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## **Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority Announces the Cultural Programme of Qasr al Hosn Festival**

*Festival promises visitors an interactive experience through guided tours, public programmes and an internationally renowned show*

**Abu Dhabi, January 14, 2014:** Under the patronage of His Highness General Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, Qasr al Hosn Festival will open next month on the site of Abu Dhabi's oldest structure dating back to the second half of the 18th century. Organised by Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA), Qasr al Hosn Festival will run from 20 February to 1 March 2014 with an exciting programme that includes guided tours of the fort, public programmes and an internationally renowned show adapted to reflect the elements of the UAE culture.

On February 21, Qasr al Hosn Festival will be open to women and children only.

HE Sheikh Sultan Bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, Chairman of Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority, said: "Qasr al Hosn represents the foundation of the nation's capital and symbolises more than two and a half centuries of Emirati heritage and cultural development. Qasr al Hosn Festival is an annual opportunity to celebrate this magnificent national monument and iconic symbol of Abu Dhabi's proud history and identity and to engage our community in the development of Qasr al Hosn restoration programme.

HE added: "The public programme of this year's Qasr al Hosn Festival reflects Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority's holistic vision of culture, which embraces both tangible and intangible heritage. The festival is a key part of the authority's commitment to the preservation of architectural and archaeological assets as well as to the development of visual and performing arts, literature and poetry to celebrate the Emirati identity."

For the first time in several years, Qasr al Hosn Festival presents an opportunity to its visitors to explore the historic fort as it undergoes renovation. The interior foyer will be partially open to festival visitors on guided tours and educational activities for children and youth.

Qasr al Hosn Festival will be a platform and an annual milestone, allowing the community to be completely associated with and engaged in the progress of Qasr al Hosn's restoration.



Another unique aspect of this year's festival is that visitors will be able to visit the historic National Consultative Council Chamber located adjacent to the Fort walls, where many important historical decisions were made.

In the Qasr al Hosn Centre, a public exhibition will enable visitors to delve deeper into Qasr al Hosn's history. The exhibition will be complemented by a series of oral narratives about Abu Dhabi's history and people.

In addition to the Qasr al Hosn fort being partially opened to the public, areas of the adjacent modern heritage building, the Cultural Foundation, will be opened during the festival, and will stage a series of live performances, poetry recitals and a series of films produced by emerging UAE artists.

The Cultural Foundation will also include a unique space, *Gahwa* (coffee in Arabic), a contemporary take on the Emirati coffee tradition where guests can learn about the *Gahwa*'s history and ritual, and taste or buy various types of traditional *Gahwa*.

Qasr al Hosn Festival Area will offer four distinct experiences revealing different aspects of Abu Dhabi's history and culture. Each area - Desert, Oasis, Marine and Abu Dhabi Island – will present interactive public programmes for audience of all demographics, including heritage workshops, traditional performances, celebrations highlighting Emirati skills and traditions, and guided tours and exhibitions.

One of the highlights of the festival will be the feature show 'Cavalia at Qasr al Hosn', an equestrian stage show created by Cirque du Soleil co-founder Normand Latourelle. The show has been specially adapted to be staged as part of the Qasr al Hosn festival. The multi-disciplinary production - featuring more than 40 highly-trained horses performing alongside performers and musicians - will make its regional debut at Qasr al Hosn Festival.

Throughout the celebrations, a team of Emirati "Ambassadors" from different educational institutions around the UAE will be on site to guide visitors through the various elements of the festival public programme and provide information.

Following the success of last year's event and the feedback received by the community, Qasr al Hosn Festival expects to welcome thousands of visitors.

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For more information about Qasr al Hosn Festival, please visit [www.qasralhosnfestival.ae](http://www.qasralhosnfestival.ae)

For more information about Cavalia, please visit [www.cavalia.net](http://www.cavalia.net)

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### **About Qasr al Hosn Festival**

Qasr al Hosn Festival is an annual event held on the grounds of Qasr al Hosn that celebrates the history of the fort and centuries of Emirati culture and tradition. The main aim of the festival is to strengthen the appreciation of Emirati heritage and identity, and to engage people in the on-going restoration of the more than 250-year-old structure. The festival comprises a theatrical show, and a wide range of historic and cultural exhibitions, workshops demonstrations and activities. The UAE community and visitors will experience both the tangible and intangible heritage of the Emirate through a wide range of activities at the grounds of Qasr al Hosn. This will present the fort in historical context, putting Qasr al Hosn on the cultural map and into the cultural life of Abu Dhabi today. The festival will take place from 20 February to 1 March 2014.

### **About Tourism & Culture Authority**

Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi) conserves and promotes the heritage and culture of Abu Dhabi emirate and leverages them in the development of a world-class, sustainable destination of distinction which enriches the lives of visitors and residents alike. The authority manages the emirate's tourism sector and markets the destination internationally through a wide range of activities aimed at attracting visitors and investment. Its policies, plans and programmes relate to the preservation of heritage and culture, including protecting archaeological and historical sites and to developing museums, including the Louvre Abu Dhabi, Zayed National Museum and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. TCA Abu Dhabi supports intellectual and artistic activities and cultural events to nurture a rich cultural environment and honour the emirate's heritage. A key authority role is to create synergy in the destination's development through close co-ordination with its wide-ranging stakeholder base.

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