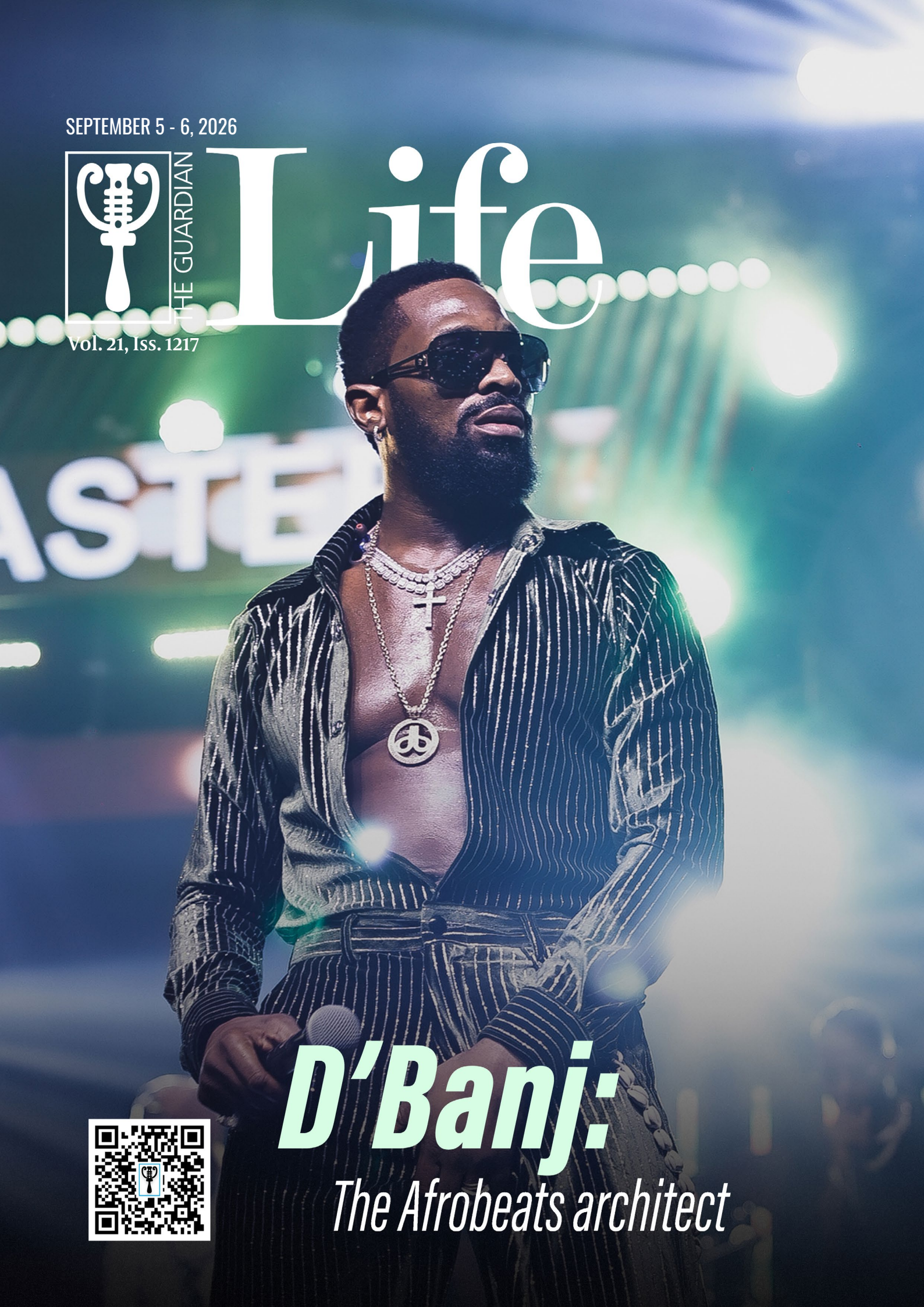
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D'Banj:

The Afrobeats architect

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THE GUARDIAN Life
Everything you need to live well





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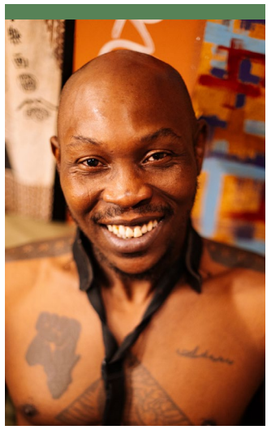
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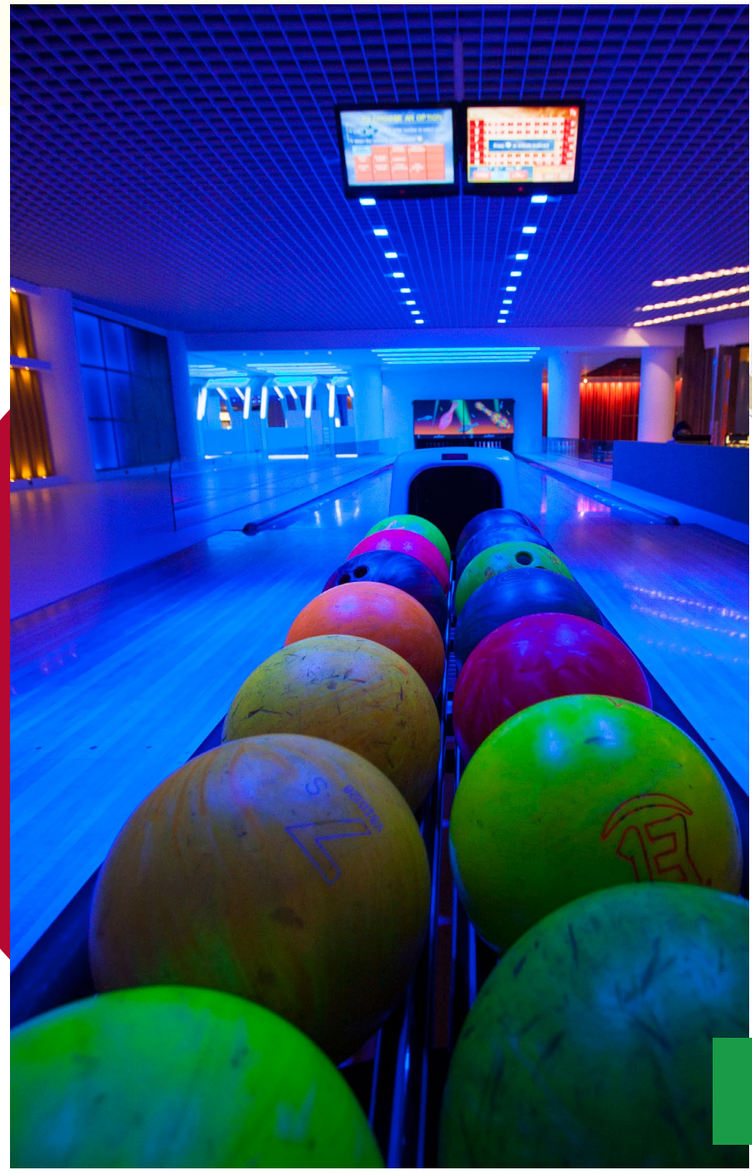




Five Gaming, **bowling spots** *in Lagos*

by Oluwagbemisola Sadare

Need somewhere to play games, go bowling or just hang out with your friends? Lagos has quite a few places where you can do exactly that. From PlayStation lounges and arcades to bowling alleys and family entertainment centres, these five spots offer something different from the usual restaurant or cinema outing.



1 Crucifix Games Ajah

Sometimes, you just want to play PlayStation with your friends without having to stay in someone's house. That is where Power Playing Game Lounge comes in. The lounge gives gamers a place to sit down, pick a game and get straight into it. A game of FIFA can start casually, but once someone scores, the whole thing can become surprisingly serious.

It is a good option if you are looking for a gaming spot in Lagos where you can spend a few hours playing with friends. You can have a couple of matches or stay longer if the competition gets interesting.

Best for: PlayStation battles, gaming sessions and hanging out with friends.

Froggles Playzone Lekki

2

Froggles Playzone is a family-friendly indoor entertainment centre in Lekki Phase 1, Lagos, offering children a mix of games and activities in one space. Located at 6A Charles Ifeanyi Street, the play zone is designed for children who want to burn off some energy while parents enjoy a more controlled and secure environment.

The centre features arcade games, a toddler play area, a kids' spa, a swimming pool and spaces for parties and celebrations. There is also a food area where children can grab treats such as popcorn, candy floss and ice cream. Its arcade and indoor play facilities make it suitable for play dates, family outings and birthday parties.



Rufus and Bees. Lekki



3

You do not have to know how to bowl to en

At Bowling Barn, the fun is often in watching everyone try to figure out what they are doing. One person might surprise everyone with a strike, while another manages to send the ball straight into the gutter.

It is one of the bowling spots in Lagos that works for different kinds of outings. You can come with friends, go with your partner or bring the family along.

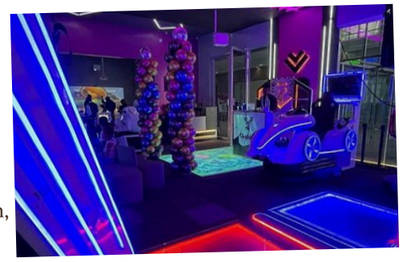
There is also more to do after the game, with food and other entertainment options such as billiards available.

Enzo Reality, Lekki

4

If you want something more immersive than the usual PlayStation or arcade games, Enzo Reality is worth checking out. Located at 8 Providence Street, Lekki Square Mall, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos, the entertainment centre combines virtual and augmented reality with a large selection of games.

There are more than 300 games and experiences to choose from, including VR car racing, fighter aircraft simulations, bowling, archery, tennis, golf and other adventure games. The variety means you can switch between activities instead of spending the entire day playing one type of game.



Funtasticaland Maryland and Ilupeju



5

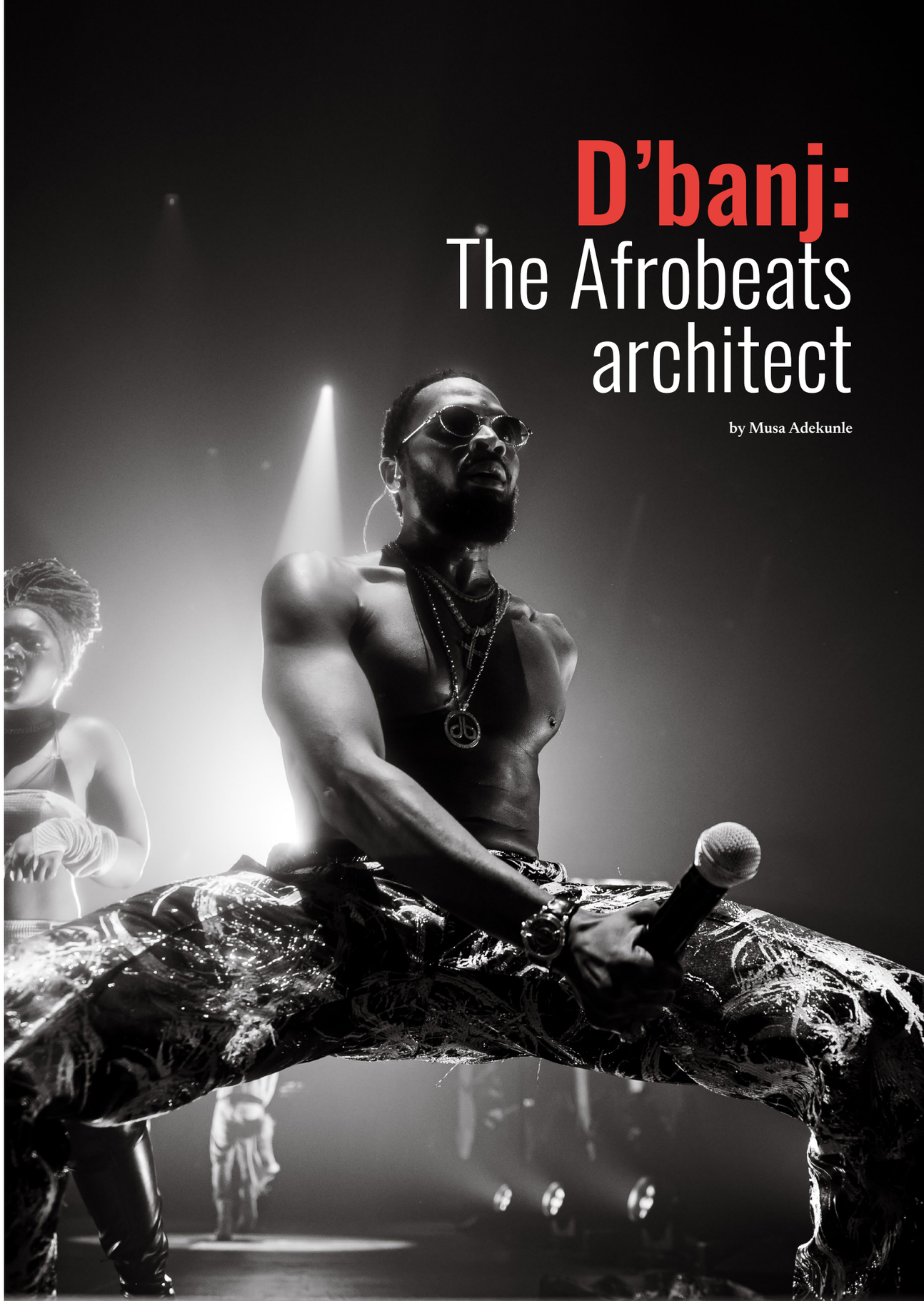
In Funtasticaland, there are video game arcades, PlayStation stations, a dance machine, a play zone, 6D cinema, bouncy castles and rides, so there is plenty to move on to if one activity loses its appeal.

