

INTERVIEW BY BALSAM EL KHAULI, IMAGES BY KADER PATTAMBI

As a CEO & Managing Partner at the Finishing Touch, The Academy of International Etiquette & Savoir-Vivre in UAE, Nour Roumieh has mastered the rules of behavior & good manners in addition to being well versed in the habits and customs of other cultures. Here, she tells us more about this graceful world & shares with us few of her Protocol & Etiquette secrets...

SAVOIR-VIVRE with Nour Roumieh



Nour, What brought you to the world of "Savoir-Vivre"?

I was exposed to the world of Etiquette & protocol since I was a young girl as my mother was a diplomat herself and I was always fascinated to watch her getting ready to attend an event whether it is a formal function, a wedding, a concert, a gala dinner or even a charity luncheon noticing when she was opting for a long dress and when opting for a cocktail one. It was all about having the correct look and behavior even if she was to conduct condolences and share other people's sorrows.

Tell us more about yourself. What is your back ground?

You will be surprised to learn that my back ground was Engineering as I always liked Math and Physics classes! And although I was trained & worked as an engineer yet I was 21 years old when I first studied Etiquette as I always believed that working like a man does not mean that we have to put our social duties on the rack.

Was your experience always centered on International Etiquette? I was always trying my best to continuously apply the hints, tips and rules I've learned.

Keeping in mind that Etiquette is the Science and Art of Living & hence is not stagnant at all, on the contrary keeps on changing...Things which did

not exist years back such as facebook, Phone and airplane Etiquette became very essential to learn about in these days.

When did you establish the Finishing touch & what's the story behind it?

It started with an idea brain stormed with my friend Nadia Midami Azem & from there we went to Switzerland where we had intensive courses in the International Etiquette and Savoir Vivre.

The "Finishing Touch," the Academy of International Etiquette and Savoir Vivre" was established in 2007 with the help and full support of a prime Swiss Consultant, Diplomat and highly experienced Professor who is charge of developing programs and teaching in several highly reputed schools such as Nadine's de Rotchild Etiquette School in Geneva, Hospitality School of Lausanne, Villa Pierrefeux in Montreux and much more.

The aim of having the academy was extending and offering our knowledge and skills to help people continuously improve their soft skills.

Is it the only "Savoir-Vivre" academy in the Gulf & Middle East Region?

We were the first of such kind in the region & started conducting classes in 2008 after obtaining the necessary approvals on our programs & from there we had our first franchise in the Eastern Province of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia KSA and we are currently in negotiation for Riyadh region &



will start conducting classes in the beginning of 2013 in Tunisia.

What programs/Courses do you teach at the academy?

We have several programs tailored to match the different Social and Corporate skills such as the Youth and Teen Etiquette, Social Etiquette, Corporate Etiquette and several topics under Art de Vivre such as Gemology, Floral art, Home management and much more.

Going back to your programs, Can you tell us a major tip you always recommend while teaching Lifestyle & General Behavior?

I always recommend my students to use the word "respect" as the corner stone in their relations, starting within themselves and to have a strong common sense whenever they need a solution to a case.

How about table Etiquette & table manners?

Table manners is one of the most critical communication tools & dates back to the Roman Empire where the elite used to be trained to eat with three fingers, keeping the ring fingers outside the gravy.

It is again about our image. It tells a lot about whom we are, what our social or educational level is.

What will a student achieve at your academy?

In most of the cases our students gain confidence and self-esteem, and feel that they are much stronger to face real life challenges specially getting to know what to do or how to behave in certain situations.

I'm sure you've had some important clients? Would you be able to name few & how did you help them?

We work with a broad spectrum of clients coming from different back grounds and positions and from all over the world among them are ladies from the GCC Royal families, Politicians, chairmen and CEOs of many companies. In addition to putting the Code of conduct together for many companies.

Being in this part of the world where entertaining is continuous, Can you tell us how important is the art of inviting & why?

The art of Inviting has rules and regulations and no matter how expensive and rich is the invitation, it will lose its effect and impact if some Faux pas are committed. Each invitation or event should be treated as a project and to make it successful it definitely needs the proper know how.

A last word for the lady readers of Ok's Red Carpet magazine?

First, I would like to thank them and tell them that the best anti-aging treatment is the lady like behavior, Refinement and well manners as the inner beauty can't be reflected & I end by a saying for Goethe that "Behavior is a mirror in which everyone displays his own image."