2026/Issue-11/Vol 02

STYLE ESSENTIALS

GLOBAL EDITION



Francesco *OF* Vegea

on GrapeSkin and the Future of Bio-Based Materials

STYLE ESSENTIALS

www.styleessentials.in

The Essence of Style Essentials

Every great magazine begins not with pages, but with a pulse, a vision stitched from beauty, meaning, and the desire to elevate what surrounds us.

Style Essentials is not just a magazine. It is a curated journey into luxury, elegance, and soul where fashion isn't fleeting, décor is not decoration, and beauty becomes a language of power and poetry.

Founded under the celestial influence of Scorpio the sign of transformation, depth, and desire, this magazine embodies the mysterious duality of modern humankind: fierce and soft, timeless yet cutting-edge.

Our purpose is simple:
To celebrate the art of living beautifully and consciously.
To tell stories that honour design, decode fashion, and elevate every layer of luxury, from the skin we wear to the spaces we create.

To champion creators, artists, thinkers, and brands who believe in luxury with meaning.
You'll find:

- Fashion that whispers legacy, not just trend
- Beauty that enhances spirit, not just appearance
- Interiors that reflect identity, not just taste
- Books that awaken the mind, not just pass the time

We work quietly, behind the velvet curtain, with voices from every corner of style — from emerging designers to legendary houses.
This magazine is powered by one voice:
A soul who believes luxury is not loud — it's luminous.

Welcome to a new standard.
Welcome to Style Essentials — where style meets soul.

Stay luminous. Stay essential.
With all our love,
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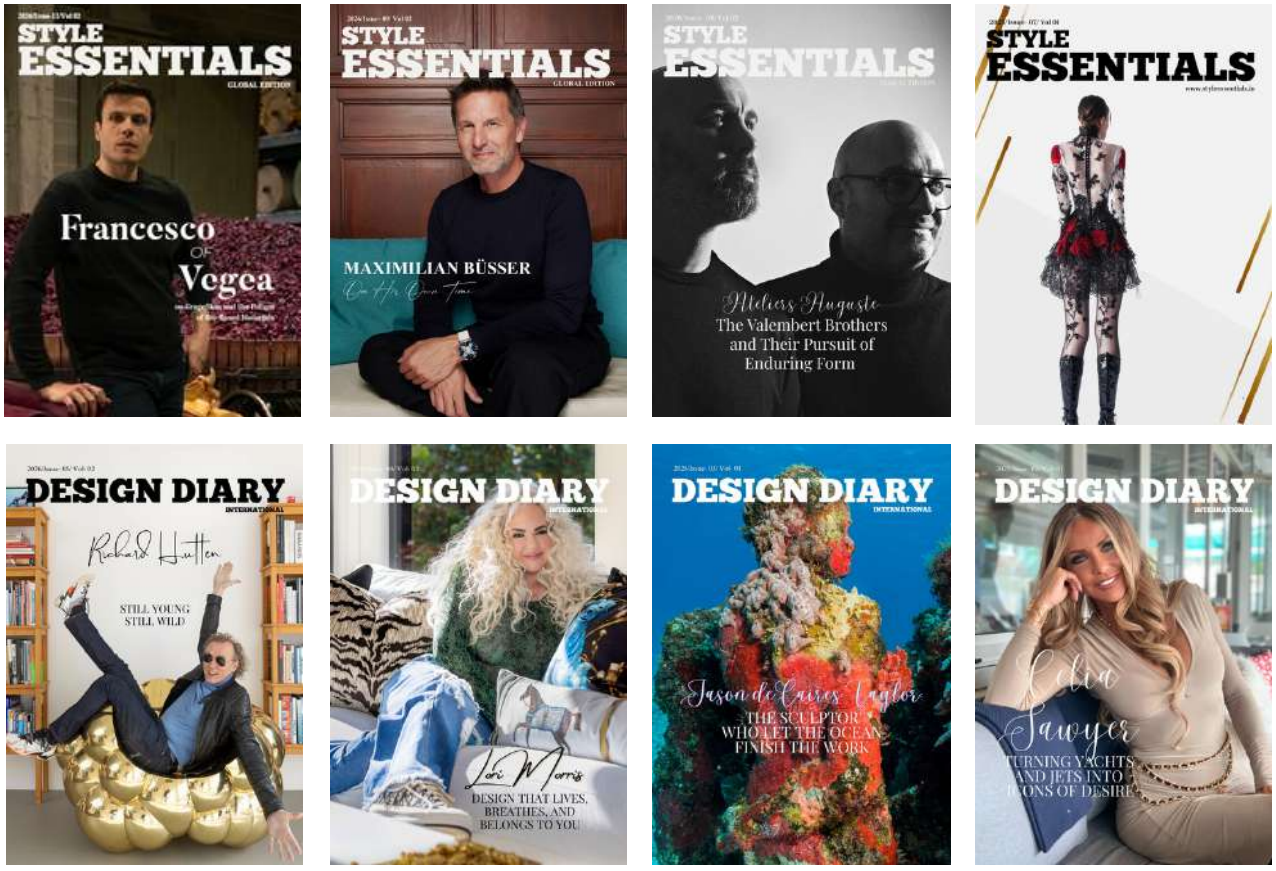
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For those who love staying updated every day, our website brings you fresh stories, brand highlights, and cultural discoveries that keep the conversation alive between issues.

