentary" created by Jada Pinkett Smith, a prominent supporter of Afrocentrism in which an individual made some seemingly unverified assertion, asserting, "I don't care what they teach you in school, Cleopatra was black.". The "documentary" received global backlash and a 1.1 rating on IMDB for "blackwashing" history, as Zahi Hawass, the prominent Egyptologist, told national media at the time "Netflix is trying to provoke confusion by spreading false and deceptive facts that the origin of the Egyptian civilization is black." This incident underlines

The appropriation of our culture is not a new phenomenon. Across Egypt's rich history, various empires that aimed to integrate us into their dominions embraced Egyptian culture as if it were their own. The zeal of "Egyptomania" in the 19th century witnessed the widespread adoption of our symbols, architectural styles, and fashion trends. Similarly, the early Hollywood films of the 20th century prominently featured a plethora of Egypt-themed movies, contributing to the global dissemination of our cultural heritage. However, the rise of Afrocentrism has brought forth a movement that strives to assert ownership over the Egyptian historical legacy while simultaneously challenging modern Egyptians' rightful connection to it. Afrocentrism is a cultural movement that emphasizes the significance of African history, culture, and contributions to the world. It seeks to reframe the narrative of history by

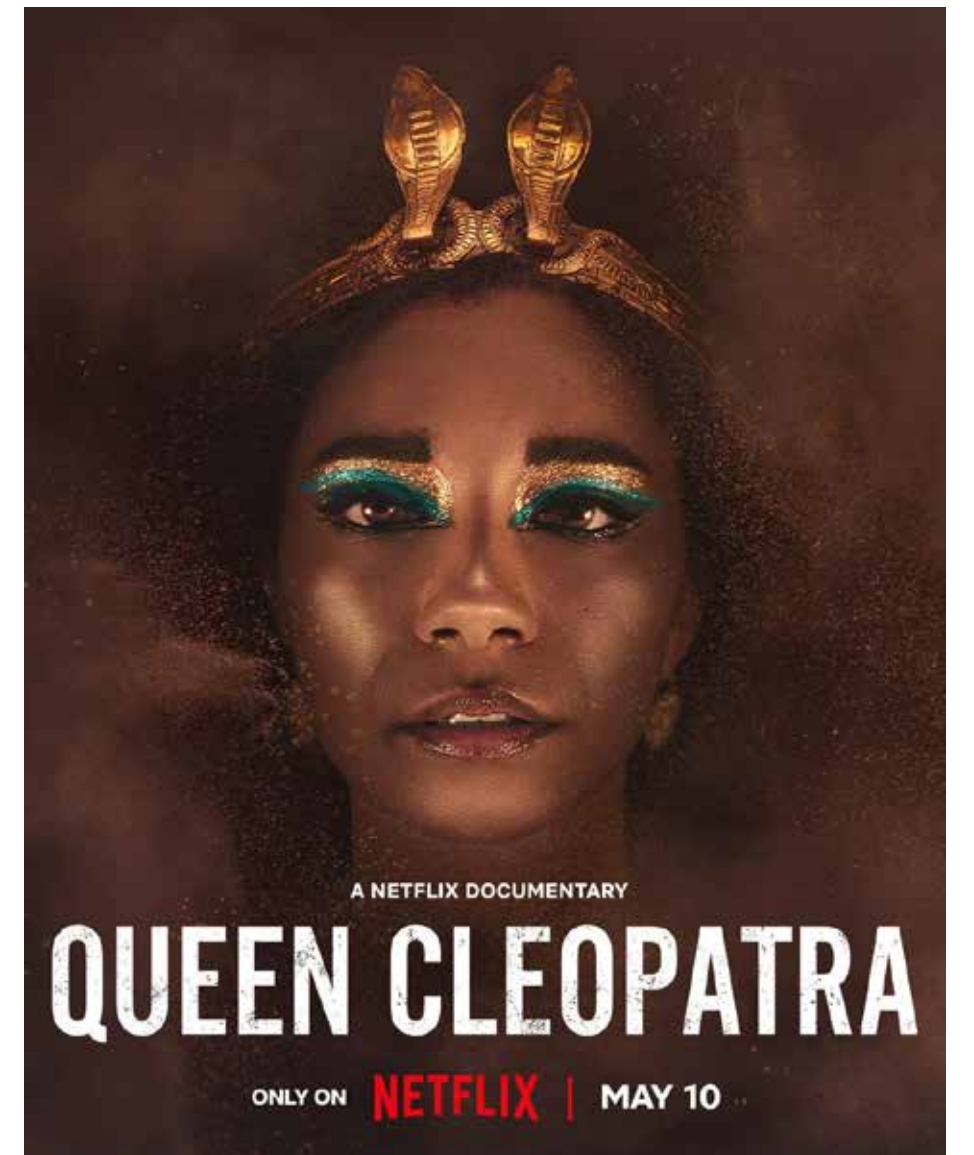
placing Africa and its diaspora at the center of analysis and interpretation. The term "Afrocentrism" was popularized by scholar and historian Molefi Kete Asante in the 1980s. Originally, Afrocentrism aimed to challenge historical and cultural Eurocentrism, which has often marginalized or overlooked the achievements and perspectives of African civilizations and peoples. Yet, as the movement grew in popularity, a few looked to claim North African history for their own. A growing number of social media posts by these self-proclaimed Afrocentric individuals argue that the original Egyptian populace was exclusively of Black descent, insinuating that contemporary Egyptians are interlopers who arrived long after. These proponents endeavor to substantiate their assertions by scrutinizing the facial features of our iconic statues, using them as supposed "evidence" to support their contentions.

