

# QAWALI

Inspired by the heart of soulful **Qawwali** culture.



**Carry yourself...**  
and be inspired by our  
beautiful jewellery collection



**Discover** the  
Indo-Persian  
region



**Plus...** Interviews,  
food stories, cocktails  
and much more



# We Are Always at Liberty to Create New Memories, Each More Beautiful Than the Last...

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The greatest gift we have as human beings is the ability to remember joyful moments.

Granted, some memories are foggier than others; but they always leave something behind.

How often has a scent or sound transported you back to a certain moment in your life, that you had safely stored in your memory bank, because it meant so much to you?

Being able to do this is such a blessing, as memories lift us when we feel despair; and we are always at liberty to create new ones. Each, more beautiful than the last.

Throughout this magazine, we invite you to enrich your life with even more precious memories, through every element of the Qavali experience.

Be it with culinary art, cocktails, or music, our deepest desire is to deliver unforgettable moments. Starting with the page-turns of this very magazine...

And eventually, by serving you in person.

Yours in Service,

**Qavali.**

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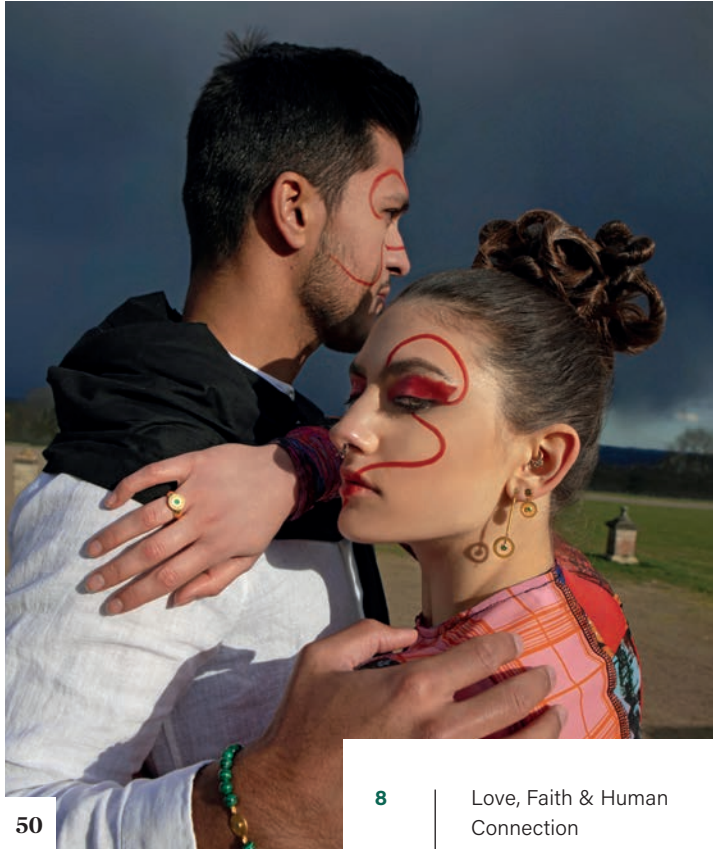
# QAVALI

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**W**hat rests between a beauty and the perfectionist  
a sculptor and his fine subject;  
between the facts, and most beautiful myths -  
is the only veil, my beauty, should care to lift.



# Love, Faith & Human Connection

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**Sahar Rezazadeh** brings her Persian heritage and style to Qavali.



**“We have a strong female presence and I like to think that’s because ladies have good taste.”**



**Can you tell us more about your role here at Qavali, it appears to be full of variety?** My role is very varied with a focus on brand management, development, exposure and communication. I also look after guest experience, reservations and events. My average day involves regular communication with guests, our resident artists as well as other enterprises that we work closely with.

**Was hospitality the industry you always wanted to work in?** It never crossed my mind. I have an outlandish history. After completing my Political Science degree, I launched my own business selling Persian rugs and art because I loved the arts and my heritage; then I moved onto my Masters studies in Real Estate. I qualified as a Chartered Surveyor at CBRE where I represented fashion & lifestyle brands including Versace, Tesla, Victoria's Secret, LVMH Group and Deciem. After that I joined Deciem as its Global Head for the brand expansion. Because I was working in real estate this brought me very close to the retail and hospitality industry. In fact, I met Faheem our CEO when I was trying to flog him commercial real estate!

## “There is nothing more compelling than love and kindness to one another in this world.”

**What was it that drew you to Qavali?** That's easy – the values, ethos and leadership. I've been a part of the steering group since inception. I understood from the preliminary meetings in the early stages with Faheem that he was a visionary and passionate about creating a place with faith, love and human connection. This resonated with me immensely.

**What role did you play in creating the restaurant?** Some may say I'm the Persian side of the Indo-Persian. I've had the liberty to add my essence to many elements of the space from menus to design as well as contributing to systems and processes that enhance guest experience. The whole creation of Qavali is truly a labour of love as a very dear friend recently reiterated. To this day, we act on our duty to serve, from a place of love.

**Tell us more about the kind of guests Qavali attracts?** We have such a cosmopolitan guest list from all walks of life and demographics, and many of them travel from quite a way to enjoy the experience of dining with us. We have a strong female presence and I like to think that's because ladies have good taste.

**Can you describe Qavali to someone who has never been?** An oasis of love, soul food and drinks with sexy music and entertainment. It's a first-of-its-kind restaurant that takes inspiration from the mountains of Turkey and Iran, the plains of Afghanistan and the dewy fields of India and Pakistan. The food travels the same path as “Qawwali” (Sufi devotional music); and the experience is designed to entice all of your senses like no other restaurant in the city.

**What makes Qavali stand out in Birmingham's restaurant scene?** Simple; there is nothing like it in the city. Qavali is definitely the first of its kind and we are so proud to introduce diners to something that is really out of the ordinary. Whether it's the show-stopping interiors, the impeccable service or the most delicious dishes, a visit to Qavali is an event in itself. The décor is dark and dramatic, with endless luxury touches, and the striking artwork makes the perfect Insta-worthy backdrop.

**What are your favourite dishes on the menu?** Am I allowed to say everything! I guess if had to choose maybe I'd go with Saffron Seabass and Mughlai Prawns for my pescatarian past. However, I genuinely love it all, from the Persian MazzeH platter, Sultani Chaat and Lahori Lamb Chops to the Afghani Kofta, the Peshawari naan and mushroom rice. For dessert I'd go with the Medley signature collection because I simply couldn't choose just one. Okay I'll stop there!

**And what's your favourite cocktail?** Flowers of Hafez, Paradise Garden and Scarlett because I love the rose garnish and inclusion. I use rosewater on everything including my face. Our recently launched Whisky menu is also extremely exciting, with the option to go non-alcoholic on many varieties. I also love Paloudeh and Solar Equinox.

**What is it about Persian culture that you specifically find compelling?** The core values of hospitality, love and kindness in Persian culture really resonate with me. Some of the most renowned romantics and writers hail from the region; many of which are fundamental to our Qavali philosophies including Rumi, Hafez and Omar Khayyam. There is nothing more compelling than love and kindness to one another in this world.