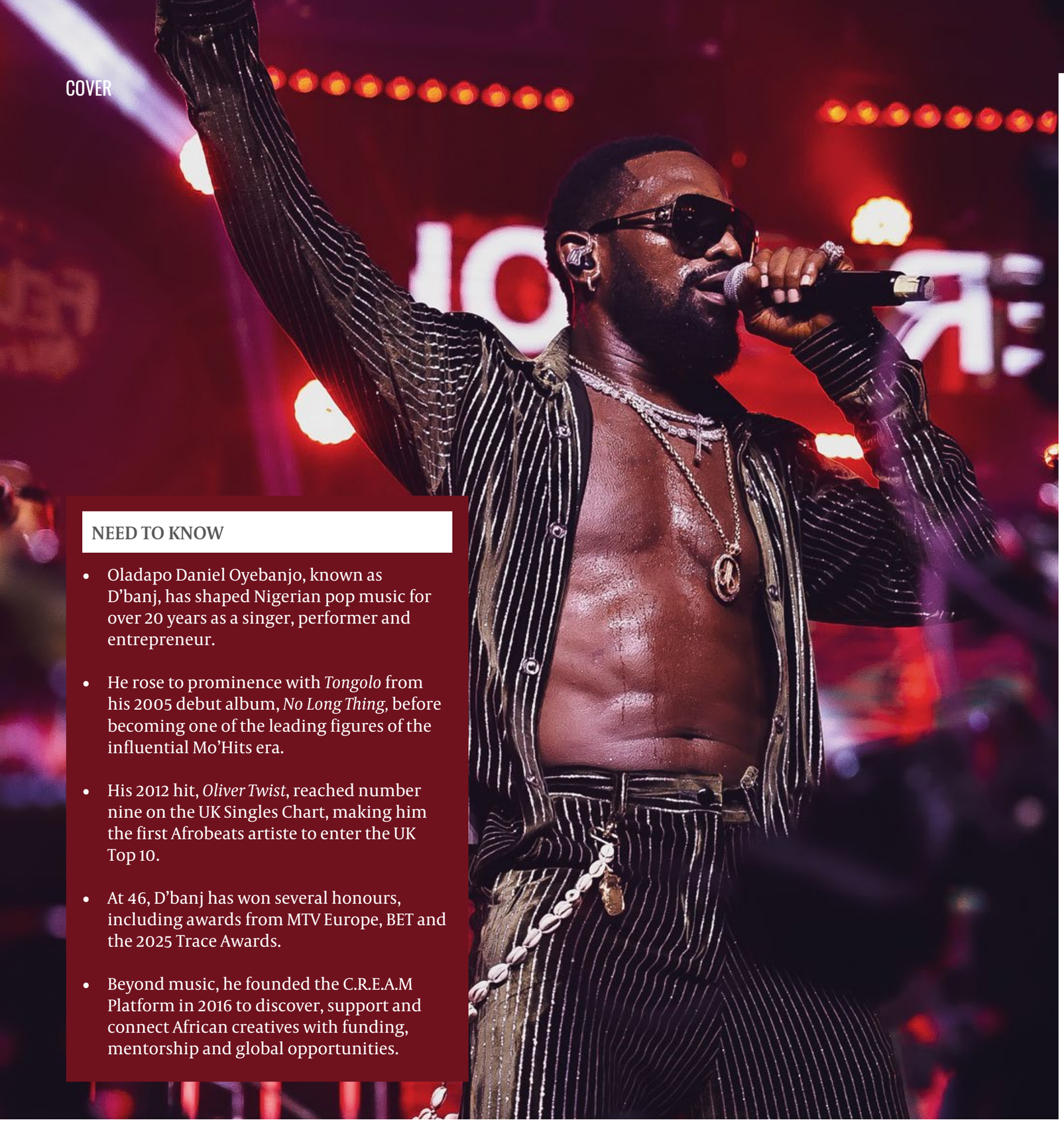
The centre has locations in Ilupeju and Maryland and is particularly suited to families and children's birthday parties.

If you are searching for family entertainment centres in Lagos, Funtasticaland is worth considering when you want several activities in one place.

D'banj: The Afrobeats architect

by Musa Adekunle





NEED TO KNOW

- Oladapo Daniel Oyebanjo, known as D'banj, has shaped Nigerian pop music for over 20 years as a singer, performer and entrepreneur.
- He rose to prominence with *Tongolo* from his 2005 debut album, *No Long Thing,* before becoming one of the leading figures of the influential Mo'Hits era.
- His 2012 hit, *Oliver Twist*, reached number nine on the UK Singles Chart, making him the first Afrobeats artiste to enter the UK Top 10.
- At 46, D'banj has won several honours, including awards from MTV Europe, BET and the 2025 Trace Awards.
- Beyond music, he founded the C.R.E.A.M Platform in 2016 to discover, support and connect African creatives with funding, mentorship and global opportunities.

Long before Afrobeats became a global force, Oladapo Daniel Oyebanjo, popularly known as D'banj, was already pushing Nigerian music beyond the continent. His 2012 hit, *Oliver Twist*, reached the UK Top 10 and confirmed that an African sound could compete on the global stage.

More than two decades after his debut, the 46-year-old singer is entering another phase. His new single, *Safe Space*, scheduled for release on September 11, moves beyond entertainment to explore mental health, emotional safety and the need to protect one's peace.

Speaking exclusively with *Guardian Life*, D'banj shares his experience of global success, personal loss and building a life beyond music. He also talks about his private life, plans for C.R.E.A.M and why he believes his best years are still ahead.

Your latest single, *Safe Space*, is dropping on 11th September. What inspired the song?

Safe Space is a different sound and, for me, it represents something much bigger than just music. I wanted to create something that speaks to the importance of protecting your mind and creating a safe space for yourself in a world that can be very demanding.

We are constantly exposed to so much information, pressure and noise, and sometimes we forget how important it is to protect our mental and emotional space. That is really what inspired the song. Safe Space is not just a record; it is part of a movement to encourage people to be more intentional about the spaces they create for themselves, from fitness and wellness to the people they surround themselves with and the things they consume.

> *"I don't see myself competing with them. I helped create a path that they can continue to expand."*
>
> — D'BANJ

At the end of the day, your mind is your most important safe space, and that is something we all need to protect.

You were one of the first Nigerian artistes to break into the international market. What did you understand about global success before others did?

I understood very early that African talent needed more than local recognition; we also needed global validation and credibility. I believed that if we could take what we were doing in Africa and position it properly on the international stage, the world would pay attention.

At that time, people did not necessarily see the possibilities, but I was focused on creating bridges and showing that African music could travel, compete, and create value globally. I think that mindset is still very relevant today. The global market is no longer something we should simply aspire to enter; Africa has the talent, culture, and intellectual property to actively participate in and benefit from it.

Some people say D'banj is now more famous for his legacy than his current music. What would you say is your legacy, as a musician and as an entrepreneur?

I don't look at my legacy as something that is limited to one particular period of my career. My legacy is about being willing to take risks, break barriers, and build things that did not previously exist.

As a musician, I was part of a generation that helped take African music to a much larger global audience. As an entrepreneur, I have also taken the time to build solutions, particularly through C.R.E.A.M., with the belief that Africans should be able to create, own, and monetise their intellectual property from within Africa.

That vision has continued to evolve through strategic partnerships and opportunities



> *"The dream was never simply to participate in the industry. It was to build a platform for the industry."*
>
> — D'BANJ

beyond our borders, including the $1 million collaboration with Cinq. For me, that is an important part of the legacy: not just participating in the industry, but contributing to building the infrastructure and opportunities that can help the next generation.

Nigerian music has changed dramatically since your peak years. Which younger artiste do you believe could genuinely challenge the legacy you built?

Who said my peak years are over? My legacy is my legacy, and theirs is theirs. I don't believe legacy is something you compete over. Every generation has its own story, its own sound, and its own opportunity to make an impact.

My goal has always been to pave the way and demonstrate that it can be done. If the next generation takes that example and goes even further, then that is a win. I don't see myself competing with them; I see myself as someone who helped create a path that they can continue to expand.

Time will always show what people have contributed, and I believe every generation should be allowed to build its own legacy.

Fame has brought you money, influence, controversy and personal loss. Which experience changed you the most?

Everything collectively. Every experience- the successes, the challenges, the losses, the opportunities and even the criticism- has contributed to who I am today.

You cannot go through a journey like mine and remain the same person. Every chapter teaches you something, and I think those experiences have made me more intentional about my life, my work, my family and the things I choose to build.

When people eventually tell the full story of D'banj, what part of your journey do you fear they might leave out?

If it is my story, they cannot remove anything from it. Every part of the journey is important because the successes only make sense when you understand the challenges and experiences that came with them.

I have also always valued my privacy. There are parts of my life that I deliberately choose to keep private, and I think that is important. But ultimately, my story is my story, and the full journey will speak for itself.

In 2017, you called going into business your best decision. Nine years later, do you still feel the same way?

Absolutely. Looking back now, I can say that it was one of the most important decisions I made.

I had already seen globally how deals were being done and how important it was for Africans to build solutions that allowed us to retain ownership of our intellectual property and create value within the continent. That vision has continued to grow.

You once said you were Daniel during the day and D'banj at night. Is it still easy to separate the private man from the public star?

As much as possible. That is why nobody really knows about my private life.

There is D'banj, the artiste and public figure, and there is Daniel, the person who values family, privacy and having a life away from the spotlight. I think maintaining that distinction is important because it allows you to remain grounded while still giving your audience the best of the public side of you.

What should we be expecting from you more this period?

A lot… a lot of music, a lot of marketing, a lot of attention on Africa and, most importantly, a lot more activity around the things we are building.

With C.R.E.A.M., a lot is happening around the platform, our catalogue, our superfan rewards and the opportunities we are creating for artists and fans. We are also looking at the bigger picture of how African intellectual property can be positioned globally, through partnerships with powerhouses like Cinq.