the detrimental impact of baseless claims on historical discourse, muddling people's understanding and appreciation of the rich heritage that encompasses Egypt's long-studied history. Furthermore, it perpetuates a disheartening oversight of other invaluable African legacies residing across the continent. These diverse narratives, emerging from myriad regions, are points of profound pride and stories that deserve acknowledgment. However, these self-proclaimed Afrocentrics remain remarkably sparing in their acknowledgment, for their unyielding pursuit blinds them to contrive a racially biased narrative, the motivations and ultimate objectives of which are shrouded in questionable intentions.

However, Egyptians are not idly observing from the sidelines. Demonstrating a proactive stance, the Egyptian documentary channel "al-Wathaeqya," operating under the Documentary Production Sector at the United Media Services Company, unveiled its plans to create a documentary centered around the authentic narrative of Queen Cleopatra. This documentary aims to provide a historically accurate portrayal of her life, shedding light on the ruler's significance. The channel's statement indicated that meticulous preparations are underway, involving collaborations with history, archaeology, and anthropology experts. This meticulous approach to research and study underscores the channel's commitment to presenting a well-informed depiction. Dr. Bassam Al-Shamaa, an Egyptian historian and international lecturer, believes "A global, influential scientific conference can put an end to the Afrocentric movement." He believes utilizing science lays the means to combat Afrocentrism and the spread of misinformation. Dr. Al-Shamaa stated in one of his press briefs, "We

should use knowledge and evidence to counter Afrocentrism rather than engaging in futile arguments." He continued by stressing the manner in which it should be handled by saying, "Conjecture and emotional reactions should be replaced with evidence-based discussions on historical subjects." Furthermore, a team of Egyptian jurists and archaeologists has taken a substantial step by demanding a substantial two-billion-dollar compensation from Netflix for distorting the representation of Queen Cleopatra and the broader ancient Egyptian civilization. In a letter addressed to UNESCO, the team asserts Egypt's entitlement to this compensation as

a means of addressing distortions that impact the core of the "Egyptian identity." The letter also underscores Egypt's prerogative to employ legal measures to safeguard its tangible and intangible heritage, spanning from ancient to modern times. In order to counter Afrocentrism and elevate the nation's global standing, Egypt must be poised to engage further in this discourse. By fostering more involvement in global media cultivating talented actors, performers, and productions, the nation can strengthen its cultural narrative and challenge misrepresentations, thereby warding off further campaigns of disinformation. ●





