

RETAIL THOUGHTS
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MRF & RETAILME
AWARDS 2018

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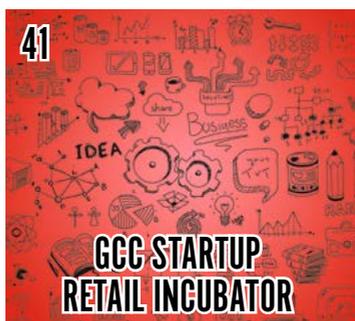
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STORE OF THE MONTH

VOL 8 ISSUE 11



The UAE has been an incredible start-up incubator for many years. A look around the Emirates today throws up many enterprises, several of which have become home-grown legacy brands. The answer to these successful ventures is simple. It's the country's thriving entrepreneurial eco-system.



Dear reader

Building an entrepreneurial nation

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In this issue, we are looking at some of the brands that are making a difference in the sectors they represent. We have Emma Banks of Jumeirah Restaurant Group (JRG) sharing her insights on setting up several award-winning F&B concepts that include Pierchic, The Noodle House, Pai Thai, Al Nafoorah, Flow, Trattoria Toscana and Perry & Blackwelder's.

Our CEO Talks features Kunal Kapoor of The Luxury Closet – a marketplace for new and pre-loved luxury items from top designer brands like Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Cartier and Rolex, to name a few. The Luxury Closet started in Kapoor's apartment. Today it has close to 80 employees, across the UAE, Saudi Arabia and India.

Talking of luxury brings us to Tryano, Chalhoub Group's home-grown department store that proudly adorns three levels of Abu Dhabi's Yas Mall.

Cocoa Kitchen is another home-grown restaurant, conceptualised by Dubai-based developer Meraas. Located in City Walk, it celebrates the versatility of a much-loved ingredient, cocoa.

Still, on food, we have Dana Al Sharif who three and a half years ago, along with her husband started Calle Tacos, which was among the first five food trucks to operate in the UAE. It was their first brush with the food industry, and she describes it as "a ride full of thrills, learning and challenges since then."

These and many other entrepreneurial success stories have inspired us to design a special session at the upcoming **MRF 2018**, which takes place at the Palazzo Versace Hotel in Dubai on October 8 & 9. The session, appropriately named – Start-up conclave: Building an entrepreneurial nation – is scheduled on day two, October 9, at 3:30 pm. (see page 25) Reserve your seat and be there!

Lawrence Pinto

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The Carving Board Sandwiches consolidates Dubai presence with a second outlet

California-based fast-casual restaurant known for its comfort food sandwiches of the highest quality, The Carving Board Sandwiches, opened its second outlet at Onyx Tower on Sheikh Zayed Road in Dubai, September 2018.

The Carving Board Sandwiches made its debut in the UAE in the Q3 of 2017 with its first restaurant at City Walk 2 under its first international franchise deal with the Ras Al Khaimah-based Master Investment Group led by Shaikh Abdulla bin Mohamed Al Qassimi.

Besides The Carving Board Sandwiches, the Master Investment Group also operates the Sirocco Restaurant and Café at Al Seef in Dubai and are developing Grove Village, a lifestyle centre in Ras Al Khaimah, where the Group plans to debut several more up and coming brands to the Middle East.

“Dubai’s forward-looking socio-cultural scenario demands new and unique brands to keep up with consumer tastes and evolving dining desires,” says Shaikh Abdulla. “The Carving Board introduces a completely new generation of sandwiches to food lovers, and I’m confident that the concept will excel throughout the Middle East.”

“We are delighted with the response The Carving Board has received at City Walk from diners in Dubai. The much-awaited second location at Onyx Tower in The Greens off Sheikh Zayed Road opens in September 2018, and we are confident that it will appeal more diners not just in Dubai but from across the UAE.

The international expansion for The Carving Board marks a milestone for the brand in its only second year of franchising. Best known for putting classic comfort food meals in between bread in sandwich form, the franchise locations will open soon.

The masterminds behind the sandwich creations, brothers and co-founders, David and Yoav Adir decided to grow the brand through franchising in late 2016 after expanding to four corporate locations. With more than 50 unique sandwich creations on its menu – including the famous Spaghetti and Meatballwich – most items are created in-house using only the freshest ingredients.

“We’re constantly innovating and will be adapting our menu to appeal to international pallets, catering to those seeking an

elevated dining experience,” says David Adir, CEO, The Carving Board LA. “Dubai is a perfect match and an untapped market for our brand, and we couldn’t be more excited to grow throughout the Middle East with such a phenomenal master franchisee.”

Headquartered in Los Angeles, The Carving Board is the bold answer to the classic sandwich joint. The Carving Board is ushering in a fresh era of industrial décor, contemporary music and handpicked ingredients; the brand is setting the new sandwich standard. Guests are sure to feel a sense of comfort while being offered a better dining experience with attention to detail in its food, décor and service.

Adir is also aware that Dubai is a crowded market, but he feels that their offering has a major differentiating factor. “The Carving Board Sandwiches might be in a crowded space, but as we developed the concept, we wanted to change the idea of what a sandwich can be. We look at traditional meals and serve them in sandwich form. A traditional sandwich joint merely toasts their sandwiches or tries to throw in one ingredient that is different.

Besides, we are opening our second outlet to mark the first anniversary of our debut here speaks for itself.”

