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MEDFEST'19 - SHOWCASES





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UOM RACING TEAM

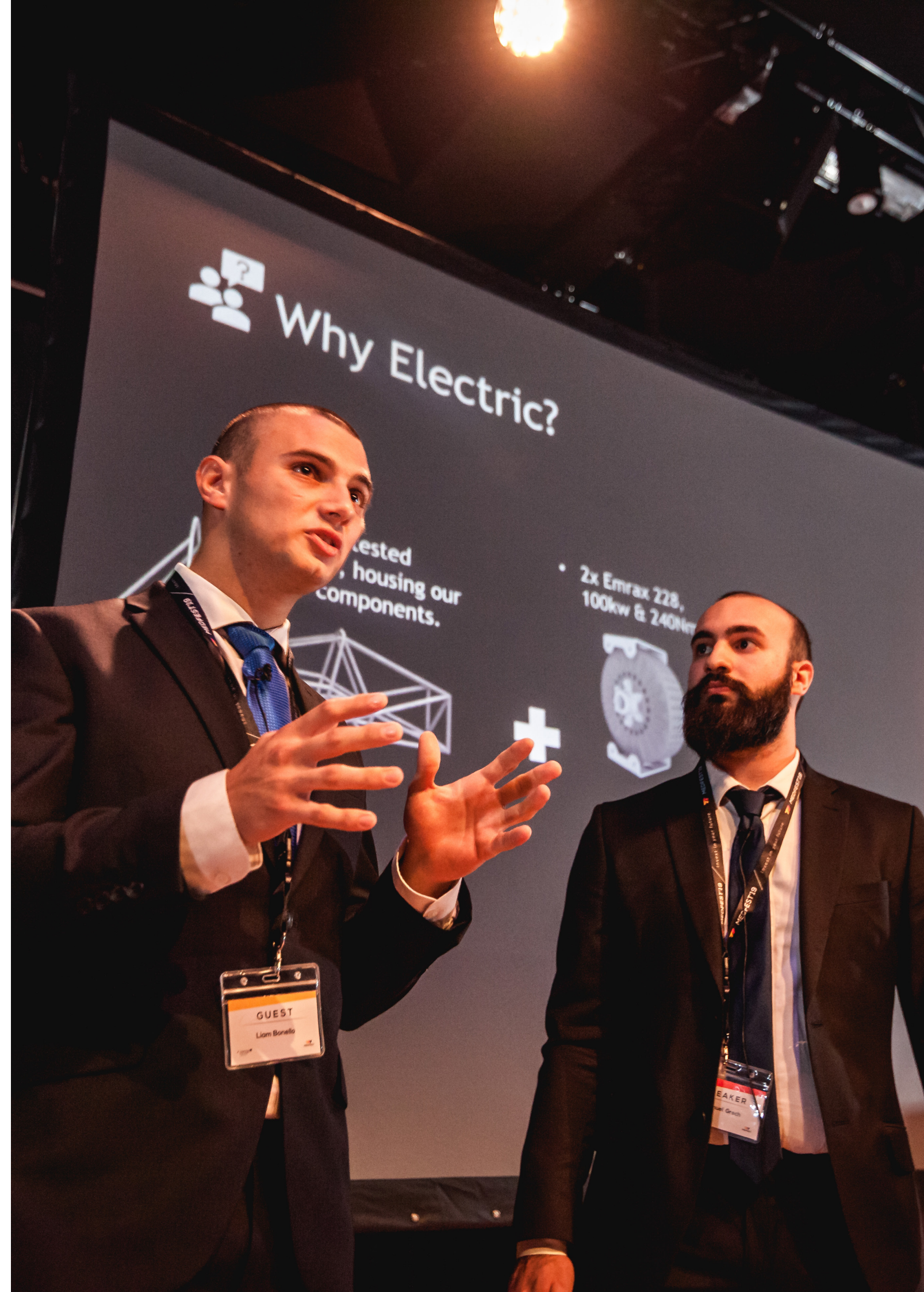
Often, theory needs practice for real learning to take place. For engineering students, this especially holds true, and this is why the Formula SAE exists. The society of Automotive engineers organises an annual design competition that assesses an array of skills from budgeting to management, design specifics to material choices. University of Malta Racing (UOMR) is Malta's very own student-based Formula SAE team.