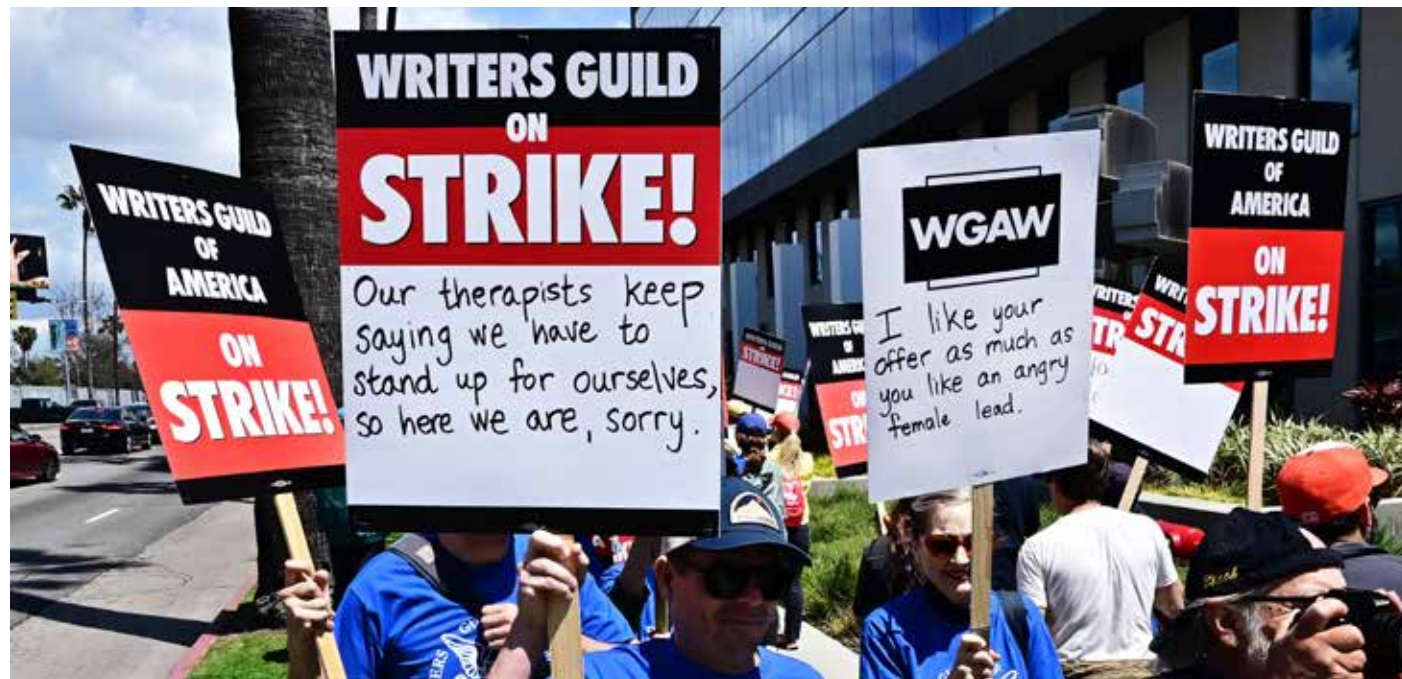
The Enigma of

AI IN HOLLYWOOD

Within the Writers and Actors Strike

WRITTEN BY: MAHMOUD DEMERDASH

In the previous edition, He Magazine delved into the global reaction to AI's use in education and the efforts of national governments to regulate its influence. The attention has shifted towards a different dilemma: AI's potential to replace human jobs within the media industry. Specifically, the ongoing writer and actor strike that is currently making waves across the globe and halting all media production within the United States across every big studio outlet. This strike presents a unique lens through which to analyze the intricate relationship between ever-developing automation, its potential for creativity, and the livelihoods of those in the entertainment field.



A different kind of drama is unfolding within the realm of lights, cameras, and action. The US film industry, a behemoth in global entertainment often associated with success and influence, is currently grappling with a significant disruption. The ongoing writers' strike, spearheaded by the Writers Guild of America (WGA), and the actors' strike that soon followed, headed by the Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA), sheds light on the instability within Hollywood. The transition from traditional broadcast networks to streaming platforms has profoundly reshaped the entertainment industry's landscape. Streaming platforms have significantly reshaped the conventional power dynamics within Hollywood. Through features like global accessibility, on-demand viewing, and data-driven insights, within the last thirteen years, these platforms have marginalized traditional broadcast studios and amplified the influence of multimedia companies, effectively restructuring the industry's hierarchy. While unquestionably instrumental in

expanding the industry through amplified budgets, a surge in acting jobs, and technological innovations, the proliferation of streaming platforms has also opened the door for the introduction of artificial intelligence into the entertainment sector. This development has triggered a wave of skepticism among industry insiders, raising valid concerns about the potential impact on their professional futures.