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Editor's Note

There is something I have always enjoyed about speaking to people who build things. Not just what they make, but how they came to make it, what they learnt along the way, and the decisions that rarely find their way into the finished product. A material, a piece of jewelry, a handbag or a business may catch our attention first, but it is often the thinking behind it that stays with me long after the conversation ends.

Francesco's work with Vegea was one such conversation. Growing up in Sicily, surrounded by the wine industry, he was familiar with grape marc long before he began considering what else it might become. His training in chemistry gave him another way of looking at it, and what followed was years of experimentation to turn an agricultural residue into a material that could find its place in design. I particularly appreciated his perspective on sustainability, and his refusal to let a compelling idea substitute for a material that actually works. It is a distinction worth remembering as more designers and manufacturers begin exploring alternatives.

The other conversations in this issue stayed with me for different reasons. Tanisha of Tintessa is approaching beauty through formulation and a better understanding of Indian skin, bringing a scientific background into a category that is as much about personal experience as it is about products. Ashima Gulati's journey from interior design to handbags was equally interesting to me. The shift may appear considerable, but her understanding of textiles, proportion and construction has travelled with her into a completely different discipline. And then there is Chetan Kanani of Alpino, whose account of building a business, losing an entire warehouse to fire and finding the resolve to begin again reminded me how little of entrepreneurship can be understood through the success stories we usually hear.

Beyond these conversations, this issue moves between subjects that have been occupying my attention for some time. The changing language of luxury, the return of color and expression in fashion, the extraordinary workmanship behind jewelry and watches, and the ways in which travel is becoming more personal rather than simply more indulgent. I wanted to look at objects that demand attention, too, including Jacob & Co.'s remarkable Angel Fantasy Bra, where jewelry becomes the garment itself. At the other end of the spectrum, our exploration of circadian health asks something much closer to home: how well do the lives we lead accommodate the rhythms our bodies were designed to follow?

Perhaps that is what I enjoy most about putting an issue together. The subjects may have little in common at first glance, yet each offers a reason to pause, look more closely and understand something beyond what is immediately visible. I hope these pages offer you a few such moments, and that you enjoy reading them as much as I have enjoyed bringing them together.

Alisha.

