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VOLUME ONE |
ISSUE FOUR | 2020

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And Vishesh
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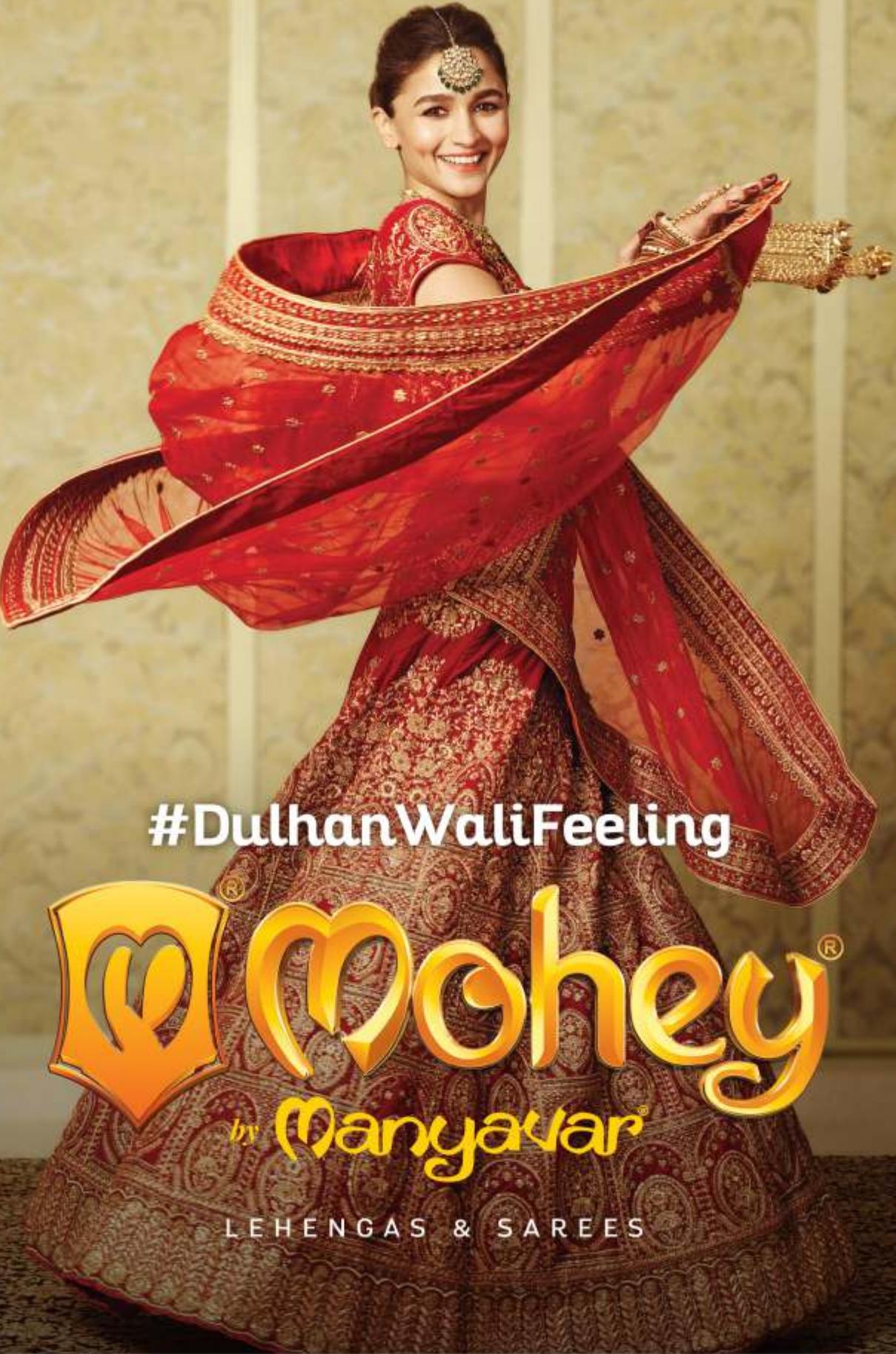


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Editor's MESSAGE



HAPPY-NESS

s the world celebrates the 60th year of the Nobel prize-winning author Albert Camus moving on to the next world, his theology of *memento mori* is fast becoming more relevant today. In this lifetime, despite stoicism, what every homo sapien dreams of is happiness, despite its elusiveness. And when you are born in a larger-than-life Indian family, the one event that overrides everything else...is your wedding, that's why, this season, we have come with a bagful of delights to charm every aspect of your special day. Bonus: it includes Begum Khan a.k.a. Kareena Kapoor dishing out some nifty advice for young brides, proclaiming that confidence is the key to the locks of vulnerability.

Blue may become the warmest colour for your D-Day, aficionados predict, as Khan, who channels her inner Goddess gives it a stunning spin, as we pack in glorious ideas. Think monochromes and their cultural identity soaked in the spirit of Yamamoto's (Yohji) ode to going colourless or Rei's (Kawakubo) homage to ebony and ivory swaying the style metre towards the direction of austerity packing it with power rather than effervescence. We paid homage to this endearing hue by accentuating its appeal with a dollop of jazz, teaming it with heritage ethos through robust jewellery. What is inevitable is time, which once released like an arrow from the bow finds no turning back, just like passing on the baton, by the country's most respected style guru Anamika Khanna. She, who lit up brides' lives with intricate embroideries soaked in the hues of artistry, has now taken off the training wheels for her affable twins Viraj and Vishesh, as they continue the legacy with AK-OK. They talk about youth, its fugacity and the need to reinvent the wheel as they live by the motto, "effort is more important than result".

Let's raise a toast to this vivacity, as we enter into a new decade, minus the theatrics as we welcome a bride, who seeks deliverance from shine and is the superhero (of course, with a dip-dyed ikkat cape) of her life!


DHRUV GURWARA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

trisvaraa.com

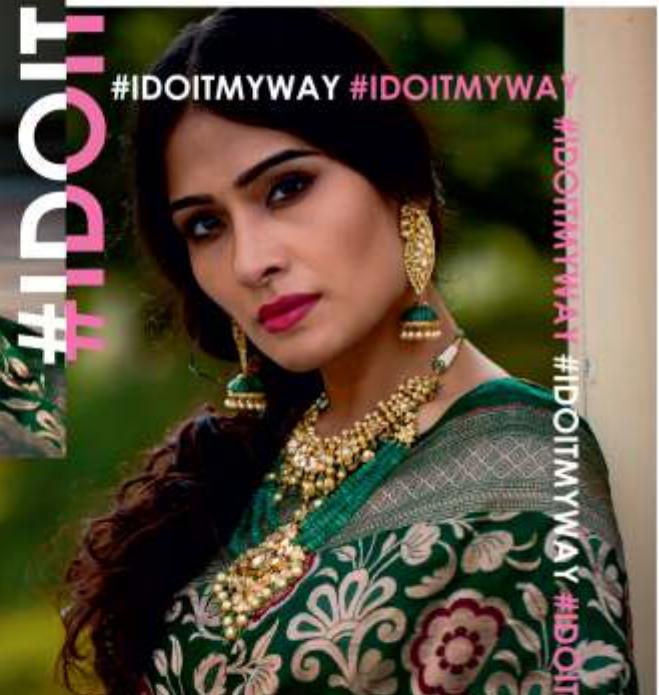
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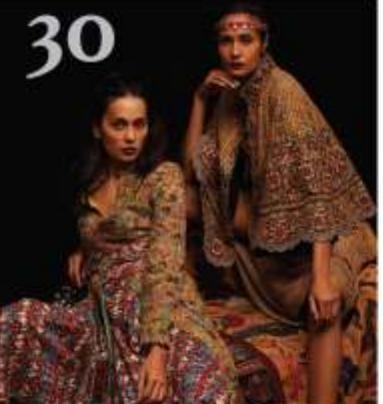
Handcrafted Jewellery for Millennial Brides

/jewelsofjaipur



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ON THE COVER
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Hazoorilal

BY SANDEEP NARANG

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EDITORIAL TEAM



ASMITA AGGARWAL, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Asmita Aggarwal has been traversing through the wilderness called fashion for the last 26 years. She teaches fashion communication at Pearl Academy, and fashion journalism at NIFT (Delhi). She works as a consultant with the Fashion Design Council of India, and was the former editor of L'Officiel, Cosmopolitan, Patriot, HT City, and Asian Age.



ANURADHA SEN, CREATIVE DIRECTOR

With 22 years of experience in the magazine business, she started as a production coordinator for shoots. She believes work and growth are synonymous and has previously worked in Cosmopolitan, and Better Homes and Gardens magazines, among many others.



ANKITA A TALWAR, DEPUTY EDITOR

Ankita A Talwar has been in the space of content for almost a decade now. She started as a health writer and since then has worked in different sectors and mediums including print and digital.



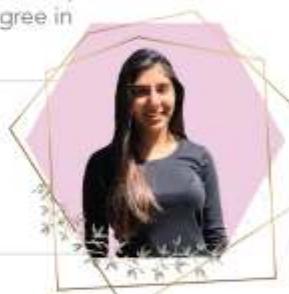
ANOUSHKA SETH, ILLUSTRATOR

Currently, a Fashion Media Communication student at the Pearl Academy, Anoushka enjoys telling stories through her art, including illustrations and photography. She prefers and tries to create graphics that are simple yet telling.



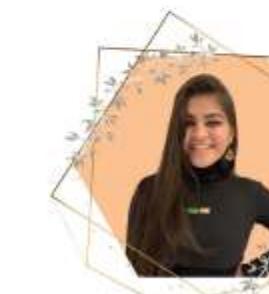
SHRIYA ZAMINDAR, WRITER

Shriya is a fashion writer, who previously created content for Outhouse Jewellery and now for Bridal Asia magazine. She is currently pursuing a Masters degree in Fashion Journalism from Central Saint Martins, UK.



SANYA CHAWLA, EDITORIAL COORDINATOR

In pursuit of combining her love for fashion and entrepreneurship, Sanya is currently studying Fashion and Lifestyle Business Management at the Pearl Academy, alongside a commerce degree from the Griffith University, Australia.



SAARA DHAWAN, INTERN

A Fashion and Lifestyle Business Management student at the Pearl Academy, Saara is keen to understand the behind-the-scenes workings of the fashion industry. She wants to pursue further education and make a place for herself in the fashion world.



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IMPECCABLE INVITATIONS

Wedding invitations are the trailers to your festivities. Make them as extraordinaire as you are. Here are a few ideas to begin with.

Text SAARA DHAWAN



▲ **CUT WITH LOVE** The new laser cut cards and favour boxes are capturing invitation designers' attention lately. You can get your destination, laser cut out—a haveli or a grand old gate of a heritage hotel to highlight the theme.



◀ **AESTHETIC ACRYLICS** Clear or acrylic invitations are for an avant-garde couple. They can be designed in a variety of shapes with details embossed on them in elegant calligraphy.



◀ **BLESSED BE** Crafted in natural materials—wooden containers, handmade paper—the addition of a little plant takes your invitation to a whole new level.

▶ **REGAL CASKET** These chest-style invites can be done in hardwood, board covered with brocade or in leather. Stow exotic teas, coffees, spices and more.



► SANCTIMONIOUS SCROLLS

If you believe in going vintage, nothing beats a scroll. Reminiscent of an era where messages were sent on sheets of fabric or hand-crafted paper, they will set the right notes for your big, royal wedding.



ETHNIC TREASURE

Give yourself an ethnic look by dressing your hair with pearl-laden braid jewellery in gold.



CLASP 'N' CLAP

The ultra-chic combination of a metallic flowers clasp placed aesthetically on softly-curved hair will make for an elegant and breezy hairstyle, befitting a day-time rendezvous.



◀ **REGAL REVIVAL** Feel like royalty on your special day by layering on hair ornaments—the magnificent union of a maang-tikka and a jhoomar is hard to resist.



GRACEFULLY GILDED

Keep it simple yet classy with a touch of gold. This Bun Holder will accentuate the charms of your tied tresses without displacing even a single strand of hair.



AVANT-GARDE

This multi-layered pearl headband replaces the conventional mattha-patti heralding the persona of a modern bride-to-be.

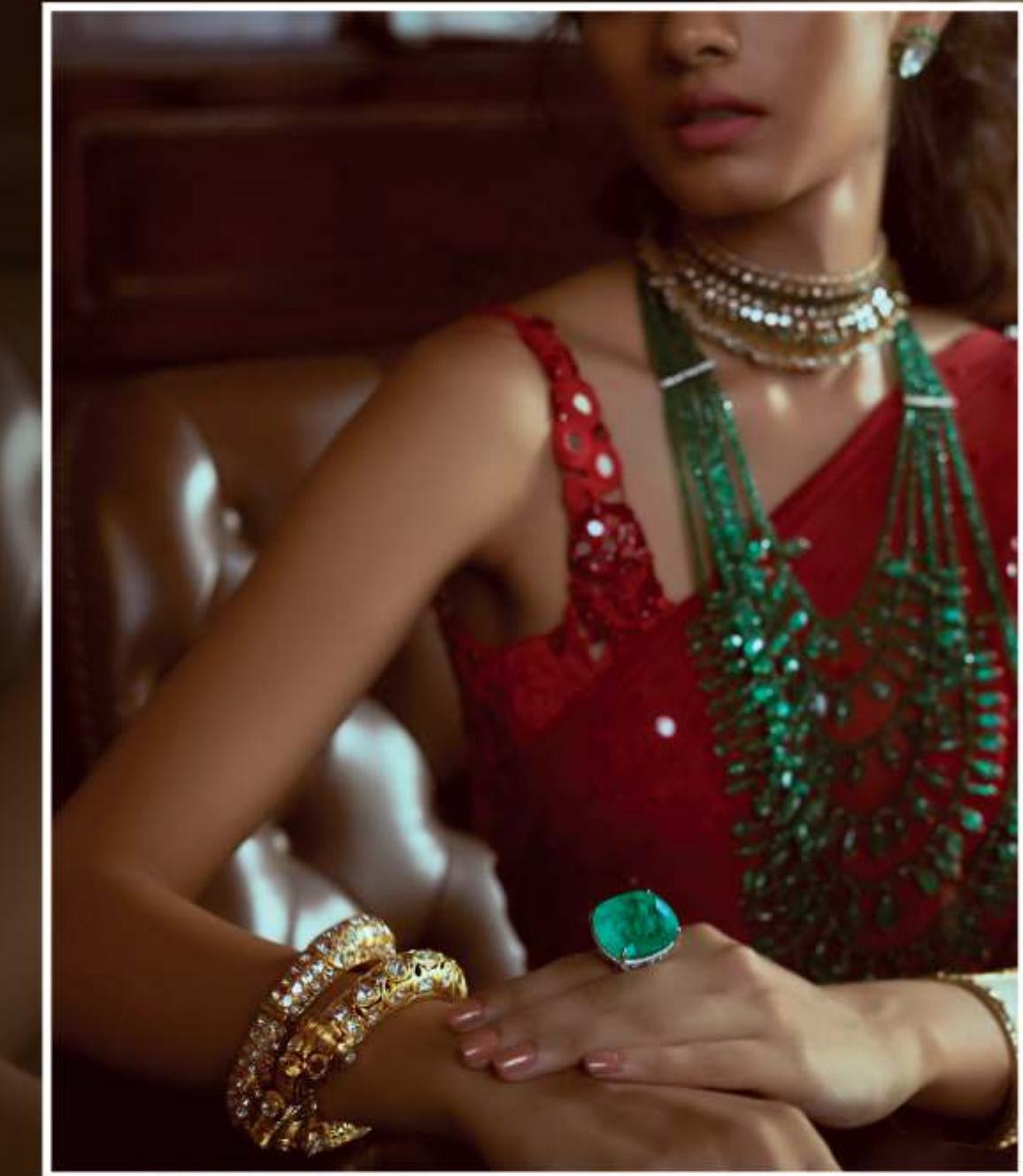
LOCKED LUXURY

Dress elegantly with these chic hair accessories.

Text SANYA CHAWLA Illustration ANOUSHKA SETH



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SNIPPET



SET A-BLAZE Adding a bright coloured blazer to your sari is not for the weak-hearted, thereby making it imperative to be tried on by a modern bride. It signifies the transition from passé to present.

Sari Statements

Celebrate like never before by giving your sari a high-octane twist with these add-ons.

Text SANYA CHAWLA



WHAT A WAIST! The combination of a waist-belt on a sari is an amalgamation of ethnic and Western fashion ethos. Not only does it look edgy, but also contours the body to accentuate a slimmer waist.



Dignified Duo: Outfit, Sabyasachi

CRYSTAL CAPES Supersede the traditional blouse-look by layering on a sheer cropped cape. These sequin constructions create an ethereal appearance that will never cease to draw attention.



Crystal Capes: Outfit, Payal Singhal

TRENCH TERRAIN Pairing a sari with a printed Banarasi trench coat will take you a long way not just on the road of being à la mode, but save you from the city chill as well.



Trench Terrain: Outfit, Saini Singhania



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Lord of the Rings

With endearing designs and flawless stones, HAZOORILAL BY SANDEEP NARANG SINCE 1952, GK-1 proves yet again that diamonds are a girl's best friend.

Here are three dazzlers from them.

Text ANUSHKA SETH



ROCK(R)ING

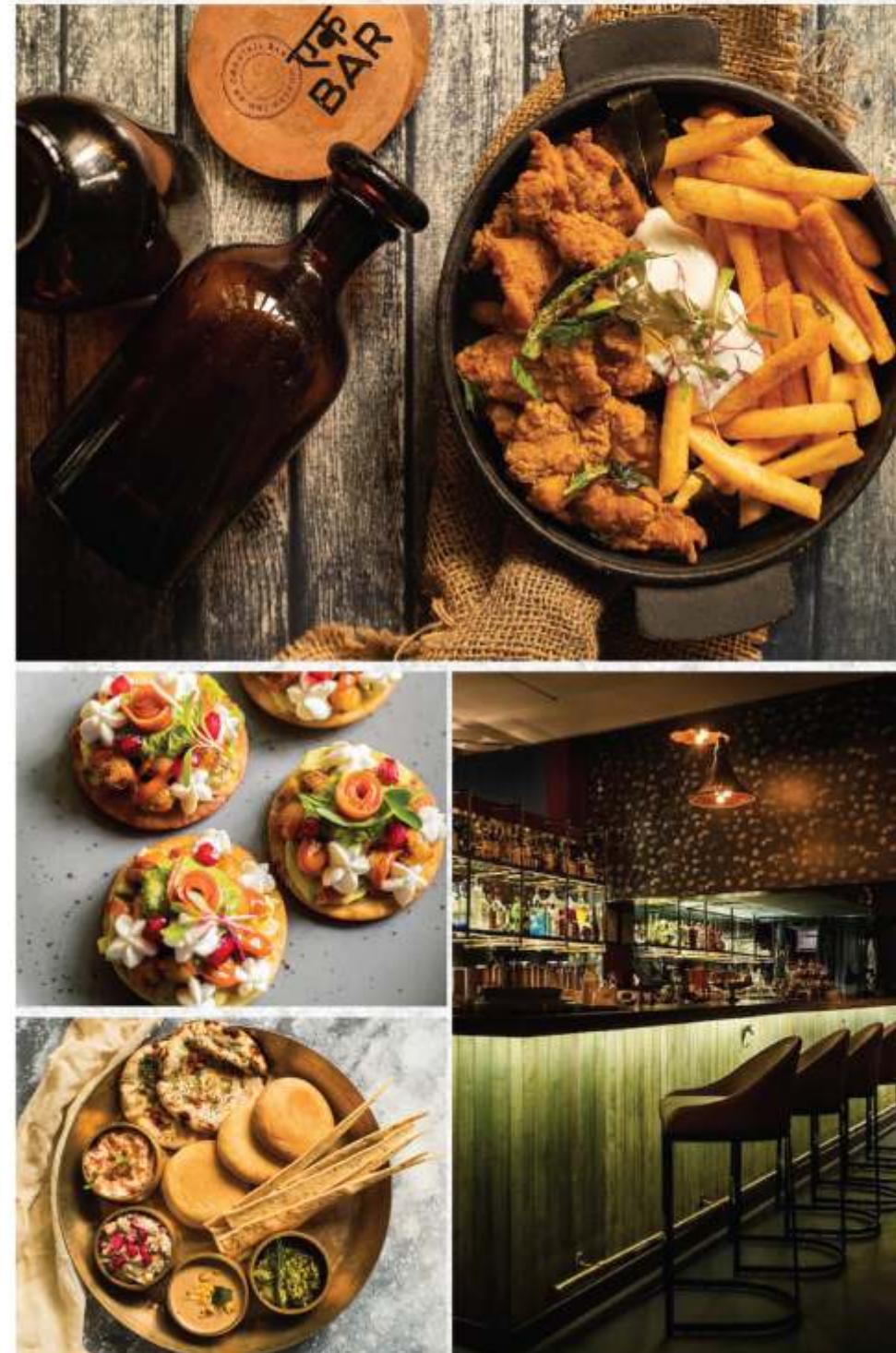
The emerald-cut diamond solitaire ring is equal parts elegant and bold. Queen of the four Cs—cut, colour, clarity and carat—this irresistible ring is set in 18k white gold and encircled with pear-shaped diamonds. Accented with a touch of pink gold, the enchantment of this ring is truly unparalleled. The encrusted design makes the centre diamond appear larger than traditional engagement rings.

