

Press release

IRAN AS IF YOU WERE THERE

In only 15 years, Iran has emerged from the Middle Ages into the 20th century. It was a huge challenge for this ancient land, the successor to the Persia of legendary figures like Cyrus and Darius, but a challenge that is being met with spectacular success.

Ever since 1963, when Iran brought in sweeping social reforms, this nation of 2,500 years of recorded history has been making a supreme effort to make education available to all its people, and has achieved a vast improvement on its previous illiteracy rate of 80 per cent.

Again this year at Man and His World, Iran is emphasizing the progress it has made through measures such as travelling schools that move about the country to places of work to take education to the people and bring them into the industrial age.

But there are many other facets to this middle-eastern country. There are also the glories of the Pahlavi dynasty, the golden age of ancient Persia, the joie de vivre of its people today, and the creative spirit of its artists and artisans. With 2,500 years of history behind it, Iran has a great story to tell.

The particularly striking facts of the post-1963 social reforms are brought to light by the Institute for Educational Development, headed by Lilly Arjomand. The visitor is sure to be astonished at the intellectual progress the country has made.

This progress involves far more than just primary school instruction. It also involves the establishment of libraries and children's centres to provide them with the educational tools to bring them into the 20th century.

The child learns to develop his creative energy and independence through the simple act of play. The lessons he learns by playing in the schoolyard will help him in his development into adulthood.

This creativity of the Iranians is shown at the pavilion through drawings and posters, rugs, batik crafts, photographs and even films, all done by children. This exhibition shows clearly the fruits of Lilly Arjomand's work, and the practical results of the children's creative instincts.

Iranian youth is one of the main themes of the pavilion.

Right at the main entrance, the visitor is struck by the magnificence of a sweeping stairway that dominates the pavilion. Also in view is the Qajar Art restaurant, a major part of the building's design.

To immerse the visitor in its history, the Iranian pavilion features an audio-visual presentation on three movie screens and 16 slide screens showing the glories of the Persian Empire more than 2,000 years ago.

Documentary films and photographs recall the great moments of its history: the coronation, wedding, birth of the crown prince, the huge festival for the country's 2,500th anniversary in 1971, the Declaration of Cyrus, etc...

The entire presentation is co-ordinated and harmonized by distinctive Iranian music, a living manifestation of the people's joie de vivre.

The Qajar Art restaurant

Magnificent transparent photographs adorn the windows of the Qajar Art restaurant. The VIP room in the restaurant is even more luxurious, with its walls decorated in ornate Persian motifs. The restaurant has been so named to emphasize the world-famous art of Qajar.

Close to the restaurant there are an ornamental fountain and a showing of films for children on the festival of Chiraz.

The bazaar

Every city in Iran has its bazaar, something the tourist shouldn't miss, and the Iranian pavilion has recreated the atmosphere as closely as it can to the real thing.

The Islamic architecture of the bazaar clearly shows the talent and creativity of its artisans and the tradition way of life in Iran.

The market stalls offer every kind of merchandise for sale, against a background of the exotic, enchanting music of the Middle East.

The Iranian pavilion is situated under two golden domes, supported by a wooden pergola. Around it are semi-circular work areas for Iranian craftsmen engaged in activities such as metalworking, painting miniatures or applying fancy designs on cloth. It's an ideal place for hand-made souvenirs from a culture as old as civilization itself.