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Quintessentially You

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FATMA AL NABHANI
Oman's Pride

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Initiative



PERSON OF INTEREST



Maggie Jeans wears different hats with élan. Not only does she run a successful business together with her husband, she is also the coordinator of British Business Forum and the Chargé de Mission of Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, Muscat. In conversation with the vibrant personality...

A well-recognised personality around Muscat, Maggie Jeans is a connoisseur of varied interests. This includes art, opera, and food. Jeans arrived in Muscat along with her husband Bill in 1990 from Bristol, United Kingdom when he took up the post as Professor of Radiology at the SQU Hospital. Six years later, Jeans launched Al Manahil International LLC & Educational Consultancy in

Muscat. The organisation specialises in wholesale import of books for the government and private sector.

An active member of the British Business Forum as well as the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, Jeans has seen the change that Oman has been through over the past many years. We chat with the vibrant personality about Oman, her interests, and the unexpected setting up of her book business.

How did the idea for Al Manahil International LLC & Educational Consultancy come about?

“Before coming to Oman, I headed the Careers Education Department in a large comprehensive school in Bristol. We fell into bookselling accidentally. The company began life as an educational consultancy. www.almanahil-books.com specialises in the wholesale import of books for the government and private sector. The company represents both Oxford and Cambridge University Press as well as many other publishers throughout the Sultanate. The company specialises in English Language Teaching (ELT) material, textbooks and medical books.”

You are the coordinator and an active member of the British Business Forum. Please tell us about the work done by BBF.

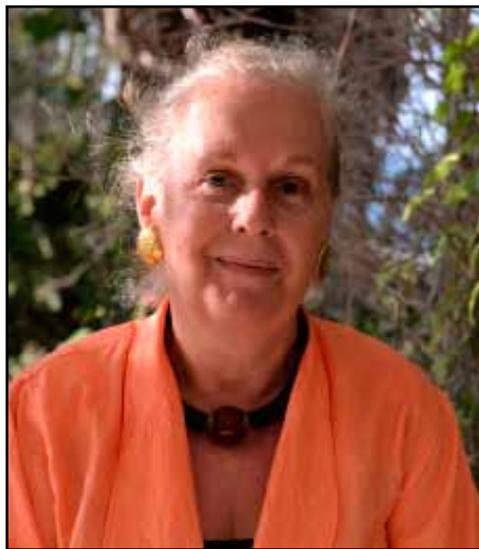
“The BBF began over 20 years ago and is an important focal point for British nationals doing business in Oman. It is a particularly useful networking forum for newcomers to Oman. We work very closely with UK Trade and Investment which is part of the British Embassy and often entertain visiting trade missions from the UK. The BBF work as a small team finding sponsors and venues for the regular monthly meeting, although most events are now held in the Grand Hyatt Muscat. The BBF is also a point of contact for British Business people visiting Oman.

“Like most event organisers, we heave a sigh of relief when a meeting has gone well! It's sometimes a struggle to find sponsors, particularly during the long hot Summer when meetings are probably most appreciated by our members. The BBF website www.bbfoman.org won the Oman Web

Awards last year. Our most exciting meeting was in November when we hosted the Red Arrows Display Team from the UK.

“Unlike the other Business Groups in Oman, the BBF meets regularly, usually on the first Sunday of each month. The BBF is gathering momentum and we hope it will continue to flourish. Networking is very important.”

You are a connoisseur of good food, and also a member of Chaîne des Rôtisseurs. What is your role at CDR?



My role serves as Chargé de Mission for the Muscat chapter of the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, the worldwide gastronomic association. The purpose of bringing the society to Oman is to spread fine cuisine and encourage young professionals working in the hospitality sector.

Which are favourite dining spots in the city?

There are many excellent restaurants in Muscat, particularly in the major hotels. My personal favourites are Come Prima, the Italian Restaurant in the Crown Plaza and the Indus at Opera Galleria. The Royal Opera House has added a new dimension to life in Muscat.

The Sultanate was a very different place when you arrived in 1990. What are your thoughts on the changes since?

It's been fascinating to witness the steady development of the country but the people remain the same, always gentle and friendly. Like many people who have "stayed on" in Oman we also appreciate Oman's natural beauty, particularly the coastline.