GO GREEN

Subtlety is not the name of the game for the bride who puts her finger in this ring. This emerald gemstone exudes a touch of royalty and in the recent past has become a favourite for younger brides, who fancy an engagement ring, which is unconventional as well. The gemstone is an emerald cut shape and is surrounded by rose cut diamonds and set in 18k gold. Historically, the emerald was also considered to be the stone of love, its green representing vitality, new beginnings and the spring season. This is why it's the perfect gemstone to represent happy, new beginnings, love and an eternal relationship.

Raising the Bar

Ek Bar gets Chef Ruchira Hoon on board to curate its latest menu



Olive Group's first Indian Cocktail Bar, Ek Bar, launched its latest menu on December 9, 2019 in New Delhi with Chef Ruchira Hoon. The menu promises delectable dishes made with the freshest of ingredients, native produce and Chef Hoon's ingenuity.

The newly-curated menu is inspired from both global and Indian-regional culinary environments and traditions. For those who have the palette for more international cuisines there is Smoked Carrot, Chickpea and Avocado Tostadas, Sumac-Spiced Paneer & Walnut Kebabs with Garlic Pomegranate Compote on the side besides other delish preparations. While dishes such as Tamarind and Peanut Chutney borrows its flavours from Karnataka, Kashmiri Mooli Ki Chutney, and Aubergine, Walnuts and Pomegranate dip hints at a Ladakhi lineage, Thecha, a classic Maharashtrian accompaniment is for the connoisseurs of Indian food.

Not-to-be-missed is Chef Hoon's famous Kerala Fried Chicken, served with triple cooked fries, a.k.a. as the Indian take on KFC, that has a pride of place in the menu.

For those with a sweet tooth, divine desserts such as Saffron and Rose Petal Coconut Tres Leches cake, with familiar flavours of Rasmalai, among other exotic preparations is going to be pleasurable.

Taking us through the journey of curating the new menu Chef Hoon says, "My inspiration for the menu is anecdotal of my culinary journey with an aim to be true to the flavours I was fond of. Integrating that with an all-inclusive eating experience whilst showcasing the gorgeous produce across India was the challenge I enjoyed the most." She also brings with her the commitment towards generating minimal waste, which has become the philosophy for the kitchen at Ek Bar.

To ensure superlative quality of ingredients, Ek Bar has partnered with niche suppliers such as Krishi Cress and Prodigal Cook Farms.

Address: D 17, First Floor, Defence Colony, New Delhi, Delhi 110024

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FASHION

VISHESH & VIRAJ KHANNA | SEEMA GUJRAL
| MEHAR & ROSELYN | SHYAMAL & BHUMIKA
| VEERALI RAVESHIA | PUNIT BALANA
| TANVEER, RIM & SANIYA

Illustration ANUSHKA SETH



Vibrant prints and bold colours, on contemporary silhouettes, sets the brand apart from its peers

Miracle Boys

Anamika Khanna is known to be the undisputed queen of subtleness, finish and whispering embroideries. She has passed on the baton to her twins, VISHESH AND VIRAJ, 24, as they embark on a challenging trek with AK-OK, with their wits in place and a clear head that loves the Belgian mavericks from Dries Van Noten to Ann Demeulemeester.

Text ASMITA AGGARWAL



Can you tell us about your education in the US and what besides design did you study?

Vishesh: I started as a business major in Marshall (USC), switched over to Dornsife as a double major in Economics and Psychology, and finally finished with Social Sciences (focusing on economics and psychology) and a minor in Communication Design. Both of us are 24, (just turned). USC was pretty intimidating at first, a completely new experience coupled with both of us being very shy! But overtime, getting out of our comfort zones, it was definitely worth it! I think it just opened our minds to how big the world really is, living in Kolkata you kind of get a little over your head. The intensity of the courses really helped us develop our work ethic.

Did you ever think you would join your mother's business despite knowing how tough the fashion world is?

Viraj knew all along that he was going to join my mother, I was convinced by senior year in college. I feel like we came to the realisation of how much potential the brand has, in terms of growth and we decided to put in our efforts there. About AK-OK, we both came back from Los Angeles with a new vibe, new thought process, which I think intrigued my mother. She is always open to experiment and could tell that targeting the youth is where she could open up a completely different customer base! She is always up for a challenge. Collectively, we decided to work on a new collection! A-OK is a common term used in America. AK (Anamika Khanna) wasn't well and we just said everything will be AK-OK (playing with A-OK) and it stuck.

Travis Scott and 21 Savage have been some of your influences....

Their influence has been a little more emphasised than it needs to be! I just like their music that's all! And my mother thinks they are really cool! They influence fashion in huge ways. What they wear, America wears. Hip-hop has a major influence on clothing in the current market! My friends simply buy Off White and Supreme because of the cool factor, which rubs off from these rappers. But I am mostly influenced not by art, culture, but more by the technical

aspects of clothing and experimenting. I read a lot about clothing and construction and fabrics and things that are more scientific, it's because I have not been to design school and am more objective rather than subjective when it comes to work. I took a couple of online courses like Shingo Sato and Maurice Sedwell's Savile Row Academy and I think that is why I'm so into the technical.

What has been your process of designing and what is the stage from moodboard to final execution?

Currently, we both know that whatever we make, has to be consistent with the brand aesthetic, that's something our mother had been clear about. There is no formal or scripted process, we brainstorm, have reference images, begin working on the samples of embroidery and colour and silhouette, etc., but as of now, everything is run through AK. It's fascinating how constant perseverance in the design process really makes all the difference in quality and look.

What have been the lessons that your mother a self-made designer taught you?

Discipline is something she has always been preaching since we were young! She is a perfect example too. Waking up early and having single-minded focus, sacrificing every small pleasure to improve and work on her skill/art. That's what it takes to achieve what she has! Nothing comes easy! The most important thing I have personally noticed is that if something isn't working, she will keep working on it, figure out what's wrong, improve on it, and go the extra mile for every single detail! That's something which helps us constantly work on new things and not give up on ideas even if they seem absurd. Design is a process not an end game. We want to grow the business and help her with the business side of it—London, Paris and New York. She isn't tough at all, but only if she knows you're trying. Effort is always more emphasised than result, so we both know we just have to put our best foot forward.

The style world is known to be fickle, what do you make of it... also how is the independent woman viewing the world?

Fashion is always changing, today younger women are



“When we came back from the US, we carried a new vibe, a new thought process that intrigued our mother.” —Vishesh Khanna

FASHION

much more outgoing, independent and experimental in everything they do! The clothing choices are being influenced by the West, therefore, we can see many Western aspects in different garments.

What makes the Anamika Khanna brand for a discerning few who value finish over fleeting trends?

The USP is definitely constant innovation and experimentation! My mother thinks only in terms of—what are we going to improve today, or what new thing or idea are we working on today! Finest handwork and tailoring is also something we focus on!

What have been your design influences and how did they shape your aesthetic?

While growing up, I don't think both of us would have design influences per se; we were into cricket and golf and had no idea about the art and design world. Once we decided we were getting into this field, that's how we began learning more and more about it, I think that's how passion is developed, by getting more into things and learning more about them in detail. Currently, my major influence would be Rick Owens, Rei Kawakubo, Junya Watanabe, Dries Van Noten, Ann Demeulemeester and Viraj would still always proudly say Supreme and Off White!

Would you ever think of doing menswear and if so what would be the ideology?

Viraj: We want to extend the womenswear ideology to men. We want to be unique, original, experimental and at the same time respect our roots and crafts. We have actually started working on menswear since a few months and it's going really well. We haven't formally introduced it yet in stores. The plan is to launch it formally in Mumbai with our new store coming up in February.

Many brands are indulging in extensions—shoes, bags, perfumes, furniture and even makeup. What kind of extension would you do?

At the moment we are mainly focusing on menswear and launching that. As soon as we perfect it we will extend to different design spaces. ■



"We want to be unique, original, experimental and at the same time respect our roots and craft."

—Viraj Khanna

Being twins what roles do you manage in the company; do you have disagreements?

I handle the finance and the management aspect of the business. I also look into the overall growth and strategy (for example opening a store in Mumbai). Vishesh is currently handling the major portion of menswear. So our roles are clear cut and there is no confusion. We never have disagreements related to anything. We have never fought in 24 years. We both understand each other really well and don't do things that might bother each other. We might have a different thought or opinion of what to do in a certain situation, but once we speak about it we are always on the same page. I am the dominating one (Viraj) because I usually take a strong stand for things (and Vishesh agrees with the stand always). For me, I love intricate embroidery! I find it very fascinating.

How difficult has it been in fashion for you... have people, clients, stylist and employees embraced you?

As we have watched AK through the years one thing was very clear that fashion is one of the most difficult professions to be in. We realised it requires not just design skills but also marketing, management and finance, besides the fact that one is judged every day for whatever you do. We have been fortunate enough that we already have a strong base to start from and someone like AK to guide us so hopefully we are able to do justice to the brand. Yes, we have been lucky with people embracing us too and having been around in this space since the beginning probably makes a lot of difference. Initially, I struggled with making changes in the business structure as people had been used to certain things for many years and needed time to accept the changes. But over time things have improved and people accepted them. I have just learnt to be patient and persistent.

How has your mother's enduring friendship with Sonam Kapoor helped your label?

Her relationship with Sonam extends much more than the clothes. Of course, an association with her from the very beginning has sort of created an identity unique for both of them. ■

Finest handwork and tailoring are trademarks of the AK-OK brand



Seema is experimental
when it comes to choosing
colours for bridal
ensembles



*After spending two decades in
the fashion gamut, SEEMA
GUJRAL believes in designing
with joie de vivre. Traditional,
contemporary, and everything
in between—she has the
answer to dressing without the
rules.*

Text SHRIYA ZAMINDAR
Illustration ANUSHKA SETH

Fabric of Fantasy





The thing about fashion that constantly pulls in people and leaves them awestruck is the sense of escapism it offers—a creative gateway that takes the mundane reality of life and translates it into infinite possibilities. This may sound idealistic and romanticised but it makes you appreciate the bandwidth of all that fashion encompasses. Something which is clearly visible in designer Seema Gujral's prêt and couture ensembles. The 54-year-old designer has created a respectable name for herself in the fashion circles by relying purely on her aesthetics and the ability to explore and experiment creatively. Her design language identifies free expression rather than technical semantics of constructing a garment. That being said, each outfit is like an artisanal heirloom—rich in details, colours and textures.

Going back to when it all started 26 years ago, this young mother found her creative outlet in designing suits. "It started with three pieces, selling two, making five, selling three—and suddenly I was in business," reminisces Seema. The exuberant manner in

her, this was a creative outlet that she could manage with a small child at home. "Working was exciting for me and rewarding as well—both mentally and financially—with the full support of my husband," recalls Seema. The ball was in motion. The label that started with two sewing machines has now expanded to house a hundred of them. She has also employed almost a thousand artisans to work under the label.

The designer's NOIDA-based studio doubles up as a retail store, where the label engages with clients on a personal level. Customer satisfaction is enhanced by giving clients access to the design team for consultation throughout the day. Apart from the home turf Seema Gujral's outfits can be found in retail stores like Aza, Ensemble, Ogaan, Carma, and Origins in Hyderabad. Her label has also amassed a global following with buyers from New York, London, Vancouver, and South Africa.

Seema can be described as a true original (patron pioneer of the arts/fashion). She was not trained professionally in her craft, nor did she tote around an

"Not only pastels and peach tones, but brides are moving ahead to experiment with ivories and sky blues as well."

which she regales this tidbit gives an impression of smooth sailing through the initial days. On the contrary, to create a constant inflow of clientele, there was a significant amount of work that has solidified the label's foundation. "The thought of the initial working days brings big smiles. Those were nose-to-the-ground days working excitedly over every small idea, enjoying the product and selling," she says. "It has been a very satisfying growth graph for me," adds the designer.

A hotel management graduate from Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition (IHMCATAN), Mumbai, Gujral graduated in 1984, and worked in a hotel briefly on a stint of six months before she got married. "I started working practically the day after I got married," she says. For

expensive degree to prove her mettle in the fashion landscape. Understanding the nuances of good design came naturally to her and the collections display this innate sense liberally. To glimpse what goes on in Seema's mind, one needs to throw the proverbial rule book out and then take a second look.

You will find that she is not one to sugar-coat words and has a similar transparent approach to fashion. As one may expect, her designs are pragmatic, but she also surprises with intrinsically glamorous garments, proving that elaborate ensembles can indeed be wearable too. The price range of her garment starts from ₹50,000 and goes up to ₹2,00,000. Each of the collections has something new to offer, and within them, every outfit is designed as a standalone piece. "We endeavour to put in that X factor into each



“Working was exciting for me and rewarding as well, both mentally and financially with the full support of my husband.”

one of them, something that will catch the buyer's attention," she explains.

Even though the designs are based purely on aesthetics, each garment has a flow and symmetry. "We normally start with any one element that catches our eye. That's usually followed by quick sketches, detailed stencils, muslins of silhouettes, detailed sampling of panels and the garment takes a life of its own," divulges Seema. "At times, it takes a week to achieve the desired result on a garment, but at other times it goes up to a couple of months," she adds.

There was the collection "Tehzeeb", which consisted of daring *lehengas* and cocktail gowns with sequin embroidery. These were paired with off-shoulder blouses hemmed with beaded tassels and net dupattas with 3-dimensional floral motifs. The palette was bold and saw the use of contemporary hues of wine-red, navy blue and emerald green. Though her collection "Ziba" was a page from a different book. With traditional leanings, it had *gota* embroidery on *Anarkalis*, *lehengas*, and *shararas*, all in a bright multi-hued palette. Violet *lehengas* were matched with yellow dupattas and turquoise with fuchsia. For their upcoming collection, the designer is sampling a floral theme on a bright palette. This would be amalgamated with textures, cutwork, and 3D elements.

But amidst the intricate *karigari* that we see today as part of every designer's line, there is an uncomfortable new issue that is taking root. Artisanal products are considered the benchmark of luxury though today the search for skilled artisans is very hard. "We find Indian embroideries use a lot of manual labour. However, with growth and industrialisation, the next generation is moving away from hand-embroideries," says Seema. The skill of handcrafting that requires an intimate knowledge of embroidery is in short supply and manual labour has become increasingly expensive to procure. Although at the designer's studio, the demand for her handcrafted garments is constant and she finds it imperative to maintain top-of-the-line quality of work for her clients.

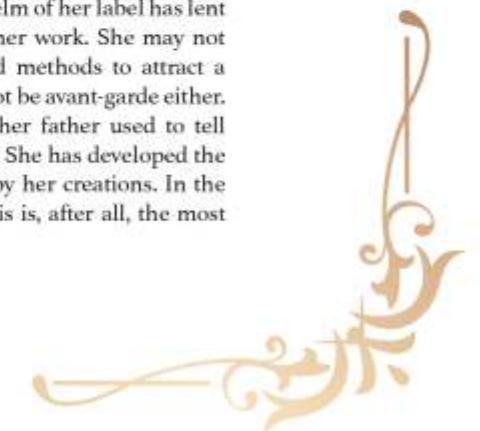
As versatile as Seema's collections get, they are inspired by themes from across the globe—plac-

es and objects that a layman's mind cannot even fathom. It could be a jumble of threads on the work room floor, an advertisement with striking colours that piqued her interest, or her daughter's dress. The key to decoding her creations though lies in her personality. Seema's unadulterated ideology and confidence in her designs are part of the recipe. "Everybody likes to stand out, don't they? You have to understand that fashion is also about being experimental," she reveals.

Seema remains unbothered by ambition and likes to give a free reign to her creativity. "I like to go opposite of what everyone is doing, because what is the fun in creating the same thing," she says.

The bridal industry, according to her, has seen plenty of changes. In a typical wedding season earlier, a bride would choose from a standardised colour palette that was considered auspicious. Dealing with today's millennial brides, Seema finds a delightful diversification of forms and colours that they are willing to try on the wedding day. "Not only pastels and peach tones, but brides are moving ahead to experiment with ivories and sky blues as well. Day weddings, destination weddings, theme dressing, all have become interesting segments to be working in," she adds.

Hervision of fashion reminds you of the heady days when everything could be light-hearted. There was a time when one could be articulate without being constricting. There was a time when designers were not 'influencers'—going by the definition today. Though she has recently entered the social media stratosphere, she maintains her freedom to design without the added gimmicks of buzz-generating activities that are the norm with the current wave of designers. Two decades spent at the helm of her label has lent her a sense of security in her work. She may not want to opt for convoluted methods to attract a wider audience and need not be avant-garde either. She's stuck by something her father used to tell her, 'Work smart, not hard'. She has developed the knack to win over people by her creations. In the grand scheme of things, this is, after all, the most important element. ■



Showcasing Glamour

With glamour as a muse, siblings, MEHAR and ROSELYN, are carving an identity for their brand 'Méro' studio.

Text ANKITA A. TALWAR



A blend of contemporary chic with lyrical retro definitions is how Mero studio likes to be interpreted. For the sister duo, Mehar Juneja and Roselyn Kochar, this juxtaposition of two fashion concepts—street-style with vintage—happened naturally since it reflects a part of both their personalities. "Just as the acronym 'Mero' has been formed fusing both our names (Me from Mehar and Ro from Roselyn), the brand's fashion genre has also been developed as a fusion of both our tastes," Mehar adds. She adds that while Roselyn's style is more sophisticated and chic, her own preference leans towards urban, funky street fashion. "By putting our heads together, Mero reflects both these distinguished themes," she adds. Additionally, the word 'mero' in Hungarian means 'made to measure', making the name, logically and intrinsically feel right.

