



**Special Thanks
to our Business Partners and
our sponsor Oman Oil Marketing Co.**



Business Partners 2009-2010





M E N U

Traditional Caesar salad
with basil croutons and parmesan shavings



Chicken supreme with spinach,
ricotta cheese filling
served with sun dried tomato polenta
Seasonal vegetables



Soupe aux fruits
Accompanied by a yoghurt ice cream



Tea or Coffee
Mignardises

FOR BUSINESS, BY BUSINESS

Oman Business Forum helps businesses in Oman network with one another

HYESHA BARRETT

Networking is the magical act that keeps businesses ticking the world over. If it was conspicuous by a relatively weak showing in the past in Oman, things have definitely changed now, thanks to initiatives like the Oman Business Forum (OBF) – an organised and all encompassing network for business establishments in Oman that was set up in early 2003.

TheWeek met up with Will J Blake, assistant director of sales, Al Bustan Hotel, (he recently moved from InterContinental Hotel Muscat, which is a group hotel), to find out how OBF which is now run by the Al Bustan Hotel, is helping businesses in the sultanate. Blake said, "An organised network that encompasses all businesses in the Oman market, OBF offers new companies to introduce themselves and build their corporate image and branding in the community."

OBF was launched as a corporate initiative of the InterContinental Hotel Muscat. Blake explained, "I felt



An OBF session in progress

that there was a lack of business forums at that time. And those that did, focused on the UK and the European markets."

Blake hence took the initiative to set up a forum for the Oman market. "The OBF was launched to capitalise on business people in Oman from all different backgrounds and nationalities. A lunch session is held every two months and is headed by a keynote speaker to discuss future businesses or the opening of new companies," he explained. "The event brings the business community together so that they can network and talk about their

businesses, their sales plans, their future revenues, meet new faces, meet key decision makers and new successes in the market," he added. Last year's events were extremely successful according to Blake.

Registration is quick and easy and can be done online at www.omanbusinessforum.com (the OBF site). Membership is open to all companies. Blake elaborates, "The site also has information on the next season's events along with details of the keynote speakers." The lunch held on December 5 featured Ross Cormack, CEO, Nawras Telecom, as the guest speaker. The next business lunch will be on February 9, 2005, and Philip Stanton, managing partner, Ernst & Young, will be the keynote speaker.

Will continued, "We also offer opportunities, to all companies and business partners in Oman, through floor space to promote their companies." He concludes, "It is the only forum in Oman that takes place at this level. The people attending the function are all key members, GMs, ambassadors and senior managers."

OOMCO sponsors Oman Business Forum

MUSCAT — Demonstrating support to the local business community, Oman Oil Marketing Company (OOMCO) was one of a few local businesses sponsoring Oman's only private sector business networking event, the Oman Business Forum (OBF). Re-launched after six months, OBF took place at Al Bustan Palace Hotel on Sunday.

"We are keen to sponsor OBF and make the most of this chance to support the local business community through events like this. Many of the delegates attending form an important part of our customer base. This forum creates the opportunity for us to communicate directly with them," Hisham al Alawi, OOMCO's Corporate Affairs Manager, said.

Up to 150 attendees spent valuable time networking at the business lunch representing as many as 70 companies encompassing a broad cross section of businesses in Oman.

In keeping with previous



MIKE Wilson

gatherings, this month's high profile guest of honour and keynote speaker at the networking event was the CEO of Oman's latest mobile service provider, Nawras Telecom. Focusing on topical business matters in the Sultanate, the CEO gave an intriguing insight into launching the new telecoms business in Oman.

OOMCO's Managing Director, Mike Wilson, said, "opportunities like these to expose ourselves to a wider audience help remind the busi-

ness community of the financial benefits of a business partnership with OOMCO, especially with the latest fuel card offer. We are now a 100 per cent owned Omani company; however, we retain our international standards and are in a position to share the experience and strength gleaned from over 40 years local operation as part of a global company. It is important for the business community — Omani and expatriate — to see we remain a key player who is committed to developing Oman with 100 per cent of its profits being reinvested in the Omani economy."

Sadiq Mousawi, OOMCO Fuel Cards Manager, added, "as an insider, it is easy for us to assume that one year on as OOMCO everyone knows who we are: communication is key and we have to keep reminding people as to who we are, what additional benefits there are from working with us and what Omanoil can do for them."



Officials of the Oman Business Forum at the meeting.

OBF extends helping hand to Oman investors

By A Staff Reporter
OMAN TRIBUNE

MUSCAT To all those who want to bring in new investments into Oman or set up shop in the Sultanate, Oman Business Forum (OBF) is all ready to help them out by providing them with the much-needed launchpad.

OBF is a forum that encompasses all businesses in the Omani market and offers new companies the opportunity to introduce themselves and build their corporate image and brand. It gives all members the opportunity to gain an insight into the different business sectors in the Sultanate's market.

