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ART IN THE HOUSE

Ellen Samano sits down with XVA Art Hotel manager Iwan Yamin to talk about art, hospitality and the hotel that holds it together.

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room (e.g. the pillow cases, curtains, etc.). The tailor can make the same and deliver as ordered.

What do you want the hotel to be known for?

A unique accommodation experience in Dubai. The hotel has nine rooms with contemporary design. It is surrounded with real artworks from various artists including the artist-in-residence, Halim Al Karim.

What is your role as a hotel manager?

I offer the real Dubai to the public with our unique, personalized service in the hotel. I promote the arts and the artists to a wide audience. Art keeps the world alive. It makes people communicate and interact. Being in the field where hospitality meets with the arts is very rewarding.

What is the fun part of your role?

Meeting different types of people from different backgrounds. Being able to boost my creativity just by being surrounded by works of art.

And the hard part?

The whole adjustment to the culture and the weather. They are far too different from The

Netherlands where I lived for a long time.

Who are your frequent guests?

Visitors from Europe, United States, Australia and Japan. Also hotel-hoppers, the travel-savvy and stop-over guests.

Why do they choose XVA Art Hotel?

It's warm, cozy and relaxing. Service is friendly and the setting is breathtaking and calming.

What's the best compliment you have received so far?

"Friendly oasis of style and calm."

What other compliments do you still want to receive?

We want to be the "coolest" place to stay in Dubai.

Have you ever stayed in your hotel?

No, I haven't stayed in the hotel up to now, because it's full most of the time.

What is the hotel most proud of?

Personalized service heritage captured in artworks, and our inspiring ambience that is good to relax the body and soul. *



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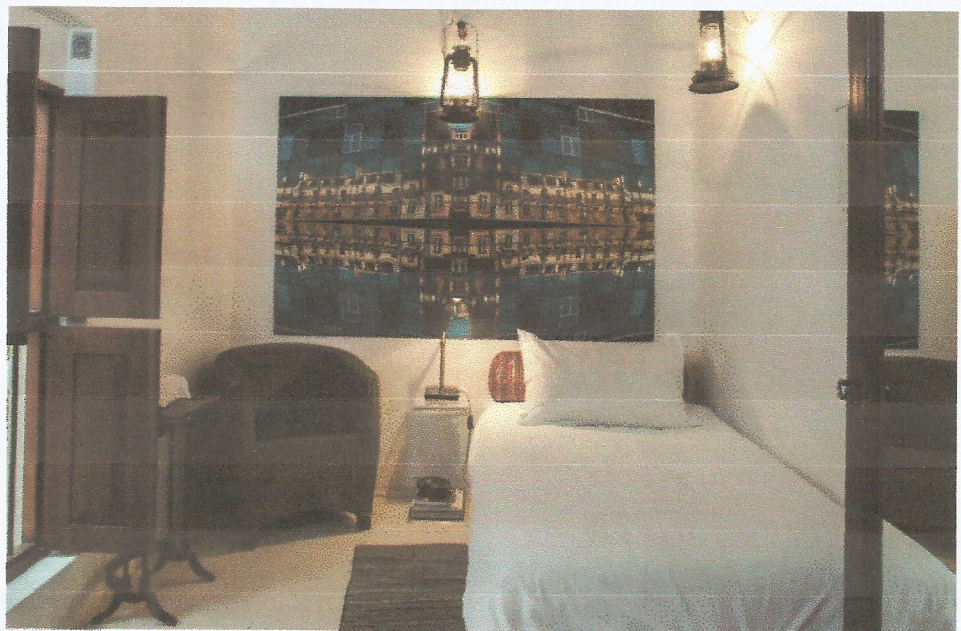


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So I finally found a chance to revisit a place that I loved at first sight.

XVA Art Hotel is not your ordinary hotel in Dubai. In fact, it stands out against the modern high-rise structures that the city is known for. XVA is a nine-bedroom boutique hotel tucked in one of those courtyards in the old Bastakiya Bur Dubai, now called Al Fahidi.

Established in 2003, this artsy accommodation is an artwork in itself, a majlis-style building in a neighborhood greatly influenced by Persian architecture.

Hotel manager Iwan Yamin says it's a "dream-come-true" for him to work in the hotel because it is a fusion of everything he has loved in life—art and tourism. After doing tourism high school in Jakarta, Indonesia, where he is originally from, and then hotel school in The Hague, he pursued the business of connecting artists with collectors, to keep their art alive, he says.

Yamin opens up the hotel—and his heart—to *Island Tribune*.

Describe the XVA Art Hotel in a few words.

An artistic and cool place in a heritage setting.

What are your rooms like?

Individually and uniquely designed by local artists and designers. They vary in sizes but they are all cozy and artsy. The rooms have regular amenities just like any other hotel, but in order to enhance the peaceful and relaxed experience of our guests, there are no TV and telephone in the rooms. (However) to keep our guests connected, there is high-speed wi-fi available throughout their stay.

How about your restaurants/café?

Vegetarian café with Arabic influence in great, calming courtyard setting. We are proud of our very own Eggplant Burger, popularly known as a "burger without a bread bun."

How would you describe your service?

Friendly, professional and personalized. We only have nine rooms to manage so the guests are treated like home guests, not just hotel guests. We approach our guests even before they arrive. We ask them how we can help with their itinerary and we assist them right away.

We have an in-house tailor that offers a unique service: the guests can request and order whatever item they liked in their

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