# A Culinary Adventure

Undoubtedly, at the heart of every Qavali experience are exquisitely crafted dishes, which draw their inspiration from across the Indo-Persian Empire.

**Head Chef Deepak Kumar** took time out from his busy kitchen to explain how he creates a menu that remains fresh, innovative and true to its complex roots.





Sultani Chaat (vegetarian). Cumin-spiced chickpeas, wheat crisps and lentil dumplings. Topped with dates, tamarind chutney, mint, rose-scented yogurt, pomegranate seeds and kadayif



**It's an early weekday afternoon at the restaurant, and it's great to see your team already busy. It must be a pleasure to see how Birmingham has taken to the restaurant?** Yes, it's been a few months since Qavali's grand opening and we are delighted to see that we are continuing to attract guests from the city and further afield. But what is even better is that so many of them return time and time again – not only to enjoy the food but also enjoy the unique atmosphere we have created.

**Tell us more about how you started your journey as a professional chef?** I was always surrounded by food and culinary get-togethers as a child. This is typical for most people brought up in traditional Indian families; and that's exactly where my love for cooking began. My professional career started in 1999, back in India. I completed a certified catering course and landed my first job as a chef at the Radisson Hotel. Then in 2004, after gaining valuable experience at the Radisson and Doubletree Hilton soon after, I moved to the UK.

I was fortunate enough to work at several high-end restaurants in Central London (some of which were

Michelin Star) and this polished my skills immensely. By 2016, I relocated to Birmingham and that's when I met Faheem Badur, who was working on an Indian street food concept at the time. By this point, I'd honed my culinary expertise across various cuisines. Faheem and I closely worked on many successful concepts together, until the idea of Qavali was born.

**Coming onto Qavali, what is your specific role?** Essentially my role is ensuring that standards are kept high in the kitchen, as well as team morale and creativity. We have 15 team members back-of-house, all of whom specialise in different regional cuisines and cooking methods. The working environment is high-pressured and sometimes tough – but we have a lot of fun and keep each other motivated.

I'm also involved in menu creation, developing new Indo-Persian dishes with the help of the team, and making sure that every kitchen member understands all of our ingredients and cooking practices. Then there's the obvious task of preparing, cooking and serving the dishes. No day is ever the same.





“One of my favourite parts of ‘the job’ is getting together with all the chefs, inventing new ideas and feeling inspired by their culinary background and culture. It’s humbling and beautiful.”



**Tell us more about these 15 team members, do they each bring something different to the table?**

Yes, absolutely. What I’m most proud about at Qavali is that we don’t just market ourselves as an ‘Indo-Persian’ restaurant; but we actually work with professional chefs from each region of the Persian Empire.

I myself am from India; then we have a chef from Turkey, a chef from Afghanistan, a chef who specialises in Iranian cooking and a chef from Pakistan. For example, Qavali’s Lahori Chicken Karahi is based on a traditional Pakistani recipe – as you would find on the streets of Lahore. This is with thanks to the genius minds we have working hard behind-the-scenes.

One of my favourite parts of ‘the job’ is getting together with all the chefs, inventing new ideas and feeling inspired by their culinary background and culture. It’s humbling and beautiful.

**On the subject of Indo-Persian, this is something that’s new to Birmingham. How are diners responding to these new flavours and dishes?**

We knew that covering such a wide region, with various different flavour blends would be a bold move.

It has definitely been a learning process for both ourselves and Qavali’s guests. However, our priority has always been to use the highest quality produce and cooking methods, which guarantees an incredible culinary experience every time. Because we’ve maintained these standards, guests are responding brilliantly – and really enjoying their foodie ‘discoveries’

Also, now that guests have had the chance to familiarise themselves and fall in love with Qavali’s flavours, we’ve revamped the menu and introduced Qavali’s Afternoon Tea, which includes new inventions of Indo-Persian inspired finger sandwiches and savoury canapés.



“Ultimately, it’s about being smart, savvy and creative”



**You speak a lot about quality, tell us more about how you source your produce and ingredients – did a lot of thought go into choosing your suppliers?** Yes, 100%; this is where excellent food begins. We believe in working with high-end suppliers and paying more for our produce, as quality is paramount. We receive fresh produce and raw ingredients every day and meat every two days. Our chicken is fresh from the butcher, and has never been frozen elsewhere, while our lamb is fresh too – we never use mutton, as this compromises on taste. Even the way our meat is delivered to the restaurant is immaculate. Always sealed and kept under 5 degrees, after which we will refrigerate it correctly, straight away.

**And what about cooking processes, does as much attention-to-detail go into this?** Because we prepare dishes from different regions of the Persian Empire, the cooking processes vary. So we need to be mindful of this and train and educate our team, accordingly. For example, Qavali’s Daal Bukhara (also known as ‘The 18-hour daal’) is prepared in the same way you would find in India. We soak the lentils and cook them over charcoal overnight for that rich, smoky flavour.

**It must be hard to choose, but what is your favourite dish on the Qavali menu?** I love the Sultani Chaat; it’s a vibrant, colourful dish and an explosion of flavours. I’m also a big fan of the Lahori Chicken Karahi and all of Qavali’s Iranian inspired dishes, as the ingredients used are quite different.

**Finally Deepak, what is it that you love most about Indo-Persian culture – and Qavali?** That’s a difficult question! There’s so much to love. On the cultural side, I adore the complex history of the Persian Empire, that has always remained ‘unexplored’ on a deeper level until Qavali came along. As I’m sure you’ve realised by now, Qavali is a multi-sensory experience; we wish for our guests to venture on a culinary journey like no other, rather than quickly eat a nice meal and not give it much thought later.

Indo-Persian culture is a marriage of different customs, values, philosophies and of course, flavours. The way it has evolved over the years has been outstanding, and I’m proud to be part of a team that promises to continually evolve and get better.



**Sounds like an endless creative process! What kind of things do you need to consider when creating new dishes for the menu?** I feel it’s integral to keep-up-to-speed with what’s going on in the industry, and try and stay one step ahead of the game. The team and I visit many restaurants both in and out of Birmingham, to see what works and what doesn’t. There’s also a lot of consumer research that goes into the process. For example, how are people’s eating habits changing? What is currently trending? Which ingredients and cooking methods are sustainable and friendly to the environment?

Our suppliers also keep us informed on their newest produce, which we try and adopt into our dishes. Recently, we were made aware of the popularity of Turkish sun-dried tomatoes, and we’ve incorporated them quite creatively in the menu with feta cheese and garlic. Ultimately, it’s about being smart, savvy and creative, and placing guest satisfaction at the heart of everything.



Persian Lamb Shank, braised in a spice broth with pomegranate and pistachio



# Whisky Tales

Home to one of the city's only whisky bars, Qavali is known for its vast selection of beverages - each inspired by legends and customs from across the Persian Empire. We speak to award-winning bar manager and cocktail artist, **Andrew Hyman** to find out how Qavali exceeds the expectations of guests, who have a thirst for stories and intriguing flavours.



