

# “Perfumes are a part of our culture”

● In conversation with Abdulla Ajmal, Deputy COO, Ajmal Perfumes

**T**his is the 70th year for Ajmal Perfumes, tell us about the unique journey of the brand?

The story of Ajmal Perfumes began in the early 1950s, in Hojai, Assam. My grandfather late Haji Ajmal Ali, the founder of this brand, was a modest rice farmer who took up oud business purely for sustenance. Oud oil is derived from the essence of agarwood (Aquilaria) trees. Late Haji Ajmal Ali left his hometown for Mumbai and worked in the early 1950s blending perfumes and trying to find the right mixture that would impress Arab traders who visited India's Western shores. In 1951, he gave his family name to his product range. Ajmal in Arabic



means “most beautiful” and it's uncanny that we ended up in this industry that is a part of the beauty industry. In 1976, Ajmal entered the Middle Eastern market by establishing its first outlet in Murshid Bazaar in Deira, and Ajmal was the first brand to launch Mukhallat fragrance. The popularity of the company's fragrance business enlisted Ajmal among the top 40 Arabian brands by *Forbes Arabia* in 2011. Today, thanks to his vision and hard work, we are a global brand, with over

270 retail stores around the world. We export to about 45 countries and have relationships with many duty free stores and airlines around the world. My vision for Ajmal is to see it as a truly global brand.

**How is Ajmal celebrating its 70th year, how has the UAE helped the brand grow?**

When late Haji Ajmal Ali sent his son Fakhruddin Ajmal to Dubai, it was still in a nascent stage of development, but the Ajmal family believed in the vision of the rulers. They had faith that the UAE would develop tremendously and become an important place for trade. The growth of the Ajmal brand mirrors that of the UAE because it has grown with the emirates. The UAE has given us everything. On account of the pandemic, we won't have celebrations like we've done in the past. We have come out with a commemorative product – the 70th year

Aristocrat Platinum Edition. Apart from that, there will be a lot of consumer-led promotions and activities throughout the year.

**Why do fragrances make such a good gift during Ramadan?**

Perfumes hold a lot of importance in Islam. It is a part of the culture, which is why it's an essential along with food, clothing and shelter. Religion has led to a culture and a culture has led to a practice, making it an excellent gift. Whatever we go through, we, as people need bits of happiness. Fragrances are a category that help spread joy. If you gift one, as long as it is on the shelves, the memory of the person who has given it is alive and strong. There is nothing specific to gift during this period but we do gift boxes of all sorts. It's all about your personal choices.

**Why is home incense significant during Ramadan?**

It's very significant during this period because home fragrances are very important to Arabian culture. Oud and bakhoor hold a special place in Arab traditions. Walk into any home, especially during Ramadan, and one is welcomed with the scent of burning oud throughout the house. It's not uncommon to burn a bit of bakhoor in cars or even offices. People consider it very important to not only perfume yourself, but also the environment. It has a calming effect and most importantly a sense of purity. Oud is the purest form of incense and so it's most popular. Many of our products are renowned for home incenses, my top picks this season are Safwat Al Safa, Oudh Adhm, Oudh Nooh and the most admired by our khalijs consumers, Oudh Mubakhar. We recently launched Rey'ah Al Sab'a.

I wish everyone a blessed Ramadan Kareem and a healthy year ahead.

# “We only source premium quality meat and farm-fresh mangoes”

● In conversation with Aiysha Azmi, Founder and Managing Director, Prime Zone Trading

**Tell us about Meat Factory.**

The Meat Factory is not just another meat shop, but a showcase of our labour of love as it shows our commitment to not only provide the freshest, highest-quality meat but also to customer service. Our operations are supported by the backward integration we applied in India by starting a 200,000 sq ft goat farm in the middle of 50 acres of lush green land surrounded by huge mango orchards and farms of seasonal produce. This rich eco-system along with an integrated logistics arm enabled movement of our fresh produce directly to the UAE.

**How do you make sure your customers become raving fans of your meat products?**

In the market one can find many qualities of meat and we see some shops offering meat at cheaper prices, but when it comes to us, we source only premium quality meat and try to provide it at a competitive price. Our customers instantly get that difference in quality. We take pride in saying that once our customers taste the meat we give, they don't go anywhere else.

Our focus is to make sure our valued customers get exactly what they want, giving the right type of cuts for the dishes they want to make.

**Do you have any special deals for Ramadan?**

Yes, we have exciting Ramadan deals across all cat-



egories available online on our website.

**In today's fast changing business environment, how do you cope with challenging times such as the current pandemic?**

We actually started just when the Covid wave began in the UAE – we faced lockdown the very next day we opened our first shop in Al Qusais. Today,

adaptability is the key to success for any business – Mangolicious was born out of this challenge. With Covid restrictions on cargo, procurement of meat became a challenge, so we manoeuvred our way to import the famous varieties of north Indian mangoes such as the Malihabadi Dassheri, Banarasi Langda, Chaunsa and Safeda, which was an im-

mediate hit. The underlying primary objective was also to support our farmers back home who were in a dire situation due to the pandemic.

**Mangoes are popular during Ramadan. What is special about Mangolicious?**

At Mangolicious, our commitment is to deliver the freshest mangoes, handpicked, naturally ripened, carbide free, and hygienically packed for our customers. The mangoes are handpicked from the farms just two days before the scheduled flight to undergo a comprehensive sorting and packaging process with all quality-control protocols in place to ensure only the best quality are dispatched. Customers can get mangoes delivered at their doorstep. We also cater to personal and corporate gift box requests, which became popular during Covid times.

– For fresh meat visit [www.mymeatfactory.com](http://www.mymeatfactory.com) and place orders for mangoes at [www.mangoliciousuae.com](http://www.mangoliciousuae.com)