The ongoing strike powerfully asserts the Writers Guild of America's (WGA) determination to establish clear boundaries for the involvement of AI in the creative process. This decision to strike over concerns linked to artificial intelligence reflects a profound uneasiness about the evolving role of AI within the entertainment industry's creative landscape. At the core of this unease lies the apprehension that the growing integration of AI tools, including prominent ones like ChatGPT, has the potential to intrude upon writers' creative autonomy and livelihoods. Writers are keen on establishing a clear distinction between their own contributions and

those generated by AI. They seek to ensure that the content produced by automation isn't considered part of their work. As comedy writer Adam Conover highlighted in an interview with "TechCrunch," "Our proposal is that we not be required to adapt something that's output by AI and that the output of an AI not be considered writers' work. That doesn't entirely exclude that technology from the production process, but it does mean that our working conditions wouldn't be undermined by AI." This stance prompts reflection on whether AI, in its present state, possesses the capacity to replace human writers. Notably, writer Adam Conover has cast doubt on this possibility. As he pointed out in the "TechCrunch" interview, "The reality is that the current state of text-generation technology is entirely inadequate for producing any content fit for production." Major corporations are capitalizing on the potential of AI, currently using it to exaggerate its capabilities. This tactic is aimed at potentially downplaying the significance of human creative writers and undermining their role within the overall process,

particularly during the ongoing strike negotiations. While the capabilities of AI in content generation, offering suggestions, and streamlining research are undeniably valuable, the WGA is taking an assertive stance to ensure that AI remains a complementary aid rather than a replacement for human ingenuity. Writers are apprehensive that the indiscriminate deployment of AI-generated content may dilute their narratives' uniqueness and erode the artistic qualities that define their craft. By advocating for AI to function exclusively as an assisting tool for writers, helping with research and brainstorming, the union not only aims to preserve the essence of storytelling that human creators infuse into the industry but also highlights the importance their role has in the creative content we so cherish as a society.

Coinciding recently with the Writers Guild of America's labor dispute, the strike by the SAG-AFTRA union has brought to the forefront an issue that pierces the heart of the entertainment world's future. The

potential replacement of actors by integrating artificial intelligence (AI), this unprecedented strike spotlights the profound apprehensions of actors regarding the encroachment of AI-generated performers. As negotiations between Hollywood studios and the SAG-AFTRA union unfold, the anxieties surrounding AI-generated actors, often referred to as "metahumans," underscore the actors' fears of losing their creative roles to machines that are increasingly blurring the lines between reality and the virtual realm. While AI has yet to assume actors' roles, the industry's lack of commitment to job security and guaranteeing future opportunities for actors is a growing concern. Many within the industry recognize the urgency to take proactive measures, lest the landscape becomes bereft of ample job opportunities as technology evolves. In the recent installment of *Black Mirror*, titled "Joan is Awful," this theme is brought to life as a pivotal plot point. Notably, actresses Salma Hayek and Annie Murphy, along with actor Michael

Cera, surrender their likenesses to the fictional entity "Streamberry," a play on the real-world streaming giant "Netflix." The storyline revolves around AI harnessing these likenesses to churn out a continuous stream of content for audience consumption without the actors' involvement. This apprehension is rooted in the prospect that AI might not only reshape the very nature of acting but also raise existential questions about the future of acting careers.

In an era marked by technology's relentless reshaping of every facet of our lives, the actors' and writers' strike emerges as a pivotal moment. As the situation unfolds, it represents a battle for creators' rights and initiates a broader dialogue concerning the intersection of AI and one of humanity's oldest crafts. Although necessary, the narrative goes beyond contractual intricacies, inviting a deeper contemplation about the delicate equilibrium between innovation and preserving the genuine human touch in creative expression. ●





Conversations on
MARRIAGE

**Married and divorced couples on embracing their changes
and discovering the true essence of partnership**

WRITTEN BY: FARAH HASSAN

Love In the Age of Expectations

In an era of relationship advice overload and societal pressures, the sacred bond of marriage finds itself entangled in a storm of demands and obstacles. While love is said to conquer all, the question lingers: Is the institution of marriage truly worth it in today's ever-changing world?

