

Million Dollar Shoppers

WANT TO BAG A BIRKIN, CREATE YOUR OWN DIAMOND SHOES OR PARTY WITH BEYONCÉ? ASK SARA KHAN, THE FOUNDER OF ABU DHABI'S EXCLUSIVE CONCIERGE AND ENTERTAINMENT SERVICE, BY APPOINTMENT PRIVATE SHOPPING AND BY APPOINTMENT ENTERTAINMENT.

Sara Khan has shopped for some of the world's elite, royalty, VIPs, A-list celebrities, fashionistas and football stars. Having previously worked in-house for Christian Dior, Stéphane Rolland and Van Cleef & Arpels she knows a thing or two about luxury retail. One of the first families to move into Etihad Towers residences four years ago, Sara spends a lot of her time shopping for her clients in Abu Dhabi and around the globe. She talks to FIVE magazine about her passion for shopping, luxury brands and making her clients wishes come true.

What prompted you to open the business here?

By Appointment Private Shopping is an exclusive shopping service reserved for high-net-worth individuals on a by invitation only basis or by referral. I

set up the service in Abu Dhabi not only because it's hard to find – there are many stylists and personal shoppers in Dubai but they are not common in the capital – but also because I wanted to offer a service across many brands, not just one. It's also my passion; I love to shop for clients.

Who are your clients?

The very affluent. To describe our client list they are cultivated people with their own private Islands, jets, yachts, multiple homes across the world, art collections, impressive fine jewellery and watch collections. Furthermore, they are accustomed to having the best of everything extraordinary. They choose to work with us because of the fact that our service is underpinned with discretion, trust and exclusivity. The privacy of our clients and their families is the cornerstone of our service so we go to the palaces, their homes or arrange private ap-

pointments in boutiques. Equally, a brand might be hosting a private event and want to have a certain high net worth client attend; we can also make that happen. We generate a lot of our business by word-of-mouth and referrals.

What's an appointment with you like?

At the initial consultation, I discuss the client's needs and budget and create their own personal shopping profile. I then go to the various boutiques and make the selections to be delivered to the client's home or hotel suite for viewing.

Is there a minimum spend?

An average shopping spree for three hours with one of our Personal Shoppers would cost an average 1500 aed or 10 percent of the shopping value.

Where are the most popular places to shop in Abu Dhabi?

In terms of brands I would say Manolo Blahnik, Tom Ford, de Grisogono, Hermès and Bulgari. I love shopping in Avenue at Etihad Towers as it's on my doorstep and also because it's a one-stop destination with a great selection of luxury brands and limited editions. We love to pick up exclusive pieces for our VIP clients there.

What sort of experiences can you arrange?

By Appointment Entertainment gives our wealthy clients the opportunity to book some of the hottest names in the entertainment industry for their private, public, or corporate events. We have organised events and parties on an international scale with the likes of Paris Hilton, Kim Kardashian, Will-i-am, Tiesto, Snoop, Pitbull, Flo Rida, Rihanna, Diddy, Chris Brown, Rita Ora, 50 cent and many others.

What are some unusual requests you've had?

A gentleman client wanted a limited edition Fer-

rari office chair, while another lady requested front-row seats for Paris Haute Couture Week, something that is almost impossible to obtain. We've also created a Winter Wonderland in Africa for one of our VIP clients; installed a snow spa in a villa in Abu Dhabi and created a bespoke pair of diamond sandals.

What does 2016 hold?

We have many more events in the pipeline. One of our key strategies is to have a dedicated team that will focus on the demand we have coming from the African continent, as there is a lot more in-bound travel from Africa to the UAE. They seem to only know about Dubai and are not familiar with the capital, and it is our job to promote Abu Dhabi to these clients, as there are a lot of attractions here.

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