Mehar, a humanities student at school, and Roselyn a commerce student, decided to take up design as their major in University since, "Both of us have always been obsessed with glamour and have a shared taste for it," Mehar says. While



MÉRO'S BELIEF The main goal is to make luxurious fabrics, quality designs and current trends accessible at healthy prices. With fabrics hand picked and ensembles crafted in-house, Mero ensures quality.

she sought fashion styling at Pearl Academy, New Delhi, Roselyn took up Interior Architecture at Ansal University. This digression from the previous line of study was organic for both the sisters given their challenge-acknowledging attitudes. "We are optimists; we aspire to reach higher than our capabilities. We like to challenge ourselves," Mehar says. The brand, started production in July 2019, was just a fledgling but that did not deter the sisters from launching their collection at their first pop-up on 5th October, 2019. Within a span of three months, they were ready to make their presence felt. The range of the garments at Mero starts from ₹15,000 and goes upto ₹25,000.

"We both started with great passion and enthusiasm and aspire to continue with it. We've had good days and disastrous ones, but we've always tried to retain that zeal and make amendments as a team. If one went down, the other helped," Mehar adds. Just like the brand name, the sisters work seamlessly together. Roselyn looks after the design, while Mehar is the Marketing Head and manages public relations and advertisements. Mehar explains, "It's team effort which works in our favour. Every decision, be it creative or marketing, is taken together."

But where the roles are divided, the vision for the brand is shared. "Our main goal for the brand is to make luxurious fabrics, quality designs and current trends accessible at healthy prices," Mehar says. With coordinated sets being the premise of the brand, Mero's repertoire also includes dresses, skirts with various styles of jackets, tops with different sleeve cuts and powerful pant suits. The garments are produced in-house at the brand's manufacturing unit in Jonapur, Delhi that also doubles up as their retail store. Each fabric—from duchess satin, organza, velvet, tweed, suede—is handpicked and imported keeping in mind, the silhouettes of the ensembles. From plaids, checks and weaves, inspiring prints are lined up in Mero's next collection.

A self-confessed Bollywood fashion junkie Mehar sees fashionista Sonam Kapoor Ahuja befitting the brand ethos of Mero. For her, Sonam is, "One of the most experimental actresses in the industry. Moreover, she will complement our concept beautifully with her classy and upbeat style", adds Mehar.

While in the previous line—their first summer venture—they offered classy and chic clothes with minimal bling (a guilty pleasure of the siblings), their winter collection "Plush" is experimental yet sophisticated with a focus on coordinated sets, powerful silhouettes and exaggerated sleeves. They have zeroed in on velvets, tweeds, suedes, jacquards and a colour palette that is as versatile as their personalities. ■

FASHION

Threads of Identity

Tucked away in Ahmedabad, SHYAMAL & BHUMIKA paint the canvas with hues of Florence as intricate handwork serves as a leitmotif for a global bride.

TEX ASMITA AGARWAL Illustration ANUSHKA SETH

Extravagance is celebrated in all its glory at Shyamal & Bhumiya





Designing has now changed with the customer, how did you both begin your journey?

Bhumika and I were both creative from a young age and the atmosphere in our homes encouraged design discussions. When we met first at the age of 17, Bhumika was already experimenting with silhouettes, textiles and stitching her ensembles. Her admission to the National Institute of Fashion Technology was the final step for us getting into fashion design.

In a sea of style gurus what sets you apart?

Being based in Gujarat we are far away from the hustle-bustle of metros. The peaceful environment of our hometown Ahmedabad, which is a UNESCO world heritage city, gives us space and time to explore the crafts of our country and design traditional collections with modern aesthetics. Our work has, over the years, also won us one of the most diverse clientele spread over several continents. That further allows us to experiment with different styles that would suit our multicultural muse.

Is real learning in design practical or can it be taught?

More than the institutes it's the upbringing and inspiring people around us that taught us most of the things that shape our work

today. Since our childhood we were encouraged to think design, be creative, think about sustainability, value our heritage and culture and promote craft by hand. Bhumika is a trained fashion designer, and I am a graduate in commerce along with professional course study at London and Milan. These institutes gave our careers the professional edge.

You are the great grandson of the man who started one of the first textile mills in 1800 and grandson of late famed cricketer Deepak Shodhan. Did you ever think of that sport?

The atmosphere in our home was

of embroideries, fabrics and colours?

The bride of today is resourceful and has vast global exposure due to social media. Her research as well as understanding of what she wants is spot on. She is confident and values her roots immensely, regardless of where she lives in the world. Young brides appreciate our craft done by hand and want to create an identity interwoven in their roots. This year, we see a lot of brides going for unique colour mixes in the threads, fresh hues woven on raw/wild silks, unconventional contrasts and a romance-inspired modern blue print with traditional colours. Foliage greens, navy blues, vintage olive, pale

“The mood this season is romance while the embellishments are playful threads, sequins and crystals in traditional embroidery techniques.”

more creative than competitive and cricket for me was more or less recreational than professional.

What would you say is your design USP?

The Shyamal & Bhumika label stands for stunning craftsmanship and artistry. We are all about regality, making use of traditional Indian techniques on silk with gold threads. We love sustainable, natural silks and craft outfits that exude a modern Indian feel.

What do you think the modern Indian bride wants in terms

sky, deep magentas, intense reds and old rose are some of the colours you will see in our collection. In terms of silhouettes, the millennial bride wants comfort while flaunting her look for a few hours. Classic *kalidaar lehangas*, structured jackets, *shararas*, *kalidaar saris*, asymmetric hem, signature cowl gowns and trailing *kurtas* are some of the silhouettes our brides enjoy wearing. Peplum jackets over *lehangas*, off-shoulder blouses and other such fun silhouettes are trending.

What kind of innovations do you add in your designs to make them contemporary and relevant?



Regal is the buzzword here, with a blend of sophistication



Our design ideology is constantly evolving every year and we have made fine, but noticeable changes to our use of colour and motifs this season. The last India Couture Week collection had a lot of Victorian glamour woven in the story of an Indian merchant princess; this year's collection is set in a French-Italian setting inspired by our travels to Florence. The collection has unique vintage and jewel tones; is royal, flamboyant and portrays a certain kind of muse. The mood, this season is romance while the trending embellishments are playful threads, sequins and crystals in traditional embroidery techniques. We have been using natural fabrics like *Matka* silk, raw silks, satins and crepe, and diaphanous fabrics like tulle and organza in innovatively cut silhouettes, *lehengas* and gowns, as well as our draped and ruffle-detailed ensembles.

Bridal designs are going softer and subtler would you agree?

I wouldn't agree with this statement as every designer has his own style and no generic trend applies to the industry. The only reason the designs are going more modern would be to accommodate a larger audience from several continents including the second generation of successful South-Asians who have a more modern subtle taste, but want to wear something that connects them to their roots.

How is Bollywood a game changer for designers and do you think social media has impacted the retail space especially the bridal market?

Bollywood has a huge influence, especially on the brides living in India. Actresses are making waves with their social media pictures and their looks are definitely dominating trends. For designers, associating with a Bollywood celebrity leads to him

Organzas, tulles
are the preferred
fabric at the brand



capes and *dupattas* are trending this season too. Woven saris can never go out of style. Traditional *lehengas* with intricate embroidery in silk thread and gold are a hit. Indian couture holds its place by giving all these trends the much-needed uniqueness as hand-embroidered details transcend the outfits into timeless masterpieces.

As a designer what are your strengths and weaknesses?

Each aspect of our work has its strengths and weaknesses. Starting with being in Ahmedabad far away from the fashion world gives our collections a unique feel and yet when it comes to reach and access we are a little far from where the client is shopping. The hand-embroidered collections are special and yet the pace of production as you can imagine is much slower, so is the amount of work that we can take on.

How do you and Bhumika maintain a balance between the roles in the business?

Our responsibilities generally overlap and we prefer not to conform to specific roles. However, Bhumika is the fashion designer and technical expert and manages execution while I am the creative head and Managing Director as I spearhead the business and strategic planning. We are always in discussion about varied topics that range from colours, silhouettes and details we want to introduce to business initiatives and distant markets we want to reach.

Would you ever think of diversifying and moving into other areas of design—home, accessories, shoes, bags and jewellery?

Yes, the lines are already in place in a small way and it will be a natural evolution. ■



being able to dominate the trends of the season with his style of work. Social media has been the biggest influence on bridal and retail trends in the last decade and it is the new form of media that people are glued to. The Shyamal & Bhumika label has been able to easily open stores in distant cities because of the massive social media following in excess of 50 lakh women.

What would you say are the biggest trends in the bridal business today?

We are one of the labels that the



Handmade Tales

Fashion label 'Loka' by Veerali by VEERALI RAVESHIA gives life to hopes of reviving culture with outfits that fit into the modern vocabulary of Indian fashion.

Text SHRIYA ZAMINDAR

The year 2019 was a turning point for the luxury prêt label 'Loka' by Veerali. Surrounded by the magnificence of the Shaniwar Wada Fort in Pune, designer Veerali Raveschia found herself next to an inspirational figure, from the fashion world, she had always looked up to. Showcasing at the India Trunk Show in Pune next to Gaurang Shah turned out to be a significant moment for her.

Presently the 30-year-old Mumbai-based designer's label proposes to change the way you look at occasion wear. She mixes vibrant reds, mustard yellows, greens—almost the entire colour spectrum on her minimalistic clothing. Chanderi dresses and jackets, peplum blouses with lehenga skirts, mulmul shararas with kalidar suits, or silk ghararas and overlays are some items you will find at her store.

In her collections, traditional occasion wear is typically defined by opulence, intricacy, and craftsmanship but blended with modern comfort. Having launched her label in 2013, Veerali says, "If you design a beautiful product that no one wants to buy, you lose the essence of the product even before starting," she explains. "It needs to serve a need or fuel the aspiration to own," she adds. She graduated in 2011 from the University of Warwick, UK, with a masters degree in marketing and strategy. While abroad, she also attended summer school at the London College of Fashion, where she studied fashion media business and subsequently found work in the fashion capital. She gathered experience in marketing for a local Italian kids wear brand, worked as a merchandiser for a retailer, and then came back to Kolkata, where she learnt how to develop prints on the job.

Kolkata happens to be her mother's birthplace. Veerali places her at the heart of the brand. Her mother believed that the rich fabrics formed



an important part of her identity. She has consciously let her childhood guide her label when she handed over the responsibility of sourcing and quality management to her mother. Apart from the colour harmonies, the theme of handlooms has been well-integrated in her body of work.

The name itself suggests a connection with the soil. *Loka* in Sanskrit translates into 'world'. Veerali connects it to having umpteen choices in the world, but for her, true identity manifests when you make the connection with your roots. She remembers a trip to Benaras in the early days of the brand. Speaking to the weavers gave her tremendous insights into the craft of the area. "I just enjoyed the process so much that we veered towards developing our weaves for one of our collections," she reveals. Though it was a time-consuming experiment, it eventually led her to venture into couture.

Her major lines consist of Loka Prêt,

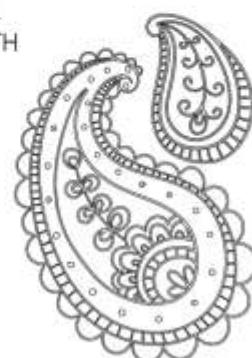


Luxuriant colours and patterns of Rajasthan are the inspiration behind the design concepts of the brand

Gemstone in the Sand

Understanding the cultural contours of Rajasthan, PUNIT BALANA journeys through the dunes of time with his malleable offerings for pre-wedding ceremonies.

Text ASMITA AGGARWAL
Illustration ANOUSHKA SETH



Rou could never imagine that a reticent, small town boy would one day light up the catwalks of the maximum city, but Punit Balana did this and lots more. Born and raised in the quietude of Bikaner in Rajasthan surrounded by a celebration of colour, he never showed any interest in his father's traditional plaster of Paris business. Clothes made his heart sing. So even though the self-taught designer never knew how to sew he would make interesting alterations in his ensembles, this grew into a passion and soon, a full-time obsession.

Despite resistance from his family, at the age of 20, he began dealing in prints and soon became one of the most coveted print-makers supplying to wholesalers observing how they were minting money out of his ingenious blocks. So, in 2015 he decided to launch his label, under his own name, of course in keeping with the sights and sounds of Rajasthan heralding the beauty of prints—*Sanganeri, Bagru, Ajrakh to Daboo*. Though his fascination for Jaipur took a robust turn, when he decided to move there.

With little money and big ambitions, Punit started a *karkhana* with just three printers, and today he has dressed almost every Bollywood star from Shilpa Shetty, Kriti Sanon, Rakul Preet to Sonakshi Sinha among others. "I would say my brand has created its own vocabulary of fashion, it operates in the space which can't be classified into ethnic, tribal, couture or contemporary, it is somewhere in between," he smiles.

The statuesque aficionado may be a man of few words, but he is an astute businessman, he understands market dynamics. The bridal space is frankly saturated so he shifted his lens to *mehendi* and *sangeet* outfits, a niche that was unexplored, but had a vast potential to grow. His USP till today which gets buyers trooping to his stall at the Bridal Asia exhibition are his *Kediyas* and *gararas*, soaked in the flavour of the vivacious city and raise a toast to the dusty forts and delicate embroideries.

"Mostly I use *Kota doria*, natural hand-woven fabrics, *chanderi*, silk as well as a smattering of chiffon. Each garment has a signature print, indigenous and expertly crafted and most of the embellishment centres around mirror work," he explains. The ethos of Jaipur whether it is the Amer Fort or the Hawa Mahal exists in the DNA of the brand with *Morri* work and *gotta patti* being executed to natty perfection.



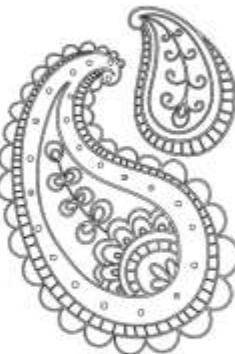
"Rabaris have mesmerised me with their cultural identity. My collection pays homage to them."



Charcoal black sets the theme for Punit's new collection "Rabari"



“Inspired by the grandiose architecture and surreal beauty of Jaipur, my collection won many fans at the fashion week. ”



In India, we always say that the wedding is the most important day in a girl's life so she must be happy. And she will be so, when she is comfortable in what she is wearing and can enjoy her D-Day. Thus, all my outfits are fun, light, subtle and not over embellished," he adds. He focuses on technique and garment construction and none of his lehengas are bridal, but they look grand despite following the less is more ideology. Pinks, lilacs and peach and pastels are de rigueur making it ideal for brunches and engagement ceremonies.

Though the road to stardom hasn't been an easy one for Punit, he admits he struggled for 17 years, it was only when he participated in fashion week, Mumbai, they took him seriously. "I followed my heart, there was no nervousness. Inspired by the grandiose architecture and surreal beauty of Jaipur, it won many fans. Most people called Bagru prints 'chaddar ka kapda', but I put it in the spotlight, gently printing it on my heavy silks and crepes elevating them to a royal appeal," he explains, add to this the gracious use of fabrics almost 25-30 metres on a single skirt, making it swirl like magic! "Suddenly I had a legion of devotees," he laughs.

Bollywood was the first to notice and quickly adopt him, flooding him with requests for outfits, so Punit without any advertising made his presence felt in a sea of designers. "Designers debate on impressive podiums about whether a star can help you gain attention, I would answer in the 'affirmative' as they have such a wide fan base that a style guru instantly gets noticed. I don't handle my own social media accounts, but I do feel it is another way to reach out to so many women, who get a glimpse of your design process," he explains.

Punit in his personal life is a sporty man, who believes comfort and functionality are the key ingredients of style, and will often be seen lounging around in his bomber, tracks or shorts, minus any flounce and that's what his design flavours replicate. "I don't do menswear, I am not a fan of formal clothing. But who knows someday it may

interest me? What has been the most delightful thing in my sojourn is my dad and how happy he was when he came to my new store opening in Mumbai. He has never been expressive, but he is curious about what I am doing and that is indication enough, he is satisfied with my trajectory," affirms Punit. His next stop would be Delhi as he believes buyers here really have the spending power and don't think twice if they are seduced by the charms of an ensemble. "I would like to increase my buyer base, but I am not a man in a hurry, good things take time for fruition," he says. In the meantime, he is busy with his new collection.

Not looking at brand diversification or branching into other areas related to fashion, Punit wants to master this trade, and experiment with what he is good at—outfits other than the wedding. "I never really liked ornamentation, style must be pragmatic and relevant. Even though I never curate path-breaking cholis, offering new templates, I keep it conservative, I know my audience. A bride in my eyes would seldom wear a monochrome or blue on her big day, she would prefer shades of tangerine," he confesses.

His latest line "Rabari" is an ode to the tribe, pastoralists by nature, known as the wandering gypsies and their vibrant thread work and fine beading that ties in riveting stories of the desert. Rabaris wear charcoal black, and their mirror work is superlative using round, rectangular, square and triangles and the men with their gravity-defying turbans. "They have mesmerised me with their cultural identity, I wanted to pay homage to their undying spirit and nomadic ways surviving the elements with sheer grit," he explains.

Being one of the three kids growing up in a business family in Bikaner, Punit is close to his sister, who is also his confidant and mentor. Not a day passes when they don't talk about how their day went. "I share everything with her, including my insecurities, even though I have a brother. She gives me her honest opinion which I value and she is only allowed to wear my clothes," he concludes with a wide grin. ■

Power TRIO

TANVEER, RIM & SANIYA, the eponymous brand offers its patrons elegance through flowy ensembles.

Text SAARA DHAWAN

If you are one who, when it comes to choosing a costume for yourself, believes in the opulence of old-world magic, but not at the cost of comfort and simplicity of contemporary times, Tanveer, Rim & Saniya might have the perfect ensemble for you. Located in Bandra West, just off Linking Road, Mumbai, the boutique specialises in premium ethnic and fusion wear.

Brainchild of Tanveer Shad, 54, and her two daughters, Rim Kohari, 35, and Saniya Shad Maqba, 32, the label stands apart from its peers in being a product of love for fashion, blended with sheer talent.

Tanveer set up the business in 2007 with her daughters by her side. Saniya did her major in science from Jai Hind College, Mumbai, after completing her schooling from Queen Mary's High School, while Rim pursued Sports Medicine from American College of Sports Medicine, US. With no formal education or training in fashion, it was simply a shared passion for well-designed garments that gave the three the confidence to venture into apparel designing. For the daughters, the inspiration is their mother, Tanveer, whom they credit with an elegant sartorial sense.

The ideology behind the label is simple and unassuming—it is about dressing real women while reliving the designs and the artistic influences of the eras gone by.

While their collections showcase vintage floral vines and motifs inspired



From heavily-embroidered traditional attire to lightweight day dresses, the label has a large collection

from Mughal architecture embellished with ornate gold embroidery, *Mukaish* work and the richness of threadwork, they restructure the garments to suit the sensibilities of a new-age woman.

Talking about their clothing,

Tanveer says, "While designing or conceptualising, our main aim is to cater and celebrate the woman, make her feel beautiful and at the same time comfortable in our clothes." Hence, all their garments are based

on an amalgamation of comfort and style. About their upcoming summer collection, she adds, "The collection is for a woman, who wants to look stylish, but still be comfortable in what she wears. It has classic silhouettes in an array of soft, pleasing summer colours."

Bridal *lehengas*, *sharara* sets, *salwar* sets, and *kurtas* etc. designed in a rainbow of colours from delicate pastel to brighter hues form the repertoire of the label. Easy-to-wear silhouettes for cocktail gatherings, engagements, fine but royal-looking embroidery for celebration wear and contemporary day dresses ensure there is something for everyone here. With the purpose of offering its customers' best quality and great designs at an affordable price, they have kept the range of their garments starting from ₹10,000 and going up to ₹40,000 to stay true to their concept.