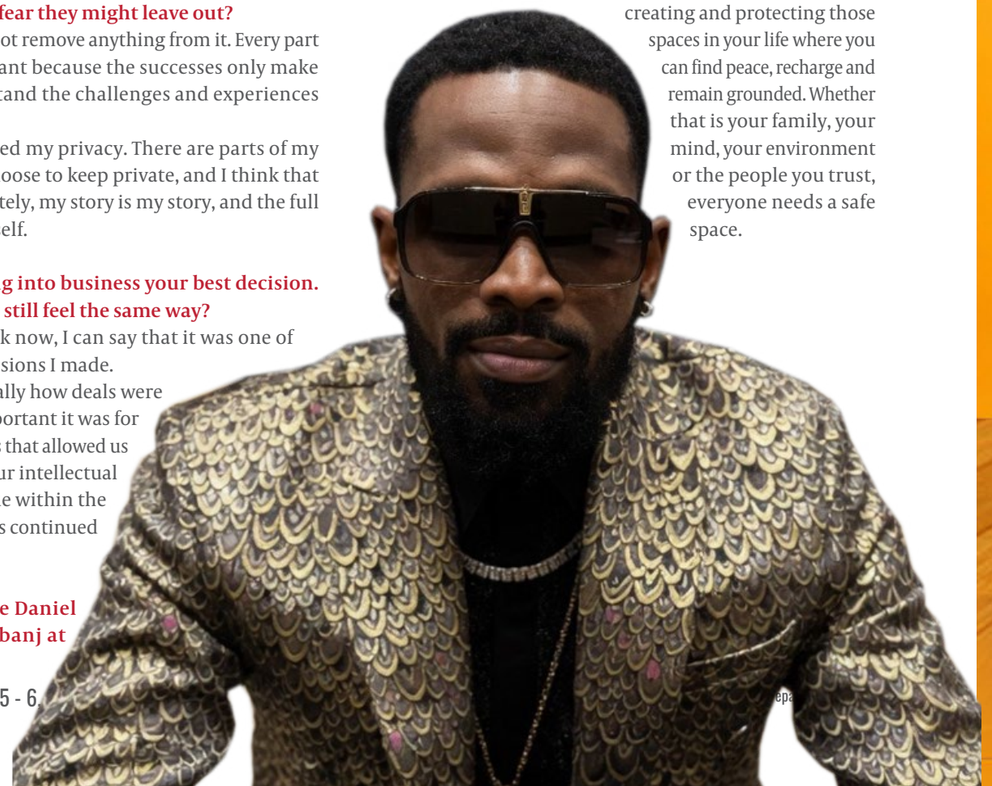
I am also looking forward to seeing more of my colleagues and artistes benefit from the platform, including achieving significant download milestones. I want to see super fans rewarded, people engaging with the platform and more exciting experiences being created around music.

What is your safe space?

My safe space is my mind, but it is also my family. Over the years, I have learned the importance of protecting your peace and being intentional about the people and things you allow into your space.

For me, family gives me that sense of grounding. No matter what is happening around me or how demanding life can become, having that space where I can be myself, away from the noise and expectations of the outside world, is very important.

That is also what Safe Space represents to me. It is about creating and protecting those spaces in your life where you can find peace, recharge and remain grounded. Whether that is your family, your mind, your environment or the people you trust, everyone needs a safe space.

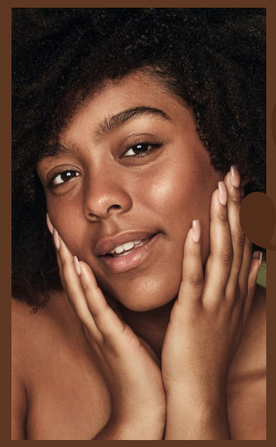


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Taking care of dry, darker *skin* tones

By Geraldine Akutu







Dry skin can be an issue for anyone, but it doesn't show up the same way on all skin tones. For darker skin, dryness often causes ashiness, dullness, uneven tone, or a rough, tight feeling that doesn't improve with basic lotion.

Ashy skin is skin that looks gray and dull and can also have a rough texture. This can appear on the face or the body and is particularly common on the elbows and knees. While not an official medical term, the term "ashy skin" often refers to the appearance of dry skin on darker skin tones.
Spending extended time in hot water contributes to moisture barrier damage and can strip the skin of its natural oils. Additionally, using harsh detergents or soaps can also compromise the skin's moisture barrier. Both of these factors can contribute to dry, ashy skin.

Over time, untreated dryness can also lead to inflammation and dark spots that linger long after the skin feels better.

To keep skin bright and supple, it is good to cleanse and moisturise daily. Use a gentle cleanser that does not clog the pores. A good cleanser helps to remove dirt without stripping the skin of its natural oils.

Use products containing humectants like glycerin or hyaluronic acid, and lock it in with moisturisers or body lotions that feature ceramides and shea butter.

Specific skin issues, such as acne and dark spots, benefit from swift treatment and preventive techniques. To even out your skin tone and fade dark spots, incorporate brightening ingredients like Vitamin C, niacinamide, or azelaic acid into your routine.

Melanin provides natural sun protection, but it does not make your skin immune to UV damage or hyperpigmentation.



Since dry skin can be caused by long, hot showers or baths and harsh soaps or detergents, try to limit bathing time to 5-10 minutes using lukewarm water, and opt for gentle, hypoallergenic cleansers that won't strip skin of its natural oils

To prevent the formation and worsening of dark spots and more serious health concerns such as skin cancer, experts recommend that everybody use sunblock with an SPF of 30 or higher every day. Stay away from abrasive scrubs and overly harsh soaps. In melanin-rich skin, physical irritation can trigger inflammation and actually cause more dark spots.

Also, avoid products containing dangerous concentrations of hydroquinone, mercury, or unprescribed steroids. These can cause permanent damage, patchy discolouration, and weaken the protective covering of the skin that acts as a barrier.

If you notice your skin starting to feel dry and you've taken the precautions above, consult with a board-certified dermatologist to discuss potential sources of your dry, ashy skin, and to collaborate on steps to help manage or prevent it.

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At SKOT, we believe that every individual and corporate has a unique story to tell, it's finding your voice that makes all the difference. Our expertise lies in connecting brands, organizations, and individuals with a defined voice that truly represents them by building authentic relationships, inspiring changes, and delivering impactful stories. Our aim is to transform the communications landscape by empowering authentic voices to break stereotypes, inspire innovation, and drive sustainable growth for businesses, communities, and the world.

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Seun Kuti: Once upon a showman

by Chinonso Ihekire

Ever since Seun Kuti first climbed onstage as a child alongside his father Fela Anikulapo-Kuti and the legendary Egypt 80, he has been an ardent lover of the stage.

Guardian Music

He was only about nine when he began opening Fela's shows, singing with Egypt 80 before his father took over the stage. By his early teens, he had formally joined the band as a saxophonist and percussionist, and following Fela's death 14-year-old Seun took over its leadership. More than three decades since those first performances, the stage remains one of the clearest glimpse into his artistry.

Throughout his professional career, the 43-year-old Afrobeat maestro has travelled across the world performing his own music alongside selections from his father's catalogue, carrying the same charismatic fervour that has long defined his family's musical legacy.

In our conversation, he recalls the thrill of eventually playing in prestigious spaces he once wondered if Afrobeat would ever enter, including the Philharmonie de Paris. Yet, after years onstage and across the world, he quips that "It's still the people that matter, not the space."

As far as recording music goes, Seun Kuti's recent releases have also been reminders of why he remains one of contemporary Afrobeat's most vital custodians. In June, he released "Na Dem," featuring prominent American guitarist Tom Morello. He also released "Problems," with Jamaican reggae musician Kabaka Pyramid, in July — both records still as politically charged and culturally rich as the bulk of his catalogue. Catching up with Guardian Music, Seun Kuti gives us another close peek into his life as a musician.

You've been on the road quite a bit this year. How has the year felt for you musically?

Well, it's not a surprise really because everything we are doing this year, things were put into motion last year or over the last couple of years. We have a bigger vision for what I'm trying to do right now, so we're working to meet those targets and doing what we need to do to achieve them.

> *"Music is supposed to speak on behalf of the poor and working people of the world, not mesmerise people with the luxuries that the elites control."*
>
> — SEUN KUTI

I've gone to far places this year. I've done a European tour, maybe about 15 shows. Then we went to Australia. I was supposed to go to Colombia, but because of the earthquake, we had to reschedule the tour. I don't think I've played up to 40 shows this year. I think we've done like 25 because I'm trying to take it easy this year and not do too much.

For someone whose career has been shaped so much by being onstage, does performing ever begin to feel familiar after all these years?

My career is one that is constantly evolving in the commercial space. When my first album dropped, I was maybe 24. The huge success of it led to my second album, and I've been on a kind of steady upward trajectory, musically and professionally. Everything I do every time is kind of new. Many people think, "Oh, I've been doing this for so long," but most things I do are new. I'm trying to break new ground in my art and enter new spaces. For me, I'm constantly trying new things, so things don't seem too familiar sometimes.

Funny enough, I think the last two years have been my two biggest European tours — world tours, actually. We did a big one in the States as well. I played four nights back-to-back at the Blue Note in New York. Being able to accomplish things like that is still new for me.

Are there particular stages or arenas you still dream of playing?

There's no arena that I'm looking forward to, but there's no arena that I don't want to grace at some point with my music, ancestors willing. When I started playing in Paris, for example, I used to imagine, "Man, will I ever play at the Paris Philharmonie? Would they accept my music in that kind of classical music setting and allow me to bring my art there to share with the world?" Then we did it. We sold it out.

After you do that, you realise it's still your fans that will come. It doesn't change how I feel about the music I'm making. At the end of the day, it's still the people that matter. It's not the space.

What is Seun Kuti's recipe for a thrilling stage performance? Do you have any rituals before going onstage?

Funny enough, I think I'm the only artist who doesn't have any pre-stage ritual except normal warming up. I play my sax a bit just to make sure everything is working fine, and it's all greased up, oiled up, and ready to blow. I warm up my voice to make sure I don't lose it in the middle of the set. Nothing special.

I have a lot of artist friends who have rituals. Some people have to pray. Some people have to be in some kind of circle. My band, when I'm touring, like to do a little huddle, and I never join them. I call them pussies for doing that. They're so corny. [Laughs]

This October, though, I'm trying to do something for the first time where I perform with a lot of guests. I want to have most of my artist friends that I can get come out with me in New York and LA. Most times when I perform, it's just me for an hour and a half or two hours. No special guests. I want to do something special in New York and LA this fall.

"Na Dem" became popular through a live performance at Coachella. What was going through your mind when you were writing it?

My lyrics are always born out of poetry that I have. "Na Dem" is actually something I wrote from back to front. I was thinking that one day Nigerian people have to really surprise these people. In Yoruba, there is an expression, jẹ ojú, which literally means to "eat the eye." It can be used as a euphemism for betraying somebody.

The African elites really believe that the people of Africa cannot rise against them and betray them as they have been betraying us. So that's where the idea started from.

PLAYLIST OF THE WEEK

by Mayowa Iyiola



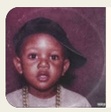
DANTATA
Zinoleesky



KALUBA
Mayorkun



PERSPE
Young Legend, Joeboy Fxrtune



TWIN
Victony ft Fola



BIG PERFORMER
Blaqbonez



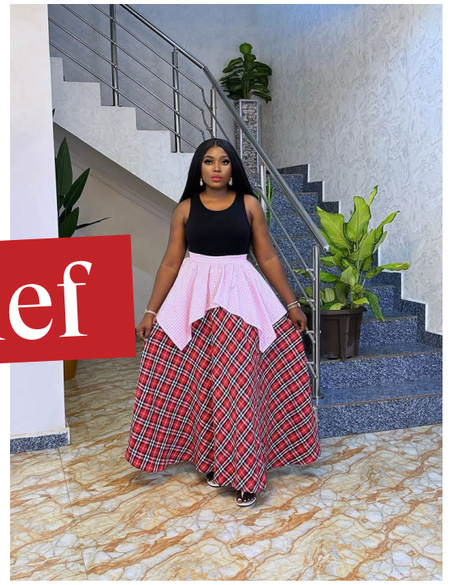
Photo credit: Pinterest

Rave of Handkerchief *Skirts*

By Ese Oghenetega

One of the latest pieces making waves is the handkerchief skirt, a playful and versatile fashion staple that has become increasingly popular among women, particularly in Nigeria.

With its distinctive asymmetrical hemline, fluid silhouette, and effortless flair, the handkerchief skirt has moved beyond being a passing trend to becoming a wardrobe favourite. Its growing appeal lies in its ability to combine comfort, movement, and femininity while offering room for personal expression.
But what exactly is driving the obsession with this distinctive skirt? Here are five reasons women are embracing the handkerchief skirt trend.



Elegance is its unique selling point

If you wish to look elegant on a casual outing, the handkerchief skirt is your perfect choice. You can pair it with a beautiful blouse and lovely accessories. Although rocking it with sandals will not take away its beauty, heels will give you a more sophisticated look.



Accepts various fabrics and multiple colours

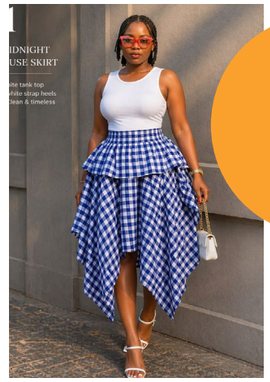
Ladies have made handkerchief skirts a part of their wardrobe for obvious reasons. Beyond its beautiful look, this style can be made with various types of fabrics and still maintain its classy appearance. From Ankara to satin, silk, chiffon, and other materials, there is no limit to what handkerchief skirts can be made with. It also comes in different colours, which gives it an increased level of acceptability.



