



## ROYAL COMMISSION FOR ALULA (RCU) – PRESS RELEASE 1 JULY 2019

### **Royal Commission for AlUla launches partnership with leading French Culinary and Hospitality Management School, FERRANDI Paris, to train and develop a new generation of young chefs from AlUla**

- First phase of programme to train 24 chefs over 4-months at FERRANDI Paris
- Newly-qualified chefs to learn from and work with Michelin-starred chefs during Winter at Tantora Season Two in AlUla

**KSA, AlUla** - 1 July 2019: The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) has announced a ground-breaking partnership with FERRANDI Paris, France's leading School of Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management. The unique partnership will see the creation of a bespoke, world-class training programme in gastronomy, which will take young, aspiring chefs from AlUla to study in the French capital.

In the first phase of the programme, a total of 24 chefs from AlUla will be selected to participate in a specially tailored four-month course at the globally renowned FERRANDI Paris. Senior lecturers and experts from FERRANDI will visit AlUla to interview applicants and select the 24 participants who will have the opportunity to study the culinary arts in France.

On their return to AlUla, the newly-trained chefs will have the chance to work under the supervision of 10 Michelin starred chefs and help in the creation of unique and locally inspired "Taste of AlUla" menus to be served to VIP guests attending the second season of Winter at Tantora, held annually in AlUla.

Commenting on the importance of the initiative, RCU CEO Amr AIMadani said: "This is another in a series of programmes we are undertaking with the people of AlUla to deliver innovative employment opportunities anchored in personal and professional development initiatives. This partnership with FERRANDI Paris will equip a new generation of local men and women with the tools necessary to become the leading chefs and culinary entrepreneurs in AlUla, promoting excellence as the custodians of the county's culinary heritage".

Throughout the specially curated course at FERRANDI Paris, programme participants will learn the techniques and secrets of authentic French gastronomy and develop the skills to create recipes and cuisine that will typify AlUla, delivering high quality hospitality and unique culinary experiences.

FERRANDI Paris CEO Bruno de Monte said: "We are extremely pleased to welcome the youth of AlUla to Paris, to our school, where France's best chefs learned their trade. We have built a program especially for them, the future culinary greats of Saudi Arabian gastronomy".

G rard Mestrallet, executive president of the French Agency for AlUla Development (AFALULA), said: "As a partner of RCU in the development of AlUla, AFALULA is very proud of this partnership with FERRANDI. It will allow the new generations of AlUla young chefs to capitalize on French excellence in the field of culinary art and hospitality management and to contribute to the outreach of the region".

RCU's partnership with FERRANDI Paris, developed under the leadership of His Highness Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Mohammad bin Farhan Al Saud, is another one of the many ways RCU is pioneering development amongst AIUla's youth through global cultural exchanges and a dedication to international best practice.

To be considered for the programme candidates must be between 21 and 35 years old, graduates of AIUla high schools and have an intermediate knowledge of English.

The application period will take place between July 5-9 when qualified candidates can submit applications online at <https://www.ferrandi-paris.com/alula-special-program> . Following interviews by FERRANDI Paris tutors in AIUla, the 24 successful applicants will be announced on July 26 and training will begin in Paris by the end of August.

The new culinary initiative is in line with the objective of RCU's Charter to help create and inspire new and diverse economic sectors in AIUla while involving the local community at all stages of development. This is the latest component of an overarching plan to develop AIUla, its natural wonders and ancient cultural sites into one of the world's leading tourism destinations.

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**For any media enquiries please contact the RCU Public Relations team at: [PublicRelations@rcu.gov.sa](mailto:PublicRelations@rcu.gov.sa)**

## **Notes to editors**

### **About AIUla**

Located 1,100 km from Riyadh, in North-West Saudi Arabia, AIUla is a place of extraordinary natural and human heritage. The vast area, covering 22,561km<sup>2</sup>, includes a lush oasis valley, towering sandstone mountains and ancient cultural heritage sites dating back thousands of years to when the Lihyan and Nabataean kingdoms reigned.

The most well-known and recognised site in AIUla is Hegra, Saudi Arabia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site. A 52-hectare ancient city, Hegra was the principal southern city of the Nabataean Kingdom and is comprised of more than 100 well preserved tombs with elaborate facades cut out of the sandstone outcrops surrounding the walled urban settlement. Current research suggests Hegra was the most southern outpost of the Roman Empire after conquering the Nabataeans in 106 CE.

In addition to Hegra, AIUla is home to a series of fascinating historical and archaeological sites such as: Ancient Dadan, the capital of the Dadan and Lihyan Kingdoms, which is considered one of the most developed 1st-millennium BCE cities of the Arabian Peninsula; thousands of ancient rock art sites and inscriptions; and Hijaz Railway stations.

### **About The Royal Commission for AIUla**

The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) was established by royal decree in July 2017 to protect and safeguard AlUla, a region of outstanding natural and cultural significance in North-West Saudi Arabia. RCU is embarking on a long-term plan to develop and deliver a sensitive, sustainable transformation of the region, reaffirming it as one of the country's most important archaeological and cultural destinations and preparing it to welcome visitors from around the world. RCU's development work in AlUla encompasses a broad range of initiatives across archaeology, tourism, culture, education and the arts, reflecting the ambitious commitment to cultivate tourism and leisure in Saudi Arabia, outlined in Vision 2030.

### **About FERRANDI Paris**

Founded in 1920 by the CCI Paris Ile-de-France, FERRANDI Paris offers a range of programs up to Master's degrees, all of which prepare students for a career in gastronomy or hotel management. An exemplary institution, FERRANDI Paris is the only school in the hotel and restaurant sector in France whose Bachelor diplomas are recognized by the Ministry of Higher Education and Innovation.

FERRANDI educates 2500 students and 2000 professionals and individuals seeking a of career change from France and abroad. FERRANDI Paris provides courses across four campuses: Paris, Jouy-en-Josas, Saint-Gratien and Bordeaux. FERRANDI is also a meeting place where businesses, chefs, associations and federations work and reflect for the advancement of the sector.

[www.ferrandi-paris.fr](http://www.ferrandi-paris.fr)

### About AFALULA:

The French Agency for AlUla Development (Afalula) was founded in Paris in July 2018 following an intergovernmental agreement signed by France and Saudi Arabia in April of that year. Afalula aims to support its Saudi partner, The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU), in the co-construction of the economic, touristic and cultural development of AlUla, a region located in the North-West of Saudi Arabia which benefits from outstanding natural and cultural heritage. The agency's mission is to mobilize French knowledge and expertise and to gather the finest operators and companies in the fields of archaeology, museography, architecture, environment, tourism, hospitality, infrastructure, education, security, agriculture, botany and the sustainable management of natural resources.

[www.afalula.com](http://www.afalula.com)