Tanveer puts the spirit behind the brand succinctly, "Tanveer, Rim & Saniya as a brand has been successful in connecting with and capturing customer interests. We live in a time of unlimited choices and hope and strive to stay relevant in our customer's mind as the best option for meeting their needs." With the client at the heart of the brand, Tanveer believes more valuable than deciding the silhouettes,



"While fine tuning and evolving is important, customers remember you and your product if they have a clear point of reference."

embroideries and designing, is the "trust we can instil in our customers. We like to believe that our USP is that we understand the needs of our customers and can communicate with them through our clothes," she adds.

With an ever-growing list of celebrity patrons including Radhika Apte, Sonal Chauhan, Daisy Shah, Sana Khan to name a few the brand is fast gaining reputation. But as valuable is each customer to them, celebrity or not, so is each dress they have ever designed. Tanveer says, "We don't have a single piece that is close to our heart since the whole collection is conceptualised and designed with equal amounts of love and care."

But is all this love and perfection worth it in this age of social media, where everything gets recognition and is written off within a matter of a few minutes? Tanveer says, "While fine-tuning and evolving the brand is important, customers remember you and your product if they have a clear point of reference." thereby acknowledging the fact that an ensemble worn by someone known—personally or a celebrity—always wins more brownie points. With brother Arzan Shad handling social media marketing for the brand, they are hoping for a promising year ahead. ■

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CURIOS COUTURE PARTY

Picture a modern-day version of Lewis Carroll's iconic Alice In Wonderland and you are likely to conjure up a larger-than-life atmosphere, audacious makeup, fantastical characters—set in coltish imagery. The tale, rich with obscure socio-political ramifications, has held the interest of children and satirists forever. Here, Bridal Asia re-imagines and brings to you, through fashion's lens, their take on the opiate-driven masterpiece.

Photography
HORMIS ANTONY THARAKAN
Styling
MOHIT RAI, GOPALIKA VIRMANI
Set & Art Direction
GOPALIKA VIRMANI



Couture, Shyamal & Bhumika; Jewellery, Hazoorilal by Sandeep Narang, GK-1



Outfits, Anushkaa
Bajaj; Jewellery,
Goenka India



Outfits, Akanksha
Gajria; Jewellery,
Kantilal & Bros.
Jewellers



Outfit, Shyamal & Bhumika;
Jewellery, Hazoorilal by
Sandeep Narang, GK-1



Outfits, Niharika Kamani;
Jewellery, Jewels of Jaipur









NIHARIKA SHEKHAWAT | ABHISHEK &
ABHIYANT RANIWALA | JINAY CHOKSI | TANYA
M. SOOD | SHACHEE SHAH |
SEEMA AGGARWAL | ANAND BATHIJA

Illustration ANOUSHKA SETH

SOUL OF THE DESERT

The Modern Meenakar is a moniker SUNITA SHEKHAWAT wears with pride. Synonymous with bringing to the forefront, the beautiful jewellery of Meenakari from the interiors of Rajasthan, her daughter Niharika Shekhawat talks to Bridal Asia about the eponymous brand and its story.



Text ANKITA A. TALWAR

Tradition with a modern edge is the buzzword

iding inside every girl is a whimsical princess—one who, with the innocence of a fairy, believes in all things good. And while she manoeuvres her way through the hustle of the real world, the princess awaits her turn, patiently. She finds her voice when the time is right—when there is a chance to celebrate with abandon. And nothing befits this princess-in-waiting more than a piece of royalty—a piece of the statuesque *Meenakari* jewellery.

There is something very fable-like about *Meenakari*. The deep colour tones, the ethnic motifs, the finesse, each piece transports you to a bygone era. "We are a Rajput family and belong to Rajasthan. My mom is from Osian Thikana, a small town near Jodhpur, while I was born and brought up in Jaipur. Growing up in Rajasthan, colours were always a part of every celebration and everyday life. Also, Rajasthan has a very rich history of the lifestyles of royalties and jewellery was a big part of it. This harmony of colour and cultural ethnicity is what the brand is all about," explains Niharika.

Colour, for the brand, is a way of communication—an extension of its aesthetics. The indigo-hues of Jodhpur and the iconic pink of Jaipur found its way into the trademark designs of the brand, giving Sunita Shekhawat, an iconic identity of its own.

Labour of Love

Completely hand-crafted, *Meenakari* demands long man hours. It is a laborious craft form where each piece is painstakingly worked upon for many hours. Each piece is hand sculpted, engraved and painted and finished off in a trademark Sunita Shekhawat way. For the brand, it is not just a piece of jewellery; for them it is a personification of perfection and devotion.

The brand uses pure and rare stones that are set in a frame or mould of gold strips which are then cut, coiled and shaped. Making of this frame is crucial to the piece of jewellery since it forms the foundation of the piece. Once the mould is made, the outer surface is engraved and etched with planned motifs and designs. Known as *khudayi*, the frame is then filled with lac or gold. *Khudayi* requires a firm hand, precision and concentration. Even a skilled artisan can end up spending hours on this. Post this, the etched spaces are filled with natural colours and precious stones—*Polki*, *kundan*, and/or diamonds—are set in. These stones are supported by a gold foil to ensure that their grip, on the frame, is tight. A true labour of love each piece takes countless hours of hard work, upto two to four months per piece based on its intricacies, before it is ready to adorn your neck, hands or ears.

Interestingly, there are no rights and wrongs when it comes to selecting a colour for a piece. The world is the artist's oyster when it comes to choosing colours in *Meenakari*. "We are all for breaking stereotypes but in a logical and aesthetic manner," emphasises Niharika. A point in case: Sunita Shekhawat has a line of jewellery in black enamel titled "Kalika". A limited edition collection, the pieces use diamond and *Polkis* set in gold.



"We are all for breaking stereotypes, but in a logical and aesthetic manner that suits the brand's persona."



Shoulder dusters are a brand innovation for the modern bride

"Traditionally considered inauspicious, people are now more open to experimenting with black jewellery. It is all about how you perceive it. For us, it is as positive as other colours are," says Niharika.

At the heart of the motifs lie the lotus—a recurring leitmotif in jewellery designs. Lotus has a mythological narration to it and therefore complements the heritage jewellery at Sunita Shekhawat's harmoniously.

The Midas Touch

And there is a lot more to Sunita Shekhawat. A whole world of vibrant colour, traditional motifs and impeccable finishing is ready out there, to take your breath away. Even the christening of the collections is deep rooted in folklore creating a soothing symphony of their own. The "Neelkamal" collection, with lotus as a central motif, and in soft pink and blue shades has *chandbalis*, chandelier earrings, bangles, and rings; the "Firoza" collection is a namesake collection where *firozi* or turquoise colour is used. What sets this collection apart from others is that there are two sets of designs on either side of the piece—one traditional and one contemporary. But what is that one piece that truly sings for Niharika? "It is a signature, standalone hand cuff from the 'Padmapriya' collection. It is in light pink lotus motif set against a backdrop of green," Niharika says fondly. The collection also has a *hauth phool* and a comb that will tie in the look completely.

Given how exquisite the pieces are, no wonder the brand has found favour with celebrities and royalties too. Royalties such as Late Her Highness Gayatri Devi, Princess Diya Kumari of Jaipur, Maharani Divya Kumari of Bharatpur, and Princess Vaishnavi Kumari of Kishangarh have endorsed the brand. From Alia Bhatt, Sonam Kapoor, Katrina Kaif to more recently Radhika Apte, Sunita Shekhawat's timeless pieces have found takers in gen-next brigade as well as with the doyens of Bollywood such as late Sridevi, Madhuri Dixit, and Raveena Tandon.

But who is the muse for the brand? Niharika says, "We don't have any 'one' muse—for us each and every person out there who is a connoisseur of arts and crafts is a muse. Our jewellery is a part of nostalgia and you need to be able to feel it to wear it." For the brand, each piece is a keepsake to be cherished lovingly rather than a wear-it-in-trend.

Futuristic Statements

Supported by a loyal clientele and self-confidence in their own skill, the brand is able to effortlessly tread the fine line

between preserving old world charm and reinventing it for a more modernistic audience. "For us while the ethos of the art and craft remain the same, we have modernised the techniques and concepts. Our newer collections have more pastel colours, construction of ear cuffs, shoulder dusters, layered jewellery and other contemporary versions," Niharika explains.

The brand also recognises, and has conformed, to the perceptible change in bridal preferences. The new-age



Statement rings will be the right pick for a cocktail event

bride is more pragmatic and practical about what she buys and wears. Catering to this thinking woman, Sunita Shekhawat has launched reversible and lightweight jewellery pieces. This increases the wearability of the piece. While the sensibilities might undergo a change here, the harmony of each piece is still maintained.

There may be a change in the approach to design and inclusion of more neoteric concepts, but there is no compromise in quality or workmanship. "While we are using design softwares and seeking more technology support in our operations, our pieces are still handcrafted to maintain the sanctity of *Meenakari*," explains Niharika. A stickler for excellence, Sunita Shekhawat's jewellery simply grows on you. "Ours is not something that is in fashion or out of fashion. Our pieces are timeless classics that are meant to be cherished," she adds.



A graduate from Maharani Gayatri Devi Girls' Public School, Jaipur, Niharika followed up her education with a course from the prestigious Gemological Institute of America, New York. Sunita Shekhawat had already acquired a pride of place in the jewellery business and with Niharika joining in, it has set the stage for a seamless fusion of technology and hand-craft.

Designs with a Heart

But what warms us further to the brand is how earnestly they take care of their family of artisans. They recognise the value of each *karigar* they have and support them assiduously. "Our *karigars* are invaluable. And we ensure that their families are well-supported. We want *karigars* to pass the craft through their generations. Therefore, we persuade our craftsmen to educate their children duly. We have supported some to get through NIFT (National Institute of Fashion Technology) and other design institutes so that they can further their skill," says Niharika.

With prestigious awards—Design Appreciation Awards, Swarovski Gems; Best Female Entrepreneur Award at JJS and Gold Souk Awards (awarded to Sunita Shekhawat); IWECAccredited Award, FICCI FLO to name a few—the brand is building a legend of its own, one that is as deeply entrenched in the glow of its founders as it is in its pieces. ■

Game of Thrones

Author of The Whole Woman, Germaine Greer rightly said, "The essence of pleasure is spontaneity," and it is this incandescence that makes KAREENA KAPOOR KHAN truly special. There are no beautiful surfaces without depth, based on this philology, the coveted actress has lived her life. The begum of Pataudi, now happy being mom to social media's newest star Taimur, talks about Sara, being her 'bar' buddy, Saif, a silent strength and sister Karisma, an inspiration, as life completes a full circle.

Text ASMITA AGGARWAL
Photography ERRIKOS ANDREOU / DEU: CREATIVE MANAGEMENT
Styling MOHIT RAI





“Being a mother made me realise that the biggest responsibility is to be one...I pray that I’m a responsible mother to Taimur.”

From Refugee to Good News, how do you describe your professional life over the years?

It's been a fantastic journey, a roller coaster ride and a lot of learning experiences. As an actor one evolves every day, with every film, with every character one essay. I guess, I've been lucky to do some amazing films with amazing film-makers. I've also learnt from my mistakes. I've said no to so many good films. But I've no regrets.

What have been the high points of your professional life that instilled faith and confidence in you?

For me everything has been about confidence. What comes along with me is my self-confidence, self-belief and my never-say-die attitude that boosts my confidence. I've always worn my confidence on my sleeve right from my debut film *Refugee*. That attitude will always remain.

What would you say has been the biggest contribution of your husband, Saif Ali Khan, in your career and personally in your life?

Saif helped me heal and made me fall in love with myself. He's always proud of me and wants me to go out there and achieve and he is silently smiling and watching. I find him to be one of my biggest supports.

Were you worried that being a married actor, and then having a baby, is going to affect your career in a not so positive way?

I wasn't worried. Marriage is about companionship and it should not stop you from achieving your professional goals. Finally, marriage has come down to what it is, culmination of love between two people, who want to spend their life together. It is not the end of an era. It's not the end for a woman. And it's definitely not the end of a career. It's just the beginning of a beautiful journey. In fact, after Taimur was born, it was Saif, who told me to hit the gym, get to the studio and get back to work. He told me take Taimur along and set an example for all young, working mothers, out there, that they can do it too.

Where are you professionally now and what's the plan ahead? What are the near projects that you are working on?

I'm hearing a lot of scripts, even from new directors. I'm finding it difficult to say yes to anything and everything. I wonder if it's worth leaving Taimur for. But I aim at doing one or at the most two films a year.

Any plans for moving to web series on Netflix, Amazon Prime? A lot

of your peers are experimenting with these platforms now?

If it's a great part, why not. Let's see...

According to you, what are the three must-haves in a bridal trousseau? And what kind of jewellery do you personally like?

Diamonds are a girl's best friend for sure. I love fuss-free Indian wear like Anarkalis which should be a must-have. Easy, everyday wear jewellery for working women who like to add a bit of a glam. Maybe a statement necklace for one of your functions and you are good to go.

Your most special memory of your wedding day? And what did you inherit from your mother-in-law in terms of vintage clothing?

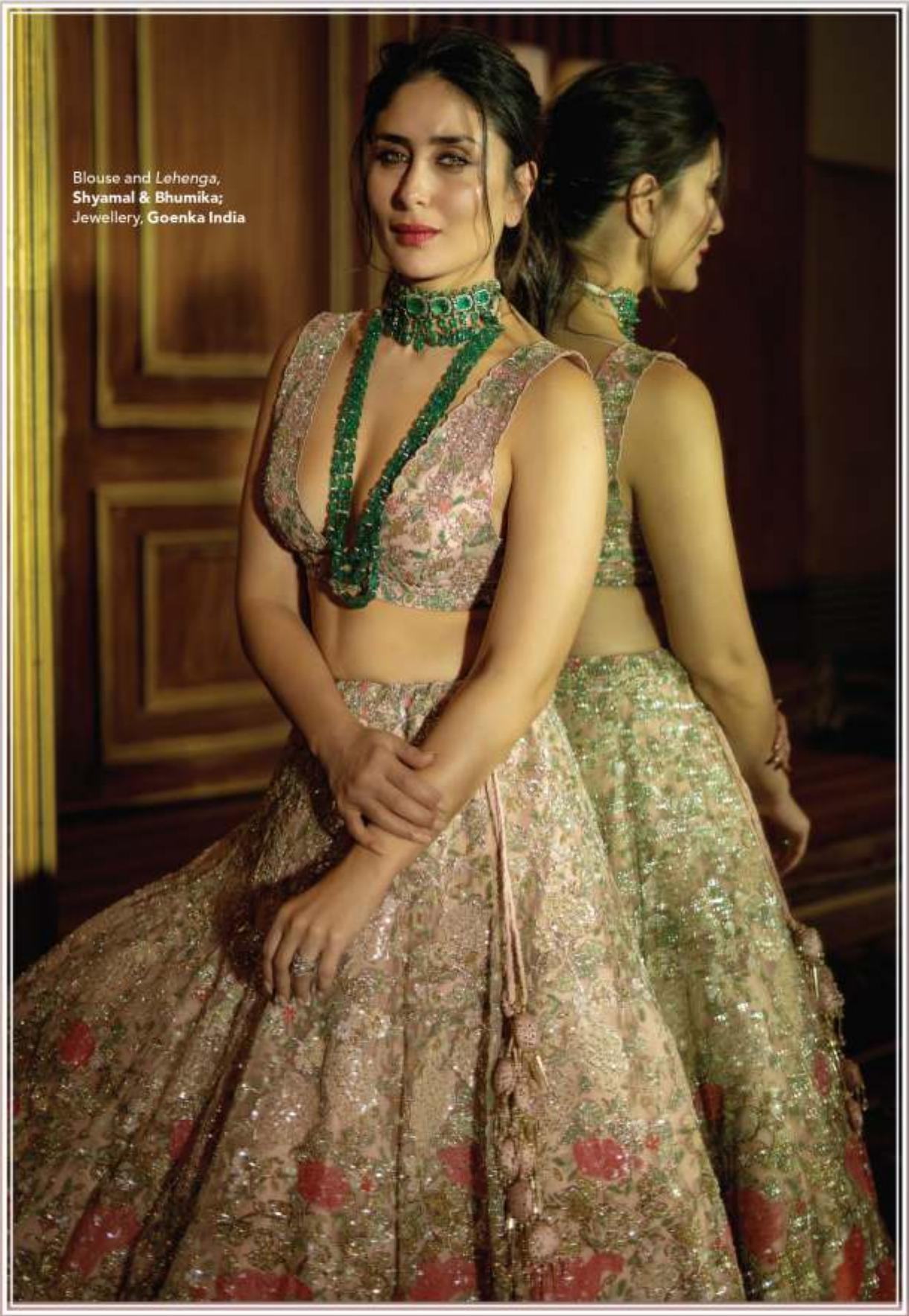
It was a truly a Nawabi-style wedding. My mother-in-law gave me an heirloom sari that will always be precious.

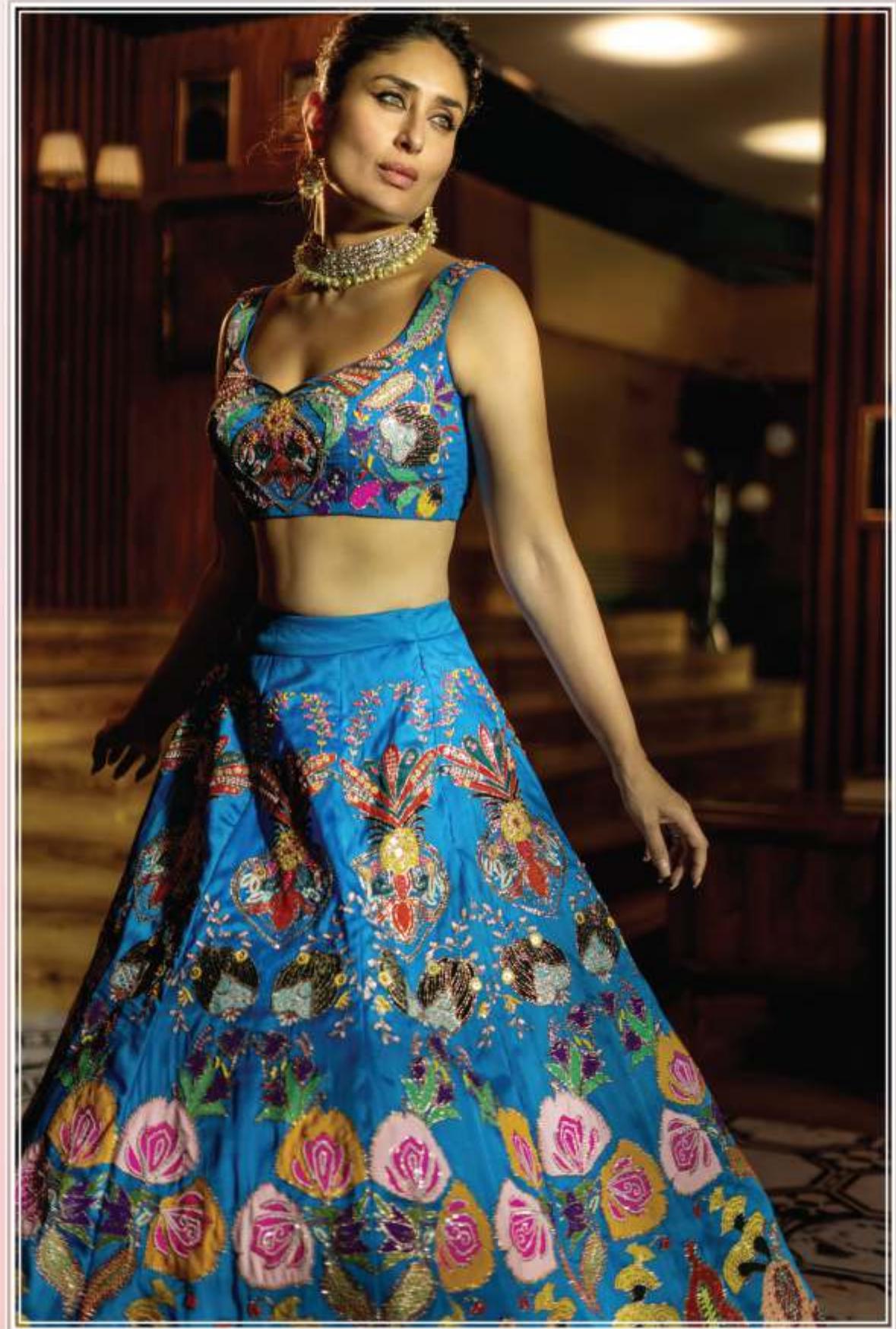
How has marriage changed you as a person and an actor? Do you really think motherhood makes you a better individual?