**“I guess you could say that’s when I decided to make bar work my career. I’ve never looked back.”**

**Andy (Andrew), we know you are always so busy and appreciate you chatting with us. There’s a lively atmosphere at the restaurant tonight; how do you find the time to balance everything?**

Ah, you’re welcome. Well, it’s always a pleasure when you love what you do. We’ve created a solid team here at Qavali; so even during the busiest shifts, there’s always someone behind the bar to give you a helping hand. That’s the beauty of working with people who are aligned with you.

Also, my experience in the industry definitely helps. I’ve passionately worked in this space for more than 20 years, and across six different countries. Starting with Birmingham’s hippest bars (that literally set the trend of ‘cocktail nights’ in the city), to renowned venues in Mumbai and Singapore.

**That’s a phenomenal scope of experience. What drew you to the bar and cocktail industry in the first place?**

Believe it or not, I actually started out as chef in the early stages of my working life. This was mostly down to my upbringing; and how my parents encouraged me to get ‘stuck in’ with the cooking and family get-togethers. Food and flavours (and the pursuit of flavours) has always been a large part of my life; and I’m thankful for that.

I worked full-time in more chef-based roles while completing my higher education studies in food and drink. My course required me to get involved in a number of front of house roles, and this is when I realised my passion for working with people and drinks. For me, that buzz was second-to-none. I guess you could say that’s when I decided to make bar work my career. I’ve never looked back.



“Qavali is all about reinventing trends; that’s what makes us so unique.”

Cocktail: Anjir



**It sounds like you’ve had plenty of opportunity to travel and explore different cultures through your work. How does this translate into what you do at Qavali?**

Yes, I’m fortunate to have immersed myself in an array of different cultures and expand my knowledge of worldly flavours. My experience across Asia (India and Singapore) lends well to what I now do at Qavali; even though Indo-Persian flavours have a history and profile of their own.

But, I have always been good at adapting to different briefs and letting my creativity run wild. For example, when I first joined Qavali and was told that we would need to incorporate ‘less conventional’ ingredients to the cocktails, such as fig and coriander, I was more than excited and up for the challenge.

**Coming onto the ‘less conventional’, tell us more about your whisky cocktail menu. This is certainly something one wouldn’t normally find at a venue like Qavali.**

Well, Qavali is all about reinventing trends; that’s what makes us so unique. It’s true that people wouldn’t normally associate whisky with Indo-Persian cuisine, or a typical ‘girls’ night out’ (whisky is normally known as a ‘mature gentleman’s drink’). But it’s because of all these reasons

that we wanted to go down the whisky route. As you know, there are few - if any - luxury whisky bars in Birmingham, that also offer a high-end restaurant menu. The flavour profiles of whisky actually complement Indo-Persian dishes exceptionally well; and you will always find me recommending the whisky cocktails to guests who are here for a lavish lunch or dinner.

Guests are usually pleasantly surprised by the delicate and drinkable flavours of our whisky cocktails. I have used ingredients from the Persian Empire; and worked hard to ‘layer flavours,’ for the smoothest drinking experience.

**It must be hard to choose, but what is your favourite cocktail on the whisky menu?**

The first one that springs to mind is the Old World Walnut; it’s a cocktail I imagine myself repeatedly enjoying as a guest. I created it with a male and female demographic in mind, and feel it’s the ultimate crowd pleaser, that people can happily sip on at the end of their meal.

I also love the Solar Equinox - which was actually the first cocktail I ever created at Qavali. It is a bright and vivacious drink with beautifully sharp undertones. The process of making it is also a true labour of love.



Solar Equinox



Thyme & Patience



**You're obviously quite the flavour connoisseur Andy. Do you see yourself as more of a mixologist or bar server, who still enjoys the vibrancy of being front of house?**

I actually dislike this question! As I am neither a mixologist nor a barman. For me, a mixologist is a person who has their head buried in their creations, while not needing to worry about the hospitality part of the business too much.

I love hospitality and I love exceptional front of house service. So, I see myself as a mix of both. This is why working with Qavali is such a pleasure; I'm at liberty to be creative and inventive, while also getting to work with a brilliant bar team and delighting guests every day.

**You speak very highly of your bar team; tell us more about them.**

Qavali's bar and bar service is led by an exceptional team. They show up for guests every day and serve up the most memorable experiences. I truly adore working with them and watching them learn and prepare each drink with charm and enjoyment. This isn't easy to do in a 500-cover restaurant while perfecting the balance between product and speed.

**Finally Andy, what would you say to a person who has never visited the Qavali bar before?**

I would say, please come along and bring all your loved ones. Qavali not only brings the richness of the Persian Empire to life, but it does so by wrapping deep-seated stories and philosophies around it - this is so unique.

We have a beautiful ambience here, from the bar, right through to the restaurant. Guests truly feel the sincerity of our hospitality and our desire to deliver unforgettable moments, every time.

I say this with pride and affirmation, a visit to Qavali - and you'll certainly want to return to raise your glasses, over and over again.



**“Qavali not only brings the richness of the Persian Empire to life; but it does so by wrapping deep-seated stories and philosophies around it - this is so unique.”**



Your lips, most savoured, when left to rest;  
for your heart is what truly speaks best.  
Be the fabric of the world, and the life of the sea-  
be the prayer that may guide us, to our soul's liberty.

# Dishes & Destinations

The Persian Empire is the name given to a series of dynasties centred in modern-day Iran, that spanned across several centuries. The first Persian Empire, founded by Cyrus the Great, became one of the largest in history, stretching from Europe's Balkan Peninsula in the West to India's Indus Valley in the East.

The term 'Indo-Persian' refers to the integration of Persian influence into various cultures of India, Pakistan and parts of Afghanistan. The earliest introduction of Persian culture to the Indian subcontinent was by the Muslim rulers of Turkic and Afghan origin; after which this 'cultural synthesis' rose steadily through the Delhi Sultanate from the 13th and 16th centuries, and the Mughal Empire from then onwards (until the 19th century).

This complex history has been captured in Qavali's menu, which pays homage to parts of the Persian Empire and Indo-Persian culture. Here we shine a spotlight on some of Qavali's standout dishes, each representing a different and historically significant destination.



The vibrant mix of ingredients for creating the perfect Biryani



Share an eclectic  
variety of cuisine from  
the Indo-Persian empire







### From Turkey, Samsun Pide 1

The word 'pide' translates as 'Turkish flatbread'. And while this more-or-less describes the form of this famous dish, its history is far more complex.

Some say the Ottomans enjoyed a bread similar to pide, called the tokalak; and that is how the pide came to be. Others say the dish was invented in the 1920's, across a war-torn Turkey. However, nearly all agree that pide originated in the Samsun area of Turkey; and it can be as simple as sesame-sprinkled flatbread.

