



**FROM THE HEART OF RIYADH AND FOR THE 1ST TIME IN THE MIDDLE EAST, FIERA MILANO AND SEMARK ANNOUNCE HOST ARABIA:
A PIONEERING EVENT SET TO RAISE THE BAR IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY**

Riyadh, 26 November 2024 – **Fiera Milano**, Italy's premier trade fair and congress sector leader and one of the top operators globally, today proudly announced **Host Arabia**, in partnership with Semark, a Saudi leader in event organization for the Food Service sector. This launch took place during Horeca 2024, the biggest international food, beverage & hospitality exhibition happening in Saudi Arabia, with the esteemed presence of Italy's ambassador in the kingdom, Mr. Carlo Baldocci.

Set to launch in Riyadh in 2026, the new trade fair **Host Arabia** will introduce to Saudi Arabia the successful format of **HostMilano** – the world's foremost exhibition for professional hospitality, out-of-home, and retail sectors.

Amidst Vision 2030's ambitious framework, Saudi Arabia is undergoing a significant transformation with extensive investments in infrastructure and tourism expansion. The Kingdom plans to construct over **300,000 new hotel rooms and welcome 150 million tourists by 2030**, marking it as a key player in the global hospitality market.

Francesco Conci, CEO and General Manager of Fiera Milano, commented, *"This project marks the beginning of a new growth phase for the Group, focused on global expansion and enhancing our portfolio in high-potential markets, as outlined in our 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. We aim to further establish ourselves as an incubator of innovation and a hub for business growth, extending the reach of our exhibitions to the world's leading economic arenas. The Saudi professional hospitality market offers unique opportunities, with import values for HostMilano sectors rising to 456 million euros in 2023 and expected to reach approximately 600 million euros by 2027. Host Arabia aims to capitalize on this potential and reaffirms our ability to anticipate trends and promote Made in Italy in an increasingly competitive international context, expanding the scope of our exhibitions to key markets."*

The collaboration with Semark, part of the prestigious **Al Rajhi Group**, provides a solid foundation for the success of Host Arabia, thanks to the Saudi partner's extensive experience in organizing high-profile events aligned with the ambitions of **Vision 2030**. **Jad Taktak, CEO of Semark**, stated, *"We are thrilled to collaborate with Fiera Milano on Host Arabia. For the past 15 years, our 'Saudi HORECA' exhibition has led the region in showcasing food, beverage, and hospitality services. This partnership with Fiera Milano is poised to elevate the hospitality exhibition standard in Saudi Arabia, setting the stage for the largest hospitality gathering in the Kingdom and uniting the most influential players from around the world to explore opportunities and showcase the latest industry trends."*

HOSTMILANO: A SUCCESS STORY

HostMilano stands out with its **unique exhibition concept** that offers a comprehensive overview while providing deep insights into specific sectors, fostering cross-sector synergies across **three macro-areas**: Professional Catering and Bakery-Pasta-Pizza; Coffee-Tea, Ice Cream-Pastry, and Bar-Coffee Machines-Vending; Furniture-Technology and Tableware.

This biennial event gathers all major **international players to unveil their latest innovations**. The 2023 edition featured over **2,100 exhibitors, 40% of whom** were international, representing **50 countries**, and attracted **more than 180,000 professional visitors**, with 42% from **166 countries**, including **over 700 top-tier hosted buyers worldwide**. Approximately **one in five visitors** were from GCC countries and Asia.

The event attracts a diverse audience, including importers, distributors, bars, restaurants, hospitality and retail businesses, as well as industry professionals such as chefs, pastry chefs, food service consultants, architects, designers, contractors, and installers. HostMilano goes beyond showcasing exhibitor offerings by placing innovation at its core, featuring an **extensive program of events** that include insights, expert panel discussions, professional development workshops, live cooking demonstrations, and prestigious international competitions and championships.

ECONOMIC DATA FOR THE SECTOR

Building on this foundation, Host Arabia aims to leverage the **forecasted growth potential** in Saudi Arabia and the broader GCC markets for professional hospitality. In 2023, **trade between the EU and GCC** in HostMilano sectors reached **1.31 billion euros**, projected to rise to **1.6 billion euros by 2027** with a 6.2% CAGR. **Saudi Arabia, notably the second-largest market**, generated **455.9 million euros** in trade in 2023 (expected to rise to 598.9 million euros by 2027, a 7.1% CAGR).

Italy, a global leader across multiple sectors, holds **the largest trade volume with Saudi Arabia for products showcased at HostMilano**. In 2023, trade between the two countries reached **167.9 million euros** and is forecasted to grow to **190.7 million euros by 2027**. By sector, Saudi Arabia is the largest GCC market for **Food Service Equipment** (100.5 million euros in 2023, 110.5 million euros in 2027) and **Bakery and Pastry Equipment** (18.7 million euros in 2023, 20.0 million euros in 2027), and the second-largest for **Furniture and Tableware** (14.2 million euros in 2023, 17.3 million euros in 2027) and **Coffee Machines and Vending** (34.5 million euros in 2023, 42.9 million euros in 2027).

Regarding consumer habits in the region, preliminary findings from an ongoing survey by Fiera Milano and HostMilano, conducted by **CSA Research**, reveal that Saudi and UAE consumers are increasingly drawn to **personalized and customer-centric out-of-home experiences**. Service quality is the top driver for 22% of Saudi consumers and 18.8% in the UAE, followed by **ambiance (15.7% in Saudi Arabia, 12% in the UAE)** and **recipes and cooking processes (15.3% in Saudi Arabia, 16.6% in the UAE)**. These findings underline the importance for operators to continually upgrade their businesses by **investing in technology and innovation**.