Talking of the process of creating a quirky, diverse yet comfort menu, Adir explains the unique preparation method they follow. “We take all our experiences from our everyday lives and try to incorporate them in our food. Every time we go out to eat we ask ourselves can this item convert into a sandwich?”

Adir is pleased with the success of The Carving Board at City Walk 2 and how it has helped enhance the UAE dining scene. “Our menu is very diverse, and we believe that it brings fresh flavours to the region. We are also looking at local favourites trying to create items that will appeal to the local and expatriate communities.”

“Right now, we are working on lobster ‘burger’, our version of a lobster roll. We do food testing on a weekly basis and roll out the sandwiches that stand out. We are also working on trying to create some more sandwiches with Asian influences as they are just beginning to trend in LA,” Adir concludes. ■



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8 & 9 October 2018
Palazzo Versace Hotel, Dubai

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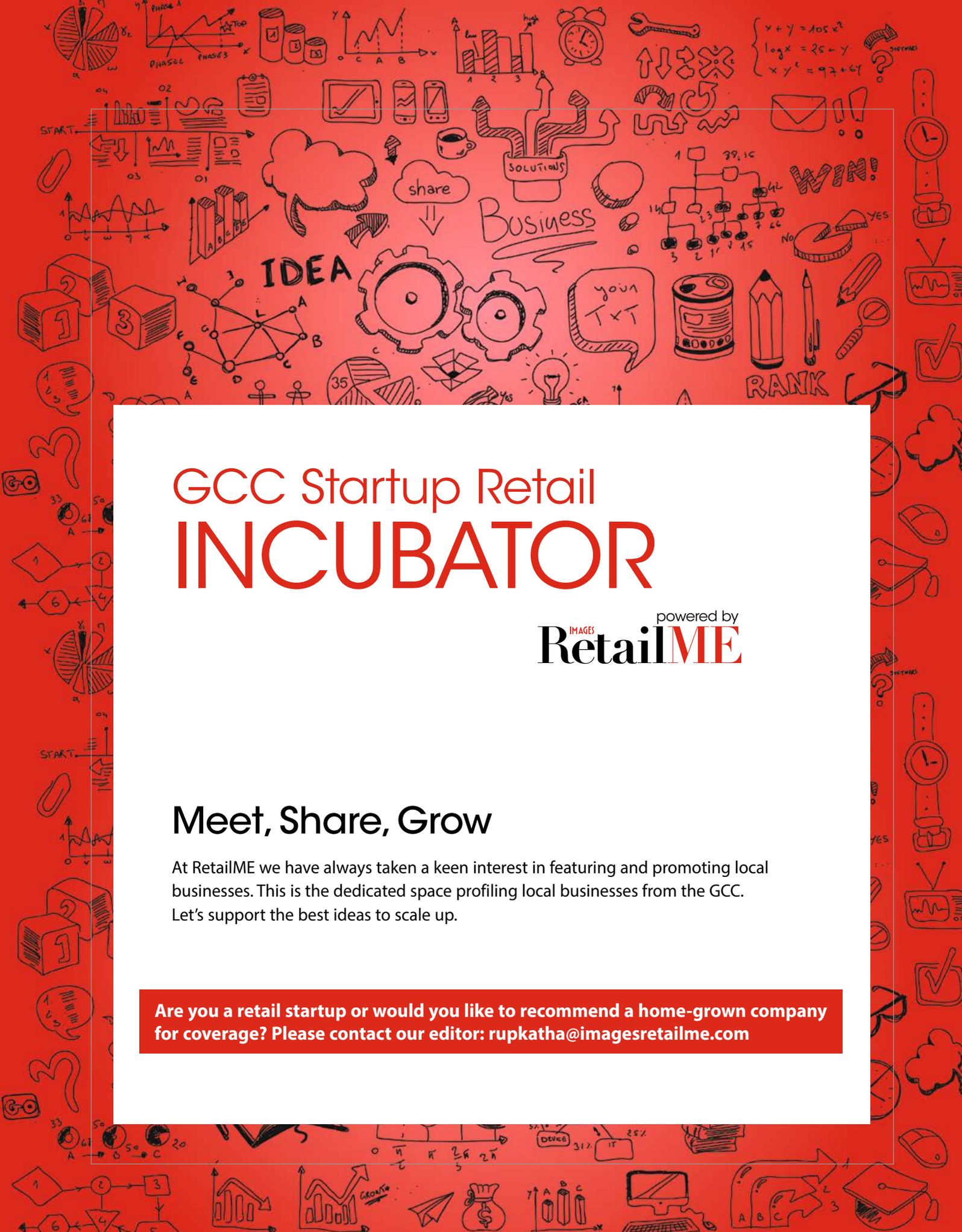
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Store of the month

OUTLETS | SPACES | IDEAS | INNOVATIONS |
DESIGNS | CONCEPTS | VENDORS | BRANDS |

Virgin Megastore

Location: **The Dubai Mall, Dubai**

Size: **25,403 sqft**

Concept and design: **Virgin Megastore**

Fixtures and fittings: **Kalandoor Contracting LLC**

Virgin Megastore, which began as an international entertainment retailing chain, has evolved as one of the leading lifestyle retail destinations in the Middle East. It sets a constant target of consolidating and expanding its regional presence as well as product offering to fulfil the growing trends and aspirations of its customers.

The focus of the new concept store, which opened in August, is on showcasing, as a 'one-stop shop' for all entertainment needs - the extensive range of lifestyle products across fashion, culture, technology, entertainment, beauty and related services.





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