

Observer

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF



Conde Naste Hunts for Middle East Partner

The publishing powerhouse is on the verge of investing in the Middle East with branded restaurants complementing their renowned titles, reports **Heba Hashem**.

CONDE NASTE, THE PUBLISHER

of *Vogue* and *GQ*, is planning to launch Middle East versions of its biggest titles, along with a series of branded restaurants.

The US publisher is considering opening magazine-themed restaurants in the Middle East – such as *Vogue Café* and *GQ Bar* – within the next two years. This follows the successful launch of Conde Nast licensed *Vogue Café*, *GQ Bar* and *Tatler Club* in Moscow, operated by Arkady Novikov. “We are looking to start magazines in the UAE in the future,” said Jonathan Newhouse, the chairman of Conde Nast International. “Usually *GQ*, *Vogue* and



The Vogue Café is one of the branded restaurants Conde Nast is planning to open in the Middle East with an eye on creating brand awareness for its magazines.



The GQ Bar has had a successful launch in Moscow.



Conde Nast Tatler's Club would be based at high-end hotels in the Middle East in keeping with its image.

“Usually GQ, Vogue and Glamour are among the first magazines we bring to a new market. Conde Nast Traveller is another product that has strong potential in the Emirates market.”

Glamour are among the first magazines we bring to a new market. *Conde Nast Traveller* is another product that has strong potential in the Emirates market.” Although no negotiations have taken place yet, Newhouse said that any plan would involve partnerships with local publishers. “It is a small market, so we’d work with an established group,” he said. “We’d look for a publisher that has a good reputation. You really need people who know the market.” The chairman added that it was too soon to know

whether local titles would be published in Arabic or English, or both. However, a publishing presence in the UAE would not necessarily act as a centre for the entire Middle East. “I suspect that the Middle East is quite a variegated market,” he said. “The UAE is quite different from Iraq. And Beirut in Lebanon is quite another market,” he added. In August the company established a new division in Hong Kong, Conde Nast Restaurants, which aims to open its eateries in locations such as Dubai, Singapore and

Hong Kong. Conde Nast Restaurants is spearheaded by Stuart Nielsen, ex-Regional Director of Food, Beverage & Design for International Hotels Group in the MENA region. Conde Nast’s Dubai restaurants would be based at high-end hotels. “You could look at the restaurants as a first step to producing magazines in the local market,” Newhouse said, adding that Dubai was one of the first target markets for its restaurants. ■