Editor, Style Essentials


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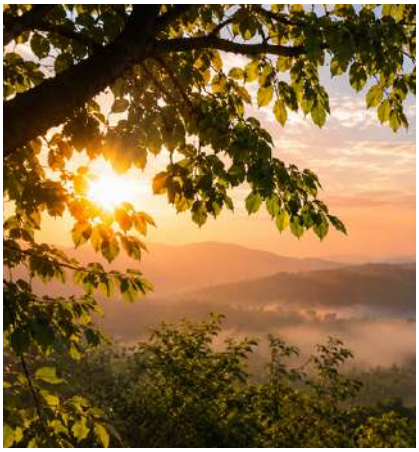
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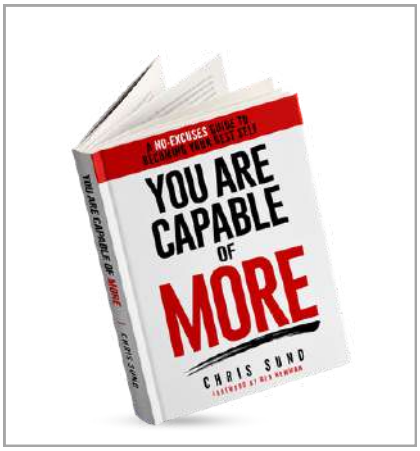
A watch can tell you the time. The best ones also tell you where they were born.



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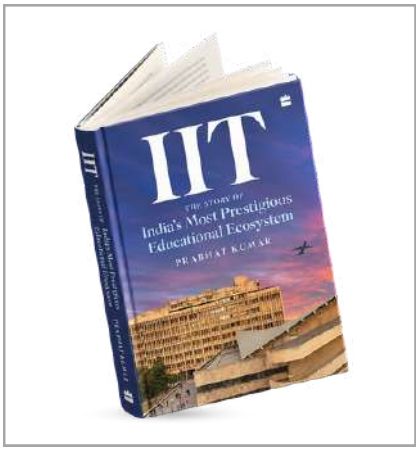
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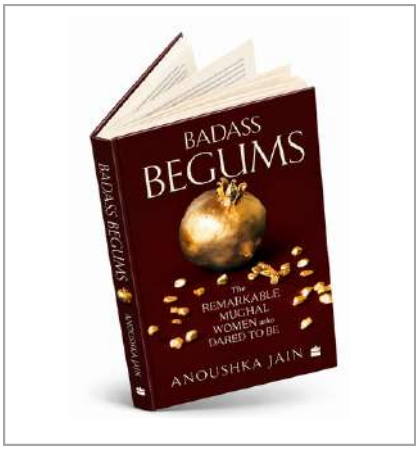
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The MIDAS touch

A Golden State of Luxury





OJ Exclusive | 24K Gold-Plated Bumper iPhone Case
Price: On request
Shop: OJ Exclusive



Bottega Veneta | Knot Gold Minaudière
Price: On request
Shop: Bottega Veneta

Gold leaves the jewellery box and takes over the wardrobe, transforming handbags, shoes, eyewear and everyday essentials into objects of desire.



Versace | Lou Metallic Nappa Mini Bag
Price: ₹1,82,600
Shop: Versace



Gucci | Women's mid-heel sandal with Horsebit
Price: On Request
Shop: Gucci



Jennifer Behr | Eldoria Hairpin
Price: ₹35,300
Shop: Jennifer Behr



Dior | Small Lady D-Joy Bag
Price: ₹4,90,000
Shop: Dior

Louis Vuitton | LV MyWay Slingback Pump
Price: ₹1,31,000
Shop: Louis Vuitton

From liquid-metal finishes to sculptural silhouettes and gleaming details, these covetable accessories bring a little extravagance to the art of dressing.



tanisha

Founder of Tintessa

ON SKIN-FIRST MAKEUP, LIP BUTTER AND FORMULATING FOR INDIAN SKIN

When Tanisha returned to Delhi after completing her master's in biotechnology at the University of Warwick in the UK, she brought back more than a degree. Having spent time in London using makeup products that combined skincare and color, she began looking more closely at what was available in India. The difference she noticed was less about one particular product and more about formulation standards, ingredient transparency and the possibility of creating makeup that was more ingredient-conscious without compromising on pigment, performance or price.

That thinking became part of the foundation for Tintessa, a young beauty brand built around skin-first makeup. The current range is deliberately small, comprising Lip Butter, Mousse Tint and Reset Lip Glass, with the brand taking a more considered approach to product development rather than expanding simply to fill out a conventional beauty catalogue.

