

Maison Boucheron has crafted a pendant especially for the UAE. It is **made of white gold with onyx, sapphires and diamonds, and is shaped like a falcon.** Price on request, available at Maison Boucheron shops in Mall of the Emirates, Dubai, and at The Galleria on Al Maryah Island, Abu Dhabi



Easy rider



Saint Laurent.

Diesel Black Gold.

Isabel Marant.

luxe for less by Nadia El Dasher

The fashion rebellion is here – with black leather, studs and a take-no-prisoners attitude. Look to Orphan Black and Girl with a Dragon Tattoo for on-screen inspiration, as well as the new collections of Diesel and Isabel Marant

how to wear

Daytime

- The trend can be divided into three subcategories: Bohemian (Isabel Marant), glamorous (Saint Laurent) and neo-punk (Diesel Black Gold). Choose your style and stick with it.
- The staple piece is a black leather jacket so be sure to invest in one that will last you more than one season. A simple zip-up version is your best bet.
- If in doubt, stick to an all-black palette with loose pieces underneath – an instant motorcycle-chic look.

After hours

- The idea of a dramatic new evening look should be left at the door. Not much will change at night in terms of clothing; a matte, deep-red lip or a messy rockabilly updo is plenty.
- Depending on which final look you're channelling, select your shoes wisely. Black is the way to go for any closed-toe style, be it flat ankle boots or plain, pointy-toe courts.
- Don't be tempted to add colour to your outfit with accessories. Gold chains and studs will be the farthest you should push it.

shopping list



Shorts, Asos, Dh133

Jacket, Dorothy Perkins, Dh755

Bag, Marks & Spencer, Dh187

Dress, Miss Selfridge, Dh220

Boots, Zara, Dh575

fashion briefs

Posen's latest role

The New York-based designer Zac Posen was recently announced as the new creative director at Brooks Brothers. America's oldest fashion label will tap into Posen's talents for its womenswear collection, with Thom Browne continuing his role in the Black Fleece collection

Primark: labels are stunt

After labels reading "Forced to work exhausting hours" and "Degrading working conditions" were found sewn into garments at Primark, the label investigated and said they were a stunt. "They were made by different suppliers, in different factories, on different continents," said a statement.

Charney is back

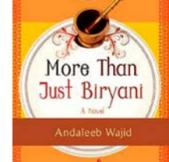
American Apparel's ousted chief Dov Charney has now taken over around 43 per cent of the cult brand's stock. The investment firm Standard General was obliged to lend him US\$20 million (Dh74m) upon his request, which he used to purchase the stock.

Grumbach out

Didier Grumbach, the 77-year-old president of the Fédération Française de la Couture, Prêt-à-Porter des Couturiers et des Créateurs de Mode, is leaving his position. Ralph Toledano, the former chief of Chloé, will take over on September 1.

books & views

For recipes of the dishes that feature in the Indian Muslim writer Andaleeb Wajid's novel *More Than Just Biryani* (Amaryllis), **check out her blog morethanjustbiryani.wordpress.com**



Andaleeb Wajid's books give readers an insight into the lives led by Indian Muslim families. Courtesy Andaleeb Wajid

Write to expression

The writer Andaleeb Wajid, whose fifth book is part of a time-travel trilogy, tells **Priti Salian** that the life of an Indian Muslim is no different from anyone else's

Modestly dressed in a pretty headscarf and shalwar kameez, the Bangalore-based writer Andaleeb Wajid smiles as she talks about her short but successful writing career – she has published five books in six years, most of them featuring a Muslim setting and credibly representing the community in India.

Wajid, 36, says she has been writing since she was 10. Her first book, *Kite Strings*, was released in August 2009 followed by *Blinkers Off* (August 2011), *My Brother's Wedding* (May 2013) and *More Than Just Biryani* (January 2014). *No Time For Goodbyes*, released in April this year, is her latest book and the first in the Tamanna Trilogy series, books on time travel targeted at young adults. The other two will be released in September and December this year.

How did you begin writing?

I have been writing stories since I was 10. When I was in Grade 12, I was left very confused about what I would do with my life. There weren't many options for girls from orthodox Muslim families. Then it occurred to me to take up writing as

a career. I was certain that no one would stop me.

Is there a reason why many of your books have been set in a Muslim milieu?