These days, it's common to describe pide as 'Turkish pizza' but that would be doing such a culturally-rich dish a disservice. Traditionally, Samsun pide is made with dough; and can be filled with cheese, vegetables, and meats. The secret of the perfect pide lies with its use of glossy butter, which really brings the bread to life.

Qavali offers three different fillings - plump tomatoes, onion, and pepper, just as it's enjoyed in Turkey.

### From Iran, Koobideh Kebab 2

In the crowded Bazaar of Tehran, or inside a hospitable home in Shiraz, the sizzles and fragrant aromas of cooking meat draw Iranians in. Koobideh Kebab is inseparable from their culture; in close-knit families, children make fond memories of helping their fathers grill spiced lamb meat, before wrapping it up in bread (and perhaps taking a cheeky bite, beforehand). This skewered meat dish is widely favoured at Persian weddings, get-togethers and in nearly every restaurant in Iran.

It is believed that the original Koobideh Kebab was invented during the Safavi Era, by a Persian chef named Nayeb. The chef created the dish for people who did not have the time to return home during their working day in central Tehran and needed to eat a filling lunch nearby instead.

Not only was it easy to make, it was cheap too (during a time when rice was more expensive than meat). And so this delicious kebab, mixed with spices - lots of turmeric and sumac - became immensely popular and is enjoyed as one of Qavali's staple grilled dishes.

### From Afghanistan, Kofta Afghani 3

The cuisine of Afghanistan has elements of all its surrounding regions, but remains distinctively - and deliciously - its own. The Afghans are keen meat-eaters; and because they reside in a region of freezing winters and harsh landscapes, fatty dishes often serve them as fuel.

A traditional favourite is Kofta Challow, which consists of handmade meatballs (the 'kofta') of either lamb or beef that are steamed and cooked in a rich tomato sauce. These

meatballs are served alongside Afghani rice ('challow') and an assortment of vegetarian and non-vegetation curries. Qavali's Kofta Afghani simmers succulent lamb meatballs in a sauce made of tomato and fresh garlic, two ingredients found in abundance in this part of the region. Contrary to popular belief, Afghans prefer their food to be delicately spiced and seasoned. As such, Qavali's Kofta Afghani is enjoyed as ultimate comfort food, with just the perfect amount of heat. Perfect with a side of buttery bread or a bowl of rice, just like they devour in Afghanistan.

### From Pakistan, Lahori Chicken Karahi 4

Lahore is a city of ornate Mughal buildings; where rickshaws and motorbikes weave in and out of sun-soaked lanes. This historically rich part of Pakistan is celebrated for its culinary brilliance and every local here will share their favourite food-related memory.

Food Street in the bustling Gawalmandi Quarter is famously known to be a hubbub of street food delicacies and large, bubbling pots of Pakistani karahis. At the heart of this is the chicken karahi walla, who adds fresh ginger juliennes and chopped chilli to his gastronomic masterpiece, before serving it to hungry locals who devour the classic Lahori Chicken Karahi with chunks of tandoori roti.

As a dish that originally comes from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly, the Northern frontier of Pakistan), Lahori Chicken Karahi is distinguished by its tomato-like base and use of fresh coriander, capsicum peppers and plenty of green chilli. Qavali takes inspiration from Pakistan's culinary finesse and prepares its Lahori Chicken Karahi in a cast iron wok, ensuring it is packed with flavour.

### From India, Hyderabad Biryani 5

The perfect portrayal of Indo-Persian; the fragrant Hyderabad Biryani begins with roots in Iran after which it has evolved in India having been introduced to the country, by the Mughals. To date, there are numerous versions of the classic biryani dish, with various recipes using different kinds of fruits, nuts and meats to enhance its rice-based flavour.

The 400-year-old city of Hyderabad is famously linked to its signature biryani, as much as it is with the stunningly constructed Charminar monument. It was invented in the kitchens of the Nizam of Hyderabad and combines elements of Hyderabad and Mughlai cuisine. Usually, this version is made with meat, yoghurt (for a slightly tangy flavour) and is topped with fried onions, for an added sweet taste. The traditional Hyderabad spices also give this biryani its satisfying kick. The Hyderabad Biryani has travelled immensely and remains a true tribute to The City of Pearls.

# Afternoon Tea at Qavali is More Than a Treat ... it's an Occasion

This most luxurious of dining experiences is bursting with the flavours that are drawn from across the Persian Empire. Settle down in stylish surroundings and indulge in a speciality spread of finger sandwiches, scones, classic Indo-Persian sweets, savouries and a glass of Champagne.

**Pictured: Champagne Afternoon Tea at Qavali includes -**  
Chicken tikka with roasted red pepper finger sandwiches  
beetroot hummus with sun-dried tomato canapés  
Persian chocolate brownie, pistachio baklava,  
rose Turkish delight and assorted macarons,  
scones with clotted cream and seasonal preserve

**Accompaniments:**  
Champagne  
Heart of Persia Teapot. (Qavali's signature blend)  
For more information including vegetarian options  
please visit: [www.qavali.com/afternoon-tea/](http://www.qavali.com/afternoon-tea/)





# Qavali - Exploring Indo-Persia

Inspired by Sufism and its euphoric qawwali music, Qavali's elegant menu takes its visitors on a culinary and spiritual journey spanning over 3,500 miles across Indo-Persia. From the bustling bazaars of Tehran to the tropical east Indian coast, these dishes have been influenced by the enduring search for joyful experiences to create something unique.

But while Qavali celebrates the epic voyage of Qawwali, each country crossed offers something very individual and brings its own distinct history, language, landscapes and people. An open mind and the willingness to explore are two key components of the best travel experiences and the countries of Indo-Persia offer some of the world's most iconic sights, cities and sounds.

**Join us on a voyage east to the spiritual sound of Qawwali music, visiting some of the most alluring countries on Earth.**



Hot air ballooning, Central Anatolia, Turkey

# Turkey



**With the Bosphorus Strait piercing the city in half and straddling the line between east and west, Istanbul is both seductive and enigmatic. Home to several UNESCO World Heritage Sites, part of its enduring attraction is down to the city's 2,500-year history and its glorious architecture.**

A Byzantine masterpiece and the world's largest cathedral for more than 1000 years, the soaring Hagia Sofia mosque has been a place of worship for Istanbul's Christians and Muslims since 537, when it was built by Roman Emperor Justinian I.

But there's far more to Turkey than the city they once called Constantinople.

And while travelling down Turkey's sun-kissed Aegean coast means entering a world of glittering turquoise seas, rugged rivieras and charming coastal towns, it's to the east where you'll see this vast land at its most remarkable.

Journey into Central Anatolia and take a ride on a hot air balloon across the weird and wonderful landscape of Cappadocia's colourful rock formations, while in the far east of Turkey stands the lone snow-capped peak of Mount Ararat. Soaring to an elevation of 5,137 m (16,854 ft), it's a spectacular corner of a land that deserves to be explored in its entirety.



