

MEET & EAT



Each week we break bread with a special guest diner

EAU ZONE, ROYAL MIRAGE

NAME: IMAD BECHARA
JOB: ARTIST AND INTERIOR DESIGNER
AGE: 36
NATIONALITY: LEBANESE
IF I COULD ONLY EAT ONE THING FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE IT WOULD BE: MOROCCAN SWEETS
I REFUSE TO EAT: PUMPKIN SOUP

Rome, as the saying goes, wasn't built in a day. Just ask Imad Bechara. The Lebanese-born artist began his career well over 10 years ago, starting out as a simple hobbyist, then moved on to interior design, before finally finding his feet – and recognition – as contemporary art painter.

Now Imad's work has finally become recognised as some of the most sought after in the Gulf, with the artist's new Bechara studios in the Greens Community drawing an increasing audience.

"Although I call it a studio, it's actually a gallery of my own work," says the artist as we sit in the opulent surroundings of Eau Zone, at the Royal Mirage.

"I don't actually work in it. However, I decided against calling it a gallery purely because I didn't want to start exhibiting other artists and seeing it all turn into a business."

Imad's drawing of the lines between art and business is clearly important to him. So much so, that unlike most artists who churn out piece after piece for sale, Imad prefers to work to request, creating work specifically

“ Each artist has their own style... creates something different ”

for one person, rather than finishing a collection then selling it.

"Usually, a client asks me for what kind of piece they want and I create it, as opposed to painting different pieces and then selling

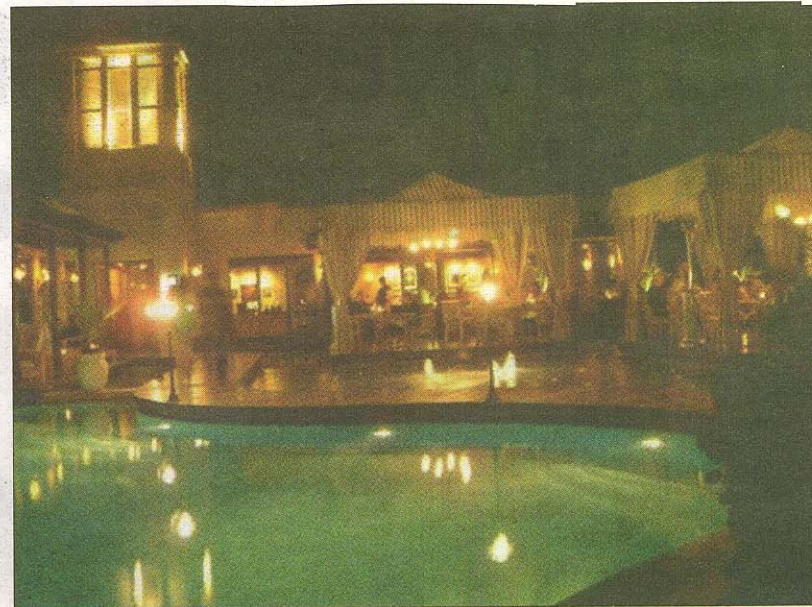
them," he explains. "However, I stick to my style – I don't just paint anything. I believe that each artist has their own style, and thus creates something different."

Using acrylics and mixed media to design abstract and figurative pieces, Imad is able to create work that retains a distinct sense of individuality.

"I don't stick with one style, either," he insists. "I have different collections and, once done, I do not return to it. I assign different ideas to different collections."

It is clearly an idea that works; Imad has participated in a number of high-profile exhibitions, including such recognised galleries as the Maccassar Gallery in Bangkok, the East West Gallery, Cenisio Art Gallery and Gilardi Museum in Italy and the Galleria Le lach in Lugano, Switzerland.

However, the artist has no intention of resting on his laurels, and the launch of his new studio



■ The view of Eau Zone's pool at night is a magnificent sight

should see the artist further expand his creative horizons.

"Each time is a different artistic phase for me, because, of

course, artists evolve," he insists.

"What I'm doing now is different from what I was doing five years ago. By the same token, in

10 years time, what I'll be doing will be different again."

If the past 10 years is anything to go by, we will look forward to it.

» THE FINAL VERDICT

IMAD BECHARA ATE:

Seared scallop tartar
Glazed five-spiced beef ribs
Lemon and ginger sorbet
Mineral water

EMIRATES TODAY ATE:

Red snapper ceviche
Corn-fed chicken with potato pave
Passionfruit soufflé
Mineral water

IMAD BECHARA'S VERDICT:

It's a nice, cosy atmosphere, with relaxing music, where people can have good conversation without

having to shout over each other. The staff were also incredibly friendly.

My favourite dish was the main course, as it was delicious. The sorbet was also delightful – and the ginger gave it an interesting twist.

EMIRATES TODAY VERDICT:

If you decide to make the trip to Eau Zone, make sure you have 15 minutes between the time you step foot in the hotel and your reservation time. The hike through the hotel's Arabian Court's endless corridors is enough to work up anyone's appetite.

However, the effort is definitely worth it. Eau Zone's setting alone is

enough to take your breath away, with not only the interiors looking stunning, but also the outdoor view of the pool looking magnificent at night.

The dishes could not be faulted either. Although inventive at times, Eau Zone's chefs use only the freshest ingredients, as the red snapper ceviche was excellent.

The corn-fed chicken was cooked to perfection and the wild mushrooms accompanying the dish gave it an extra kick.

Finally, the passionfruit soufflé was the perfect ending to the perfect meal – soft, fruity, and served with delicious ice-cream and jam.

Eau Zone is definitely worth every dirham – and then some.