**Meet Naseer, Anantara’s Connoisseur Falconer**

The falcon has long been part of the United Arab Emirates cultural heritage and was once an integral part of desert life. Today falconry is practiced purely as a sport and the skill of a falconer is still highly esteemed and the power of the falcon greatly treasured. Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort by Anantara’s expert falconer, Naseer Muhammad Abdul Latif is proud to show off his amazing skills as he takes guests on an historic journey of falconry that started over two millenniums ago.

Naseer has had a passion for birds from a very young age when he used to care for his brother’s pigeons and parrots at home. While working on a farm, Naseer helped feed the local falcons and started training them during his free time. When the farm owner saw his interest and enthusiasm around the birds, he offered him the opportunity to go through proper training to become a connoisseur falconer.

The training of a falcon has not changed for centuries – a leather hood is used to cover the falcon’s eyes and the bird is fed only small portions. The falconer names his new bird in the first few weeks and remains with the bird constantly so he gets comfortable with his owner.

“Falcons are wild, fast and aggressive birds so finding the right balance between patience, time and effort can sometimes be complex during training,” Naseer explains. “For example, during the initial few weeks if I release the bird and push him to fly while he is not hungry, chances are he might not come back to me, so training requires a great level of expertise and understanding to master the bird.”

Exercising such a free creature often turns into an adventure in itself, and Naseer has a lot of stories to share on the subject, “During the early stages of my training, I had to walk for many kilometres in the sand dunes to find the falcon that I had just released, and try to convince him to come back to me. Sometimes, you just have to accept that he won’t come back, that’s one of the risks.”

However, when Naseer watches his falcons soar before guests at Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort, showcasing their incredible speed of 320 kilometres per hour and leaving the viewers in awe, he could not be more proud of his accomplishment as Anantara’s Chief Falconer.

**Editor’s Note:**

For hundreds of years throughout Thailand, people would leave a jar of water outside their house to provide refreshment and extend a welcome to the passing traveller.  Anantara is taken from an ancient Sanskrit word that means 'without end', symbolising this sharing of water and the heartfelt hospitality that lies at the core of every Anantara experience.

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