Versatility sets it apart

You can combine it with sneakers, heels, sandals, or whatever footwear or accessory you desire. Are you looking for a style you can rock to different gatherings? Be it corporate, weekend getaway, beach hangout, or even religious gatherings. The handkerchief skirt is a perfect choice as the style is versatile.





The uneven hem looks stylish

One of the distinct features of the handkerchief skirt is its uneven hem. The edges are not parallel, and it gives you a stylish look as you walk with it. Ladies who love creativity with a blend of simplicity will appreciate this design.



A fashionista's delight

Fashion is a dominant part of our lives, and embracing the handkerchief skirt is only normal, especially as it is a trend offline and online. Some ladies love to be up-to-date with trends and it is one of the reasons they have it in their wardrobe.

Walk into wellness

by Oluwagbemisola Sadare

Wellness has become a business of its own. There are gym memberships, fitness classes, smartwatches, workout programmes, supplements and fancy water bottles. There are retreats promising to help people become healthier, calmer and more in tune with themselves. For anyone trying to keep up, taking care of yourself can sometimes feel like another bill to pay. But then there is walking.

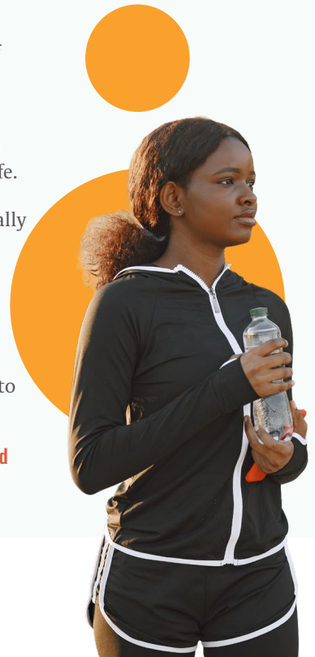


Walking is probably one of the simplest ways to get some movement into your day, and it costs nothing to do. You do not need a gym membership or a trainer. There is no equipment to set up and no class to book. If you have a comfortable pair of shoes, you can walk. People have always walked, of course. What has changed is how much attention it is getting. A walk that used to be just a walk now has a place in the wellness world. People are taking morning walks before work, going for evening strolls, joining walking groups and challenging themselves to hit a certain number of steps.

Part of the attraction is probably the fact that it is easy to fit into everyday life. Not everyone can afford a gym membership, especially when there are other bills competing for attention. In addition to this is the transport to and from the gym, workout clothes and the question of when exactly you are supposed to find the time.

Walking can be worked around what you are already doing.

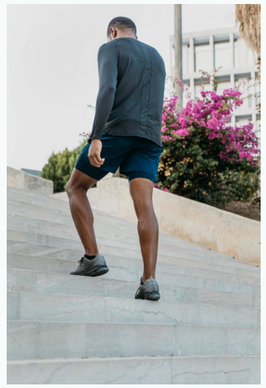
If a shop is close enough, you can walk there. If you are commuting and the distance allows it, you can get down at a convenient stop and walk part of the way.



You can take a walk during lunch or spend a few minutes outside after work before heading home.

It does not have to be a serious workout either.

Some days, you may walk quickly because you want to get your heart rate up. Other days, you may just want to stroll and clear your head. You can walk alone, meet a friend or put on your earphones and listen to music. There is no complicated routine to follow.



For people who spend most of their day sitting, even that little bit of movement can make a difference. Walking can also be a way to spend time with people without spending money.

Two friends can catch up while walking around the neighbourhood instead of meeting at a café. Couples can take an evening walk and talk about their day. Parents can take their children out for a walk when they need a break from staying indoors.

And sometimes, you do not need company at all.

One beautiful thing is walking with nowhere particular to be. You notice things you would normally miss when you are in a car or rushing to catch a bus. You get some fresh air, think about whatever is on your mind and, for a while, step away from the noise of your phone.

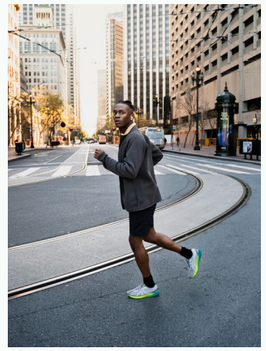
This is especially relevant now that wellness feels like a long list of things to buy. There is always a new product, programme or trend promising to make you healthier. But not every healthy habit needs to become another monthly expense.

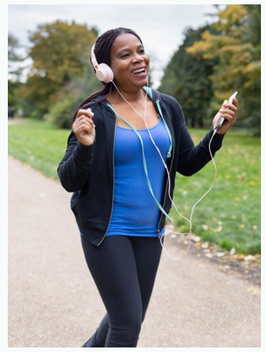
Walking is also not a replacement for every kind of exercise. Some people may need strength training or other forms of physical activity depending on their needs.

In Lagos, walking is not always as simple as it sounds. Traffic, bad roads, flooding, long distances and safety concerns can make walking difficult or impossible in some places.

So, no, the answer is not to tell everyone to walk everywhere.

But where it is safe and practical, walking can be an easy way to move more without spending more. It can be part of your commute, your lunch break, your evening or simply a few minutes stolen from a busy day.





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marie claire NIGERIA

FASHION



Everyone's catching gingham fever — and these Nigerian brands are making it impossible to resist

by Ashim Ojeh

School uniform material, checkered material — you've definitely heard those before. Chances are, whoever you heard them from was talking about gingham fabric. Here in Nigeria, gingham wasn't always associated with fashion. You'll find it used for all sorts of things, from actual school uniforms (no surprise there) and boarding school house wear to tablecloths, curtains, boxers, aprons and so much more. Today, however, it has found its way into fashion in more stylish ways.

Gingham is a lightweight woven fabric that is usually made from cotton or cotton yarn. It is highly recognisable by its repeated block pattern, which displays equal-sized blocks of white paired with a single bright colour, such as red, blue or green. This distinct block pattern is hard to miss, which may explain why the fabric has become so familiar to many of us. The pattern also works well in various styles. These days, designers are really spicing things up by using it to create pieces well l loved by everyone.

As gingham re-emerges as a fashion favourite, especially as a summer staple, it's clear that the trend is enjoying a resurgence. Here are some Nigerian brands and pieces you can turn to if you want to catch the gingham fever.

Ivory Afrikaan – Myla dress
Baby doll, but make it gingham. This dress embodies freedom with its flowy silhouette. It features slip straps and a wide horsehair braid added to the hem, giving it t more volume and structure. It also comes with a matching headband and, guess what, protective bubble shorts underneath. That also has me sold.

Nandra – Gingham skirt
The handkerchief silhouette has been all the rage, and designers have found various ways to showcase it. Nandra took the silhouette and created a standout gingham skirt. The skirt comes in two colours, red and black, and is available in three different lengths: regular, midi and maxi, perfect for those who want variety.

Kaykay – Bambi dress
When you think of the Kaykay brand's Deux collection, your mind might naturally go to the gorgeous Gwen dress. However, from that same collection comes another hidden gem: the Bambi dress. The dress features a delicate princess neckline and the well-loved bubble gown silhouette. It also comes in mini and midi lengths.

Fruché
At the 2026 Berlin Fashion Week, Fruché gave viewers a taste of what's coming with its Spring/ Summer collection titled K Leg. The designer, Frank Aghuno, tapped into his secondary school years and had countless gingham pieces grace the runway. One standout was a red gingham dress with a shirt silhouette, draping at the waist and a tail. It's definitely one I can't wait to see released.

Malité – The Sunday two-piece set Adire
Malité gives the classic gingham pattern a fresh, distinctly Nigerian twist. Made from cotton chiffon and hand-dyed using traditional Adire techniques, the piece combines the familiar checked print with the texture and character of artisanal dyeing. It's a playful take on gingham that feels both contemporary and rooted in tradition.

Visit www.marieclaire.ng to read more

DATING & RELATIONSHIP



5 unconventional first dates that might tell you more than dinner ever could

by Oyindamola Adebiyi

The first date is usually treated like a job interview. You pick somewhere nice, dress well, arrive on time and try to appear interesting without trying too hard. You ask the usual questions, laugh at the appropriate moments and hope the other person is not secretly counting down the minutes until they can leave.

But dinner and drinks do not always tell you much about someone.

People are on their best behaviour when they know they are being assessed. Sometimes, you need to take them out of the carefully curated first-date setting to see what they are actually like. So, if you are tired of dinner and drinks, here are five unconventional first dates that might tell you more about your potential partner.

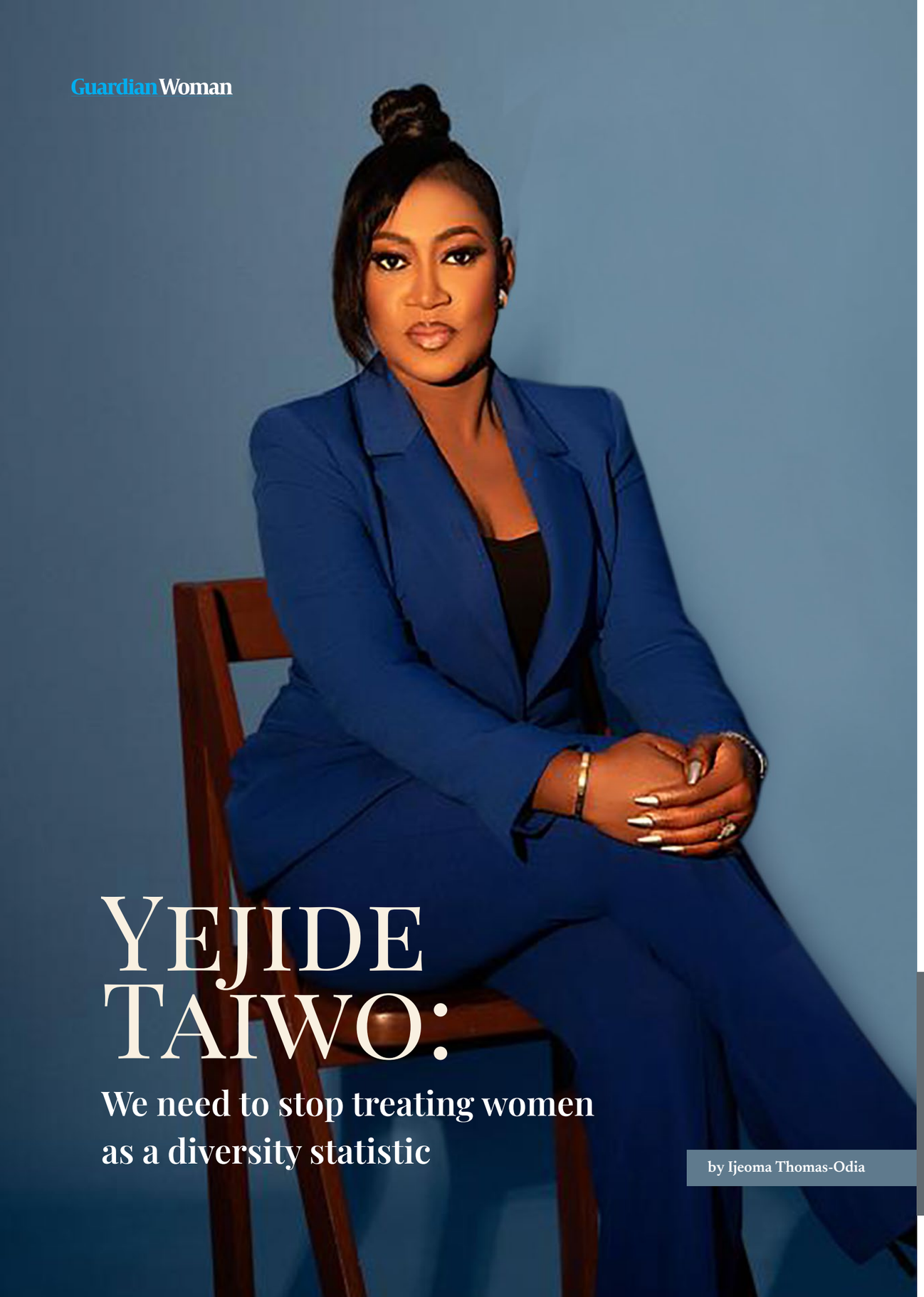
Meet the parents
This is obviously an extreme place to start. You have barely exchanged enough information to know their middle name, and somehow you are sitting in their parents' living room answering questions about your intentions. But hear me out. Meeting someone's parents on a first date can be less about getting their approval and more about seeing your date in their natural habitat. You get to observe how they speak to their parents, whether they are respectful without being performative and how they behave when someone else is not the centre of their attention. You might also learn things they would never tell you over dinner.