Hagia Sofia mosque, Istanbul

# Iran



The towering columns and ornate facades at Persepolis



**One of the oldest civilisations on earth, what is now modern-day Iran, was once the beating heart of Indo-Persia. The intrepid ancient Achaemenid Empire spread from the Greek coast on the Mediterranean all the way out to the shores of western India.**

And though that empire has long since disappeared, Iran's historical sites offer a fascinating window into that distant time period. Just 60km north of the vibrant city of Shiraz, the towering columns and ornate facades at Persepolis are a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the palatial ruins date back to the 6th century BC.

Back in Shiraz, another more recent example of beautiful Iranian architecture is the Nasir al-Mulk Mosque.

Completed in 1888, the extraordinary cocktail of colours that shine through the mosque's stained glass windows in the early morning light are unlike anything seen in Europe. However, not every wonder in Iran is man-made.

Journey north beyond the bustling capital of Tehran and stand in awe at the sight of Mount Damavand. Featuring prominently in Persian folklore and literature, it's the highest mountain in the Middle East and is visible from Tehran's busy streets on a clear day.

From the dense forests of Gilan Province to the widescreen dunes of the Maranjab Desert, the landscapes of Iran are as varied as they are striking.

# Afghanistan



**Vast, rugged and dominated by the 500-mile long Hindu Kush mountain range, Afghanistan is a country of cinematic scenery and many cultures. With such geographic diversity, it's no surprise that Afghanistan's people have been a proud tapestry of tribes, nomads and warriors over thousands of years.**

Those people have crafted exquisite aromatic cuisine blending spices, herbs and tender meat, but this country is truly a place to see the great outdoors.

Lying in the heart of central Afghanistan's Bamyan Province, the otherworldly Band-e Amir National Park is famous for its series of six deep blue lakes inside a spectacular canyon. Travel to northeastern Afghanistan

and you'll soon be engulfed by the stunning Panjshir Valley. Flanked by steep snow-dusted mountains and split by the snaking Panjshir River, the cavernous 75-mile-long valley is epic and home to around 100,000 people.

On the opposite side of the country in Herat Province is the grandest mosque in Afghanistan and arguably the finest in all of Asia. On first approaching the Great Mosque of Herat, it's difficult not to be struck by the ornate, tiled façade with its huge arch flanked on either side by two soaring minarets wrapped in dazzling geometric patterns.

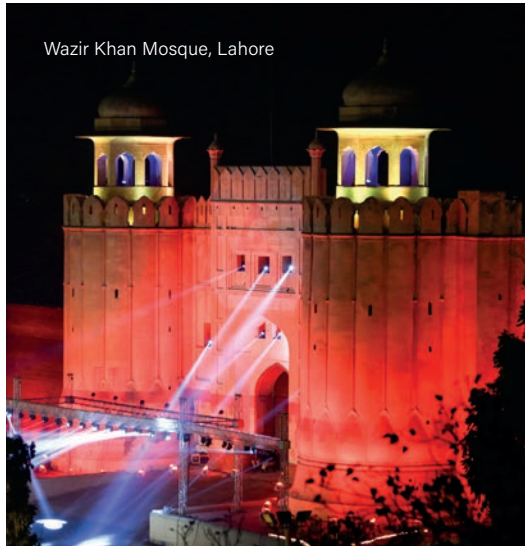
The 600-year-old mosque is one of many examples of Afghani architecture and culture that should be more famous worldwide, and perhaps, one day, may indeed be.

The ornate Great Mosque of Herat

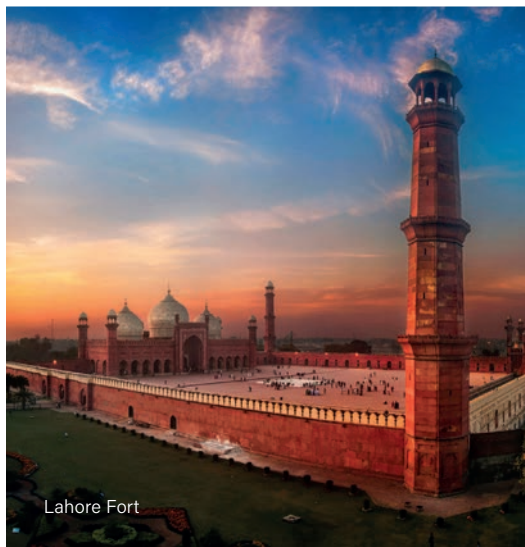


# Pakistan

Did you know Pakistan has more glaciers than anywhere else on Earth besides the Polar regions? With more than 7000, these dense bodies of ice weave in and out of Pakistan's soaring northern mountains (including K2 - the world's second-highest mountain) and are a unique feature of a unique country.



Wazir Khan Mosque, Lahore



Lahore Fort



The soaring K2

Modern-day Pakistan has only existed since 1947 following the partition with India, but this is an ancient land with a vast ethnic and linguistic diversity. And it holds myriad surprises for the uninitiated.

Almost 1000km south of Gilgit-Baltistan's awesome mountains lies the historic city of Lahore. A UNESCO City of Literature and the cultural heart of Pakistan, Lahore was one of the world's grandest metropolises during the Mughal Empire period. These days the bright lights and sizzling street food of the Gawalmandi Quarter are the most alluring draws to the city, but the splendour of Wazir Khan Mosque, Lahore Fort and the Shalimar Gardens display Lahore's lasting architectural prominence.

Follow the meandering Indus River south through green valleys and under iron bridges to its natural end at Karachi, Pakistan's most cosmopolitan city. The chaotic energy of Karachi is infectious, but don't miss the city's quirkier side by taking a camel ride along the shimmering shores of Hawke's Bay Beach.

# India

The land we know today as India is as far as the Indo-Persian Empire stretched and, since then, a cocktail of different cultures and people have all left their mark on this beguiling country.

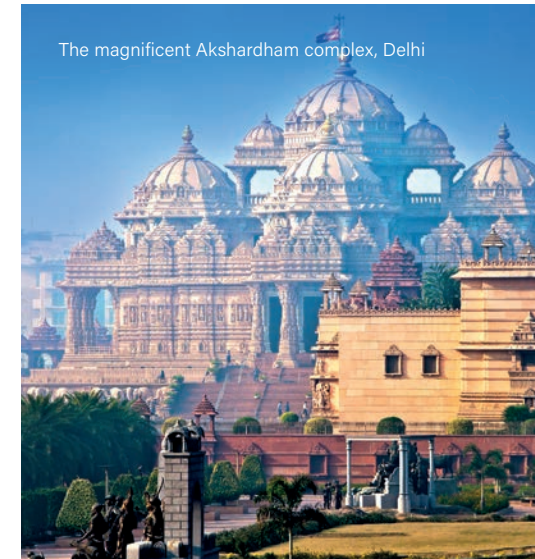
From the snow-capped Indian Himalayas to the warm sandy shores of Palolem Beach in Goa, the world's seventh-largest country features every kind of landscape imaginable, but it's in India's vibrant cities where its true identity is found.