Being a mother has made me realise, the biggest responsibility is to be one. I've been a responsible daughter. I've been a responsible wife. I hope and pray that I'm a responsible mother to Taimur as well.

Blouse, Lehenga and Dupatta, Tamanna Punjabi Kapoor; Jewellery, Jewels of Jaipur







“I need to have my family and friends around because my life revolves around them. I need to feel like a human being...not a robot.”

What are the five beauty items you can't do without and would recommend to others?

A lip balm, moisturiser, an eye mask, a homemade facepack, and almond oil.

You are very close to your sister what makes this bond so strong? What are the qualities you admire in her?

Karisma is my older sister, but I think I kind of bully her sometimes. I fire her, and I also give her advice. But eventually, she's the person I have grown up aspiring to be. Even the way she conducted herself back in the '90s—she was a very private actor—was inspiring. What I admire the most in her personality is the dignity with which she has conducted her life, her career, and single-handedly brought up her children.

Do you think young actors are much smarter and aware than your generation? Which one of the young lot of actors do you admire?

From *Raazi* to *Gully Boy*, Alia's (Bhatt) choices of films is outstanding. She reminds me of myself when I did *Chameli*, *Yava* and *Omkara*. She is a brilliant actor.

Your favourite designer when it came to your own trousseau?

Manish Malhotra. Always a dear friend. Always there.

How is your relationship with Sara and what advice do you give her as an actor?

We're like best friends. Saif refuses to come out with us. She's my bar-hopping partner. I enjoy my equation with her. I always remember Sara standing up and doing *adab*. Both Sara and Ibrahim are like that. I am like a friend to them. At times me and Sara chat over a glass of champagne. That's the way Saif wanted and that's the way I wanted it. Whenever she wants to call me she does at a time when Saif isn't around and she doesn't want to talk to him. She talks to me.

What is the toughest part about being an actor and a celebrity parent? How do you find yourself a peaceful balance?

The toughest part one would think is to juggle your career and personal life, but I love doing nothing and being at home, just with my son, Taimur. But again, I also know that I can't always

do that. So, the idea is to find that balance. Strangely and honestly, I've found the perfect balance between my personal and professional life. For instance, if I'm working back-to-back for four-five days, I take the next two-three days off because I want that downtime. I need to have my family and friends around because my life revolves around them. I need to feel like a human being. I can't treat myself like a robot because this industry and the atmosphere pushes you to become one. People are always on the go—if you're not at work or a set, you're on digital platforms like Instagram and Twitter or talking somewhere and giving your comments.

Do you think Taimur has an inkling about his special status? Does his celebrity status bother him?

We want to give him a normal childhood. I do not want to grow up covering Taimur's face because that would scar him even more. He does not like being clicked all the time as he is growing up and has become aware of what is happening around him. He even denies us if we want to photograph him. ■





Blouse, Lehenga and Dupatta,
Abhinav Mishra;
Jewellery, Hazoorilal by
Sandeep Narang, GK-1

Hair: Yianni Tsapatori;
Makeup: Kritika Gill;
Creative Direction and Set Direction:
Gopalika Virmani;
Production: MMC World



*“My wedding was Nawabi-style.
My mother-in-law gave me an
heirloom sari that will always be
precious.”*



A Thousand Splendid Stones



Effortlessly blending the opulence of heirloom jewellery with modern-day techniques is Raniwala 1881. ABHISHEK and ABHIYANT RANIWALA lead the brand today.

Text NIVI SHRIVASTAVA



In luxury businesses across the world, the importance of trust and the heritage value a brand carries, is crucial in establishing its reputation among the clientele. In India, jewellers from Rajasthan are traditionally renowned for their impeccable craftsmanship when it comes to identifying and handling precious stones and metals and one can still find a handful of families, from the region, carrying forward the tradition in the luxury jewellery market. A living example of the same is the famous jewellery brand Raniwala 1881, where the legacy of precious metal and stone ornaments continues to grow as current founders and brothers—Abhishek, 39, and Abhiyant, 36, Raniwala—reinvent the grandeur of *Maharanis* for modern brides.

As custodians of traditional jewels for royal kingdoms of Rajasthan, the Raniwala brothers take pride in blending artisanal techniques, finest gemstones and intricate settings to represent the fusion of the old and the new. "Jewellery from Raniwala echoes the imperial history of not just Rajasthan but also the country in a modern way. We continue to use traditional motifs and inspirations from old designs, but the techniques and settings used are contemporary. By keeping the latest trends in mind, we experiment with a pastel colour palette, *navratnas* and an up-to-date approach," mentions Abhishek, who looks

LUXURY

PRINCESS
BY RANIWALA 1881



“Our pieces hold a bit of history of Indian royalty in them with patterns and motifs inspired by regal India. ”

after the designing, manufacturing, marketing, and the finance activities for the brand.

The legacy of Raniwala goes back to 17th century to Beawar city, from the Ajmer district of Rajasthan. Raniwala or “family of the queen” was an honorary name bestowed on the family by the community, in recognition of their knowledge, appreciation and passion for fine jewellery. Rai Bahadur Champalal, patriarch and founder of Raniwala, was a connoisseur of fine gems and stones. “He used to procure finest precious metals and gemstones and make jewellery for his own family,” informs Abhiyanta as he shares the family history. Since then the family members took the legacy ahead and Raniwala 1881 was founded, in its current avatar, in 2006. The brand is a pioneer in handcrafted flat-cut diamond (*polki*) jewellery. “Our pieces hold a bit of history of Indian royalty in them with patterns, motifs, and compositions inspired by regal India,” he further adds. Today the brothers are determined to bring back the legacy of *maharanis* for modern-day brides and make them feel like one on their special day.

Born and raised in Udaipur, Abhishek Raniwala was always fascinated by precious jewels. He completed his early education from Mayo College, Ajmer, and went on to complete his Masters in Communication and Advertising from Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Pune. He sought training in diamonds while working with Choron Diamonds, Moscow, Russia. He returned to Jaipur in 2007 to pursue his passion for jewellery and joined one of the many family businesses started by his great-grandfather and set up Raniwala Jewellers Pvt. Ltd. His interest in the business developed during his formative years spent with his grandfather. He says, “I was exposed to jewellery at a very young age and that’s where the fascination began from. My grandfather taught me everything that I know about jewellery, and I believe I have imbibed his values but with a modern outlook to create heirloom pieces. As I watched him work for long hours in multiple capacities, I developed a knack for the *jadau* craft. I decided to combine our expertise and passion for jewellery to carve a niche in *jadau* jewellery in an ethnic style with contemporary demands.”

Younger brother, Abhiyant Raniwala, manages sales at the brand. He completed his engineering in Computer

Science from Merit International Institute of Technology, Ooty, Tamil Nadu along with an additional Bachelor of Business Administration from The Neotia University, West Bengal. After graduation he pursued a Masters in Business Administration with a specialisation in International Business from the University of Delaware, US. Abhiyant worked for two years in the New York City with Marlabs, Inc., but in 2010, he joined the family business and started looking after their line of jewellery and gemstones.

Presently, the Raniwala brothers have joined forces to recreate the magic of *jadau* jewellery. The brand delves deep into the Indian craft and designs to understand the needs of an Indian bride. Speaking about the designs and inspiration for wedding jewellery, Abhiyant says, “The design philosophy of the brand is inspired by the beauty of Indian heritage. A lot of motifs in our jewellery like paisley, lotus, etc. are inspired by traditional designs from Rajasthan’s art and architecture and the Mughal era. We combine traditional motifs with modern techniques and colour palettes for new-age customers. Our bridal collections include everything from delicate daily wear pieces, *Polki* jewellery to extravagant bridal sets. Some of our latest designs for brides feature beautiful sets consisting of breathtaking *maang tikka*, chandelier earrings, bold big *Polki* bracelets, phenomenal chokers strung with pearls and emeralds making them heirloom pieces.” The range of their pieces start from ₹50,000 and goes higher.

Apart from an existing enviable client list, the team is also focused on attracting the new generation using innovative platforms. Abhiyant highlights their recent collaboration with established runway designers, celebrity endorsements and the other initiatives introduced to popularise the collections among new buyers. He says, “As the digital media is evolving, there is a transformation in design. We foresee a minimalist millennial world approaching and so adaptation on that front is what we are planning to do while spreading our footprints on the global map. As of now, we’re retailing only in India, but we plan to expand soon.”

The brand recently collaborated with designer Manish Malhotra to launch a jewellery collection that shakes off the rigidity of traditional styles and gives brides a fresher,

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PRINCESS
BY RANIWALA 1881



younger look. They also brought in luxury fashion consultant Nisha Jhangiani to create a limited edition of jewels. On the client front, celebrities such as Alia Bhatt, Sonakshi Sinha, Janhvi Kapoor, Katrina Kaif, Madhuri Dixit Nene, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Pooja Hegde and Vaani Kapoor have flaunted their collection.

Situated in Jaipur's plush Civil Lines area, Atelier Raniwala 1881 welcomes guests to walk in and get a glimpse of decadence of Rajasthani ornaments. The brothers further elaborate on some of their best sellers and Abhishek mentions, "Our vision is not just taking the rich legacy ahead, but to bridge the gap between the two eras and to communicate heritage, through our jewellery, to the new generation. In our collection *jadau* technique is being used on gold with different stones like emerald, blue sapphire, ruby, tourmaline, pearls etc. and recently at Raniwala 1881, we have curated a ready-to-wear line with *Polki* using techniques from royal craftsmanship."

The above-mentioned collection derives its inspiration from the iconic 'Art Deco' era and combines bold styles with the traditional Indian motifs such as parrot, fish, star and the crescent moon. Resulting pieces are in true ethno-contemporary style, comprising stylish earrings, necklaces, stackable bracelets, chunky rings, and many more wearable pieces. "The line is designed to suit the needs of a spirited and modern woman, and it is created in 14k gold, flat-cut *Polki* with a gorgeous colour palette of gemstones," says Abhishek.

But for the brand, their most talked-about collection was the "Princess" collection. Handcrafted in 18K gold and set in intricate *jadau* the collection featured chokers, layered neckpieces, chandelier earrings, cocktail rings, and *haath-phools*. For their excellent work and quality, Raniwala 1881 has bagged some outstanding awards and accolades. Some of their latest achievements include getting first and third prize in Jewellers Category at the 12th Jewellery Design Awards (JAS) 2019 and the award for Excellence in Design Colored Gemstones Necklace and the Retail Jewellers Guild Awards 2019.

But besides the brand and the business, Raniwala has its heart set where it counts the most. "We support a cause close to us called the Bal Badhit Vikas Kendra in Kota. It is a pioneer in the field of education and rehabilitation for children with special needs, viz-a-viz, hearing, and visual impairment," reveals the duo before signing off. ■



Shine Meets Elegance

MULTI-LAYERED CHAINS If you are a bride who loves a blend of modernity and tradition, invest in a layered necklace with bespoke chains. Buy one that is accentuated with pearls and relive the classic era of the maharanis.

EARRINGS The trend of long *jhumkas* is popular on the bridal circuit. Invest in stylish big hoops, half *jhumkas*, chandelier earrings or a pair of a beautiful duster earrings that brush your shoulders.

CHOKER NECKLACE A *Polki* choker with sparkling stones and pearls can be worn as that one statement piece with your ensemble for picture-perfect occasions.

MULTI-FINGER RING From cocktail gowns to *lehengas*, sari and even Western wear—it is easily one of the most functional pieces of jewellery. Keep it elegant by not wearing any other piece on your hands or fingers, if you aim to make the ring stand out.

BRACELETS AND BANGLES Indian brides love to flaunt customised bangles and bracelets. With intricate designs and engravings, bangles or bracelets are very versatile in their look and wearability.

LUXURY

slivers of shine

Grandeur of Polki, vitality of diamonds, coyness of the pearls—each accent individual but whole in itself. When put together they create a parlance so powerful it transcends the forces of time, form and colour—jewellery. From opulence of bygone eras, to the preferred spartan constructions of au courant, jewellery has inured itself to any insistence. Yet, it creates an affirmation of its own, even when everything on the panorama is monochromatic.

Photography
HORMIS ANTONY THARAKAN



Jewellery
Goenka India

LUXURY

Jewellery, **Raniwala 1881**



Jewellery, **Jewels of Jaipur**



Jewellery, Jewels of Jaipur



Jewellery, Raniwala 1881



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Jewellery, **Rambhajo's**

Jewellery, **Hazoorilal by Sandeep Narang, GK-1**



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Jewellery, Goenka India



Jewellery, Goenka India



Model: Carolandrea Kevichusa; Hair and Make-up: Pallavi Devika



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Polki make a play in the design repertoire of Kantilal & Bros. Jewellers

All That Glitters...

Modern concepts with traditional themes define the design philosophy at Kantilal & Bros. jewellers. In the hands of JINAY CHOKSI, the brand is set to reinvent the perception towards jewellery.

Text SHRIYA ZAMINDAR

To look at jewellery objectively is a difficult task; some stores promise instant glamour with a hefty price tag, while some give a brand name, but with an equally hefty price tag. Living in aware times, the future of luxury is in creating dialogues with buyers, a defining aspect of Kantilal & Bros. Jewellers. The Surat-based jewellery brand has a loyal clientele built, meticulously, on their motto of retaining these values and rewriting the rules, which have been preserved through four generations now.

Established in 1948 by Kantilal Panachand Choksi, the store was a trusted name in the business. Seventy years later, they still maintain their reputation but have expanded to three stores in the city. The original one is situated in Parle Point, the second in Bhagal, and their newest one will launch soon in Katargam, Surat. In 2016, they received the award for Best Diamond jewellery and Best Jadau Jewellery by National Jewellery Awards.

The family business is now in the trained hands of 29-year-old Jinay, who brings a futuristic and forward-

thinking vision to the mix. He grew up watching his father nurture the business faithfully and gives him credit for the brand's phenomenal growth. Tushar Choksi was the president of the Surat Jewellers Association for 18 years and instrumental in making ground-breaking changes in their family business. Jinay has been handling the business for four years now. He graduated from the Indian Diamond Institute, Surat in 2010, from where he went on to pursue his MBA from SP Jain University in Mumbai. After that, he went abroad to study Gemology in 2013 from the famous Gemological Institute of America in California, USA. With such distinguished education, he has a trained eye in procuring the perfect stones for the artful construction of couture jewellery.

Now fully engrossed in running the business empire, Jinay has worked tirelessly towards changing the brand's standing from a reputed jeweller's store in the city to charting out a path countrywide. He wanted to change the perspective of people towards their products by using new concepts. The brand language was tweaked to include

"Stones are my first love, and I love to experiment with them."

modern designs and materials. They also introduced marketing into the fold with innovative visual campaigns to show their clients a new side of the Kantilal name. At the heart of the business though, the core value of transparency held steady and unchanged.

Design aesthetic, transparency and building lasting relationships with their clients is part of their foundation. Offering a range of contemporary and modern jewellery, they even customised their brick-and-mortar stores according to the customers' wants. While one floor caters to the mass market, the other focusses on a niche one where the price goes from three lakhs up to a crore of rupees. Of course, when talking of a discerning segment, the premium pricing matches the accessories' couture status. Their bridal

collection "Aryahi" is an exploration of Polki and pearls. Opulent chokers caressed with pearls and set in antique gold are some statement pieces that define the collection.

They are known for traditional gold and Polki jewellery, but have also modernised their ideas with the need of the hour. A few years back the brand launched a contemporary collection inspired by birds. It was a medley of Swarovski stones in popping colours juxtaposed with real gemstones like garnets. It was, designed taking into account a modern bride with a versatile wardrobe. "This was a modern collection that we had designed, of course, we do traditional jewellery too, but this was something different, and we got an amazing response to it," explains Jinay.

His approach to designing is bolder and wildly colourful. "Stones are my first love, and I love to experiment with them," he reveals. One of his recent innovations included a distinctive collection featuring Russian emeralds, sapphires and rubies. The chokers and necklaces ranged from two to ten lakhs rupees and were a popular choice for people shopping at their stores and exhibitions.

Today Jinay is focused on eradicating the issue of trust around the true value for money in the jewellery business. "How do you know if you're paying for 22 carat gold and not 18?" he questions. The breakdown of the cost of a luxury item is often veiled, which leaves buyers with just the option of placing their trust in unknown quantities. "We reveal the entire process on the various stages of how a particular piece was designed to the buyer before they place the order," he explains. The care with which customer responses are acknowledged is a mark of a conscientious name. ■





From traditional, contemporary, ethnic to Western, the brand caters to a large audience base

Enchanted Adornments



House of Aynat's jewellery is an ode to the strong spirit of women. TANYA M. SOOD, pushes the boundaries by offering superlative quality, unique designs and a wholesome experience to each of her clients.

Text ANKITA A. TALWAR
Illustration ANOUSHKA SETH

You launched your jewellery brand House of Aynat last year, in 2019. But why a jewellery label? What motivated you to choose this line?

Jewellery for me, is a reflection and projection of one's inner self. It has the ability to enhance not only the outward appearance, but also inner strength and confidence of the wearer. During a particularly trying time in my life when criticism was high and doubts aplenty, I mustered up every ounce of determination and confidence and fought back. House of Aynat was born during this trying period, and the rewards have been very fruitful ever since. The brand was born out of a show of inner strength and it is important to me that my craft represents that. It is the backbone of House of Aynat!

The label name House of Aynat is a mirror image of your name Tanya? What's the story behind the name?

House of Aynat is an extension of me, and my jewellery is reflective of what I believe in and who I am. The mirrored spelling of "Tanya" explains just that—the brand, the art and the ethos of the brand—all carefully constructed to

be a true reflection of me.

The driving philosophy behind House of Aynat is creating jewellery that not only enhances your outward experience, but also your inner strength and self-belief. Jewellery does that for me, and I want to be able to do that for other women. House of Aynat is a means to spread joy, strength and confidence to others around me.

What is the design philosophy behind the label? And your vision as the Founder and Creative Director for the brand?
I love to mix and match. I've never been one for conventional rules, where a certain type of jewellery is meant for certain occasions or to be paired with certain outfits. With my art, I want to break the stereotypical thoughts behind matching and pairing. We mostly use silver with a variety of different finishes like 22k gold, rhodium, platinum etc. depending on the design of the piece. We also work with gold and brass and love to play with the combination of all these metals in a single piece. The pieces are embellished with pearls, American diamonds and coloured stones. The design repertoire of



The collection at House of Aynat includes neckpieces, earrings, rings and more

the brand includes neckpieces, drop earrings, chandelier earrings, statement rings, bracelets, *chandbalas*, *matha patti*, and more. It also has a range of items for men that include kurta buttons, lapel pins and cufflinks.