Go somewhere neither of you knows
Pick a part of the city neither of you has explored and spend the afternoon figuring it out together — no elaborate itinerary or reservations. Have a general destination and enough money to eat, move around and get yourselves home. The appeal is partly the uncertainty. When you are somewhere unfamiliar, you cannot rely entirely on your usual routines. You have to make decisions together. You might get lost; you might find an incredible restaurant by accident. Or you both end up somewhere completely different from where you intended to go. More importantly, you get to see how the person reacts when things do not go according to plan.

Go grocery shopping together
Forget candlelight, take each other to the supermarket. It sounds painfully ordinary until you realise how much information you can gather in one aisle. You will find out whether they plan what they need or make decisions as they go. Whether they take their time or rush through everything. Whether they are particular about what they buy or happy to try something new. You might even discover that they consider a family-sized tub of ice cream an essential grocery item.

Set a tiny budget and see what you can do with it
Set a spending limit before the date. Maybe it is ₹5,000 each, maybe it is ₹10,000. The amount matters less than the challenge. The goal is to have as much fun as possible without spending more than you agreed. You could find the best street food in the area, visit a free exhibition, buy snacks, and sit somewhere with a good view or explore a neighbourhood you have never properly seen. It sounds simple, but it can be surprisingly revealing.

Take a class neither of you has tried before
Choose something neither of you has tried before. Pottery, salsa, painting, a cooking class, archery, anything that gives both of you permission to be terrible at something. The important part is that neither person should already be good at it.



YEJIDE TAIWO:

We need to stop treating women as a diversity statistic

by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia

Yejide Taiwo is a business growth strategist, transformational leader and corporate executive with over two decades of experience across construction, energy, oil and gas, hospitality, real estate and infrastructure. She currently leads Business Development at Craneburg Construction Limited, driving strategic growth, commercial expansion and partnerships, and serves on corporate boards. A former General Manager, Business Development at Jagal/Nigerdock Group, she holds an MBA from the University of Liverpool and has completed executive programmes at Harvard Business School and the University of Oxford. A passionate advocate for women and youth development, she supports social-impact initiatives and serves as Vice Captain of Cycology Cycling Club. In this interview, she speaks on her career career and leadership journey.

You have spent more than two decades navigating construction, oil and gas, energy, real estate, and infrastructure, industries traditionally dominated by men. What did you have to unlearn, prove, or do differently to establish yourself and rise into leadership?

I had to unlearn the idea that I needed to prove myself every single day. When you work in industries that are traditionally male-dominated, especially in environments where you may sometimes be the only woman at the table, there can be a tendency to feel that you have to work harder, speak louder or be tougher just to establish your credibility. Over time, I realised that my greatest strength was not trying to compete by becoming someone else. It was becoming very good at what I do, understanding the business deeply, and being confident enough to bring my own perspective to the table. I learned to let my competence speak. And perhaps most importantly, I learned that you don't have to choose between being a strong leader and being an empathetic woman. You can be commercially tough and still be human. For me, leadership became less about proving myself and more about helping to redefine what leadership in that world could look like.

> *"Experience has taught me that you don't build great organisations by being the smartest person in every room."*
>
> — YEJIDE TAIWO

Your career has moved across several industries and leadership roles. What has been the biggest turning point in your professional journey?

I stopped thinking about my career as a series of jobs and started thinking about it as a journey of building value. Moving across construction, oil and gas, energy, real estate and infrastructure exposed me to very different businesses, but I began to see the connections between them. I realised that infrastructure isn't just about concrete and steel. It is about people, capital, energy, cities, businesses and ultimately the quality of life we create. That broader perspective changed me. I became much more interested in understanding the bigger picture, where the market was going, what problems needed solving and where I could make the greatest contribution. I also became more comfortable with change. Some of the biggest opportunities in my career came when I stepped into unfamiliar territory. Looking back, I think that has been one of the defining lessons of my career: sometimes the next chapter of your growth begins where your comfort zone ends.

Business development is ultimately about seeing possibilities before they become obvious. How do you identify opportunities in Nigeria's rapidly changing infrastructure, construction and energy landscape, and what separates a promising opportunity from a viable one?



I start with a very simple question: What problem are we solving? Nigeria has no shortage of opportunities. We have enormous infrastructure gaps and significant demand across energy, housing, transportation, industrial development and urbanisation. But a need is not automatically a business opportunity. I look at the fundamentals. Is the need real? Is there a market? Who is the customer? What is the commercial model? What are the regulatory and execution risks? Who are the right partners? And, perhaps most importantly, can we actually deliver? I've learned not to fall in love with an idea simply because it sounds exciting. A good opportunity has to survive scrutiny. You also have to understand timing. Sometimes the opportunity has existed for years, but a change in technology, regulation, demographics, financing or consumer behaviour suddenly makes it viable. That is where business development becomes interesting to me, the ability to connect the dots before they become obvious to everyone else.

What does effective leadership look like to you today, and how has your leadership philosophy evolved over the years?

Earlier in my career, I thought leadership meant having the answers. Today, I believe leadership is much more about asking the right questions. Experience has taught me that you don't build great organisations by being the smartest person in every room. You build them by surrounding yourself with capable people, giving them clarity, trusting them and holding them accountable. I have also become much more comfortable with vulnerability. You can say, "I don't know. Let's figure it out." That doesn't make you a weaker leader. In fact, sometimes it creates a much stronger team because people know they are allowed to think, challenge and contribute. For me, leadership today is about three things: clarity, accountability and people. The older I get, the more I believe that leadership is ultimately about what you leave behind in people.

You have invested significantly in executive education, including programmes at Harvard and Oxford. At this stage of your career, what does continuous learning mean to you, and what is one leadership lesson from those experiences that has fundamentally changed how you operate?

For me, continuous learning is about remaining curious.

Federal Palace Resort, GWF set 2027 agenda for women as wealth creators

by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia



The Guardian Nigeria, in strategic partnership with Federal Palace Resort, has called for participation for the month-long celebration of International Women's Month 2027 under the theme "Women as Wealth Creators".

The Guardian Nigeria, in strategic partnership with Federal Palace Resort, has called for participation for the month-long celebration of International Women's Month 2027 under the theme "Women as Wealth Creators".

This forward-looking programme kicks off on 1 March 2027 and runs through Women's Month in Lagos, culminating in the flagship Guardian Woman Festival. The initiative echoes the global IWD theme "Balance the Scales", a call for equity that "promises that every woman and girl should be safe, heard, and free to shape their own lives".

The Guardian Woman Festival convener and Executive Director of Federal Palace Resort Anita Athena Ibru, highlights that Nigerian women are now drivers and engines of wealth creation, enterprise growth and economic transformation in all sectors:

"When we invest in women through knowledge, networks, opportunity, contacts and mentorship, we strengthen families, organisations, and the economy".

The 2027 festival invites organisations and stakeholders to align their events with Women's Month at the historic Federal Palace Hotel. Opened for Nigeria's independence celebrations in 1960, Federal Palace was the setting where the Declaration of Independence was signed.

The hotel later hosted major cultural gatherings – including the 1977 Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC '77) underlining its legacy as a venue that incubates national development and cultural wealth.

As Ibru notes, Federal Palace is "a living property, not just a building where events happen", positioning it as a platform for leadership and culture. The venue is available for bookings between 2-30 March 2027 with opening and closing ceremonies on 1 and 31 March.

This structure ensures a sustained, measurable impact rather than a single-day event.

Festival Focus: Women as Wealth Creators

The 2027 Guardian Woman Festival highlights women's roles as creators of prosperity across all walks of life. In keeping with this focus, the festival's sessions, panels and workshops will explore how women entrepreneurs, leaders and innovators generate economic value in diverse fields.

Ibru emphasises that gender equality yields broad returns: "Equality is not about advantage for some; it's about dignity, safety and fairness for all. When women and girls stand equal, families are stronger, workplaces are fairer, communities thrive, and society becomes safer."

Organisations are encouraged to host conferences, trainings or CSR events at Federal Palace at discounted rates during March, ensuring women are not just attendees but drivers of the dialogue and outcomes.

50th Anniversary of FESTAC '77

The 2027 festival will also commemorate the 50th anniversary of FESTAC '77, Nigeria's landmark Pan-African cultural celebration. The original FESTAC (Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture) was a month-long global gathering in Lagos featuring 16,000 artists and performers from 56 African and diaspora nations. It celebrated African music, fine art, literature, dance and heritage on the world stage.

By including FESTAC's legacy, The Guardian Woman Festival honours the creative economy and cultural entrepreneurship that have long underpinned African wealth and identity.

These connections remind us that women's influence in the arts, culture and creative industries is a vital component of national prosperity.

Key highlights and logistics include:

Dates & Venue: Women's Month events run 2–30 March 2027 at Federal Palace Resort, Victoria Island (opening ceremony 1 March; closing ceremony 31 March).

Themes: Aligning with IWD's "Balance the Scales", the festival's overarching theme "Women as Wealth Creators" spotlights women's economic contributions.

Participation: Business leaders, government agencies, NGOs and women's networks are invited to convene sessions that showcase women's impact on enterprise growth and innovation.

Legacy: The month-long format builds on its past success in 2026 when the festival expanded into a full-month programme in partnership with Federal Palace ("Give to Gain" theme), providing a structured platform for sustained engagement.



Guardian Woman *Festival*

For more information on the **Guardian Woman Festival 2027**, including event details and sponsorship, please email: ***Guardianwomanfestival@guardian.ng***



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MSF addresses mental burden of caregivers as children battle malnutrition

For caregivers of children battling severe acute malnutrition, the worry does not end at the hospital. At Médecins Sans Frontières' (MSF) Nilefa Kiji nutrition facility in Maiduguri, Borno State, children receive treatment while their caregivers deal with their own fears and worries. Some spend days or weeks by their children's beds, hoping to see them get better while thinking about the families they have left at home.

Treatment can last from one week to a month, depending on the child's condition. Because severe malnutrition weakens the body's immunity, some children also arrive with illnesses such as malaria, measles and diphtheria.

For many caregivers, particularly mothers, the fear of losing a child comes with another concern: who is looking after the children at home?

Fatima Ibrahim spent three weeks at the Nilefa Kiji facility with her 23-month-old daughter, Aisha, who was admitted after battling meningitis and repeated convulsions. Although Aisha began to improve, Fatima could not stop thinking about her eight other children at home.

"I am worried about my children," she said. "There is no one to take care of my children. Their father is away and they do not have anything to eat or drink."

Her worry grew when she learnt that one of her children had developed a fever. With no money to pay for treatment, Fatima said she became overwhelmed. "I cried and could not eat," she said. "Even this morning, I could not eat until the afternoon."

For caregivers like Fatima, staying in hospital with one sick child can mean being away from the other children who also depend on them.



An MSF medical doctor examines Faiza Isa's seven-month-old child Abubakar Gharzali at the MSF-supported Inpatient Therapeutic Feeding Centre Unguwa Uku, Taruni Local Government Area of Kano state.



MSF counsellor educator, Kethurah John watches as Adama plays with her daughter, Fatima, at MSF's facility Nilefa Kiji in Maiduguri, Borno state, northeast Nigeria. Fatima is on admission and has been receiving treatment for malnutrition

Halima Mohammed knows this struggle. She spent 45 days moving between hospitals with two sick children, a period she said began to take a toll on her own health.

"I was having good sleep before my children fell ill," she said. "Now I barely sleep."

Halima said she had also started feeling unwell. When she noticed that her daughter was improving, she asked for her discharge. She assured the medical workers that she was not trying to stop the treatment, but her daughter was not yet well enough to leave. For Latifat Abdulkareem, the reality of what was happening at home became clear when her eldest son visited her at the hospital during her daughter's admission.

"He asked me when I was coming home," she said. "He said they were hungry since I wasn't around." Kethurah John, an MSF counsellor educator, said situations like these can leave caregivers caught between the child receiving treatment and the children waiting at home.