"Our role is to provide cross-industry, cross-company and cross-country information on the current business scenario and investment opportunities in the Sultanate. In Oman, there are European, Gulf and Indian business groups, apart from the domestic business

group. We have networked them with our forum. That has created a multi-channel flow of information benefiting all parties," said Will J Blake Assistant Director (Sales), InterContinental Hotels Group.

He stressed on the fact that Oman businesses have been "extremely benefited" by OBF. "It gives me pleasure to inform you that Omani ladies are also joining our forum now. This, I consider, is a significant achievement in enhancing businesses here. In fact, 40 per cent of our members are Omanis and the rest are expatriates."

Nawras CEO Ross Cormack, who presided over the forum's meeting on Sunday in the city, said, "This is not a local forum. We have gone international with the launch of our new website. Anybody who has investment interest in Oman can go to the site and download the first set of business data. Thereafter, when it becomes

a Oman Business Forum member we take care of the company's need to acclimatise itself with the market here."

On the benefits that have accrued to Omani businessmen here, Oman Oil Marketing Company manager (corporate affairs) Hisham M. Al Alawi said, "OBF is the forum that has helped us get first hand information on investment commitment of foreign companies in Oman. We are making good use of the information in the future."

Blake informed that though OBF is at its early stages of development it has already, it already has 200 members. "We will have a maximum of really serious 500 members so as to function well."

Blake added OBF has identified several key areas that can attract investment in a big way, including telecommunications, tourism and "not to mention oil and gas".

Oman Business Forum helps new firms gain more awareness

By Hasan Kamoopuri

MUSCAT — The Oman Business Forum (OBF) is working closely with the local business community to offer new companies a chance to gain awareness and cross exposure with other companies operating in the Sultanate, said Will J Blake, Asst Director of Sales of InterContinental Hotels Group.

An effective networking, the OBF takes place every two months at the Al Bustan Palace InterContinental Muscat. The forum encompasses all businesses in the Oman market, it offers new companies the opportunity to introduce themselves and build their corporate image and brand in the community and it affords all attendees the opportunity to gain an



OMAN Business Forum (OBF) holds a press conference at Al Bustan Palace Hotel yesterday.
— *Picture by Saleh al Sharji*

insight and awareness into different businesses in the market.

Addressing a press conference at Al Bustan Palace Hotel yesterday, Blake said OBF plans to bring more businessmen and ladies from all fields

of business together, and expand exposure of other companies.

The next business forum, he said will be held on December 5 at Al Bustan Palace Hotel and it will seek to introduce new

companies and business people.

Since its inception in March 2003, the forum has been "extremely successful with over 150 people at each OBF lunch. ■ To page 17

OBF helps new firms gain awareness

■ From page 15

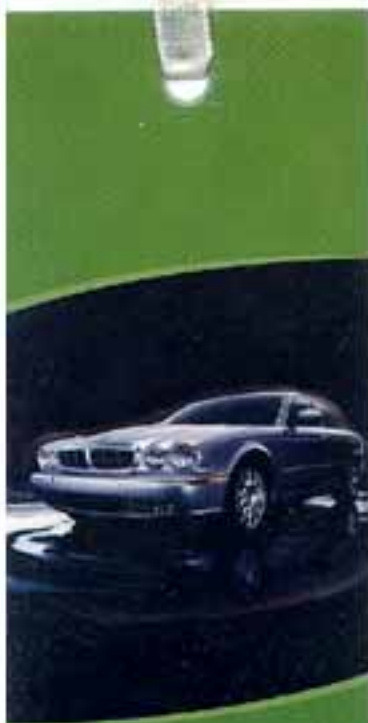
Each OBF lunch has a high profile guest of honour and key speaker in the attendance who addresses the attendees for about 10 minutes on current topical business matters in Oman. Business trends and any new concepts that might be in the pipelines are also discussed.

Blake said the role of the Oman Business Forum is to look after the corporate market sectors available and to enhance the network of the forum. "We felt that there was a lack of total forums available in Oman therefore the OBF stands to identify new companies in the market, share ideas and make contact across all businesses".

About 60 per cent of OBF attendees are expatriates and 40 per cent are Omanis. Blake said he wanted more and more Omani businesswomen to attend the OBF events in order to explore new business opportunities. The forum has around 500 business people's data base to share with its members.

The last OBF lunch had four companies buy floor space in order to advertise their products. The companies were MHD Automotive, introducing into the market the new Jaguar XJ and the Range Rover, Gold Coast Properties offering foreign investors to buy property in Australia's XJ and the Muscat Insurance Company, Polyproducts and Oman TradeNet (OTN).

At the OBF, each guest is given a list of all guests and companies that attend the forum so that they can follow up on any business matters. Nine different nationalities including Omanis, British, Dutch, German, Italian, French, Chinese, Indian and Australian participate in the forum. It is a good meeting ground for Omani and international business leaders.



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