House of Aynat is an extension of my personality and beliefs. I am a firm believer that there is no one right way to wear a certain piece. That said, there is no ideal woman that my jewellery is moulded for. The jewellery I create falls anywhere and everywhere on the spectrum of traditional to contemporary, ethnic to Western. For me, it is more important to be able to create something for everyone than everything for one particular type of person.

House of Aynat has already had a tremendous journey and it is gratifying to witness the growth and love we receive from our patrons. We had a fantastic launch with Radhika Apte, followed by extremely fulfilling associations with designers Gauri and Nainika, Pankaj Nidhi, Abhinav Mishra, Mahima Mahajan and more. We also inaugurated our first atelier in Golf Links, Delhi, last year. Tapping into international markets and opening more ateliers is definitely on the cards.

Given the burgeoning jewellery market and the increase in the demands of the consumer, what sets you apart from your contemporaries?

House of Aynat for me is a projection of my inner self, an outlet to my creativity and art. That would be the USP of House of Aynat. Each piece is a labour of love and a manifestation of my own personal taste and art. That said, I am running a business. So, from that perspective, I believe that the diversified offering of House of Aynat is what attracts consumers and keeps them loyal. There is something for everyone, every occasion and happy clients have always expressed how House of Aynat has over time become the one stop for all their needs!

“House of Aynat is an extension of my personality. I am a firm believer that there is no one right way to wear a certain piece. ”



How do you keep the brand relevant for the discerning consumer of today?

Our jewellery is an eclectic mix of traditional, contemporary as well as fusion pieces. We've always aimed to cater to different audiences and also offer bespoke customisation services to our discerning patrons. Our main strength is the diversified offering; there is literally something for everyone in our collections! Apart from shopping online on our website, our patrons can also shop through our social media or set up an appointment at our Golf Links studio and atelier in Delhi.



A combination of metals is used together to make stunning designs

Out of your many gorgeous collections—Baroque in Vogue, Timeless, Empowered, Wedding Spells—any piece/collection that is close to your heart?

One of the collections closest to my heart is "Empowered", which celebrates womanhood in all its forms. The collection is for those multitasking, vibrant women who manage both their professional and personal lives efficiently and with finesse. The response we've received for this collection is extremely satisfying and keeps us hopeful for the future. The "Empowered" collection includes elegant pieces in rhodium finish with natural stones and coloured crystals. It has rings, earrings, evil eye bracelets, neckpieces etc.

Any muse or inspiration after whom you fashioned the brand?

I don't think there is a particular person or icon who served as the primary inspiration for the brand. House of Aynat is essentially an ode to today's woman—the person, the mother, the daughter, the wife and the businesswoman. The jewellery is intended for this multifaceted identity of the 21st century woman whom I view as an amalgamation of strength, sensitivity, empathy and much more. She, who doesn't fit into any one particular mould, is my muse and inspiration.

The label has found patrons in celebrities including

Yami Gautam, Soha Ali Khan, Sarah Todd, Neha Bhasin.

Any international or national style icon you would want to see wearing your designs?

I would love to dress Julia Roberts, Monica Belucci and Kylie Jenner. Also, I love Emilia Clarke so that would definitely be a dream too.

We would like to know more about Tanya Mehra Sood, the main driving force behind House of Aynat? What makes her such an excellent jewellery designer and entrepreneur? Did you take any professional training or course in jewellery-making or designing?

Professionally, I have always been in PR and communications until I made the switch and became a full-time jewellery designer. I actually have no formal training in jewellery design. House of Aynat was born out of passion and is built as a labour of love. I've always had an eye for

"I am a mother, a wife and an entrepreneur. And it is my love for each of these roles and innate ability to balance, that keeps me going."



aesthetics and design—interiors, fashion and jewellery. With House of Aynat, I channelled that energy and learnt on the job and continue to do so till date.

I am a mother, a wife and an entrepreneur. And it is my love for each of these roles and innate ability to balance them that keeps me going. I constantly strive to maintain a healthy balance in each of these areas, and yes it is easier said than done! I also love to travel and am a fitness enthusiast. Swimming, singing and deep sea diving are some activities that I enjoy besides being an avid reader and a gourmand.

Tanya drives House of Aynat, who is the person who has Tanya's back?

Everyone needs a support system and I am no different. I am lucky to have a loving and supportive husband Avneesh Sood, who has backed me in this journey and life, every step of the way. He is a source of inspiration and motivation for me and has been instrumental in my journey with House of Aynat.

You come across as someone who is grounded and counts her blessings. What is your way of giving back something to the world?

Our Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives are in line with our brand ethos and philosophy. The activities House of Aynat spearheads or partakes in are women-centric or even girl child-centric. For most of these, I team up with my husband, Avneesh, since it's a cause that is of great importance to both of us. We are an active part of "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" and also, another study programme titled "Buddy for Study". ■



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Gold lace jewellery
is Shachee's forte

GOLD RUSH

Love for jewellery and a never-say-die attitude makes SHACHEE SHAH, founder of Shachee Fine Jewellery, a jeweller par excellence.

Text ANKITA A. TALWAR
Illustration ANOUSHKA SETH

"I decided to move away from traditional techniques and work with tools and machinery. Through trial and error I have mastered them although it took me years."



SHACHEE FINE JEWELLERY includes two lines of work: gold lace jewellery and intricate micromosaic pieces

The piece of jewellery one wears speaks a lot about the person herself, but in case of Shachee Shah's line of jewellery, it not only credits the wearer, but the maker also. In the plethora of diamonds, stones, *polki*, *jadau* and other kinds of popular jewellery lines, Shah's micromosaic and woven lace gold jewellery stands apart in the crowd.

Born and brought up in Mumbai, Shah always had a penchant for design, but due to personal reasons, could not go to study at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, her dream college. Not one to give up easily, she grabbed the next best opportunity that came her way and made the most of it. "I joined the newly introduced course in designing and manufacturing of jewellery at SNDT Women's University, Mumbai," she says. From there, step-by-step, she delved deeper into the line of jewellery designing till she found her fit in the micromosaic and lace work jewellery.

"It didn't come easily to me," she says, "I put years into the study of the techniques of manufacturing jewellery and travelled the world, interacting with design houses to understand their processes. I studied metal smithing from a master in Italy and observed the technique used in Vatican museums to interpret it in my designs," she adds.

Within Shachee's eponymous label are two lines of work: the gold lace jewellery and the micromosaic pieces. The former, inspired by the renowned old-world craft of hand making laces of Venice, requires 18k gold to be melted into threads and wires, which are then woven, by Shachee herself, into intricate lace designs (without any fabric in them) and made into jewellery pieces, accented with diamonds. Shachee does all the weaving and designing herself and only uses the services of other professionals to set the diamonds and stones. "It is a laborious and complicated technique and it can take me months to finish one piece," she adds, "and I fall in love with every piece I design," Shachee says fondly. Each piece reflects her love for fashion, fabrics and embroideries and showcases a part of her personality too. "Since, I manufacture each piece myself and also given its complexity, it's not easy to copy my work," she states emphatically. That also explains why, unlike other designers, she is not wary of putting out her pieces on social media. "No one



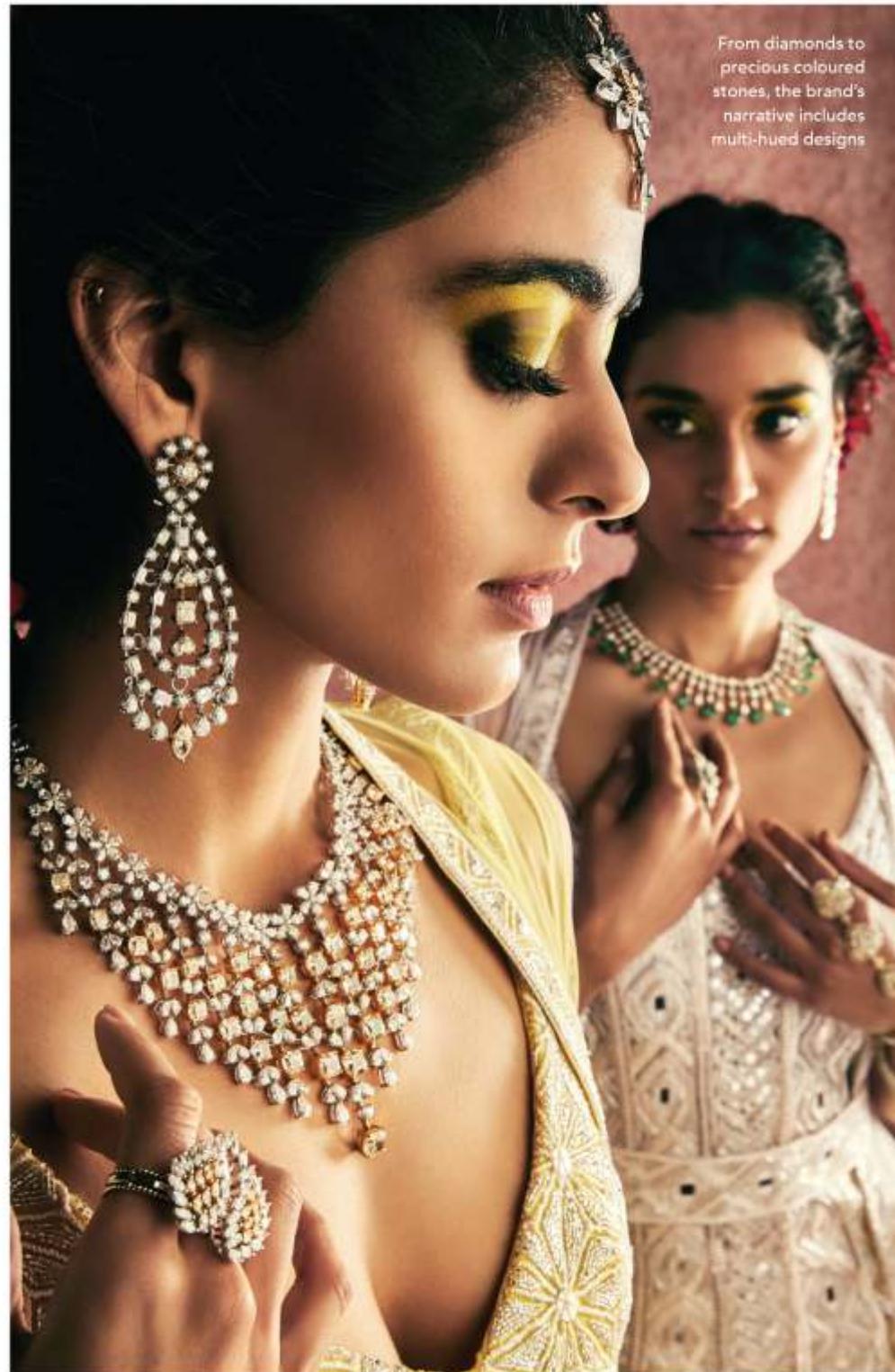
is doing anything like I do. The energy put in creating my pieces cannot be replicated and that's what makes them unique," she explains. Her pieces are priced in the range of ₹65,000 and go upto ₹4,00,000.

Her second series, micromosaic, is as interesting as it sounds. It uses pieces of glass that are melted, by Shachee herself, into strips and woven into complex designs inspired by Vatican museums that are fashioned into jewellery pieces and set with tiny coloured tesserae (glass). "It can take me anything from 6-8 months to a year to make one piece of jewellery. It is an intense art," she emphasises. A result of 15 years of hard work, practice and research put in by Shachee, her collections are fast gaining an enviable reputation.

With most of the industry dominated by men right from *karigars* to businessmen, standing on her own has required a lot from the courageous woman entrepreneur. "I have been making jewellery for almost 20 years now and learnt to use machinery and tools on my own. I decided to move away from traditional techniques and work with tools and machinery. Through trial and error I have mastered them although it took me years of research and practice," she adds. With talent in heart and machine in hands, Shachee today makes mesmerising neckpieces, earrings, bracelets and rings for her clientele. A real high-point for her comes when "jewellers themselves buy her pieces for their personal use," says Shachee, since it reinforces the rarity of her artwork. For the past couple of years, she has also been experimenting with hair clips and brooches and venturing into men's jewellery that include *sherwani* buttons, cuffs and brooches.

For inspiration, Shachee doesn't look too far. "Nature, flowers, birds and the details in the sceneries inspire my designs with peacocks being a favourite leitmotif," she adds. In love with all things related to fashion, fabrics, textures, laces and embroideries, for Shachee the world has enough designs waiting to be sought out and interpreted. ■

LUXURY



SEEMA AGGARWAL'S life can be an example for women who dare to dream, and with sheer grit achieve sparkling victory, as she shatters the proverbial glass ceiling, to emerge as a front runner in the jewellery trade, with Nirakara Jewels.

Text ASMITA AGGARWAL

*Light
on Life*



"We also offer multi-purpose jewellery, so a ring can become a pendant; a haath-phool a bracelet or a choker a bracelet."

N

he epithets "strong", "confident", "forward-thinking" and "path-breaking" seem weak in comparison to what the maverick entrepreneur Seema Aggarwal has overcome to emerge victorious. Born in Hisar, Haryana, to a trader, she studied in Jodhpur only to complete the final leg of her education from the capital's Daulat Ram College, where she took up economics. Never really predicting that crunching numbers will come in handy, one day when she presides over a burgeoning jewellery empire.

Coming events cast their shadows before is an adage that fits almost seamlessly on Seema, who from an early age had a fire in her belly to excel. Whether it was the pursuit of arts, painting, a dance competition in school or making paper jewellery, one of the first outings she had with creativity, she knew she had to be on the top. "My son was in school and I was always interested in doing something that was handmade, so I made a few pieces for fun, and took them for the school mela. They got sold out the first day itself," she remembers. This not only gave her the much needed boost, but also the confidence to attempt silver, which was her next stop, peppered with coloured stones. This too found many buyers and then the ride to the summit came with diamonds, which she began as a small business from home 15 years ago.

Today she boasts of two boutiques, one in Pitampura and the newly opened one in South Extension-1, Delhi. The beauty of Seema's growth lies in her sheer grit and will to succeed, without looking at obstacles. Coming from an orthodox family that didn't allow women to either study, forget work, she is the first generation entrepreneur. She studied the jewellery business on her own, getting enormous support from her husband, who stood like a rock beside her, in rain, hail, sleet and snow, as the saying goes. "In 2007, I started making jewellery from home as a hobby,

but as the line of customers grew steadily, my husband suggested, we move our business outside. Even during my childhood I had this innate desire to be the best in what I do and this passion stayed with me as an adult even though I was just a housewife," she smiles remembering all the opposition she faced from the family when she announced her will to start a business.

It was met with derision and many-a-times she was told "a woman can't run a business", "you will incur losses", "why do you need to do this?" But she never gave up and knew she must only look at the goal and not bumps along the way. "Sometimes clients don't take a woman seriously, if she is at the helm of affairs, especially when they have to invest in a big stone that costs many lakhs. So I would request my husband to come and convince them. Coming from a man, they would feel reassured, unfortunately that is how the Indian system works, on patriarchy," she confesses. Her husband who used to make cello tapes has now joined her business and takes care of the financial aspects, leaving her with just designing, which remains her first love.

Seeing her rise, many women who only dream of owning a business come for advice, and she always tells them to live for themselves and not just for husband and kids, but many don't dare to, as society tries to break their will-power with subtle jibes. "I hope to write a book someday which can serve as a beacon of light to many women, who trample on their wishes to be the 'perfect woman' without understanding that they can be so by carving out a career for themselves," she confides.

The name Nirakara Jewels came for her love for shapes, or maybe the lack of it, like God has no "akaar" or definitive shape, jewellery too can be moulded in any pattern—this formed the edifice of her ideology. What makes Seema



"I had this innate desire to be the best in what I do and this passion stayed with me as an adult as well. "



different from most jewellers is her connection with her clients, and also an astute understanding of what brides aspire to buy to sparkle on their D-day. That's why solitaires is what becomes the game changer, and a single string seems potent enough. "We have brides who come for *haath-phools*, which they can team up with Western gowns, or they will choose to wear just a *maang-tikka* and nothing in the neck," she explains.

Many aspects inspire the design palette, and Seema admits it could be nature in its magnificent glory, flora and fauna to even vintage carpets, the key is intricate forms that accentuate the look of the piece. "Sometimes kids' toys, even furniture and upholstery can give shape to my patterns that will then be converted into jewellery. It can be anything unusual that catches my attention which possesses unique qualities," she adds. Recently the lotus became a metaphor and the nucleus of her line, the fact that it doesn't lose its dignity or blossom despite being in muddy waters, is also a reflection on how we can live in the world which has many shades of grey.

Interestingly, Seema's jewellery offers a wide range for every type of customer, so it is not only the businessman's daughter who she caters to, who prefers heavy traditional *polki* sets, but also doctors and lawyers, who like it light and frothy and maybe different shapes of diamonds from marquise, pear to round and princess cut. All the stones are cut in Jaipur, and she has two factories one in Mumbai and another one in Hong Kong. The micro setting is done in Hong Kong, as they have the latest technology for stone setting, that even laborious hand work can't achieve. As the cost of importing these is exorbitant, many Indian jewellers don't invest in them, as they have computer-based algorithms that have the prowess to cut stones in any shape making each set personalised.

Gold though has lost its sheen, in a volatile market, as

women don't look at jewellery as an investment to be put away in lockers, but as something they can wear every day with pride.

"I tell my two sons, Chaitanya, 24, and Hardik, 22, both of whom studied Gemology, the former in California and latter in Antwerp, as they will inherit my business, that trust and honesty are two virtues that go far. So, sell only hallmarked gold and diamonds must exactly weigh what you tell customers; only then will they keep coming back," she admits. Transparency is the soul of the business and Seema has clients who are not just in India, but also Dubai and England that's why her next stop is a store there soon. "I remember when a client came to me, when I started my business, I would explain the whole piece to them in such detail that my husband would reprimand me and say, 'you are so succinct that sometimes you spill the secrets of designing'," she laughs.

Her latest addition is necklaces that fit like a glove or shall we say carpets, that it takes the shape of the floor you put it on, her jewellery doesn't put any pressure on the collarbone or the neck of the bride, who has to wear it all night long for lengthy ceremonies. "We also offer multi-purpose jewellery, so a ring can become a pendant; a *haath-phool* a bracelet; a choker a bracelet; a choker can be broken into three small sets. The new customer wants to make the best of what they get in a single piece," she adds.

To make sure the bride is comfortable, she has added a bridal room, in her South Extension store, where they come armed with their *lehenga* and she customises the jewellery keeping in mind, the colour and embroidery. "Last few years has seen the rise of coloured stones—emeralds, rubies, pearls, amethyst, tanzanite among others as these add unadulterated charm. But solitaires have emerged as everyone's favourites as their buy back increases with the passage of time," she concludes. ■

Silver Spring

Bridging the gap between expensive and imitation-quality jewellery is ANAND BATHIJA, the third generation entrepreneur at Curio Cottage.