She recalled the case of a woman with six children whose husband eventually left the children with neighbours after telling her he was tired of caring for them. "She could not cope staying in the hospital," John said. "She had six children. She had to leave, not because she wanted to, but because she feels this is just one child."

John said the woman became distressed even when she was given food at the facility because she was thinking about her children and whether they had anything to eat.

The pressure on caregivers is not always obvious to the people around them. While medical workers monitor a child's weight, symptoms and recovery, the fear, tiredness and worry carried by the caregiver can easily go unnoticed.

MSF has responded by including mental health and psychosocial support in its nutrition programmes.

Caregivers receive psychological first aid when they arrive at the facility. They can also have individual counselling and join group sessions where they talk about what they are going through, share their concerns and learn ways to cope.

The support is not limited to what happens inside the hospital. When caregivers lose contact with their families, counsellors help them make phone calls. In some cases, supervised home visits are arranged so they can check on their families before returning to complete their child's treatment.

Children are also given time to play through structured activities during their recovery. For some, it provides a break from the hospital routine.

For Mariya Mukhtar, an MSF facility in Kano became a place of relief after she arrived with her severely ill daughter. She had taken the child to several other health facilities without seeing much improvement.

Her daughter had a severe fever, vomiting and loose stool, and Mariya feared she would not survive.

Down memory lane… Nigeria's railway heritage in Ebute-Metta

By Oluwagbemisola Sadare



The Nigerian Railway Corporation compound in Ebute-Metta holds reminders of a time when the railway was a much bigger part of everyday life in Nigeria.

The railway compound Nigeria's railway system dates to the colonial period, with the Lagos-Ibadan line opening in the early 1900s before the network gradually extended to other parts of the country. For decades, trains carried passengers, agricultural produce and goods across the country.

Ebute-Metta grew around this railway activity. Railway offices, workshops, stations and staff facilities made the area an important part of Lagos' railway operations.
Today, old coaches, tracks and railway equipment remain within the compound. Some sit alongside buildings and infrastructure still connected to the railway system, giving the surroundings the feel of a place that has not completely moved on from its past.
This setting is also important to understanding Jaekel House. The museum is not a standalone collection placed somewhere else in the city. It sits within the railway environment it documents.



Inside Jaekel House

Built in 1898, Jaekel House is one of the historic buildings within the railway compound. It was associated with senior railway officials and was named after Francis Jaekel, a former railway official and historian who documented Nigeria's railway history.

The building retains much of its old character, with wooden interiors, high ceilings, large windows and spacious rooms. Inside, those rooms now house a mini railway museum.
The collection brings together photographs, railway artefacts, tools, equipment and other materials connected to the Nigerian Railway Corporation.

According to the corporation, its photographic archive covers the 1940s to the 1970s and includes images of railway personalities, places and events from both the pre-independence and post-independence periods.

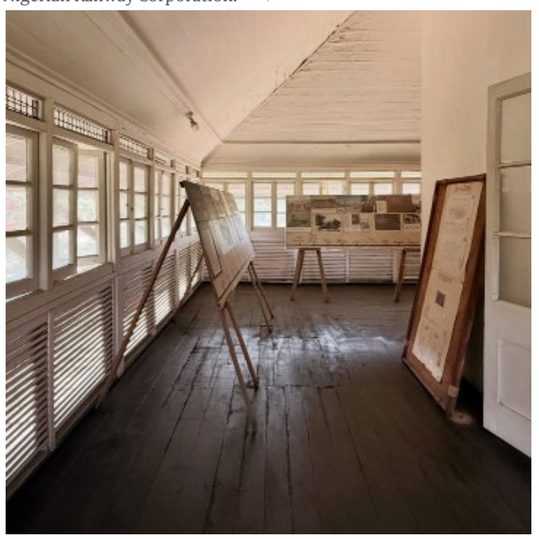
The photographs show trains and railway stations, but they also bring attention to the people behind the system. Railway workers appear in their uniforms, while tools and other equipment offer a glimpse into the work that went into keeping the trains moving. Some photographs tell a different story: that of Lagos itself.

Lagos in photographs

For anyone familiar with Lagos today, the photographs offer a chance to see a city that looks considerably different from the one outside the museum. Roads, buildings, stations and neighbourhoods appear as they once were. Some places are recognisable, while others have changed so much that their earlier appearance requires a second look.

The photographs also capture people using the railway as part of their daily lives. Passengers gather at stations, railway workers pose for photographs, and trains sit along platforms in scenes from another era.

This makes the collection more than a record of trains.
It is also a record of Lagos and of the people who lived and worked around the railway. The photographs preserve small details of everyday life while showing how the city's physical landscape has changed over time.
Beyond Lagos, they point to the role the railway played in connecting different parts of Nigeria. As the network expanded, trains became an important means of moving people and goods across the country.
The objects and photographs at Jaekel House offer pieces of that history, allowing the story to be seen through the places, people and machinery that were part of it.



Getting there

Jaekel House is located within the Nigerian Railway Corporation compound in Ebute-Metta, around the Iddo and Ebute-Metta railway area of Lagos.

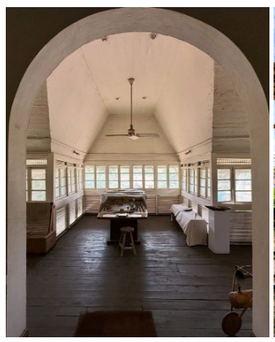
> *Jaekel House preserves more than the history of Nigeria's railway, it preserves the story of Lagos, its people, and a city shaped by movement.*

Visitors coming from other parts of the city can take a taxi or use a ride-hailing service to reach the area. It is best to confirm the entrance, visiting arrangements and opening hours before setting out, as these may change.

Legacy, the Historical and Environmental Interest Group of Nigeria, is associated with Jaekel House and lists the building as its headquarters. The organisation also provides information about visiting the museum.

If you plan to spend time around the wider railway compound, comfortable footwear is advisable.
A few hours is enough to explore the museum, but spending additional time around the compound gives a better sense of the setting in which the railway story unfolded.

For a city that is constantly changing, the railway compound offers a reminder of an earlier Lagos which was one where trains were an important part of how people and goods moved through Nigeria.





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SPOT REVIEW



Abuja's Zuma Grill fine dining

by Chidinma Enweani

Located inside the iconic Transcorp Hilton Hotel in Maitama, Abuja, Zuma Grill continues to hold its ground as one of the capital city's most distinguished destinations for high-end dining. Combining classic European culinary techniques with a dark, intimate atmosphere, the restaurant offers a refined retreat for food lovers, business executives, and international visitors seeking a calm escape from the city's fast pace.

The Ambience

Step past the buzz of the main hotel lobby and the environment shifts immediately. Zuma Grill trades bright lights for low, warm illumination, dark wood accents, and rich leather seating that instantly set a sophisticated mood. The room is cleverly arranged to give every table a generous sense of privacy, making it an ideal setting for romantic dates, quiet client dinners, or milestone celebrations. Soft background music adds to the gentle, relaxed vibe, ensuring that conversation remains the central focus of the evening.

The Menu and What to Expect

While the setting leans into timeless French-style elegance, the kitchen shines brightest through its specialty grill and continental menu. The emphasis here is on top-tier ingredients, carefully cooked cuts of meat, fresh ocean catches, and a well-curated international wine list designed to complement every course.

The Grill & Steaks

The main attraction is, without question, the steak. Prepared to order and seared to lock in natural flavours, the restaurant offers premium cuts ranging from tender fillets to rich, juicy rib-eyes. Each plate comes paired with classic sauces, including rich peppercorn, creamy béarnaise, or red wine reductions.

Seafood Specialties

For those leaning towards seafood, the kitchen serves beautifully grilled jumbo prawns, pan-seared salmon, and lobster tails served alongside herb-infused butter sauces and crisp seasonal greens.

Starters & Soups

Diners can begin their meal with French-inspired classics, such as rich onion soup, creamy seafood chowder, or paper-thin beef carpaccio finished with fresh rocket and shaved parmesan.

Vegetarian & Pasta Options

The menu caters thoughtfully to all preferences, featuring rich pasta dishes like truffle mushroom tagliatelle and creamy fettuccine, alongside fresh vegetarian platters.

Desserts

The meal finishes on a sweet note with European favorites, including a classic chocolate fondant with a molten centre, rich crème brûlée, or fresh fruit tarts served alongside hot espresso.

Service & Hospitality

The dining experience is matched by attentive, understated service. Staff members are highly professional, well-versed in menu details, and happy to offer recommendation pairings for wines and side dishes. The service proceeds at an unhurried pace, allowing guests to relax and enjoy each course without feeling rushed.

The Verdict

Zuma Grill delivers a polished, reliable fine-dining experience that balances traditional European culinary techniques with modern comfort. Whether you are booking a quiet table for two or hosting an important business dinner, it remains one of Abuja's most reliable spots for exceptional food and world-class hospitality.

NEED TO KNOW

Location: Transcorp Hilton Abuja, 1 Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja.

Opening Hours: Open daily for dinner from 4:30 PM to 10:30 PM.

Dress Code: Smart casual to formal.

Reservations: Recommended, particularly for peak weekend hours and large groups.

The Marriage Blueprint

10 Conversations Worth Having Before "I Do"



by Priscilla Iwedike

Nobody tells you that one of the biggest arguments in marriage could be about toothpaste.

Yes, toothpaste.

Should it be squeezed from the middle or neatly rolled up from the bottom? Should dirty dishes go straight into the sink or wait until after dinner? Is it okay to wear slippers into the bedroom? Should the air conditioner stay on all night or be switched off after an hour? Is Sunday for church and family, or for catching up on sleep?

They sound like little things until they're happening every day under the same roof.

The reality is that marriage is less about grand romantic gestures and more about ordinary moments repeated every single day. It is in those moments that differences become visible. The way you spend money, respond to stress, relate with family, divide household responsibilities, or even decide whose turn it is to wash the dishes can either strengthen your bond or create unnecessary tension. These are not the conversations that usually make it into engagement photos or wedding speeches, yet they often shape the quality of life after the honeymoon is over.

The truth is, many marriages don't struggle because love disappears. They struggle because couples never talked about the ordinary things that eventually become everyday realities. Long before discussions about school fees, mortgages or retirement, there are conversations about habits, expectations, money, family and values. Those seemingly small conversations often determine how peaceful life together will be.

Here are 10 conversations worth having before the wedding bells ring.

1. What does marriage mean to you?
Love may bring two people together, but shared expectations keep them together. Talk about what marriage looks like to each of you and what you both expect from the relationship.

2. How do you handle money?
Saving, spending, borrowing, generosity and financial priorities should never be a mystery. Money conversations may feel uncomfortable, but avoiding them can be even more costly.

3. How do you deal with conflict?
Some people want to resolve issues immediately, while others need time to process. Understanding how each of you handles disagreements can prevent unnecessary hurt.

4. What's your picture of home?
From toothpaste to chores, cooking, laundry and sleeping habits, everyday routines matter more than many people realise. Don't assume you're on the same page—talk about it.

5. What role will family play?
How involved should parents, siblings and extended family be? Healthy boundaries help protect both your relationship and your peace of mind.

6. Do we agree about children?
Whether it's when to have them, how many, or even how they should be raised, this conversation shouldn't be postponed until after the wedding.

7. What values guide our lives?
Faith, honesty, respect and personal beliefs influence almost every major decision you'll make together. Shared values often matter more than shared hobbies.

8. What are our dreams?
Discuss your hopes for your careers, finances, where you'd like to live and the future you're building together. A shared vision gives a marriage direction.

9. How do we express love?
People give and receive love differently. Understanding what makes your partner feel appreciated can prevent years of avoidable frustration.

10. What happens when life gets hard?
Every marriage will face challenges. The question isn't whether storms will come, but whether you'll face them as partners who communicate, support and trust one another. Marriage isn't built in a day, and it certainly isn't built on a wedding day. It's built one conversation at a time. The happiest marriages aren't built on perfect compatibility. They're built on honest conversations, shared understanding and the daily decision to choose each other even when the toothpaste is squeezed from the wrong end.