I'm quite amused with the way Muslims are depicted in Bollywood films and on television in India. My stories attempt to show a slice of Muslim life, which is no different from anyone else's. I wrote *More Than Just Biryani* only because I strongly felt that the world has labelled us as just biryani-eaters and I wanted them to be aware of the diversity in Muslim cuisine. *Kite Strings* discusses the issues a young girl from an orthodox Lababin Muslim [a community from Tamil Nadu] family faces. But a large number of non-Muslim fans also reached out to me, saying how much they identified with the character, which proves that some things transcend religious boundaries.

More Than Just Biryani was conceived as a recipe book. What prompted you to turn it into fiction?

My brother and I had thought of writing a culinary memoir but the idea never took off because I realised early that I could never do justice to

non-fiction. Instead I wrote about three women and the role food plays in their lives. Nearly every chapter of the book has a recipe, which is woven into the story.

Have you drawn upon your personal experiences to craft stories?

Yes. Like most writers, I started off writing about what I knew best. In *Kite Strings*, the protagonist Mehnaz is a rebel without a cause and behaves a lot like I did as a teenager. The story is set in Vellore, Tamil Nadu, where as a child I spent several holidays with my grandparents. In *More Than Just Biryani*, one of the protagonists loses her father. It was the most painful chapter I have ever written.

What else is in the pipeline?

I have one more young-adult novel in my kitty, about a girl whose mother has left the family. Then there's another about a crochet teacher and the four women who learn this beautiful craft from her and end up baring their lives to her.

● Andaleeb Wajid's books are available on Amazon

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observing life by Chris Newbould

Ramadan, the perfect time to slow down

I've just returned from a few days' break in Cyprus and have to say I was totally bowled over by the radically different pace of life there compared to the hustle and bustle of Dubai. I've rarely encountered anywhere so relaxed; most of the population seemed so laid-back, you could probably beat them round the head with a wet fish and they'd just look at you quizzically before getting on with the next plate of their seafood mezze.

Of course, holiday islands such as this can afford to be chilled out – that's part of what makes them a good holiday island and the machinations of global business aren't such a key feature as they are in a city such as Dubai, but I still couldn't help wondering if we could learn a few lessons from the more relaxed approach to life. For example, although things moved at what externally appeared to be a catatonic pace, everything was still done with remarkable efficiency. Taxis arrived as booked – and knew where they were going, orders in restaurants were delivered as ordered and requests for information about trips or locations were met with a friendly, informed response. Basically, those working in the tourism industry knew their product.

Compare that with the apparent accepted wisdom in Dubai's eateries that hiring more staff makes for better service. I find quite the opposite is often the case, particularly when the staff regularly get the order wrong, bring different people's meals at different times so one poor soul is always left eating alone at the end and the other myriad niggles of eating in Dubai that I'm sure I can't be alone in encountering (not everywhere, of course, but too often).

Just the night before I flew to Cyprus, I had a meal out (halloumi, ironically) in Dubai. On this occasion, I'm pleased to say, our orders arrived correctly and concurrently, but the restaurant was fairly quiet and no fewer than four different waitresses came over to ask if our food was OK. There's a fine line between polite, professional interest and borderline harassment, and this was getting close to crossing it.

Having returned with Ramadan already under way, perhaps this could be an ideal time to spread some of that relaxed vibe to my fellow residents since things slow down at this time of year anyway. Drivers – try not to get so angry when the guy in the big 4x4 cuts into that parking space. Restaurants – if you're empty, tell your staff to take five; don't feel they always have to be doing something. Customer-service call centres – no, let's be realistic, I think they're beyond redemption the world over.

I noticed on pulling up outside my building from the airport that my building management seemed to have taken my advice already. It seems the building security contract had passed over to a new company in my absence and I was greeted by some fairly friendly chaps on the door wearing a pretty simple shirt-and-tie combo. The previous company had preferred the full pseudo-paramilitary approach with epaulettes and matching berets, and it sometimes felt like you were returning home to the seat of an uprising. Just this minor change seems to have already made the place a more relaxed one.

So, whether you're celebrating the Holy Month or not, maybe we can all see if we can use this traditional time of spiritual reflection to just relax and carry that through to Eid and beyond. Otherwise, I may need another holiday.

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