

Qasr Al Hosn beckons visitors

10-day festival will give visitors inside look at renovations and transformation

ABU DHABI

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Staff Reporter

The oldest building in the capital will be celebrated at the second Qasr Al Hosn festival which will allow visitors an inside look into the ongoing renovation works, for the first time in a decade.

Commencing on February 20, the 10-day event will feature a live show by Cirque du Soleil's Cavali co-founder Normand Latourelle.

Meanwhile, a team of 200 Emirati students from across the capital will answer any questions visitors may have regarding the 250-year-old fort.

"Guests this year will be able to understand the significance of what started out to be a watchtower for fresh water, and then evolved into a symbol of defence to eventually become a representation of the transformation of Abu Dhabi," said Butti Al Muhairi, one of the committee members of the festival.

"Individuals will also be introduced to some of the first government buildings inaugurated in 1968 where some major decisions involving the UAE were taken," he added.

While poetry reading, story telling, and Emirati cultural dances take place throughout the festival, an exclusive show tailor-made for the event will exhibit the strong friendship

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Festival facts

- **What:** Second annual Qasr Al Hosn Festival
- **When:** February 20 to March 1 with February 21 being a women's only day
- **Why:** Learning about oldest building in Abu Dhabi
- **Where:** Qasr Al Hosn Fort, old Cultural Foundation building. Main entrances opposite Grand Stores and Futooh Al Khair.

that has brought together man and horse over the centuries.

“Around 50 horses and 50 acrobats, musicians, aerialists and singers will come together to demonstrate the strong bond between humans and horses that has existed for 5,000 years.

Live music

The music will all be live because sometimes we are required to improvise as the horses run around the stage, unrestricted by ropes,” Latourelle said.

“I have written a poem especially for the show, and have studied carefully the Emirati culture in order to be able to be as culturally sensitive as possible – in terms of the outfits or the story as a whole,” the director told *Gulf News*.

The fort will not be the centre-piece of the Cavali show, but will be used alongside projectors and other modern technology to bring Latourelle's vision to life.