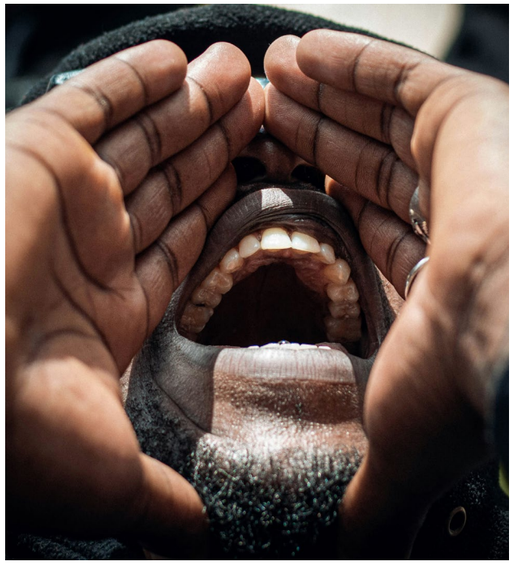
COLUMN



Bunmi Tokede is a Harvard-trained orthodontist, professor at UTHealth Houston, and founder of The SmileHub, Lagos. His work explores data science, AI, patient safety, and how oral health shapes wellbeing.

Questions you are allowed to ask

by Bunmi Tokede



There is a silence I know well, because I was raised into it before I was ever a clinician.

A patient sits down, is told what is wrong and what must be done. The patient often says nothing, not because they have understood, but because they have quietly decided that understanding is not their place. To ask why would be to question; to question would be to disrespect.

Having practised in different settings around the world, I have come to understand that paternalism has its fingerprints all over healthcare. It is not a Nigerian thing. Western systems are richer, but not always wiser. Paternalism is the old idea that the expert knows best and the patient's job is to comply, an idea with deep and not entirely dishonourable roots. In cultures that respect age, learning and authority, deferring to the doctor can feel like good manners.

And clinicians are not the villains of this story. A doctor seeing patient after patient in a system that rewards procedures more readily than conversation has little time left for explaining. Paternalism is often less a personal failing than a habit our systems quietly reward.

There is, however, a better way to understand what should sit between a patient and a clinician: a *fiduciary* relationship. The word comes from the idea of trust. When you place your health in someone else's hands, expertise gives that person power, but also an obligation to use it in your interest and to give you enough information to make an informed choice. Nigerian law is less paternalistic than many patients realise. In the 2001 Okonkwo case, the Supreme Court affirmed the right of a competent adult to refuse medical treatment. The National Health Act goes further: healthcare providers are expected to explain your health status, the available options, and the benefits, risks, costs and consequences of those options, in a way you can understand.

In other words, the right to understand is not a favour a kind clinician grants you. It is already yours.

Five questions to ask before agreeing to a treatment

1. What exactly is wrong and what happens if I do nothing?
This may be the most important question, because it asks whether anything needs to be done at all.

Some problems are genuinely urgent: an infection, a badly broken tooth, a suspicious lump. Delay can make these worse.

Others can safely wait.

You are entitled to know which of the two you are facing. Ask what the diagnosis is, how certain it is, and what is likely to happen if you postpone treatment.

2. What are my options and what does each one cost?
It is not small-minded to ask about money. It is part of the decision.

For many, healthcare is paid out-of-pocket. "The best treatment" on paper is not always the best treatment for a particular person if it cannot realistically be completed.

Ask whether there are reasonable alternatives, what each costs, and importantly, what the total cost will be, not merely what you need to pay today.

3. Why this treatment and what are the risks?
Ask what the procedure involves, why it is being recommended, what can reasonably go wrong, and what would happen if a complication occurred.

4. Is anything being removed or done that cannot be undone and is there a gentler option?
A tooth extracted cannot be put back. Tooth structure drilled away does not grow again.

Some irreversible treatment is absolutely necessary. But irreversible steps deserve a second question before a signoff.

5. What should I expect afterwards and when should I worry?
Before you leave, know what normal recovery should look like. How much pain or swelling is expected? For how long? Can you eat normally? When can you return to work? Which symptoms mean you should call or come back immediately?

None of these questions is an accusation. They simply invite the expert to think aloud, in language you understand, about your body, your options and your money.

The clinicians most worth your trust are not diminished by your questions; they are helped by them. Asking is not the opposite of respect. Done well, it may be one of its fullest expressions, the point at which a paternalistic encounter becomes the fiduciary relationship it was always meant to be.

The mouth, I wrote last month, can be one of the body's most honest mirrors. You should expect the same honesty from the person you trust to care for it.

That was always your right. Let it now become your habit.


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Best in the cities

by Chidinma Enweani

Planning to escape city noise, a fun family weekend, or enjoy fresh air, Nigeria's major hubs have plenty of green spaces and amusement parks to offer. From coastal rainforests to peaceful gardens and lively family spots. Here is your guide to outdoor destinations worth checking out right now.



Best outdoor parks escape across the city

1 Lekki Conservation Centre, Lagos

Lekki Conservation Centre is a premier nature escape spanning 78 hectares of protected rainforest and wetlands right in the city.

Highlights: Home to Africa's longest canopy walkway, mangrove boardwalks, and free-roaming wildlife like monkeys, peacocks, and tortoises.

Why Visit: Ideal for nature lovers, fitness fans, and thrill-seekers ready to conquer the bridge.

2 BMT African Garden, Abuja

Situated in Wuse, Abuja, BMT African Garden combines cultural heritage with modern leisure facilities in a beautifully landscaped setting.

Highlights: Traditional African architecture, swimming pools, indoor games, outdoor dining lounges, and lush greenery.

Why Visit: An ideal central location in Abuja for social gatherings, relaxed dining, and casual weekend hangouts.

3 TCK Family Park Rutaland, Port Harcourt

Located along Igwuruta Road, TCK Family Park Rutaland serves as a major amusement and leisure destination catering specifically to families in Port Harcourt.

Highlights: Amusement rides, bouncy castles, arcade games, and outdoor event spaces.

Why Visit: A high-energy recreation hub ideal for kids' day trips, weekend outings, and birthday celebrations.

4 Freedom Park, Lagos

Located on the historic grounds of a former colonial prison on Lagos Island, Freedom Park has been transformed into a vibrant heritage site and cultural arts venue.

Highlights: Open-air performance stages, historical monuments, ponds, art galleries, and live music nights.

Why Visit: The perfect evening spot for cultural events, live music performances, and relaxed outdoor dining.

5 Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt

Positioned along Aba Road, Port Harcourt Pleasure Park is a state-of-the-art public park built to international standards, providing diverse leisure activities for all age groups.

Highlights: A large man-made lake with pedal boats, miniature golf courses, climbing towers, cinema facilities, and expansive lawns.

Why Visit: The flagship recreational destination in Rivers State, perfect for all-day family outings and weekend leisure activities.

6 Landmark Beach, Lagos

Located along the coastline of Victoria Island, Landmark Beach offers a premium beachside recreational experience right in central Lagos.

Highlights: Beachfront loungers, boardwalk dining, watersports, beach volleyball, and an active leisure environment.

Why Visit: A top destination for coastal relaxation, social gatherings, and enjoying beachside dining by the ocean.

7 LUFASI Nature Park, Lagos

Spanning 20 hectares along the Lekki-Epe Expressway, LUFASI Nature Park is an eco-friendly urban forest dedicated to nature conservation and outdoor education.

Highlights: Forest trails, play areas made from natural materials, animal sanctuaries, and peaceful forest ponds.

Why Visit: An educational and peaceful retreat ideal for eco-tours, quiet walks, and teaching children about plant and animal conservation.

8 Garden City Amusement Park, Port Harcourt

Garden City Amusement Park, Port Harcourt provides a fun, family-focused environment packed with outdoor entertainment options.

Highlights: Children's rides, carnival games, play areas, and refreshment kiosks. A convenient, centrally located park in Port Harcourt designed for afternoon entertainment with young children.

Why Visit: A safe space and play ground that accommodates children.

9 Freedom Park, Lagos

Located on the historic grounds of a former colonial prison on Lagos Island, Freedom Park has been transformed into a vibrant heritage site and cultural arts venue.

Highlights: Open-air performance stages, historical monuments, ponds, art galleries, and live music nights.

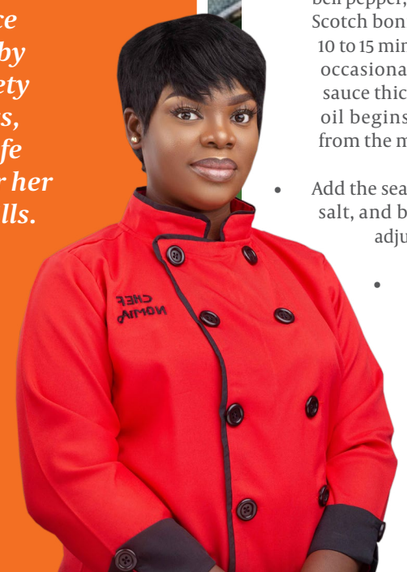
Why Visit: The perfect evening spot for cultural events, live music performances, and relaxed outdoor dining.

Chef Nomia's coconut signature rice

by Chidinma Enweani



This week, Onome Precious Igbudu, also known as Chef Nomia, shares her signature coconut rice recipe accompanied by practical kitchen safety advice for home cooks, with The Guardian Life magazine. Known for her excellent culinary skills. Her passion for the culinary arts took root during her polytechnic days, where she regularly prepared meals for her roommates and volunteered to cater for hostel



Here is how to make the Signature Coconut rice:

Ingredients

- 2 cups long-grain parboiled rice
- 1½ cups coconut milk (1 can)
- 1 cup chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 medium tomatoes, blended or finely chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, blended
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil or coconut oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 seasoning cube (optional)
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- ½ cup mixed vegetables (carrots, peas, sweet corn)
- 1–2 Scotch bonnet peppers (optional, for heat)

Instructions

Prepare the Rice: Rinse the parboiled rice thoroughly under cold running water until the water runs clear. Set aside to drain.

- Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the chopped onions and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes until translucent. Add the minced garlic and cook for 30 seconds until fragrant.
- Stir in the tomato paste and fry for 2 minutes to reduce acidity. Add the blended tomatoes, red bell pepper, and chopped Scotch bonnet. Cook for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sauce thickens and the oil begins to separate from the mixture.
- Add the seasoning cube, salt, and black pepper, adjusting to taste.
- Pour in the coconut milk and stock. Stir the mixture thoroughly and bring it to a gentle boil.
- Add the rinsed rice to the pot and stir to combine. Cover tightly with a lid and reduce the heat to low. Allow the rice to cook for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring once or twice to ensure even cooking. If the liquid evaporates before the rice is tender, pour in ¼ cup of hot water, cover, and continue simmering on low heat.
-
- Stir in the mixed vegetables during the last 5 minutes of cooking to keep them vibrant and crisp.

How to Serve

Serve warm alongside fried ripe plantains (dodo), grilled or fried chicken, peppered fish, or a side of beef stew.

Chef's Culinary Tips

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before cooking, after handling raw meat, and after managing waste.
- Keep raw and cooked foods strictly separate. Use dedicated cutting boards and knives for raw meat and poultry, and separate tools for ready-to-eat items.
- Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables under clean running water prior to chopping or cooking.
- Measure cooking oil with a spoon rather than pouring straight from the bottle to manage calorie intake while retaining flavour.
- Rely on natural aromatics like onions, garlic, ginger, fresh herbs, and peppers to build depth in your dishes, reducing reliance on excess table salt and commercial seasoning cubes.

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Bouillon cube for soups, stews and any dish of choice
Cube de bouillon pour soupes, ragoûts et tous vos plats préférés
NEW PACK GREAT TASTE
FOR GREAT TASTE & AROMA
ONGA
Mama's helping hand!
Beef Flavour
serving suggestion
4g x 50 Cubes
Bouillon cube for soups & stews
Cube de bouillon pour soupes & ragoûts



RECIPE FOR EASY HOMEMADE CHAPMAN

by Chidinma Enweani

Chapman is a non-alcoholic cocktail drink across Nigeria, loved for its bright red hue, sweet citrus fizz, and distinct bitter notes. It is simple to mix at home and makes a great pairing with rich, spiced dishes like coconut rice, suya, or grilled meats.