Since launching in October 2025, Tintessa has grown from its first month's revenue of ₹75,000 to ₹8 lakh by January, while continuing to develop products around the needs of Indian skin. The brand's approach also places considerable emphasis on formulation, content, customer feedback and knowing when not to launch a product.

Alisha Maindola of Style Essentials spoke to Tanisha about the formulation thinking behind Tintessa, building skin-first makeup, the realities of launching a beauty brand at 24, developing products for Indian skin and knowing when a product is ready to go to market.

You landed back in Delhi from Warwick with a biotech master's and ran out of the skincare-makeup hybrids you'd been using in London. What was the first Indian product you picked up off a shelf that made you think, this wouldn't be legal to sell in the UK?

It actually wasn't one dramatic product where I thought, "This is illegal." It was the difference in formulation standards and ingredient transparency that caught my attention. I'd become so used to checking ingredient lists in the UK that when I came back, I naturally started doing the same here. That's when I realized there was room for makeup in India that was more ingredient-conscious without compromising on pigment, performance or price.

You were auditing formulations against UK and EU restricted-ingredient lists before you'd formulated a single product of your own. Walk me through that first audit. What's one ingredient you found in a mainstream Indian product that genuinely surprised you?

My biotechnology background made me slightly obsessive about ingredient lists. I would literally sit with an INCI list and cross-reference ingredients, their concentrations where available, their function and the restrictions around them.

What surprised me more than any one ingredient was how differently the same category could be formulated across markets. It made me realize I didn't want Tintessa's standard to simply be, "Is this allowed?" I wanted it to be, "Do we actually need this ingredient, and is there a better way to formulate the product?"

Squalane, ceramides and peptides are usually barrier-repair language, not lip product language. What did your formulation team in South Korea tell you was the hardest part of getting those actives to behave in a lip format without going tacky or unstable?

The challenge is that you can't just throw skincare actives into makeup and call it skincare-powered. The entire base has to accommodate them.

With Lip Butter, for example, the balance was getting the conditioning ingredients into a formula that still had the payoff of makeup: glide, pigment, shine and comfort, without making the stick too soft, greasy or unstable. That balance between treatment and performance is probably the hardest part of developing skin-first makeup.



Kojic acid and niacinamide are known to be temperamental with taste and shelf stability in lip products. How many failed batches did the Lip Butter go through before you landed on ₹799 and were ready to sell it?

I actually wouldn't connect the ₹799 price to the number of formulation trials. Pricing came from positioning, formulation, packaging and the overall product experience.

And I'm quite careful with the word "failed". Product development is iterative, and every sample tells you something. We kept adjusting texture, pigment, payoff, stability and the overall sensorial experience until I felt the product was genuinely ready. I'd rather delay a launch than put my name behind a formula I'm only 80% happy with.

You launched on 7 October 2025 with ₹80 lakh of family savings behind you. What's the one line item in that budget you now think you got wrong, in hindsight, whether you overspent or underspent on it?

The biggest thing I underestimated was content and distribution. You can spend months making an incredible product, but if people don't see it being used, understand why it's different or see it repeatedly enough to remember it, none of that development matters.

If I were starting again, I'd allocate more from day one to consistently getting the product into the hands of the right creators and producing a much larger volume of strong, usable content.

Tintessa did ₹75,000 in its first month and ₹8 lakh by January, a roughly tenfold jump in under four months. Was there a single post, review or moment you can point to where you watched the graph actually bend?

There wasn't one magical viral post. The graph moved when Lip Butter, our hero product, started becoming a product people were discovering through other people rather than just through us.



Once customers began posting it organically, coming back for another shade and recommending it, we knew we had something. For me, repeat purchase was actually more exciting than a viral reel because it proved that the product itself was driving the growth.

Your full range is three products: Lip Butter, Mousse Tint and Reset Lip Glass. At what point did you decide to hold the line at three rather than launch wider, and what's the actual internal rule that decides what earns a fourth spot?