Amidst the whirlwind of opinions, there persists a prevailing belief in popular culture that marriage brings happiness, divorce breeds loneliness, and remaining single is a fundamental failure of belonging. However, the concept of marriage has undergone profound transformations, igniting discussions on its relevance and potential obsolescence in modern society.

The idea that being married makes us happy, getting divorced makes us lonely, and never getting married at all is a basic failing of belonging still pervades in popular society. Marriage as a concept has experienced tremendous transformation, which has sparked discussions regarding its applicability and potential obsolescence in today's society. Traditional conceptions of marriage have changed to encompass a variety of partnerships and legal status, in addition to the lifetime commitment between a man and a woman.

Perils of Perfection

The landscape of love and marriage is undergoing a seismic shift, as evidenced by soaring divorce rates and the pursuit of truly fulfilling partnerships. Startling figures from a report by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics

(CAPMAS) reveal that in 2022, Egypt witnessed a staggering 1.8 new marriages every minute, accompanied by one divorce every two minutes. This marks a substantial 5.6 percent increase in marriages and a corresponding 5.9 percent rise in divorces compared to the previous year.

Governmental data shed light on a concerning reality: 25 out of every 100 new marriages ultimately end in divorce, with the highest rates found among individuals aged 20 to 30. These statistics reflect a profound shift in societal attitudes towards relationships and the rise of individualism, which has significantly influenced perceptions of marriage.

"I married my college sweetheart, I got married without even thinking what it truly meant, at the time it was what you were supposed to do when you're in love. And falling in love with someone feels like flying for a little while until you're not. What affected my marriage was the long time we spent apart because of the nature of both of our jobs and it eventually got to a point where we became two strangers living in the same house."

32-year-old divorced female on 6 years of marriage

In today's world, personal fulfillment, career aspirations, and individual autonomy often take precedence. Sometimes, this creates a clash with traditional expectations and the accompanying responsibilities that come with marriage. As Egypt navigates these changing dynamics, it is crucial to delve deeper into the factors driving this transformation and explore new paradigms for achieving harmonious and successful partnerships in the modern era.

"Looking back, I was constantly frustrated and would often take it out on my partner and blame them for a lot of the things that happened and play the victim. I felt stifled in the relationship and we were so attached to the way we lived before our marriage that I feel like we weren't able to find a common ground."

35-year-old divorced male on 8 years of marriage

In the wake of evolving societal norms, the economic necessity that once underpinned marriage has diminished. Both partners now frequently pursue careers and enjoy financial independence, reshaping the traditional dynamics of matrimony. Additionally, the roles within marriages have experienced significant transformations, with a greater emphasis on equality and shared responsibilities.

While it is true that marriage has lost some of its popularity compared to previous generations, proponents argue that it remains a stabilizing force within relationships. They assert that regardless of divorce statistics, marriage continues to be viewed as an essential step toward a successful life. The very commitment inherent in marriage serves as a binding factor, helping couples navigate challenges and remain together even in circumstances where they might have otherwise separated.

"It may sound cliché, but never go to bed mad at each other; end a fight then and never let anything carry over into the next day. It is only natural that couples fight but it is about how well you move on and process things that matters."

34-year-old male, 10 years of marriage.

The Evolution of Matrimony

Marriage is a union of two souls, yet the meaning of successful marriage differs from couple to couple. There is no clear definition of a successful marriage.

“If being married has taught me anything, it is that you have to listen to what is important to your spouse, communication and honesty are keys for a successful marriage and if you disagree, always try to compromise.”

65-year-old female, 38 years of marriage.

In the past, older generations thrived within a structured model of relationships, where communal structures provided a clear sense of identity, expectations, and behavioral norms. This framework fostered certainty and a deep sense of belonging. However, in our present era, we have embraced radical individualism and aspirational materialism, leading to a transformative landscape where relationships are experiencing rapid shifts.

The once-defined rules have been replaced by a myriad of choices, resulting in a climate characterized by significant uncertainty and self-doubt. One could argue that what was formerly governed by rules, duty, and obligation now necessitates ongoing conversations and mutual understanding.

