

A note from the editor Welcome to 2014



time to organising Yogafest (page 27). We wish her all the best in her new venture and can't wait to see what next month's Yogafest brings.

Feng shui guru Cristiano Falconi gives his advice for getting your home in the best shape for the new year (page 30) and we also explore the top New Year's resolution – getting fit – by asking: Will yoga give me a great body? (page 46).

Anyone who wants to build a stronger body should check out our core strength yoga sequence with Laura Weston on page 39. Laura also appears on our cover.

This month is special for *YogaLife* because it is our first

birthday. To celebrate, we teamed up with Hayley Maca of BeStro, a raw vegan eatery opening soon at Lafayette Gourmet in The Dubai Mall. Hayley prepared an array of delicious raw vegan food for our birthday party at the Miele Kitchen and has shared her recipes on page 56.

And finally, to mark our first birthday, we have an entire month of giveaways (page 100), so stay tuned to our Facebook page for your chance to win yoga classes, workshops, yoga mats, discounts on teacher training programmes, astrology readings and spa treatments.

I wish you a very happy 2014 and hope this year is your best yet. ✨

Here we are again at the start of a new year. This time of year is all about renewed hope, the prospects of a better year, an opportunity to be a better person and another chance to reach our goals.

This issue is all about new beginnings. We look at how to set realistic goals and achieve them, especially when it comes to a career change (page 24). We speak to someone who has done exactly that. Elaine Kelly, the organiser of the Dubai Yogafest, left her job at Microsoft in November to pursue her passion for yoga and to devote more

Stay happy,
Amanda



YogaLife magazine is printed on wood-free paper

JOIN THE YOGALIFE TEAM

EDITOR/DEPUTY EDITOR

Do you have a passion for yoga and holistic and natural therapies? Are you a talented writer with at least three to five years' experience in a senior editorial position? If you know your downdogs from your forward folds, have a positive can-do attitude and can flatplan in your sleep, **please email Kish Pagarani at kishpagarani@yahoo.com**

ART DIRECTOR

We're looking for a creative art director to take *YogaLife* into 2014. The successful candidate will have/be:

- ✦ Experience in editorial design or knowledge of printing processes
- ✦ Experience with photo shoots, photo retouching and colour correction
- ✦ Typographic awareness
- ✦ Proficiency in Adobe CS5.5 or higher and can operate a Mac
- ✦ Digital or video experience is beneficial as there may be some basic video editing
- ✦ Original thinker who loves a challenge
- ✦ Works to briefs and deadlines and must be extremely organised
- ✦ Fluent in English

Besides the magazine, other duties may include:

- ✦ Creating artwork for social media/enhancing branding outside/existing news stories
- ✦ Online advertising and social media campaigns
- ✦ Supplements (book design)
- ✦ Marketing collateral

If this sounds like you, please **email Kish Pagarani at kishpagarani@yahoo.com**

FOLLOWING YOUR PASSION

THE LONG WAY ROUND

Dubai Yogafest organiser Elaine Kelly has given up the corporate world to follow her passion for yoga. She talks about her journey



For many people, working for Microsoft is the ultimate career destination. I have spent the last three and a half years managing Microsoft's real estate portfolio across the Middle and Africa, but I gave it up at the end of November to pursue my passion for yoga and sustainability.

Now while it is easy to write that sentence, the journey to this point has been long and challenging.

I started life in the UAE back in 1994 when I moved here from the UK with my then-husband and two young sons. Within a few months my marriage had ended and I was 30 and alone in a new city with no friends. I could have gone back to Canada, my home, but I decided to stay. I had no idea how challenging that was going to be.

I have always been into aerobics and classes in Dubai were expensive so I decided to become a part-time aerobics »



Elaine Kelly, centre

This page: Elaine joined Microsoft in 2010 and completed yoga teacher training at the same time. Next page: Elaine and her husband Gray.

instructor. With some financial support from my husband and the small income I made, we managed.

By 2000, my sons were 10 and eight, and I felt it was time to find a 'real job' and gain more financial independence. I found a job as conference producer for a large exhibition company and realised how challenging work-life balance was for the clients I had been training. Spending eight hours a day in an office chained to a computer was purgatory, but sadly I became used to it and before long, I had forgotten my other life and instead spent early mornings at the gym and my limited free time running about with my sons to their various activities.

In 2003 I was offered a job with Motorola as a facilities manager, so I took the opportunity to learn something new and earn more money. But, in 2007 a sudden redundancy left me with some free time and the chance to return to my passion. I requalified as a personal trainer and started teaching Body Pump and Body Balance. I was following my passion again and it felt great, but life will always test our resolve to stay true to our vision.

Two months later, I was offered a job with an international law firm and decided to return to the corporate world. This time I kept teaching on the weekends, which provided some level of balance.

In 2010 when I joined Microsoft, I had just completed my yoga teacher training. My teacher at Zen Yoga was leaving and suggested I take over her early morning classes. I could teach, shower and be at work by 8.30am – it was perfect.



In 2000 I found a job as a **conference producer for a large exhibition company** and realised how **challenging work-life balance** was for the clients I had been training.

I discovered the green oasis that sits between buildings one and eight at Dubai Internet City and came up with the idea to start the first karma yoga festival in the Middle East. It seemed the perfect marriage of my corporate skills and love of yoga, and I was so excited. I wanted people in offices to step outside and try different styles of yoga, smell the fresh air and feel refreshed.

Yogafest launched on December 21, 2010, and last year attracted more than 2,500 participants. In 2011, I launched Full Moon Fridays – two yoga classes and one meditation session on the Friday closest to the full moon. Like all my events, participants make a donation and the funds go to charities supporting children. I also started a blog called Corporate Yogini – travels with a mat in which I describe my experiences attending yoga classes as I travelled for work around Europe, the Middle East and Africa. In Cairo, for example, I discovered a karma yoga centre, The Breathing Room, run by an American couple. All proceeds go to local charities, including a homeless shelter for women and children. I have met amazing people and written about my experiences in the hopes that other travellers will benefit from my stories and information.

As my yoga activities grew, my time became more limited and with my 50th birthday looming in the not-so-distant future and my sons both studying overseas, I felt it was time to

do what I had always wanted, follow my passion and give up the corporate world and work for myself. It's interesting when you do something like this because there are two reactions: people who celebrate your courage and those who caution you. When I started my CTI Co-active coaching course two years ago, I wrote my resignation letter promising to hand it in three months later. It's taken me two more years, but I've done it. There is only one time to live your life and that is now. And that's what I intend to do. ✨



Dubai Yogafest

This free community event is on from February 14 to 16 in the grounds of Dubai Internet City. Teachers and practitioners from across the UAE volunteer their services for a full weekend of yoga, meditation, pranayama, concerts and more. Last year's event attracted more than 2,500 people, but 2014 is set to be the biggest yet. New features include a healing tent, chill-out tent, Pilates classes and a healthy food market. Yogafest is for men and women of all ages and all abilities. Children are also welcome and there will be a special kids' shala where they can try meditation and yoga. Participants and visitors are asked to make a donation which will be given to local children's charities. There's also the chance to win great prizes. For more information about Yogafest, to volunteer, become a sponsor or an exhibitor, visit www.yogafest.me