Vivid and intoxicating, the busy narrow lanes of Old Delhi are packed with narrow lanes of sizzling street food stalls, but head down to the lush southern stretch of Buddha Jayanti Park for one of Qavali's biggest inspirations. Chef JP Singh has been cooking his legendary lentil Dal Bukhara at the imposing ITC Maurya hotel since 1981 and Qavali's version pays wonderful homage to this.

The magnificent Akshardham complex is as impressive as the Taj Mahal and its massive temple was constructed from the carvings of several thousand Indian artisans.

The religious diversity of India has also led to some wonderful architectural examples that could only have been built here. Whether it's Sikhism's striking Golden Temple in Amritsar or Jainism's 15th-century marble Ranakpur Temple, the cultural richness of India has only added to its mystique.

Appreciating India isn't something that can be done in one quick trip. To fully absorb a country like this takes time, and may end up being one of the most rewarding journeys you'll ever make.



The magnificent Akshardham complex, Delhi



The Golden Temple in Amritsar

Thousands of miles later, this voyage into the music of Qawwali is at an end. And while the search for spiritual enlightenment can be a never-ending process, experiencing the dynamic food, drink and atmosphere of Qavali can be a marvellous stop along the way.

# The Story of Shirin and Khosrow

As retold by Qavali

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Before Romeo and Juliet, there was Shirin and Khosrow. The most famous version of this Persian love tragedy was written by poet, **Nizami Ganjavi**, with its first manuscripts dating as far back as 1362.



To date, the fictional tale of Shirin and Khosrow has been captured in various folk art, poetry and songs - among both Persian and international audiences. While the story is elaborate, it follows the conventional peaks and troughs of classic tragedies and places all-consuming love at the heart of its knotty plot line.

Qavali's adaptation of Shirin and Khosrow has been rewritten in the absence of its original tragic ending. We present a world set in the period of the high middle ages, where the main protagonists are aligned with Qavali's philosophies; and such, respond to their circumstances in a very different way.

# Part One

## Shirin and Khosrow Fall in Love

A Prince named Khosrow has been preparing to govern over Persia, after his father's reign. He is young and handsome, and the sort of man that any Persian bachelorette would desire.

Khosrow has a wise consultant, an artist by the name of Shapur. One day, during their travels, Shapur mentions the Armenian Queen Mahin Bahu to Khosrow as well as her niece, Shirin, who is to become the Queen of Armenia.

The Prince listens intently, while Shapur eloquently describes the beauty, virtue and intelligence of Shirin. He falls in love with Shirin and asks his wise consultant to help him win her heart.

So, Shapur visits a lake near Shirin's castle, where she is known to frequently go for a swim. The consultant paints a face of Khosrow and places the portrait against a tree, next to the lake. A soft-hearted Shirin is immediately drawn to Khosrow's physical appearance; and so, she sets off into the city in peasant clothes to look for the owner of the painting. Upon meeting him, she plans to find out more about his handsome subject.

Shapur advises Shirin to travel to Persia, where her new-found love is waiting to accept her with open arms! At the risk of losing her claim to the throne, Shirin jumps onto her beautiful black horse and escapes to Persia to pursue her fairytale ending.

# Part Two

## The Lovers Cross Paths



As Shirin is travelling to Persia from Armenia, Khosrow has been advised to elope in the opposite direction (to Armenia) due to strife between himself and his father, King Hormizd. The lovers cross paths along their journey as if by romantic serendipity; but because they are both dressed in peasant clothes, they fail to recognise each other. Khosrow catches a glimpse of Shirin as she is bathing and washing her flowing hair in a nearby lake; but Shirin shyly turns away after trying to cover her naked body with her long locks.

Neither Shirin nor Khosrow realise that they have just come face-to-face with the object of their devotion. Eventually, Shapur crosses paths with both Shirin and Khosrow (individually) along their travels, informing them that both lovers are simultaneously seeking each other. The Prince and Princess realise that they had unknowingly run into each other at the lake and vow to reunite, at last.

Now that Shirin and Khosrow are finally travelling back in the same direction towards Armenia, the Armenian Queen gives Khosrow a warm welcome as he arrives first, and tells him about his father's passing. Khosrow is to now claim the throne of Persia and save his people from rival.

Upon her return to Armenia, Shirin is disappointed to hear that her love has travelled back to Persia. But her aunt, the Queen advises Shirin to be patient - as all good things come to those who wait, gracefully.

# Part Three

## Khosrow Marries Maryam

Now, as King of Persia, Khosrow has many enemies and responsibilities. He has finally met with his first love Shirin, but she refuses to be intimate with him until he can commit to marriage.

However, Shirin must prioritise seeking help from the Byzantine Empire, so that he can save his people and welcome Shirin to a country that is safe and free from blood-thirsty enemies. Upon attempting to do this, he is ordered to marry Maryam, daughter of the King of Byzantium.

Knowing that this is the only way he can gain help from the Byzantine Empire, Khosrow marries Maryam much to Shirin's absolute devastation. Shortly after, Shirin's aunt passes away and she becomes the Queen of Armenia. But her sadness of a long, lost love consumes her entirely. She decides to leave the throne for someone else and travels back to Persia, where she can at least be in closer proximity to a now married, Khosrow.

When Khosrow learns of Shirin's arrival in Persia, he asks Maryam to let her stay at their royal palace. Although Maryam is overcome with jealousy and rejects Khosrow's plea, immediately. This breaks Shirin's heart even more, making her unable to eat or drink anything other than milk. In an effort to help Shirin, Khosrow asks Shapur to find her someone who can provide her with drinking milk, every day.

Shapur finds a young sculptor named Farhad, who falls head-over-heels in love with Shirin.

# Part Four

## Khosrow's Selfless Sacrifice

It is not easy for Khosrow to witness the blossoming love between Shirin and Farhad. The two men partake in a verbal duel, after which Shirin concludes that it is actually Farhad who loves her more.

Khosrow, unable to detach himself from his feelings for Shirin, challenges Farhad with the impossible task of carving stairs out of cliff rocks of the Behistun mountain. Determined to be rewarded with the life-long companionship of Shirin, Farhad accepts the challenge and begins by creating a life-size sculpture of Shirin and her black horse.

While Farhad is busying himself with the carving of rocks, Shirin brings him a bowl of milk for support. In doing so, she nearly falls off the edge of the cliff, until Farhad saves her with his strong sculptor hands and returns her back home.

When Khosrow learns of this encounter he realises that Farhad is best-suited to love and look after Shirin. He places his own needs and ego aside, and blesses the couple to live and long and happy life together.

Khosrow makes peace with his sacrifice, only now understanding the true meaning of unconditional love. Shirin and Farhad elope into the sunset together, and live happily ever after.







***Y***ou ask how I carry the entire galaxy  
and its stars, in my mortal mind -  
do you not know my heart, is what I read discreetly?  
My wisdom is forever, sublime.