Founded in 2012, UOMR started competing in 2014 with their first design. Since then, two more cars have been built for competitions in 2015 and 2018. Currently, the fourth car is a work in progress and will hit the tracks in 2020. 'The project allows us to start a path in motorsport,' explains UOMR President Liam Bonello, 'all while learning and transferring knowledge.'

And that includes everyone, not just engineers. 'Since we are a university-wide organisation, we provide the opportunity for anyone to be part of the team. We need expertise from IT and engineering to business and management. Everyone gets to have hands-on practice in their field,' Liam emphasises.

Lessons learnt are many, but there are two that the team refers to most often. The first is the classic 'there is no I in team.' The second stems from the understanding that without the combined efforts of individual members, the team would get nowhere. 'We have to be a team to get things done,' Liam notes, 'people who don't have the will to work together end up leaving.'

From nothing, the end result is a functional race car that is a testament to true collaboration. And though this is one of the most satisfying results of any project students from the University of Malta are exposed to, Liam is still adamant that 'the journey getting there is the best part of it.'



STEP UP FOR PARKINSON'S

It began with one dancer. Natalie Muschamp was a professional, performing in shows all around Europe, when she decided that she wanted to use her skills to help people. She came to the University of Malta with that intention, and life filled in the blanks. Reacting to the loss of her partner, her aunt walked from Amsterdam to Rome to raise money for the Dutch Parkinson's Foundation. That simple act of altruism in the face of tragedy saw Muschamp dedicating her time and talent to research how dance could be therapeutic not just for people living with Parkinson's disease, but also their carers who dedicate so much time providing support.

evidence from the last 20 years showed that dance therapy can improve balance, motor function, and quality of life, imbuing people living with Parkinson's disease with confidence. She then discovered that no form of dance therapy was available in Malta at the time. Muschamp decided to change that.

With support from the Malta Parkinson's disease Association, The President's Foundation, and many more, today Natalie runs nine classes a week in seven different locations for a group of around 200 people, all of whom she considers to be her family. 'It is very important for me to keep these classes free of charge,' Natalie emphasises. 'They need to be accessible and available to everyone and anyone who needs them.' She does this by keeping self care and sustainability in mind at all times. 'This means thinking in different ways to find solutions and working on qualitative classes in order to gain data which we can use to achieve beneficial outcomes for our participants.'

To her, the reason that keeps her going on this journey that has touched so many lives is simple. 'It works,' she grins. 'They smile, they dance and they reconnect!'



PHILEAE PERFUME

Marina Fabic has been playing with colours, textures, flavours, and scents since forever. A creative through and through, she is not bound by role or label whether she is designing interiors, inventing new culinary delights, or consulting with other artists and business people. This is precisely why when she discovered her passion for perfume and set up her company Phileae, it came as a surprise to no one. It was simply part of Marina's evolution as an artist. 'It is a very fortunate place to be when you call your passion 'work' but it's also essential to turn it into a sustainable enterprise which can grow organically,' she notes.

What differentiated Phileae from other companies is its commitment to authenticity. 'It's about fresh, raw ingredients,' she says. 'There's nothing better.' Where other companies use synthetic scents, Marina travels the world to find the real source. From frankincense and myrrh to the essence of orange blossom, she has tracked all her ingredients down with resolve.

While some might look upon such a journey with weariness, Marina embraces it wholeheartedly, seeing it as part of the creative process itself. 'The packaging, the perfumes themselves, the brand. It all takes its own time to come together, to come to a place where you're happy with it. It has to have a story, it has to have depth, and it has to come from me. It's not only a commercial endeavour, it's a personal story.'

Throughout it all, there have been challenges and lessons learnt, both in terms of the craft and in the act of running enterprise. The biggest ones for her were understanding the importance of a great team, and having faith in her own ideas. 'One should never try to do everything oneself,' she advises. 'Make sure you persevere and let the process take its time to give you the great results you're looking for.'