Text: SANYA CHAWLA

Amalgamation of traditional techniques with in-demand designs is the main theme at Curio Cottage

Curio Cottage is synonymous with affordable yet high-quality jewellery. As Anand Bathija claims, "At Curio Cottage, we try and create something for everyone." The third generation entrepreneur joined the family business at a young age of 17. Juggling interacting with clients in the mornings and attending college (Anand did his Bachelor in Commerce from HR

College of Commerce, Mumbai) later in the day, he discovered very early in life what he truly loved doing. His enthusiasm for his work has remained unadulterated all these years. "I frankly love every aspect of the business right from sourcing stones to working with skilled *karigars* and networking with clients," he says.

Recalling early days of the brand, Anand shares the story of how his grandfather started this journey in

1971 in a small store in the touristic hub of Colaba, Mumbai, from where he used to retail silver jewellery, handicrafts and, of course, curios. And now, as the brand looks forward to its 50th year, they are not only the leaders in contemporary designer jewellery, in India, but also define accessory trends.

The ethos of the brand revolves largely around its originality and the unrivalled quality that it has to offer. "You'll find something for every

season, reason, person, destination, and mood," explains Anand. From a delicate minimalist silver ring to an OTT necklace, Curio Cottage specialises in silver jewellery. Integration of traditional heritage techniques with modern design whims define the design strategy of the brand. "We believe the difference is in the details. From high fashion, classic, resort to wedding wear our designs are contemporary but given a twist with Indian sensibilities," adds Anand.

Another fact that makes Curio Cottage stand above its peers is the promptness with which the brand introduces new collections. To adapt to a rapidly changing market they have condensed their design cycle from six to two months. For the brand this translates to about 50 designs every week. "Clients are more demanding now and we love it. Our team loves a challenge and it brings out the best in us," comments Anand. To ensure its customers get nothing-but-the-best experience, Curio Cottage provides a repolishing facility for all its products. The collection is priced in the range of ₹1,000 for smaller pieces to ₹40,000 for bridal necklaces.

For Curio Cottage its clients, chic influencers and celebrities are the inspiration behind their designs. "They deserve the best which motivates us to do more and be more creative," states Anand. Their recent collection "Elements" is curated in collaboration with celebrity stylist Sanjana Batra. "We felt that since she is from the fashion and film industry, her inputs would be spot on and they were," adds Anand. To cater to the very social-media aware clientele, Curio Cottage has also been working closely with the Miss India Pageant.

Anand explains that these contemporary *haslis* are more wearable than the traditional ones and can be paired with something as modern and basic as a white shirt.

Over the years the brand has worked with several celebrities. "Ce-



"I believe in organic and sustainable growth...but in the right manner."

lebrities influence us; what they wear and ask for, gives us an insight into trends," explains Anand. Personalities such as Alia Bhatt, Kareena Kapoor and Shilpa Shetty have worn his jewellery. Additionally, Curio Cottage has also been working closely with the Miss India Pageant.

But for its enthusiastic owner, the brand still has a long way to go. Anand recognises an increasing demand for quality fashion jewellery in the market. With four stores in Mumbai, he would like to expand nationwide but not at the cost of losing its identity. ■



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LIFESTYLE

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KHULLAR | DHRUV GURWARA | ASHISH
& SANJAY MULCHANDANI | NANDEETA
MANCHANDAA | MEGHNA GHODAWAT
| UPASANA JAJOO

Illustration ANUSHKA SETH

Good Karma

KABIR and ANISHA VARMA, from KKarma, want to ensure that each bride has her dream shoes to wear—comfortably!

Text ANKITA A. TALWAR

Everybody knows best where his own shoe pinches', goes the apt proverb, but the entrepreneurial duo at Kkarma—Kabir Varma, Founder, and wife Anisha Varma, Head of Marketing—are set on changing it. For them, no shoe should pinch—ever!

"Brides go through a lot of pain and misery on account of fashion. They stand for long hours, walk, and even dance in shoes that, though gorgeous to look at, can be extremely uncomfortable and painful," rues Anisha. It was this gap in the footwear market—availability of shoes that are good-looking yet comfortable—that the brand noticed and intends on addressing.

Brainchild of Mumbai-based Sunanda Varma (mother, Kabir Varma), the brand goes back to 2014-15. "My mother-in-law started designing and selling these, hand-embroidered, colourful juttis, initially, from home, exhibitions and in family and friends network. They garnered so much appreciation that we formalised it into a brand," explains Varma.

But what's the story behind the intriguing brand name? "As a family we all deeply honour the sanctity of karma. What you do comes back to you. We wanted to create a brand that serves people well—quality, affordability, comfort—and hopefully earn some bonus points for the good karma," says Varma. Not to mention the addition of 'K' for Kabir which makes the brand name more personalised and chic.

Astailored is the brand name, so is the product. "Kkarma is a bespoke footwear brand. We are singular in the sense that we personalise shoes, especially ceremonial wear. We customise to any colour, embroidery, motif, occasion, or style the client wants. Many of our brides share pictures of their bridal lehangas or dresses and we coordinate her shoes with it," adds Varma. With them being around, no longer



Gold and silver figure prominently in the collection at Kkarma

does the bride need to make a choice between comfort and beautiful shoes. Kkarma empathises with this dilemma the bride faces and has taken the stress out of shoe shopping. "Not only designs, our shoes are customised as per the shape of the feet as well. Even though the foot size maybe seven, how broad or narrow the foot is, can make all the difference when it comes to comfort. Imagine, fitting a broad foot into a standard size 7, tapering shoe! It is bound to pinch," explains Varma.

And their favourite customers? The not-so-young moms and grandmoms for whom it is even a bigger challenge to find stylish yet comfortable footwear.

In order to stay relevant, the 29-year-olds, young, enthu-

KABIR AND ANISHA STARTED Kkarma out of love and pride for their mom Sunanda Varma's existing footwear venture.

siastic couple, has moved from just *juttis* to embroidered sneakers and more contemporary footwear. "There is a subtle though definitive shift in perception when it comes to bridal wear and accessories. Women want to now enjoy their wedding ceremonies and not just sit pretty. We get a lot of requests for embroidered sneakers and wedges," she adds. As per her, the new-age pragmatic bride wants shoes in more neutral colours so that she can mix-match and wear on different occasions. That also explains why Kkarma indulges in a lot of gold and silver—celebratory yet not specific. Also, a pastel palette, embroidery on heels, embellishments such pom-poms and feathers are on the anvil, from the brand, for 2020.

The brand repertoire also includes flats, wedges going up to 5 inches, platforms, ballet shoes and more. But mules earn a place of pride. "We take credit for being the pioneers of mules. We believe we launched them and they will always remain close to the brand," says Varma.

But where mules are close to their heart, what endears us to their brand is that their shoes are completely vegan. "We do not work with leather or any animal products at all. We work with other materials such as rexine, fabric, suede but no leather and use only locally-sourced materials," says Anisha. Now, that's definitely going to get the brand some bonus points from karma.

A graduate from Bombay Scottish School, Kabir went on to do his Aeronautical Training from Griffith University, Australia. But the love of shoes and pride in his mom's work prompted him to move specialisations. He worked with his mom for sometime before putting a la touché finale on his craft at Accademia Riaci, Italy, in a shoe designing programme. Joining hands with Anisha, who is an MSc, in



management from University College London, they formed the perfect team—both personally and professionally. And post that there has been no looking back.

What started as a small pursuit is now a full-fledged venture, with plausible plans of growth and progress. Besides footwear, Kkarma also design bags, *pottis*, clutches and other accessories to tie in the entire look of the bride. Kkarma retails from exhibitions, trunk shows and wedding extravaganzas held across the country and has a warehouse showroom in Mumbai.

Cinderella is proof that a pair of shoes can change your life. It definitely did for Kkarma. ■





Mughal Musing

Swarovski king, ANKIT KHULLAR, reinvents old-world royal jewellery and makes it wearable with his brand Purab Paschim.

Text SANYA CHAWLA

Blending old-world charm and modern sensibilities is the key ethos of the brand

Somethings are just meant to be. There is no stopping them. As was Ankit Khullar, meant to be one of the country's most recognised jewellery designers. "Being a graduate from the National Institute of Fashion Technology, Delhi and having worked in close coordination with Swarovski India as wholesalers for Swarovski crystals and pearls for the entire North India, I have had some great opportunities," recounts Ankit. He was selected as an entrant at Asia's

Fashion Jewellery & Accessories fair in Hong Kong in 2008, and, at the Paris Expo Porte de Versailles show in 2009. From here, there was no looking back.

"In 2011, I created an exclusive line for the Weaves of South India show hosted by Swarovski in Chennai," he says. Ankit's designs were well appreciated and he went on to create some more masterpieces. Through a blend of sheer hard work and talent, in 2013, Ankit launched his own brand, Purab Paschim—synonymous with perfectly blending heritage designs

and modern aesthetics to craft unparalleled jewellery pieces.

But how does one retrieve old-world charm and make it contemporary and more beautiful than ever? Purab Paschim has the answer. "Drawing a synergy between the timeless Indian art, rooted in traditional craftsmanship, and blending it with forward thinking uber designs," is the key to this conundrum as per Ankit.

Enthused by the majestic Mughal courts, the brand parades bold and royal-looking designs. The endeavour

is to transport customers to an era of extravagance and let them revel in royalty. With Nur Jahan as the muse for their "Mughal Mystic" collection, the brand binds together legendary elements of the time and reinterprets it for the modern bride. This signature collection, "aims to find within itself an eternal beauty channelled by a muse, an inspirational figure who enchants, with a nod to the past and an eye on the future," adds Ankit.

When asked about his most reputed work, Ankit explains, "Each piece is a work of art, painstakingly crafted by interweaving ethereal Swarovski crystals and pearls creating a perfect balance between contemporary and classic." The pieces are given a plating of gold for that impeccable lustre and patina. The trademark pieces of the brand are its striking hair accessories; whether you are adorning a *passa* or *maang tikka*, most of his ornaments go well with every possible ensemble be it "traditional or a swish cocktail dress" as Khullar puts it. The "Mughal Maharani" hair accessory stands out from the array and is one of Ankit's favourite pieces. This conceptual piece includes two Swarovski laden floral sprays attached to each other with a cluster of pearl strings and a small *borla* in the centre. While the floral sprays decorate the sides of forehead, the *borla* will sit in the centre, highlighting the hairline and accentuating the shape of the forehead. Ankit captions it as a "sure shot statement" piece.

concept studio, in Delhi, is a space where bespoke services are extended to clients, who love jewellery as a creative expression." The brand aims to raise the expectation of a personalised

PURAB PASCHIM'S JOURNEY Over the years, Purab Paschim has successfully fostered a bond with its clients by providing them uncompromised quality and exquisitely-designed jewellery.

For the brand, it is important that the customer connects with the pieces.

experience and make every visit memorable. After being showcased in various fashion weeks in India, the brand now retails from stores in Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad. Upmarket stores such as Ogaan, Evoluzione, Aza and Pernia's Popup Show also exhibits collections. More so, the brand has gained Bollywood attention with many actors, including Alia Bhatt, Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Sonam Kapoor, adorning its jewellery.

In response to evolving markets and changing lifestyles of the Indian bride-to-be, Ankit feels, "Modern brides today have veered off the typical shiny gold jewellery sets and now want versatile pieces that they can pair with their range of haute designer bridal outfits." Thus their bridal collection caters to this niche, dynamic market—their pieces though carry the visage of age-old vintage jewellery are easy-to-wear and lightweight. Future collections comprise "A blend of pink morganites and blue aquamarines, a collection full of whimsical charm that will always feel fresh and be unique," says Ankit. The pieces are priced in the range of ₹15,000–₹ 85,000.

For Ankit each piece of jewellery is an outlet for a creative expression with its own personality. "Over the years, we have successfully fostered a bond with our clients by providing them uncompromised quality and exquisitely detailed products," says Ankit. A job well done, indeed. ■





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I do but I don't

The new-age bride with a mind of her own says 'yes' on her own terms, as she journeys to the altar with a nuanced approach with pieces that will last long after the wedding! Maybe it's time to turn the clock back to classicism.

Text DHRUV GURWARA Illustration ANOUSHKA SETH



From maximalist to being a minimalist, what has become the norm in bridal dressing is functionality giving rise to pockets in lehengas.

There has always been this tug of war between intellect and beauty. It is a question that has been debated for eons. Apparently, the verdict is divided. Even though feminists insist that the former has longevity and we should not take things on "face value".

However, what is certain and can be written in proverbial stone is the rise of a bride, who is ready to make decisions for herself. She is independent in more ways than one—not just financially, but also intellectually.

That's why designers are changing their strategy, relooking at what they offer to a thinking mind. This reflects in the metamorphosis of hues which have seen a move towards subtler, carefree and easy going a bit like the millennial bride. Think champagne, blush and hints of lilac.

The need of the hour is embroideries which are expressive not ornate, shapes which are accommodating and not restrictive and most importantly anaesthetic that is fantastical yet rooted in the fabric of reality.

Zardosi, Dabka, Marori have quietly been replaced by beads, pearls, frills, flounce, ruffles and feathers to give luxury a new meaning even though silk, crepe, organza and tulle are de rigueur. The emergence of lace and the long-standing love affair with florals persists, as autumnal tones darken with falling leaves.

Interestingly, most succinct brides want to reuse their mother's wedding

outfits making minor alterations. Thus vintage has made a pronounced entry in the trousseau rule book without losing the fulcrum which remains individuality. It is time to begin a new chapter on heirlooms and how beautifully they communicate emotions as she embarks on a new journey.

From maximalist to being a minimalist, what has become the norm in bridal dressing is functionality, giving rise to pockets in *lehengas*. All she needs is her cellphone and she can dance the night away, hands-free without being bogged down by "clutching on" to a bag!

Restraint and refined are the two buzzwords for a woman, who values her freedom and wants to tie the knot with a partner, who is more of a fellow traveller. Hints of gold, swaths of sequins and a bit of drama with femi-

ninity are cool now. The catchphrase is 'be a woman' as girly loses steam paving way for sheer layering, a boho gypsy vibe, shimmering necklines and a heady blend of artsy prints. There is finally a robust bridge between tradition and modernity making pragmatism the mainstay even though it isn't the end of the road for romantic sleeves and botanical prints, voluminous skirts as well as puffy one-shoulders. The message is clear—texture and movement.

Capes, T-shirt blouses, button downs, *kurtas*, tunics and even crop tops as well as nifty bomber jackets have created space for unpredictability making the new-age bride an experimental one. Trumpet sleeves, asymmetry, appliqués, and cowl necks are being preferred over sparkle, as complement not compliment have taken over the landscape. The play between fabrics and techniques that ve a feeling of empowerment as she pires to be her authentic self with ends becoming more global.

Lastly, airy is the new right as savvy gets outdated. What's energised pride is her desire to savour the day ith fervour. Light-hearted *lehengas* e now focusing on 3D embellishents, recycled fabrics to go eco-conious, this season expect the unexpected! As American playwright Nora shon rightly exclaimed, "When you alise you want to spend the rest of ur life with somebody, you want e rest of your life to start as soon possible." ■



Marinades & Marriages

Caterers to the A-list party circuit, Studio Kitchen by brothers ASHISH MULCHANDANI and SANJAY MULCHANDANI brings together artisanal concepts, impeccable quality, and all your whims and fancies on one plate.

Text SHRIYA ZAMINDAR Illustration ANOUSHKA SETH



Avocado with paneer masala, drunken mushrooms, white truffles, and beetroot *galouti* kebabs—these delectable and radical delicacies invoke a hunger for the gourmet experience they promise. The dishes are unique and unheard of and have all of Bollywood raving about them. Providing a five-star hotel-like experience in catering, Studio Kitchen has gained access to a sizeable chunk of who's who in the film industry. From catering for Manish Malhotra to Priyanka Chopra Jonas, as the names become more posh, their menus become equally extravagant.

Based in Santacruz Mumbai, Studio Kitchen was set up in 2016, by brothers Ashish Mulchandani, 29, Sanjay Mulchandani, 32, and their cousin Gautam Lalwani, 36. Their family though has worked in the hospitality industry for over 60 years, with two hotels—one in Ahmedabad and the other in Mumbai—are quite humble about their success. Ashish studied at the prestigious Glion Institute of Higher Education, a hospitality management institute situated in Switzerland while Sanjay possesses a Masters in Business Management from the University of Westminster in London, and Gautam has a diploma in hospitality management from Jai Hind College in Mumbai with almost 15 years experience as a hotelier. The three of them have taken charge of production, finance, and communication respectively at Studio Kitchen.

Having already hosted banquet functions at their hotels, they knew the catering business well, but felt a few pieces of the puzzle were missing. Time spent on research proved most fruitful for them. "We were able to gauge the wavelength of the catering segment better after months of research and found a gap in the market for experimental food," says Gautam. They started the company with core focus on providing an innovative menu. "We didn't want to do anything run-of-

the-mill. We wanted to do something unique in terms of food quality, food designing, and food presentation," says Gautam. Word of their culinary expertise spread soon after their first event itself, which helped them amass a constant flow of clients. Today they are catering almost 350 events in a year.

But the highlight of their client list is the first celebrity catering opportunity they had for none other than Priyanka Chopra Jonas. "Of course, you feel nervous because they're big stars, so you're apprehensive how they will react to the food and service. But, trust me, it was as straightforward as doing any other event. They're hassle-free people," claims Ashish. Stars may come with specific dietary needs but Ashish finds it merely a blip in the bigger picture. "If you take the brief seriously and are prepared for it then everything goes smoothly," he says.

Lately, a food trend that people are obsessed with is avocados, which also is a part of their signature dishes. "At one of the recent parties, we introduced avocado paneer masala with truffle oil, served with *azaat arranali* roti, presented in an avocado shell," says Ashish. It could sound discombobulating but their over-booked calendar is a testimony to this. These delicacies can be tailor-made and served to a party of 25 or even 5,000 people.

For weddings and similar functions, they strive to match their tableware with the theme and colour story of the event. There are options for silverware in gold, silver, and even rose-gold, which is a popular choice.

"If you take the brief seriously and are prepared for it then everything goes smoothly."



Cooking for a wedding as compared to a party has one important demarcating factor, which according to Ashish, is the age of the crowd. A wedding is a mixed crowd, so the young ones tend to be the most experimental of the group, while the elders gravitate towards the tried and tested dishes. But the balance lies in combining experimental with the classics. "Amritsari *chhola* and *kulcha* is a live counter that is a wedding staple," reveals Ashish. They also have their own version of it that uses white truffle.

It is a fact that food made with love tastes phenomenal and the trio keeps this spirit alive in their kitchens too. They plan on taking the business across the globe, which is already in the pipeline with one event coming up in Oman, and one in Russia. Their aim for Studio Kitchen is to create memories for the client, bringing together people and creating bonds using food. Constantly pushing the envelope and transgressing boundaries in ever-intriguing ways this band of brothers plans to keep on innovating and exploring new horizons in the catering world. ■



Complexion Perfection

Making you beautiful, responsibly is the intent behind Enn's Closet, says NANDEETA MANCHANDAA

Text NIVI SHRIVASTAVA Illustration ANOUSHKA SETH



t's said that nature has solutions for every human problem, and when it comes to well-being and holistic care, there's nothing better than age-old wisdom that has been passed on from generations. In a world full of chemical-laden skincare products, a one-of-its-kind initiative is Enn's Closet—a brand that aims to repackage nature's benevolence into new-age skincare products that are free from SLS (Sodium Laureth Sulphate), parabens, mineral oils, and petrochemicals. Enn's Closet also promises absolute cruelty-free and guilt-free indulgence.