# Spiritual Elegance...

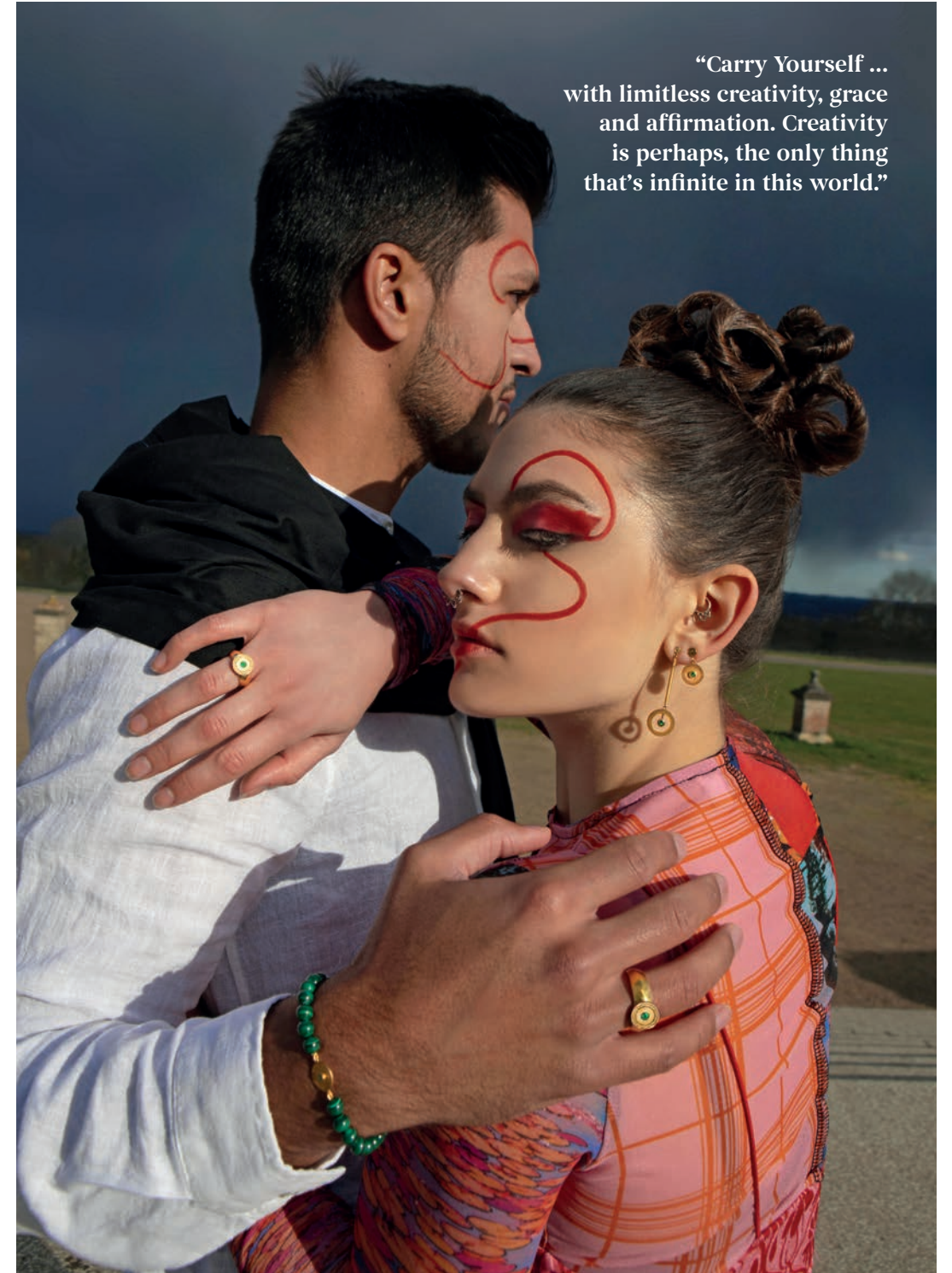
Carry yourself with charm and grace with the new jewellery collection from Qavali. With delicate pieces for him and her, this exclusive collection has been expertly crafted to embody charisma, eloquence, empowerment and spiritual wellbeing.

The simple yet intricately designed selection features handmade earrings, a pendant necklace, ring and bracelet specifically chosen for their high quality 21 carat gold and flawless emerald stones. Qavali's signature symbol serves as the visual centrepiece in each one to represent a union between the universal philosophy of being and dignified strength.

**“The philosophies of Qavali draw upon the importance of connecting with yourself, to then connect with the entire universe. Each time you share a personal expression through creation, you are becoming one with the space around you and reaching a state of fulfilment.”**

[www.qavalicollection.com](http://www.qavalicollection.com)

**“Carry Yourself ... with limitless creativity, grace and affirmation. Creativity is perhaps, the only thing that's infinite in this world.”**





**“Over the centuries the spiritual beliefs, rituals and practices of Sufis have inspired some of the greatest works of art. At Qavali we believe art is the most beautiful form of expression.”**

To shop and discover visit  
[www.qavalicollection.com](http://www.qavalicollection.com)



**“Creativity is the ultimate way of speaking to the universe. Empower yourself to create meaningful things in your life, until your inner-fulfilment knows no bounds.”**



To shop and discover visit  
[www.qavalicollection.com](http://www.qavalicollection.com)



**“This handmade emerald pendant serves as a valuable reminder of love, a way of reminding yourself that there is love all around you while also living within you too.”**



Art Direction: **Avizeh**  
Photography: **Juliet Pea**  
Model Female:  
**Lilla Beatrix Varga**  
Model Male: **Hamed Arif**  
MUA: **Karen Messam**  
Hair: **Rosy Bee**

# Love and Harmony...

The beautiful emerald takes centre stage in Qavali's Carry Yourself collection, chosen for its long association as a life-affirming gem. It is believed to open our heart chakra and calm our emotions, providing inspiration, wisdom and patience, and boosting inner peace and harmony.

To shop and discover visit  
[www.qavalicollection.com](http://www.qavalicollection.com)



“Throughout history, the stone has been revered by ancient civilisations as a source of eternal life. In Indo-Persian folktales in particular, its colour symbolises spring, renewal, growth and intellect, while it is often described as the stone of successful, meaningful love, promoting self-validation and fidelity”

# A Work of Art

A journey through the décor at **Qavali**

**In a city that has become increasingly hungry for ingenuity and artistic expression, Qavali takes centre stage. The restaurant has quickly gained a reputation for its stunning art that is used throughout to showcase its many elements and ancient philosophies. One thing's for sure, Faheem Badur CEO certainly doesn't shy away from pushing creative boundaries.**

To understand the art on display at Qavali, one must first look at how each bespoke piece is used to tell a story. Faheem believes that a creator's biggest accolade is the creation itself; with this in mind he feels that once art has been shared with the world, it is free and open to vast interpretation. "It cannot be credited to just one person," he says, "Instead, it should be strong enough to stand on its own two feet."