“Nobody stays the same during their years of marriage, as no one should. And it is natural to feel that as if you are with another person than the one you married many years ago. The foundation of core values, ethics, and morals can transform growth into a source of marital joy. When we keep different interests and

relationships, we allow our personal growth to improve our individual lives as well as the shared journey of matrimony.”

58-year-old female, 27 years of marriage.

The Modern Love Paradox

Love, with its intoxicating allure of everlasting passion and unwavering commitment, can also exert immense pressure on couples. From the relentless pursuit of perfection to the haunting fear of missing out, these mounting pressures have the power to strain relationships, creating a breeding ground for disillusionment and dissatisfaction.

The intricate fabric of human emotions and experiences is interwoven with the threads of marriage, love, and divorce. While the demands of modern life may feel overpowering, grasping

the essential components of a prosperous union empowers couples to navigate the turbulent seas. Through fostering open channels of communication, embracing adaptability, and acknowledging the significance of personal growth, couples can forge unwavering connections that withstand the trials of time.

As our society continues to evolve, it becomes vital to recognize the ever-shifting dynamics of relationships and approach love and matrimony with empathy, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to shared joy.

Love exists in a realm where a universal formula cannot be applied; it defies a one-size-fits-all approach. Recognizing the uniqueness of each relationship, we understand that the path to fulfillment may vary for every couple. ●



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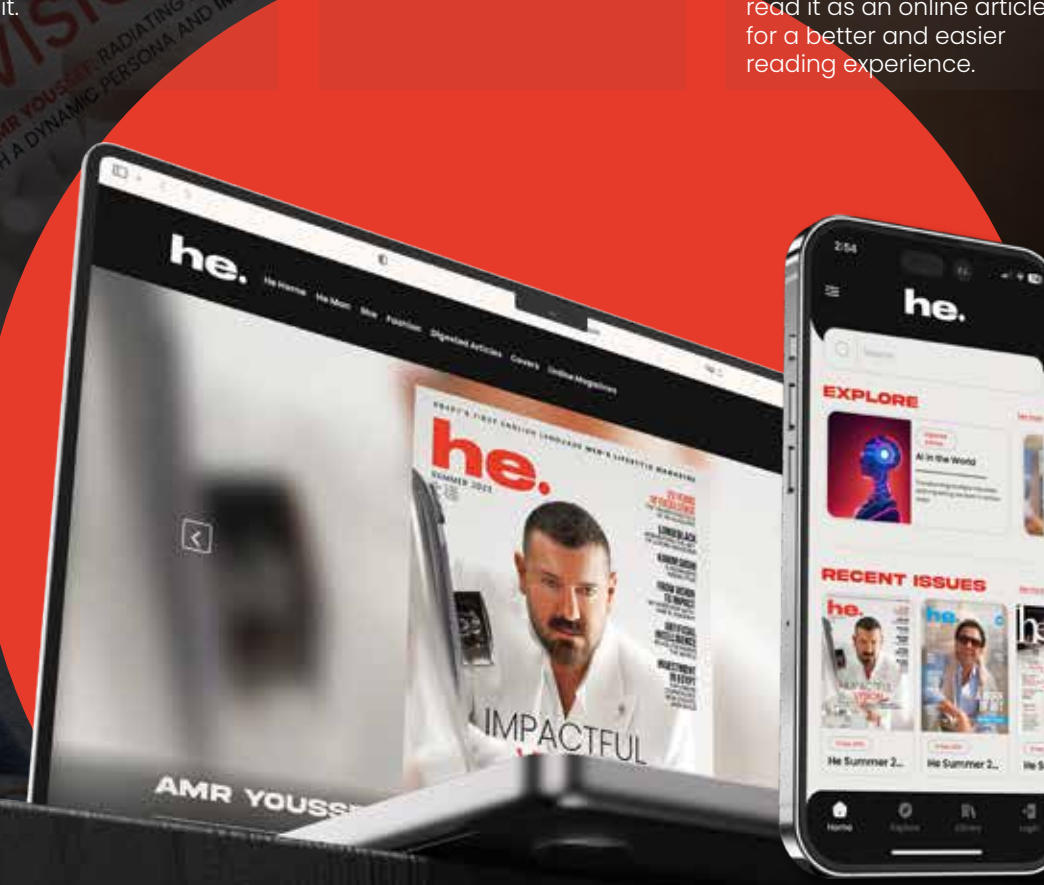
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