

MEDIA/PUBLISHING

Shared staples of luxury, Arab wardrobe has led to discerning consumers, says Vogue Arabia editor in chief

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Gigi Hadid photographed for Vogue Arabia

By JEN KING

MUSCAT, Oman For decades Vogue Arabia was just a whisper, but the Conde Nast-owned publication's recent launch plans to redefine what it means to be a discerning Arab woman.

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During Conde Nast International's "Mindful Luxury" conference April 5, Vogue Arabia's editor in chief spoke about the new era of Vogue and its celebration of Arab womanhood. In addition to Vogue's renowned fashion coverage, the title's launch aims to spread light on a region often undervalued, dismissed and lost in translation.

"First, we must look at constitutes Arabia," said Her Highness Deena Aljunhani Abdulaziz, editor in chief of **Vogue Arabia**. "We are comprised of many countries, not just one.

"Although the Arab League is vastly diverse, we share common ground," she said. "The cultural DNA of being Arab is the unifying factor.

"We share a language, a way of life, an integrated and respectful societal structure and pride in diversity amongst the countries."

Reading for a new era

Based in Dubai, Vogue Arabia targets the entire Middle East, an area that is seeing one of the fastest growths in ultra-high-net-worth population.

Vogue Arabia is the 22nd Vogue edition produced globally. For Vogue Arabia, Cond Nast has partnered with Dubai-based publisher Nervora, which currently publishes Style.com/Arabia.

The advertising positions on Vogue Arabia's online platform have been bought by high-end fashion houses looking to capitalize on Middle Eastern market share. Brands signing on from launch include Chanel, Dior, Saint Laurent, Fendi, Dolce & Gabbana, Burberry and Bulgari, in addition to other relevant participants.

Vogue Arabia's ad space includes display and native activations ([see story](#)).



Dolce & Gabbana, who has a line of abayas and hijabs ([see story](#)), is a Vogue Arabia advertising partner

The title will be distributed to countries in the Middle East and North Africa, including members of the GCC, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt.

Her Highness Ms. Deena explained that the 22 countries that comprise the Middle East, throughout history, have contributed to art, architecture, literature, fashion, music and philosophy. Vogue Arabia stands at the apex of this rich culture.

Turbulence in the region has led to cultural misunderstandings, and Vogue Arabia is humbled by the task to represent the Middle East and its discerning women.

The publication continues Vogue's documentation of the times by acting as a barometer of what is new, next and noteworthy in high-end fashion. As it has done in other markets, Vogue Arabia is determined in its intentions to find new faces, support local designers based in the region and turn Arab couture into reality.

At the core

Vogue Arabia launched online Oct. 25 with a bilingual platform, in English and Arabic, a historic first for the magazine title. The print version began its distribution on March 5, demonstrating the changing media consumption of today's consumer audience.

For its print launch, Vogue Arabia chose to spotlight an It girl with Arab roots. American model Gigi Hadid, whose father is Palestinian, posed for the April cover in photographs by Inez Van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin.

The inaugural issue combines fashion and lifestyle content, featuring interviews with shoe designer Amina Muaddi and fashion designer Racil Chalhoub as well as a look inside the home of interior designer Maria Ousseini.



Model Gigi Hadid for the inaugural print edition of Vogue Arabia

This debut also includes a portfolio of Arab imagery from Vogue and new fashion photography from various talents tapped by fashion director Paul Cavaco ([see story](#)).

The April edition of Vogue Arabia is dedicated to the power of womanhood, as the matriarch is the crux of Arab society.

Speaking to who the Vogue Arabia readership base is, Her Highness Ms. Deena noted that she could be in Brooklyn or a rural village in Jordan. The publication's wide reach is a reflection of Arab culture's global nature.

No matter where this woman is located, her sense of self and culture remains constant and distinctive. Vogue Arabia was launched to allow the Arab woman to feel herself, no matter where she lives.

Vogue Arabia's mission statement is to display the Arab woman as discerning and powerful. Due to today's geopolitical conflicts in the regions, Arab women have been misrepresented and portrayed as meek, instead of being the respected center of their households and intrinsic figures of the community.

Also, the Arab woman is well-versed in luxury and couture sensibilities because the industry's pillars are the founding staples of the region's wardrobe.

"Most women want to look beautiful and feel good, to feel self-assured that she looks her best so she can focus on the day ahead," Her Highness Ms. Deena said. "Whether she's a stay at home mother or a surgeon, both women want to feel good about themselves.

"When someone is dressed well, it helps," she said. "The power of fashion is to give her that bounce in her step. A good outfit is like a corset for her life.

"The Arab is no exception to this rule, if anything, it's more important to her than ever before. Speak to that, and you will have a loyal client for life. More than that, you'll find a friend in her too."