Founded by Nandeeta Manchandaa in 2017, the skin-friendly brand Enn's Closet was started as a medium to popularise home remedies but powered with modern aesthetics. Speaking about her journey as an entrepreneur and the ups and downs of running the show, Nandeeta mentions, "I graduated in Corporate Finance from the University of Texas, Austin, US. But after losing a close friend to skin cancer, I was determined to actively contribute to eradicating this problem from the country by promoting natural alternatives to chemically-laden products. The brand was created to enhance the lives of people, and although my journey has not been a cakewalk, I refuse to give up the dream. I have been a beauty aficionado for as long as I can remember, and would like to give the credit for this to my grandmother. A home remedy that has been followed

by every individual in my house is that whatever is left on the breakfast table can be applied on the hair or the face. Be it curd, banana, coffee, lemon or wheat flour—we have been following this home remedy for years now." This simplicity and effectiveness of regular off-the-table ingredients is what Nandeeta wanted to bring to her brand.

The skincare brand that, though, has its DNA in modernity, is well amalgamated with age-old wisdom and ensures that each product is curated using methods that meet the highest standards of clarity, authenticity and quality. As a 100% vegetarian brand, the main ingredients are primarily fruit and floral extracts along with infusions of rare essential oils. Speaking about the process of manufacturing and verifying the quality of products, the founder highlights, "All our products are an unadulterated blend, made from an understanding of the science behind beauty, but with a modern and fresher twist to produce an extensive experience. Enn's is also cognizant of providing value and strives to build a relationship with its customers. We aspire to create products that are both effective and ethically sourced. We also maximise resources used, for example, we use distilled water and waste water is recycled and not discarded. Our recycling program also allows our customers to return five boxes in exchange for a free mask."

She adds, "We don't practice animal testing and are 100% cruelty-free. A majority of our ingredients come from sellers who are certified to sell natural ingredients. Fruits, butter, vegetables, flowers that are used in the products are sourced directly from the farmers.

Among the basketful of unique products, some of the best sellers at the Enn's Closet happen to be the "About to Glow" 100 times washed ghee with saffron-infused water. Speaking about this star product, she says, "We have a lot of unique products

The R&D unit and factory are located on the periphery of Delhi. Our teams of formulators create the concoction and keep it for stabilisation for three months. Once it is stabilised, it is tested on various skin types. As they are natural ingredients they can be safely disposed and are not hazardous. The brand is consciously aware of providing value and hopes to build a relationship with its customers at the same time."

Nandeeta also points out the sustainable practices used by the brand to promote their eco-friendly production of skin and hair care products. She mentions, "We're doing our bit to support sustainable practices and reduce our carbon footprint. Seventy percent of our work is done manually and not on machines which saves electricity and increases employment opportunities. We also use recyclable packaging as much as possible. The majority of our products come in glass containers that can be recycled easily. Also for the outer box packaging, we use covers made of biodegradable and recycled paper." For the brand, it's important to give the customers something new and creative, yet something that is ecologically sound.

Enn's Closet aims at creating an identity for itself as a brand with conscience that keeps the customer's well-being at the heart. ■



ENN'S CLOSET DECODED The brand was created to enhance the lives of the people by bringing to them natural alternatives to conventional, chemically-laden beauty products.





Hello Glow

Anti-ageing scarf, anyone? Skin Project by MEGHNA GHODAWAT makes these and much more to give you all-round skincare.

Text NIVI SHRIVASTAVA Illustration ANOUSHKA SETH

Move over "an apple a day..." The modern-day beauty doctor recommends drinking a shot of skin-special ingredients to keep all vanity issues at bay. Wondering what's the hoopla? Take a look at a unique initiative called Skin Project to discover the joys of honest skincare, beauty, and wellness—all blended with innovative and sustainable techniques to protect, replenish, and nourish the skin.

Meghna Ghodawat, Founder & CEO at the Skin Project Private Limited, who is steadfastly promoting the idea of "beauty from within" is working towards revolutionising the current market with her Skilixir shots (anti-ageing, anti-wrinkle supplement drink) and anti-UV fabrics that will deliver long-term benefits. Ghodawat, who received her Masters degree in Advance Management Practice from the University of Bath, England, mentions, her brand was conceptualised and created out of a personal need for skin-healthy nutrition when she was studying in London, UK.

Talking about the story behind the brand, she says, "When I was a 21-year-old student in London, I faced a lot of skin issues such as dryness, and even though I was consulting many skincare specialists, I couldn't find anything helpful. Luckily, I chanced upon collagen shots in Boots and started using them. It did wonders for my skin, and I wanted to bring the technology to India because I had never seen anything like this here."

On delving deeper, Ghodawat discovered the shots were made using an age-old formula that existed in Japan and Taiwan. This cocktail of rejuvenating ingredients was also consumed by ancient queens in a bone broth to boost collagen. It took

her a year to complete her research and reach out to the company that was making these collagen shots. "We finally got a formula patent—the main ingredients of which are N-Acetyl-D-Glucoamine, Hydrolyzed Marine Collagen, L-Glutathione, Vitamins C, D and E. These extracts are derived from silk protein, rare snow mushrooms and marine collagen which keep the skin hydrated." Since, the brand wanted to make it more affordable for the masses, so in India, a box of ten Skilixir shots was made available for ₹4,000. The marine collagen powder, sister of Skilixir, can be consumed every day with your meals or beverages.

Skin is the largest organ of the human body and the main aim of the brand is to take care of it. This skin formula which is available as shots and powder is also endorsed by celebrities and beauty bloggers online. "We work with every aspect of the customer's requirements to offer luxury and get results like never before," says Meghna, adding, "Our products have the finest-grade ingredients sourced from all over the globe. They contain natural antioxidants, and are also non-GMO, which agrees with our environmental-friendly ethos. Our brand believes in fluidity, which makes it suitable for all skin types, genders, colours and ethnicities. Our skin products are made using non-acidic Vitamin C, rosehip extract, acai berry, and acerola cherry—these ingredients keep the skin healthy and prevent ageing. We have an FSSAI (Food Safety and Standard Authority of India) approval for all the products that we manufacture, making them completely safe for anyone to use for holistic skincare."

Whereas, the next big fashion-technology revolution that Skin Project is promoting is the anti-UV scarves, called Tan Ban, and clothing, which are designed to protect



human skin from harmful sun rays. Speaking about this unique fabric, the founder mentions, "We have a Swiss patented fabric technology and we are the first Indian brand to get it for making UV-protective clothing. We use organic fibres derived from bamboo silk and blend them with an effective German UV technology and Vitamin E technology. Our fabric also has anti-microbial qualities that can keep the skin hydrated and safe. We make scarves and kaftans using this technology." The fabric is engineered in a way that it blocks UV rays from penetrating the skin and acts as a natural shield. The clothing is also helpful in pollution and places where extreme sun exposure can lead to several skin issues. The products of the brand are an honest solution for complete skincare.

Apart from the high-end technology and nutritional benefits that Skin Project is trying to promote in India, the company also shoulders



Pyjama Party

Nightwear shouldn't mean comfy but scruffy attires. LA.Q.UNA by UPASANA JAJOO is set on changing how we perceive nightwear.

Text NIVI SHRIVASTAVA

The idea of a peaceful, good night sleep is nothing less than luxury. But while there is not much we can do about the stresses that are depriving us of the much-needed shut-eye, if a small change—comfortable lounge wear for example—can enhance our sleep quality, it is not asking for much, is it?

For Upasana Jajoo, entrepreneur and founder of fashion lounge wear brand LA.Q.UNA, the idea to create luxe nightwear for young women was born out of love for comfortable yet good-looking sleepwear that could also double up as cute outdoors-y garment if needed. After a series of brain-storming sessions and, paradoxically, spending sleepless nights, in February 2018, LA.Q.UNA was launched.

A student of psychology and economics, Jajoo credits her educational background in understanding the psyche of her customer. Speaking about herself, she tells us, "Back in 2005, I went to Switzerland for my schooling. There I met people from all over the world. Similarly, for college, I spent four years at the University of South California, Los Angeles. In this process, I was fortunate to have experienced different cultures. Having picked up on style influences from across the world, I was fascinated by fashion. My exposure to psychology (in college) helped me understand how being uncomfortable in your clothes will never go unnoticed. For me, my mantra for the choice of clothes has been simple: easy on, easy off."

Aspiring to fill the void between upmarket styles and comfort, the idea of the brand was conceived to bring the best of both worlds together. Sharing the story behind the name and the animal logo of a wolf, Upasana mentions, "Finding its origin

in the word 'lacuna', LA.Q.UNA was essentially introduced to fill the gap in the fashion spectrum. To give the name more character, we sought inspiration from the Spanish words 'La' and 'Una', meaning 'The One', while the 'Q' in the name stands for 'quintessential'. Representing what we stand for, the brand logo had to be the majestic wolf. Indomitable, graceful, with a calming presence was exactly what we were going for. We had a persona in mind that reflected our brand perfectly. The name, the logo and the designs merge beautifully together."

Speaking about the brand conceptualisation, Jajoo says, "We've been hearing it since we were kids that sleep is of utmost importance. Unfortunately, as a brand, there's not much we can do in terms of the quantity of sleep. However, when it comes to the quality of sleep, the ball is in our court. As somebody who loves her downtime, I had personally felt the void between style and comfort in the nightwear section. I strongly believe that when it comes to rummaging through our wardrobe looking for something to wear at sleep time, the only thing one should be forced to decide is what outfit they're in the mood for. The dilemma of having to pick between either looking like a dream or feeling like one was something that didn't make sense to me. The brand was conceived as a need

"As a leading nightwear brand, comfort has been a priority for us, but how one looks is equally important. We have shorts sets, pyjama sets, tracksuits, hoodies, rompers, jumpers, and many more. Having created a niche category for ourselves in women's wear, we've recently launched our men's collection. And, after seeing a phenomenal response in the industry, we've also ventured into resort wear and streetwear."

Not just for their customised nightwear and accessories, the brand is also popular among young brides for their fun-meets-fashion bridal loungewear. "As a label that does bespoke ensembles, we found ourselves designing a lot of styles on bridal themes too. Sultry silhouettes, soothing fabrics and a lot of lacework, we discovered a playful side to ourselves in a matter of months. Exciting yet luxurious, our bold bridal styles bring passion into play. Laying a strong foundation, going forward, we're only focusing on the Indian market at the moment. Presently, we've done two bridal collections in the matter of a year," informs Jajoo.

Focusing on providing an unmatched relaxing experience, LA.Q.UNA set forth on its journey with nightwear. Interestingly, within a short period, the popularity of the

women's range led to the expansion of other segments such as accessories, bridesmaid invitation boxes and menswear. Jajoo mentions, "As a leading nightwear brand, comfort has been a priority for us, but how one looks is equally important. We have shorts sets, pyjama sets, tracksuits, hoodies, rompers, jumpers, and many more. Having created a niche category for ourselves in women's wear, we've recently launched our men's collection. And, after seeing a phenomenal response in the industry, we've also ventured into resort wear and streetwear."

Over the past few decades, fashion saw a tremendous change with the rise of fast fashion. However, for those fashionistas, who swear by ethical style, charm of handmade garments will never fade. Speaking about the brand's core philosophy, Upasana says, "Each product is unique in the sense that it is crafted by hand. Laden with fine attention to detail, each outfit is a product of a laborious yet rewarding process."

Manifesting their designs into reality, the brand employs a large team of artisans and tailors from the state of Haryana. "As a brand that began of women, for women, and by women, we're massive advocates of empowerment too. Led by women, the journey has only begun," sums up the feisty founder of LA.Q.UNA. ■

3 Ways to Slay the Airport Look in Lounge Wear

1 GO FOR BOMBER: Light, breathable and sexy! On one hand, the comfy fabric in pretty colours makes them extremely wearable, on the other the deep, useful pockets add to their functionality, ensuring room for your phone and passport.

2 HOOD IS GOOD: Casual, comfortable and classy, the hoodie is a travel essential. Not having to worry about stains and spills, the hoodie has you covered. It offers a comfortable fit with convenient kangaroo pockets and you can keep snug while lounging at the airport.

3 HIP IN ZIPPERS: Invest in tracksuit with zipped pockets, making it convenient to reach for your earphones, phone or the lip balm when on move. An ideal choice for long-haul flights, a tracksuit in 100% cotton is soft and comfortable and looks stylish too. Dark colours will hide any stains.



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LIFESTYLE

Powered by Windows

From Audrey Hepburn, in a black Givenchy, peering wistfully into the windows of Tiffany & Co., Harrods featuring a shattered glass effect on its display windows to mark the centenary of women's voting rights, to WindowsWear an annual award celebrating the best dressed store windows, fashion and windows have been wreathed together inextricably. Despite Instagram shopping being the new decree for shoppers, the warm fuzzies of window shopping will withstand. Here we celebrate the timeless joie de vivre of window shopping.

Photography HORMIS ANTONY THARAKAN



Jewellery, Sunita Shekhawat



Jewellery, Sunita Shekhawat



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Ridhi Mehra (Designer), Meghali Gupta (Shri Ram Hari Ram Jewellers), Vinita Gupta (Shri Ram Hari Ram Jewellers), Harshita Ashok Agarwal (The Right Sided), Gopalika Virmani (Entrepreneur & Influencer), Abhinav Mishra (Designer)



Influencer, Suchana Bera

Time Capsules

'Plant a Tree', a plantation drive organised by TEAM BRIDAL ASIA saw designers and influencers come together and sow seeds for a better future.

Text SANYA CHAWLA

As Swedish climate activist, Greta Thunberg, emphatically stated at the recently-concluded United Nations' Climate Action Summit that it is time people of the current generation start taking positive actions for the future. And given the pace at which we are losing our environment to irreparable damage, the time to take action is now! Continuing in the same spirit, team Bridal Asia held a plantation drive, 'Plant a tree', on 29th September, 2019. The drive was held in a farmhouse on the outskirts of Delhi, in Chhawala village, and had celebrities and socialites come together for the green cause.

Dhruv Gurwara, Chief Marketing Officer, Bridal Asia and Editor-in-Chief at Bridal Asia magazine says, "Every initiative, even a small one can make a huge difference and keeping this in mind, we decided to do our bit, however small, to make the world a healthier, greener place." It is believed that one tree can foster oxygen enough for two human beings and therefore if each one of us planted a tree, the exponential benefits

accruing from it would be huge. "We are glad we could give something back through our humble attempt," Dhruv adds.

The initiative had popular designers such as Abhinav Mishra, Ridhi Mehra, Harshita Ashok Agarwal and social media influencers including Suhana Bera and Gopalika Virmani, amongst others, who came forward enthusiastically for the cause. True to the purpose of being eco-conscious, even the invitations for the event were printed and sent on seed paper. The banners and placards placed in the event were designed on recycled paper to reduce the carbon footprint.

Around 50 saplings of plants and trees of varieties including tulsi and mango were planted since their chances of survival are high. These plants also give greater benefits to the environment than other ornamental trees.

A community table lunch was set out for the guests to keep the event interactive, light-hearted and positive.

The event was promoted on social media with the hashtag #thechangestartswithme to inspire people across the globe. Sharing the credit in making the initiative such a success was Eventually Yours Designs (event decor partner), Ek Bar (hospitality partner), and Thirsty Beer (beverage partner).

It was also the right platform to spread awareness on another one of Bridal Asia's close-to-heart initiative "Kitchen for Paws" where food, medication and other essential items are given to stray dogs.



(L-R) Shaurya Bajaj, Vedansh Kumar, Subahlekhsmi Chandra, Dhruv Gurwara



Designer, Ridhi Mehra



Divya Gurwara (Bridal Asia)



RJ Supriya Kapoor



(L-R) Avinash Chandra Shekhar, Param Dhingra, Karan Anand, Juhli Anand, Dhruv Gurwara



Dhruv Gurwara (Bridal Asia)



Designer, Abhinav Mishra



Vandana Gurwara (Bridal Asia)



Luxury Brand Strategist, Sarthak Raswant



Vandana Gurwara (Bridal Asia)

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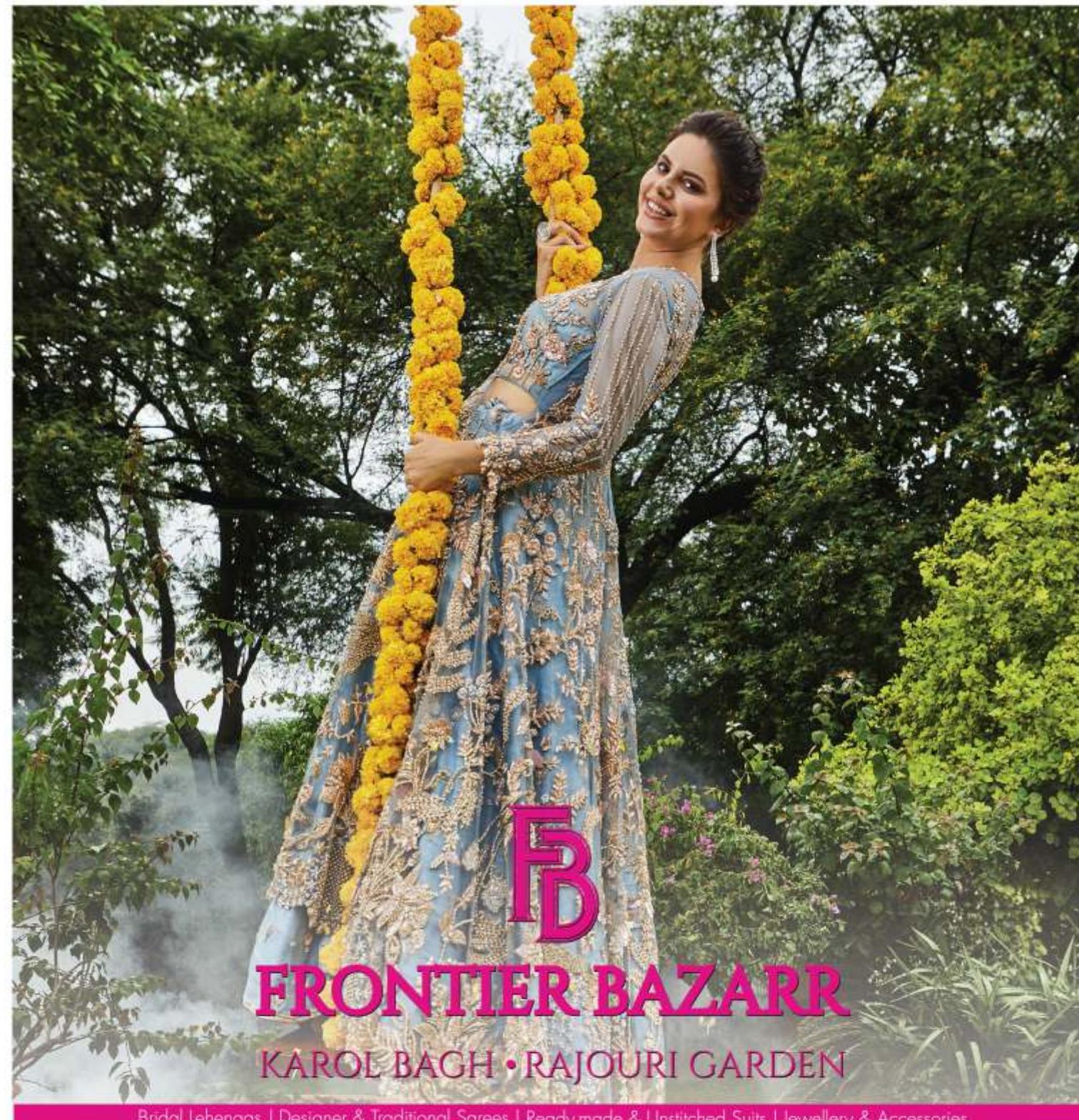
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