Ingredients

- 1 cup Fanta (or orange soda)
- 1 cup Sprite (or lemon-lime soda)
- 2–3 dashes Angostura bitters
- 2 tbsp Grenadine syrup (or Ribena, for colour and sweetness)
- 1 tbsp fresh lime or lemon juice
- Ice cubes
- Cucumber slices, orange slices, lemon or lime wheels, and fresh mint sprigs

Instructions

- Fill two large glass mugs or tall tumbler glasses halfway with ice cubes.
- Pour equal parts Fanta and Sprite over the ice into each glass.
- Stir in the Grenadine syrup (or Ribena) and fresh lime juice until the drink takes on its signature vibrant reddish-pink color.
- Drop 2 to 3 dashes of Angostura bitters into each glass and stir gently to combine without losing the fizz.
- Drop cucumber slices and citrus wheels directly into the drink, top with a sprig of fresh mint, and serve immediately with a straw.

Chef's Tips

- Angostura bitters give Chapman its distinct adult flavor profile. If serving kids, simply omit the bitters.
- Chill the sodas before mixing so the ice doesn't melt too quickly and dilute the flavor.
- Feel free to toss in chopped apples, strawberries, or pomegranate seeds alongside the traditional cucumber and citrus slices.

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Best *Coffee* shops across the city

by Chidinma Enweani

Whether you need a quiet spot to work on your laptop, a sunny place for weekend breakfast, or a really good cup of coffee, Nigeria's coffee space is growing fast.

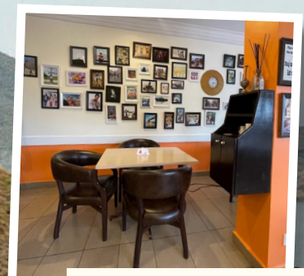
These great coffee shops double as stylish spaces, creative hubs, and top food spots.



Coffee Bar, Abuja

Sleek, minimalist, and intensely functional, this venue is built for focus and flavor. The atmosphere is sharp and modern, designed with clean lines, comfortable seating arrangements, and a serious dedication to productivity. They serve meticulously roasted coffee beans brewed into potent americanos, smooth flat whites, and refreshing iced beverages.

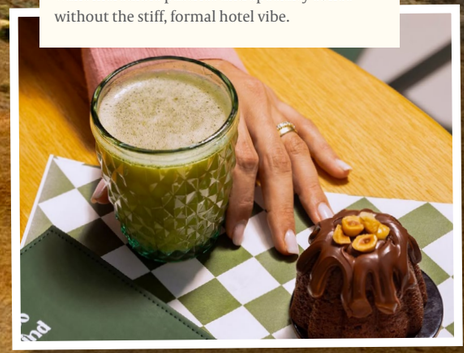
Why you should visit: You should visit if you are a remote worker, digital nomad, or creative professional looking for high-speed Wi-Fi paired with a serious caffeine kick to power through your deadlines.



Café Flour

This intimate neighbourhood favorite smells entirely of comfort the second you cross the threshold. The ambiance is warm, unpretentious, and deeply welcoming, featuring rustic wooden accents and gentle lighting that encourages you to linger. They excel in artisanal baking, serving fresh-out-of-the-oven loaves, buttery croissants, and robust, expertly pulled espresso shots.

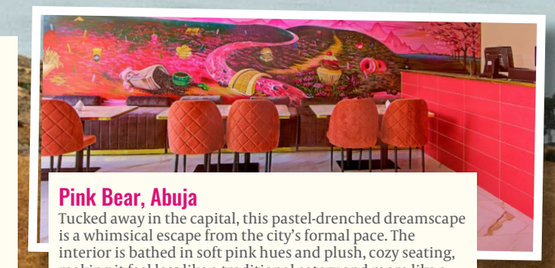
Why you should visit: Good for a quiet breakfast date or when you need a comforting slice of homemade cake paired with a hot cup of coffee to reset your day.



Ziya Federal Palace

The Lobby Café x Ziya brings Ziya Delicacy Boutique's cult-favourite bakes, pastries, and signature drinks straight into the iconic Federal Palace Hotel lobby.

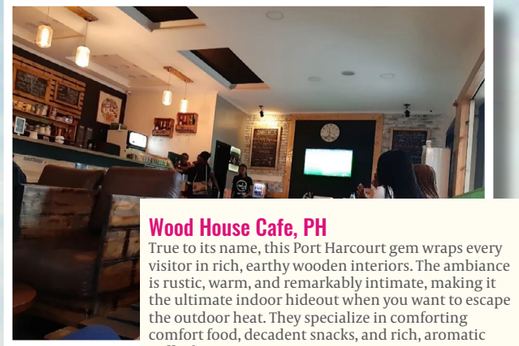
Why you should visit: It is the ultimate spot for a chic, low-key catch-up or a solo treat when you want incredible pastries and specialty coffee without the stiff, formal hotel vibe.



Pink Bear, Abuja

Tucked away in the capital, this pastel-drenched dreamscape is a whimsical escape from the city's formal pace. The interior is bathed in soft pink hues and plush, cozy seating, making it feel less like a traditional eatery and more like a curated film set. They specialize in velvety lattes, Instagram-worthy sweet treats, and delicate pastries that taste just as good as they look.

Why you should visit: Perfect for a relaxed afternoon catch-up with close friends or whenever your social media feed is screaming for a vibrant, cheerful backdrop.



Wood House Cafe, PH

True to its name, this Port Harcourt gem wraps every visitor in rich, earthy wooden interiors. The ambiance is rustic, warm, and remarkably intimate, making it the ultimate indoor hideout when you want to escape the outdoor heat. They specialize in comforting comfort food, decadent snacks, and rich, aromatic coffee brews.

Why you should visit: To enjoy a quiet afternoon with a good novel or when you are craving a grounded, unpretentious space to slow down your pace.

Nikkybell cafe, PH

A warm, community-driven neighborhood fixture that prioritizes comfort above all else. The atmosphere is friendly, unpretentious, and instantly puts you at ease the moment you walk through the door. They serve dependable, classic espresso drinks alongside comforting local and continental snacks.

Why you should visit: Pay a visit when you want to bypass the scene-y pretension and simply enjoy a genuinely good cup of coffee served with a smile in a relaxed environment.



Faarah Coffee Lounge, PH

A versatile hotspot that knows how to transition smoothly from a peaceful daytime retreat to a stylish evening lounge. The environment is upscale and plush, designed with mood lighting and comfortable lounge seating that invites you to stay a while. They craft exceptional coffees alongside a sophisticated menu of small plates and specialty drinks. Why you should visit: You should visit when your day calls for a seamless shift from catching up on emails over morning espresso to winding down with upscale relaxation in the evening.

Cafe One Yaba

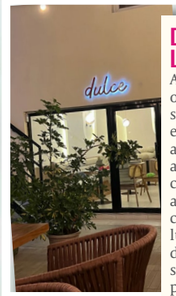
Nestled right in the pulsating heart of the mainland tech district, this space acts as an incubator for ideas and caffeine alike. The vibe is innovative, young, and dynamic, functioning seamlessly as both a collaborative workspace and a relaxed social lounge. They supply high-speed internet, steady workspace power, and reliable, energizing coffee options.

Why you should visit: You should visit if you want to plug into the local tech and startup ecosystem, collaborate with bright minds, or simply need a buzzing, productive atmosphere to get things done.

ART CAFE, Lagos

A legendary bohemian sanctuary steeped in the creative history of the city. The atmosphere is eclectic, artistic, and bursting with soul, featuring vintage furniture, walls plastered with local art, and an effortlessly cool crowd. They serve a diverse menu of comforting meals, fresh juices, and dependable coffee classics.

Why you should visit: Visit if you would love to soak up the inspiring creative energy, sketch in your notebook, or lose track of hours conversing with fellow artists, writers, and thinkers.



Dulce Cafe & Bakery, Lagos

As a long-standing fixture on the island's luxury dining scene, this spot delivers refined elegance on every level. The ambiance is upscale, polished, and sophisticated, featuring chic contemporary furnishings and an expansive display of confections. They are masters of luxury baking, offering gourmet desserts, heavy-duty breakfast spreads, and premium coffee pairings.

Why you should visit: Beautiful spot to celebrate a milestone, impress a business date, or treat yourself to high-end pastries in an environment that feels effortlessly exclusive.



TOP BEANS. Coffee, Lagos

This is where casual coffee drinkers transform into purists. The atmosphere is sleek and dedicated, stripped of unnecessary fluff to put the absolute focus on the craft of brewing. They source exceptional beans and employ precise, scientific extraction methods to create everything from delicate pour-overs to rich, concentrated espresso shots.

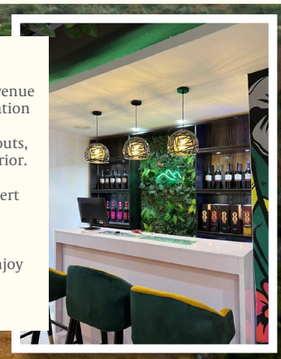
Why you should visit: Visit if you view coffee as an art form and want to experience what a truly well-roasted, masterfully brewed cup of coffee tastes like.



Marley and Blue, PH

A design-forward, trendy addition to Port Harcourt's expanding culinary map. The aesthetic is vibrant, youthful, and contemporary, filled with clever design details and a buzzing social atmosphere. They offer inspired brews, creative drink formulations, and delicious pastries that cater to modern palates.

Why you should visit: You should visit if you want to be seen at the newest cool spot in town, catch up with your social circle, or simply enjoy a wonderfully crafted latte in a genuinely inspiring space.

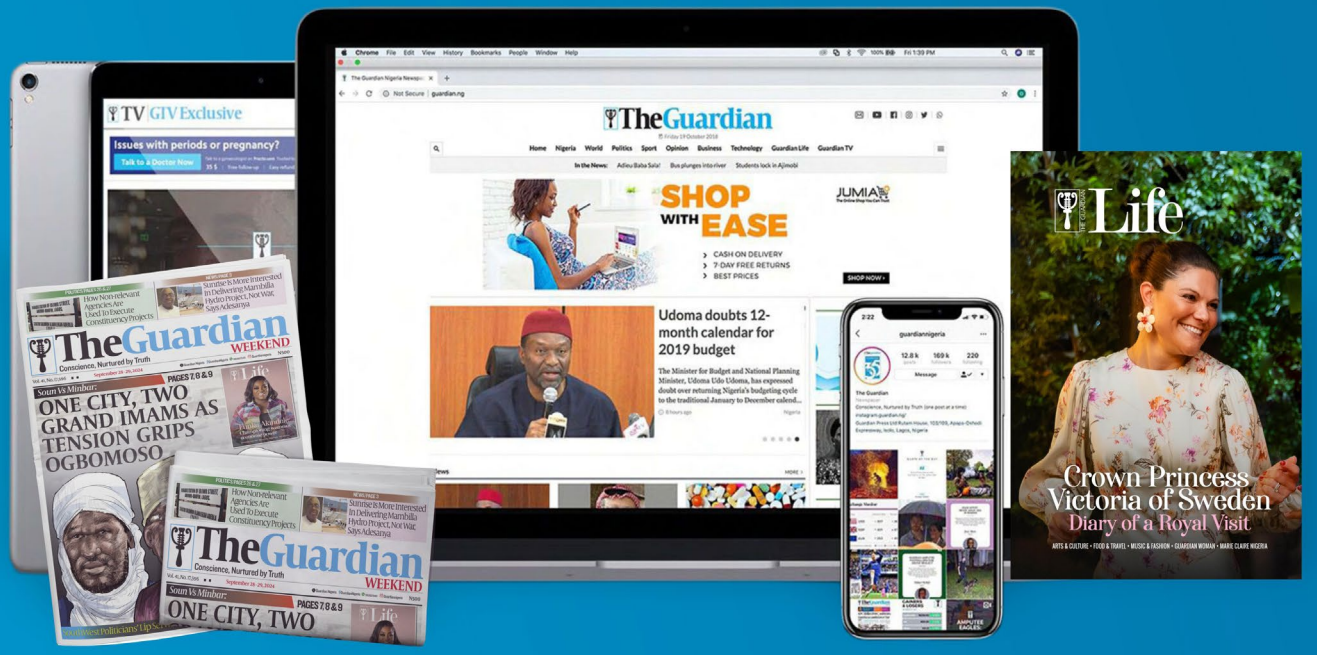


Tahilla Café, PH

Sleek, modern, and effortlessly chic, this venue brings a touch of metropolitan sophistication to the Garden City. The decor features contemporary lighting, clean seating layouts, and a stylish crowd that matches the interior. They serve a diverse lineup of artisanal coffees, specialty teas, and delightful dessert selections.

Why you should visit: You should visit to kickstart your weekend with style or to enjoy a trendy midday hangout that feels fresh, upbeat, and visually appealing.

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