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The Selimiye Mosque is the crowning achievement of the Ottoman master builder Sinan. Its dome is pierced with windows that flood the interior with light and create a breathtaking spaciousness and poetry of space. Photo by Images & Stories / Alamy.

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**Back Cover**



When California botanists were looking for the best commercial variety of pistachio tree, they settled on the Kerman, in part because its nuts grew larger and thus naturally split more of its shells—making pistachios easier to shell and eat than ever before. Photo by Eric Hansen.

Saudi Aramco, the oil company born as an international enterprise just eighty years ago, distributes *Saudi Aramco World* to increase cross-cultural understanding. The magazine's goal is to broaden knowledge of the cultures, history and geography of the Arab and Muslim worlds and their connections with the West. *Saudi Aramco World* is distributed without charge, upon request, to a limited number of interested readers.



## In Search of the Mother Tree **2**

Written and  
photographed  
by Eric Hansen

A single seed from Iran became a tree in 1929 that half a century later had spawned a billion-dollar

California agribusiness. In the rush to turn an ancient delicacy into a modern snack, everyone, it seemed, had forgotten about that tree that bore California's first Kerman pistachios.



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## Rock and Roll Ambassador

Written by Gerald Zarr

A son of Turkey's ambassador and head of Atlantic Records through six decades of R&B, soul, pop and rock, Ahmet Ertegun gave stardom to countless musicians—that's Ray Charles above—and laid down soundtracks for the lives of millions of fans, few of whom ever knew his name.



## DOMES

2014 GREGORIAN AND  
1435-1436 HIJRI CALENDARS

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## 2014 Calendar: Domes

Introductions by Sheila S. Blair  
and Jonathan M. Bloom, and Paul Lunde

Like minarets, domes are one of the signature forms in Islamic architecture, vaulting spaces in most—if not all—Islamic lands with masterpieces of art for more than 1300 years. Each dome evokes its time and place, and inspires beauty and wonder.

## The Pearl Emporium of Al Zubarah

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Written by James Parry

Photographed by Dan Britton / OIAH / OMA

Casually inscribed on a recently uncovered wall, a picture of a dhow harks back to the pearl trade in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that made fortunes in Al Zubarah, Qatar's first UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the largest intact pearling towns of the Arabian Peninsula.

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**INTERPRETER  
of TREASURES**

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## Part 6: Tall Tales

Written by Tim Mackintosh-Smith

Sea monsters and giants one might expect, but stones that make you laugh or cry? Pearls that fall like rain from the sky? To end our yearlong browse of Arabic literature, we finish on notes of playful extravagance.

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Written by Julie Weiss

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