

## Lifestyle | Features

## Oscars will have a host again in 2022

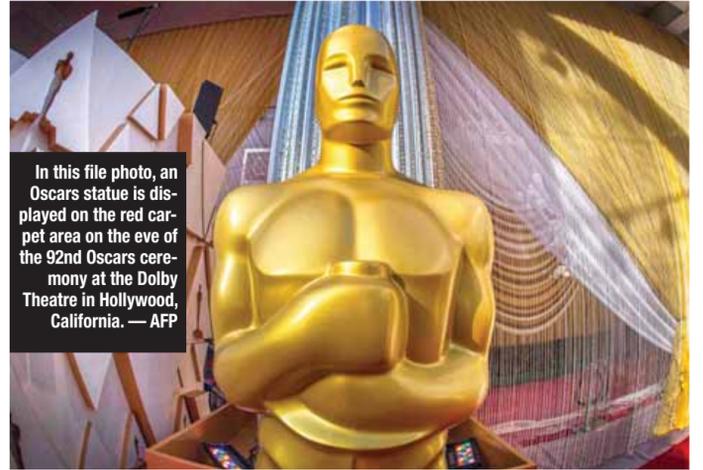
The Oscars will have a host for the first time since 2018, broadcaster ABC said Tuesday, after television ratings for film's biggest night have plummeted in recent years. The 94th Academy Awards, scheduled for March 27, will see Tinseltown's most important prize-giving event return to its traditional Dolby Theatre venue in Hollywood.

Last year's unorthodox edition, held at a Los Angeles train station with no host, was watched by just over 10 million viewers - a 56 percent decline from 2020, which was already a record low. "You heard it here first, I can confirm that this year's Oscars will have a host," Craig Erwich, president of ABC Entertainment and Hulu Originals, told a virtual panel discussion hosted by the Television Critics Association.

Erwich declined to give any further details, including whether Jimmy Kimmel - host of ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" and the last two hosted Oscars in 2017 and 2018 - will return. "It might be me," he quipped. In 2019, comedian Kevin Hart pulled out of hosting the Academy Awards after homophobic tweets he made several years earlier reemerged. He was not replaced, and while that year's hostless format drew praise and was even emulat-

ed by other awards shows such as the Emmys, subsequent Oscar ceremonies were criticized for lacking focus and humor.

Also on Tuesday, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced that veteran Glenn Weiss will direct the Oscars for a seventh consecutive year. Few details have been confirmed for the show, which will be produced by Will Packer and were postponed for a second consecutive year. The delay, reportedly to avoid clashing with February's Winter Olympics and the Super Bowl in Los Angeles, was announced months before the Omicron variant forced multiple Hollywood shows to scrap in-person events this winter. — AFP



In this file photo, an Oscars statue is displayed on the red carpet area on the eve of the 92nd Oscars ceremony at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, California. — AFP



An aerial picture shows stalls in the first camel hotel during the sixth edition of the King Abdulaziz Camel Festival in Rumahi region some 160km east of the Saudi capital Riyadh.

## Hot milk and grooming for camels at Saudi luxury 'hotel'

With heated stalls and hot milk, life couldn't get more glamorous for Saudi Arabia's most beautiful camels when they stay at a luxury compound near Riyadh. For 400 riyals (just over \$100) a night, the camels are trimmed, scrubbed and pampered before taking part in beauty contests, where millions of dollars are at stake. The camels, many of which are rented, are checked closely for Botox and other illegal enhancements which could see them thrown out for cheating.

And it's all done in a COVID-safe environment to prevent any disruptive outbreaks. The Tatman, described as the first hotel for camels, is an open-air desert compound near the annual King Abdulaziz Camel Festival, which has prizes totaling \$66.6 million. It's a logical step for the lucrative industry in the well-heeled Gulf, where camels are prized as a symbol of traditional life. The animals are judged on attributes including their lips, necks, humps and coloring, and wins are highly prestigious for their owners.

Omair Al-Qahtani, who is Saudi, checked 80 camels into the Tatman for 16 days, saying it would cost him \$160,000-

213,000. The facility is "very comfortable, as the camels remain under their care and undergo regular medical examinations", the 51-year-old businessman told AFP. It has 120 enclosures, including singles and doubles, each equipped with plastic containers for water and fodder. Check-out is 12:30 pm. During their stay, 50 workers look after the animals and are kept under strict sanitary conditions to minimize the risk of COVID cases.

### 'Obsession with camels'

In years past, Qahtani and his assistants would set up tents near the festival, tending to and feeding the camels themselves. Many of the four-legged guests are competitors in Mazayen Al-Ibl contest, the world's biggest camel beauty pageant and a highlight of the King Abdulaziz Festival. Mohamed Al-Harbi, media chief of the camel club that organizes the competition, said the group dreamed up the hotel "to protect and preserve camels and also to reduce the burden on the owner".

He said the hotel was popular, bringing in revenues of more than \$1.6 million. Money is no object for some attending the festival, which features well-appointed



A Saudi man tends to a camel at the first camel hotel during the sixth edition of the King Abdulaziz Camel Festival in Rumahi region.



A worker grooms a camel in the first camel hotel during the sixth edition of the King Abdulaziz Camel Festival in Rumahi region.

buildings and tents in the middle of the desert, and booths for luxury car-makers Rolls-Royce and BMW. Saudi enthusiasts can spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on camels entered into the contests, where unscrupulous competitors sometimes seek an illegal advantage.

Forty-three dromedaries were

drummed out of the festival when camel checkers spotted infringements such as Botox, silicone and fillers injected into lips, humps and tails. But Harbi said the hotel provides a "check" so that people "can find any tampering early", reassuring them their rented beasts won't be sent packing. Qahtani said this is a big advantage, as

doctored camels can attract fines of up to \$26,000. The competitions "reinforce the obsession with camels in Saudi Arabia", Harbi said. — AFP



A picture released by the King Abdulaziz Camel Festival shows a Saudi man tending to a camel at the first camel hotel during the sixth edition of the King Abdulaziz Camel Festival in Rumahi region some 160km east of the Saudi capital Riyadh. With heated stalls and hot milk, life couldn't get more glamorous for Saudi Arabia's most beautiful camels when they stay at a luxury compound near Riyadh. — AFP photos