Very early. I never wanted Tintessa to become a catalogue brand where we launch something just because every beauty brand is expected to have it.

Our internal rule is simple: if we can't explain in one sentence why our version deserves to exist, we don't launch it. A new product has to either replace multiple steps, improve the ingredient story of an existing category or solve something our customer is repeatedly asking us for. Otherwise, we wait.

You're 24 and running a brand that prices itself against far more established players. What's a decision you made early on that an experienced beauty executive would have told you not to make?

Probably being willing to kill something after we'd already spent money on it. We've developed shades, produced stock and then realized they weren't good enough or weren't translating properly across Indian skin tones. The financially sensible answer would have been to sell through the inventory. My answer was: no.

When you're young, you don't have decades of brand equity protecting you. Every product someone receives is building their entire opinion of your brand.

Every product in your range is built around lips and cheeks. When does a base or skincare product actually enter the Tintessa catalog, and what's stopping you from launching one tomorrow?

When we can genuinely add something to the category. I could launch a foundation tomorrow, put skincare ingredients into it and call it skin-first. But that isn't enough. Base products are incredibly dependent on undertone, oxidation, texture, climate and skin type, especially in India.

So when Tintessa enters complexion, I want the shade development and formulation to be the reason the product exists, not just because foundation was the next obvious SKU on a product roadmap.

If you had to describe the one non-comedogenic, skin-tone-specific gap in Indian makeup that's still wide open after Tintessa, what would you tell the next 24-year-old founder to go build?

I think the opportunity is still in the complexion, but not another 30-shade foundation range for the sake of saying you have 30 shades. Build complexion products around how Indian skin actually behaves: our undertones, pigmentation, heat, humidity, acne-prone skin and the way shades oxidize on us. Make something that understands Indian skin scientifically rather than simply expanding a Western shade chart.

That's the gap I still think is enormous.

