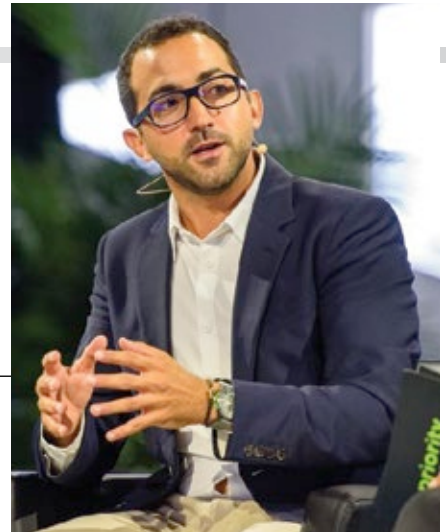




Fahim Al Qasimi

Co-founder and Chairperson of Seafood Souq



INTERVIEW YI-HWA HANNA

You're on a mission to tackle the exploitation of our oceans. Why is this so important to you? I grew up on the water – sailing, surfing, free-diving, and fishing. Later in life, I was fortunate to get involved in sea turtle conservation. So when the opportunity arose to work with like-minded people and build technology that would have a positive impact on our oceans, it was impossible to say no. As human beings, we are driven by purpose, and I am confident my purpose is to play a small – but hopefully important – role in tackling ocean exploitation.

Your business uses technology to protect one of the greatest assets of nature. What would you say to those who fear that embracing cutting-edge technology might take us further away from nature? We have to be realists – it only works if it is win-win. At Seafood Souq, we look through the lens of socio-economic and environmental impact, so we work with fishers and coastal communities to build a more resilient blue economy. Our technology was built to build transparency, traceability, and trust through information. We need reliable and accurate information, as we can't improve what we can't measure.

What, in your opinion, are the three key traits every successful business leader should have? I am not able to comment with much authority on what successful business leaders should have. I will say that the days when we celebrate 'wins' at Seafood Souq, there are three things that come together; the team, our purpose, and being bold with ideas.

Sustainability has become a buzzword in recent years. What does living sustainably mean to you? I took inspiration from Jo Ruxton, founder of Ocean Generation. She said that we all need to be imperfect environmentalists. It is not about one person living perfectly, but rather, more of us making small choices every day to improve our relationship with our planet.

When and where did your passion for ocean conservation begin? I have always loved the ocean, but the day it all changed was February 2021. I was free-diving off a remote island and found myself saving a drowning sea turtle caught in discarded fishing net. The chances of me being there at that exact time, in that place, was no coincidence. It may sound a bit far-fetched, but I was meant to be there.

Why do you think it's so important for the hospitality industry to embrace not just sustainable but traceable seafood? I would say that the hospitality and supermarket sector need to embrace traceable seafood. Mislabelling is an industry issue and we need to empower seafood procurers to make responsible decisions. Focusing on the sustainable sourcing will have a trickle-down effect on the rest of the supply chain.



What are your three favourite seafood restaurants in the world? Tough question, but if I were to choose, Ossiano (Atlantis, The Palm), Rockfish (Jumeirah Al Naseem), and Langosteria in Milan.

Seafood Souq was founded in the UAE, and is now a global company, recognised as one of the UAE Ministry of Economy's Future 100 companies in 2023. What does work travel typically look like for you? Short and focused on outcomes. I rarely travel for more than three-day trips. Being back with the family is a priority.

What's the first thing you do when arriving at a new destination while travelling? Usually, I take a walk around the local area, find a local coffee shop, and continue walking around.

What are three things that you always pack in your suitcase? I always have my favourite coat, a travel adapter, and a book.

What is your earliest memory of a holiday as a child? Camping in the mountains in Germany with my mum and grandad.

What's been your most memorable trip so far? I have had the privilege of seeing some fantastic parts of the world – picking one is unfair to me or the places I have been.

What is your go-to choice of in-flight entertainment? Reading. If not, then watching James Bond movies.

How do you spend your air miles? I do not have as many as people may think, as I like to travel on many different airlines. Hotel loyalty points are more my thing – I spend those on renting homes and villas on family vacations.

What places will you be travelling to next? Barcelona, London, Shanghai, and Singapore.

What's one travel experience you'd rather forget? I got a severe infection in both my feet from mosquitos on a surf trip once. Still have the scars. Tough one to forget though.

What's your ultimate bucket list destination and why? As a sailor, there are a few places in the world that I would love to visit. The Cocos Islands, Ascension Island, and the Cook Islands. All of them are places where sustainable seafood opportunities can be built in remote, biodiverse parts of our ocean. [AI](#)