## Defining Art

**While it's true that the understanding, expectation and impact of art will vary from person to person, to Qavali, it is a form of expression... and the most beautiful one at that.**

Faheem explains: "Art is intimate, sometimes ruthless and always honest. Whether it's a portrait, a poem, or a sculpture, it is a creator's way of sharing a piece of their soul to the opinionated world - and that's why it's so subjective. Some of the greatest artists believe that art should simply 'work on its own' and its understanding shouldn't be controlled by its creator, which is somewhat identical to my own school of thought."

Upon closer inspection, it's clear that Qavali's enigmatic style of visual and written art (where even the language is lyrically ambiguous) is shared with guests for them to reinvent, over and over again. These guests will do so, according to their mood, emotions and experiences; making the artists a mere "side-effect".

You could say, that when an artist has the limelight taken away from them by their own work that's the exact moment you know that their art has made a lasting impact. It begs the question - shouldn't this be the ultimate goal?

# Translating a Vision

With art being central to Qavali since its very inception, it's natural to wonder if there's a deep-seated 'vision' that's been steering it all along.

The restaurant itself is steeped in layers. It's undoubtedly an Instagram-worthy haven, with striking backdrops and decorative statements at every turn. Each bespoke piece breathes life into Qavali's beautiful vision and takes inspiration from the teachings of Sufism, qawwali music (devotional music practiced by Sufis) and of course, the Indo-Persian empire.

"The philosophies of Qavali have been formed to spark creativity, spirituality, goodness and oneness among our guests, who choose to spend time at the restaurant," says Faheem. "This is also where our adoration for Sufism comes in. Sufis are followers of an aesthetic school of thought, who believe that patience, love and humility carve the way to a fuller life. We believe that the world has been starved of such enlightenment, and therefore we strive to showcase this in our artwork."



# The Faces of Qavali



To create a space unlike anywhere else in Birmingham, Faheem and the team handpicked specific standout pieces to grace the walls of Qavali.

Perfect for those scroll-stopping social media stories, it's no surprise that these breathtaking pieces have since graced countless photos, videos and reels.

The staple graffiti-style pieces show the stunning faces of the Indo-Persian empire. Many of these are adorned with jewellery, beautiful outfits and makeup styles that pay homage to their heritage. There is also a collection of digital artworks, framed and dotted around the entire restaurant; alongside calligraphy-style prints where the word 'Qavali' has been used over and over again to form the shape of a tree, a coffee pot or lion's head.

The common theme among the main works - including the large feature pieces that are impossible to miss - is the celebration of female empowerment. "What many people don't know is that Sufism has been largely influenced by ancient female leaders, and that all the regions that Qavali takes culinary inspiration from hold women in extremely high regard," says Faheem.

If you have visited Qavali a few times already, you might've noticed that most of the art also incorporates the circular Qavali logo. "This is an ode to say that Qavali is 'a part of everything,' just as each individual person represents all of Qavali in their own way. You can understand why I thought it would more impactful to make our art such a focal point as the creation itself carries the essence of everyone within it anyway."





# Sculptures and Poetry



Sculpture by Iranian visual artist Mohsen Keiany

**While the grand wall art is usually first to capture guests' attention, Qavali is shrouded in many other forms of expression, inspired by its Indo-Persian roots.**

The venue is home to two fabulous sculptures by Iranian visual artist and sculptor Mohsen Keiany. These stand proudly at the entrance and symbolise the act of service and hospitality in Iranian culture, where greeting guests is akin to a royal experience. The detail-orientated King and Queen sculptures are made using scrap metal and each one has a plaque featuring a bespoke, dedicated poem.

In fact, poetry itself is an integral part of Qavali's artistic direction. As some of the world's most famous philosophers teach, "writing is a painting of the voice". As such, Qavali's poetry and poetic storytelling adds another dimension to its art. Qavali uses writings that predates literacy and is heavily inspired by the style, tone and philosophies of famous Sufi poets including Rumi, Hafiz, Omar Khayyam and Rabia al Basri.

# The Qavali Experience



The bustling ambience of Qavali

**With a devout claim to "entice all six of a guest's senses", it is no surprise that Qavali uses art in various forms to shape the entire dining experience - and this is designed to last long after they have left the restaurant.**

Of course, the spectacular design of the venue is only just one part of the Qavali experience. Guests who enter are also invited to enjoy the soul-soothing Indo-Persian music, soft and purpose-fitted lighting, and dishes from across the Persian empire - each one designed to rival the artwork gracing the walls. The restaurant also describes itself as a "paradise garden" (inspired by the Persian Gardens), thanks to its dramatic and leafy decor.

"The very fact that Qavali's art cannot be deciphered into black-and-white terminology adds to its elusive beauty," adds Faheem. "While we always aim to stir a range of positive feelings among our guests - whether they are visiting for a romantic dinner or one of many Qavali's events - we hope that the art itself has embodied a presence of its own. A presence that far transcends any one person, but lives and grows within each person in the most uplifting of ways."



# Love Qavali

We love what we offer at Qavali, but sometimes it's best to leave the talking to our guests. With art and culture at the heart of everything we do, it's no surprise that some of the leading music and theatre performers feel inspired by the sophisticated surroundings and sumptuous food. We asked them to share why they love Qavali.

## Martin Rizzola

Music Producer & Percussionist  
(Ableton & Academia de Música):

**“It’s stylish, the food is excellent and above all, the vibe is really cool!”**

## Naomi Whelan @Naywithlove

International Aerialist, Pole Artist & Singer.

**“Because of the elegance this venue oozes luxury. The staff are also extremely delightful.”**

## Nino Nikolov @ninoviolin

International violinist & Britain's Got Talent Finalist

**“The moment I step inside this beautifully orchestrated restaurant, I feel the journey into the traditional riches of the Indo-Persian culture! It’s just magical.”**

## Julian Smith

Sony recording Artist. Britain's Got Talent third place finalist 2009:

**“Luxurious surroundings, cool vibes and friendly staff.”**

## Matthew Holmes

Drummer, Composer, improviser. National Youth Jazz Orchestra - Jazz Exchange. Canopus Drums Artist. Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Graduate (2020)

**“The bartenders make great cocktails, all the food is delicious and the decor is exquisite!”**

## Phoebe Killworth

Dancer and Musical Theatre Performer

**“The staff are so lovely and supportive of what you do. The atmosphere of Qavali is unmatched!”**



## Address

9 Brindleyplace / 60 Broad Street / Birmingham / B1 2HJ

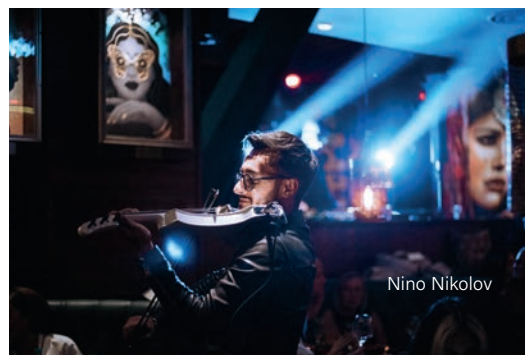
## Contact

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Martin Rizzola



Nino Nikolov

“You can be an atom in this universe,  
and the entire universe itself.”



QAVALI