KISS & TELL





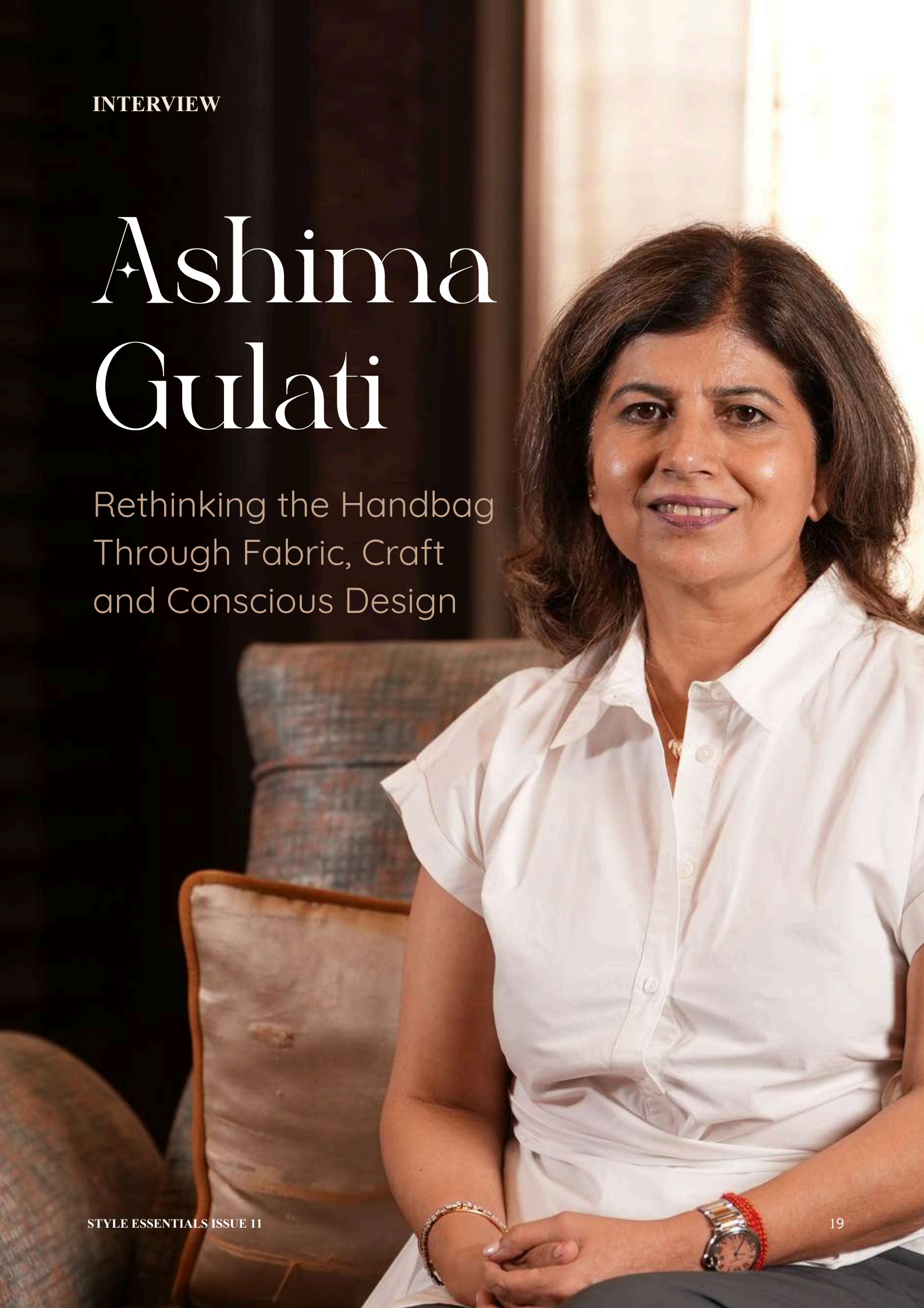


Meet your new lip wardrobe, from everyday hydration and soft tints to high-shine gloss and classic lipstick



Ashima Gulati

Rethinking the Handbag Through Fabric, Craft and Conscious Design





Founded by interior designer Ashima Gulati, Etcetera emerged in 2021, during the pandemic, when a career spanning more than two decades in interior design unexpectedly led her toward handbag design. Working with fabrics, Indian textiles and vegan materials, Gulati questioned the conventional association between luxury handbags and leather. What began as a creative experiment has since developed into a consciously priced accessories brand, made in India with a small team of karigars and a deliberately limited approach to production.

Here, Gulati talks about the origins of Etcetera, the influence of her interior design practice, working with unconventional materials, the realities of sustainable production and her vision for taking the brand beyond India.

You founded Etcetera in 2021, during the pandemic, after more than two decades in interior design. What brought you to that moment, and when did the experiment begin to feel like a brand?

Textures, colors and fabrics have always been an integral part of my journey as an interior designer. Alongside designing interiors, I was also creating and manufacturing soft furnishings for residential and hospitality projects. When the pandemic brought this work to an unexpected halt, my experience with textiles and my passion for bags came together in a surprising new way, inspiring me to explore fabric as a medium for handbag design.

It also made me question the perception that premium handbags must necessarily be made from leather. It was important to me that my bags be cruelty-free, hence no animal leather.

Fashion houses such as Chanel and Carolina Herrera have long incorporated textiles into their collections, while Stella McCartney has demonstrated the possibilities of vegan alternatives within luxury fashion. This encouraged me to question convention and explore how fabrics and vegan materials could be used to create distinctive, elevated accessories.

You started this venture at 57, after an established career in another field. What did that leap feel like, and what did your years in interior design and textiles bring to Etcetera?

There was no single moment when Etcetera suddenly felt like a fully realized brand. It emerged gradually through the process of developing its identity, building the website and eventually making the first sale. Every stage felt both exciting and intimidating, marking a new step in bringing the idea to life.

It was more of a blind play, not knowing what I was getting into. It was a creative experiment that I enjoyed. I was learning new skills in digital marketing and online selling, along with the technicalities of making bags.



