

We're proud to host 'Rembrandt in Oman': Franzen

MUSCAT Visitors to Grand Hyatt Muscat now have the opportunity to view the original etchings of the Dutch master Rembrandt van Rijn, who is also well known for his drawings, and paintings.

Of course, this is the first time that these etchings of Rembrandt are being shown in the Middle East and North Africa.

The hotel is wearing a unique look these days and Christoph K. Franzen, general manager, Grand Hyatt is without doubt, a happy man.

"The feeling is very high. This is the first time that Grand Hyatt is involved in such a prestigious exhibition and we are the first hotel in the Middle East to hold such an event of this magnitude," says Franzen.

For the hotel, the event is a milestone of sorts and not just from the PR perspective, but

it has brought in art lovers from across the Gulf to the hotel.

"Art enthusiasts know this is a very special event. We have been receiving guests especially from the GCC. We had occupancies from Dubai, Abu Dhabi and even from Doha. The response to the exhibition has been very positive and only positive," he says.

The exhibition has been very successful in creating awareness of the hotel outside Muscat.

"It has created spin off business and created awareness for the hotel which is very good," Franzen admits.

The event has brought in tourists to the country too.

"Those who come to stay at least take up rooms for at least two days. Those who see the exhibition also make sure to go around Muscat and nearby places," he says.



Christoph K. Franzen

Has Grand Hyatt as a group had exhibitions of this calibre before?

"We have done exhibitions in other Hyatt hotels but I can only talk about hotels I have worked in. So whether it is Moscow, Grand Hyatt, Dubai, Hyatt Regency, Dubai, we have not had an exhibition of a world class artists like Rembrandt. Of course we had exhibition of lesser known artists but what makes this special is Rembrandt is an icon in the art world and he is here," he says.

Franzen has high regards

for the conceptualisers of the organisers.

"Al Salmi Library obviously has been a driving factor in the whole Rembrandt exhibition. I think it needs somebody with a passion for arts to make an exhibition of this standard to happen. It is not just about organising the event. You need to have somebody who says we can do this," he says.

The general manager says it needs incredible courage to go ahead with such big ideas.

"There are lots of obstacles especially from the security and safety point of view. If no one is driving it would be difficult for it to materialise it. Besides, you need to have the right contacts too. It is full credits to the Al Salmi Library for making this happen," he says.

Franzen says it is hats off to NPA Events for giving the exhibition a special look and feel.

"I have worked in four continents, in many hotels and I have seen transformation of spaces but I can confidently say I have never seen anyone do such a convincing and professional job like the NPA Events has done," he says.

"Whether it is the Dutch House look in the front or changing the entrance hall into an art space, they have done a tremendous job," he says and adds: "They have actually recreated the museum. Where there is carpet there is no more carpet, where there was marble there are different types of walls. I mean if you have seen the Afrah ballroom before you will see the difference. It is like you are entering a different hotel. They have done a great job and I have been very impressed by them."

Was he worried about the damage to the property?

"Once I met Ashok Suvarna, executive director, NPA

Events, I would say I was worried. He gave me confidence in the fact that he knew what he was doing so that helped a lot. You will see that when they take it out that won't be damage to the permanent structure because I have seen how they have fixed it," he says.

Franzen believes the exhibition would add value from the country's perspective.

"It has already put Muscat in the art map in the Middle East. It will have a great impact. Rembrandt etching exhibition is unique because it has brought the type of art and value of art to Muscat which we have never seen before. I believe it will get a lot of people interested in art. We have Muscat audience who came back to the hotel two to three times to see this exhibition. The exhibition should highlight the passion for the art," Franzen hopes.

Grand Hyatt would always open its door for something similar in the future.

"It is a service to the public at the end not just public from the hotel perspective. It is something we as well as public which benefits. At it is the niche market and art lovers who have been stimulated. That is because you have many local art exhibitions but don't have international. This will be the next step," he says.

Franzen admits the exhibition has given a lot of mileage to Grand Hyatt.

"You cannot always measure everything in terms of money, but I would say it has made a difference. I think the event will continue to talk about We are in the German market and now we have a reach from German TV to Oman this," says Franzen.

Oman Tri

RAMADHAN IFTAR MEAL PROGRAM
FOR THE YEAR 1430 AH - 2009

The Oman Charitable Organization has the pleasure of announcing that it is launching a campaign to collect donations for the sake of providing the needy muslim families with an iftar during the Holy month of Ramadhan.

As our campaign has started, you are requested to cope with such a humanitarian and benevolent cause by sending your donation.

To: NATIONAL BANK OF OMAN AND ITS ALL BRANCHES
ACCOUNT No.: 1049 - 337798 - 001
or directly approach the Organization building at al Khuwair 33 area,
Street No. 47 near Sultan Said Bin Taymor Mosque
or Call: Tel.: 24487998 - 24488755 Fax: 24487997

Food Stuff parcels shall be distributed to needy families throughout the wilayats of the Sultanate during the Holy Month

ANNOUNCEMENT

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