GOWDWIN SPITERI

It was two short years ago that Godwin Spiteri began experimenting with stone. Starting small, he made traditional crosses and personal mementos that he gave away as gifts to the important people in his life. 'When I first started, I never knew I could do these things. I was just looking for something to occupy my time,' Godwin explains. Since then, however, consistent dedicated time and practice has seen him honing the craft.

As a result of this work, Godwin's projects have grown. His latest work is a bust he made of Maltese benefactor Monsignor Victor Grech which is now to be found in the Charles Miceli Home. 'It was a very challenging piece when I first started, and it took me three months to finish,' remembers Godwin, 'but it taught me a lot.'

Trial and error is an integral part of the creative process, and it was something Godwin came to embrace. 'You draw out the plan and get to work, but mistakes happen. And they did. Then you just learn to keep going; you find another way,' Godwin says. 'It's the same in life, I suppose,' he smiles.

As for the road ahead, Godwin is taking a laid back approach to things, putting his faith in the practice and the team surrounding him. 'I trust the journey I am on and the people I am working with, Russell Smith and Joe Bartolo, and we'll see where this leads. We've come a long way in a short time, but I'm not one to make too many plans or look too far into the future. This is an adventure. We'll see what happens.'



DANCING COLOURS

It was not long after Giusa was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, that the disease ate away at her memories. One by one, it then took all of her abilities, even her ability to speak. Designer Andrea Delicata would sit quietly next to his great aunt, supportive in his silence, but he wanted to do more.

That opportunity came when, on a separate visit, his mother hummed the tune of 'O Sole Mio' and Giusa mumbled along to a few words. 'They must have sparked the memories from her past. She started to smile,' Andrea recalls. 'It was the decisive moment where I promised myself to try and find ways to help her reconnect.'

Seven year after Giusa's passing, Andrea is creating interactive videos, tailor-made for people living with Alzheimer's disease. 'I am not a medical student, but looking at the research out there, it seems that non- pharmacological interventions such as music and imagery of recollections are most effective at enhancing communication in people with dementia,' Andrea explains. And so far, the results he has seen in his sessions tell the same story.

The response towards the programme has been very encouraging. Staff and care home residents both reported positive experiences, but not just them. 'For caregivers, the videos provided new opportunities for interaction with their patients and respite from the stresses of delivering care,' Andrea notes.

Andrea believes tailor-made audio visuals can be a new way to help people with dementia and Alzheimer's reconnect, and that is the goal moving forward. 'There are beautiful moments when a touching connection is made with persons who initially seemed unreachable,' He concludes.

This is what Dancing Colours is about.



THE HUSKIE BEER COMPANY

Physicist Jean Bickle and engineer Miguel Camilleri see the journey of brewing craft beer as an artistic expression of science. From the process of selecting hops, malts, and yeast, to purifying water to their desired specifications, all the way to going through their grain bill and tweaking the recipe, the ultimate product is a result of several weeks of work and dedication. 'It fills us with great pride to see our clients enjoying the experience that comes with drinking craft beer,' Jean says.

It all began in Leeds where Jean and Miguel met as workmates and discovered a thriving craft beer scene together. 'We were part of a club at the Wharf Chambers,' Bickle remembers. 'It's what we did after work. We played table soccer and tried beers.' Learning about the process, the recipes, and the different flavours that are possible to incorporate into a beer, planted a seed in them both. 'Eventually, when we came back home, we wanted to give brewing a shot ourselves,' Jean adds. And so they did.

Today, Jean and Miguel co-own a brewery in Qrendi that produces a selection of beers, all different from their predecessors, all limited in quantity. They have experimented with local fruit and citrus flavours, with strawberries and peaches making guest appearances. They have even gone into unconventional territory with traditional honey ring ingredients.

'The biggest lesson we've learnt so far is that quality is recognised and appreciated. People nowadays care about the products they consume. The process, the ingredients, the sustainability of everything matters. We're seeing great support towards businesses like ours, operating within the local environment, and it is heartening to say the least,' Jean says.

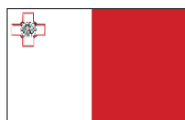






MEDFEST'19

Invest in the future



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