Being an interior designer for more than 25 years gave me a sense of color, form, proportions and attention to detail. Fabric behavior and even pattern making were easy since I had been making shop drawings for furniture and detailed construction drawings. I learned the technicalities of making bags and innovated along the way.

The name Etcetera suggests endless possibilities. Why did it feel right for an accessories label, and does that idea still guide the brand?

Etcetera was conceived as an accessories brand, with bags marking the beginning of an ever-evolving journey. The name reflects the role accessories play in styling a look, the et cetera that completes a look while expressing and defining the wearer's personality.

True to this philosophy, the brand's creative vision remains in constant motion, continually exploring new ideas, materials and concepts.

Etcetera is made in-house with a small team of karigars. What does the journey from an initial idea to a finished bag look like in your studio?

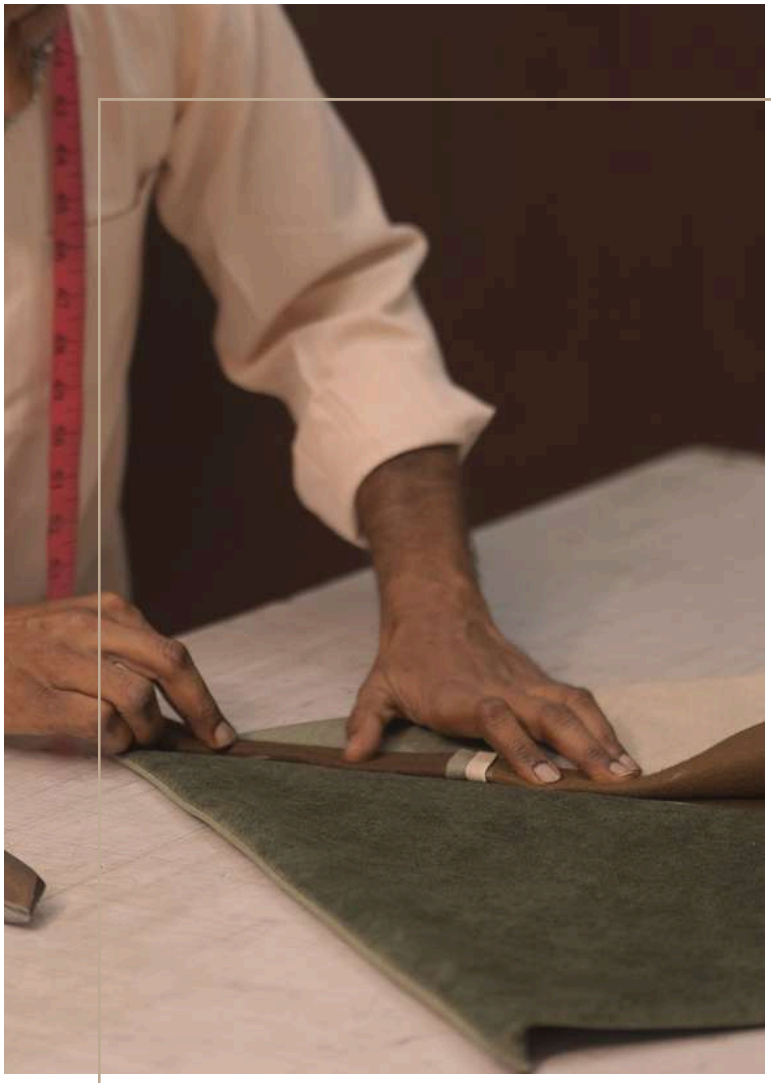


The making of an Etcetera bag begins with an idea, sometimes inspired by a fabric, an occasion or a distinctive form. Pencil scribbles and sketches are made by me, in an old-school style. From there, the concept evolves through countless iterations by the team until the final shape and structure begin to emerge.

If the design features a print or pattern, the team develops several options before refining the artwork and establishing the color palette.

The design then moves into prototyping, with anywhere between two and five versions created to perfect its proportions and construction. Every detail, from the handles and hardware to the fastenings and closures, is carefully considered. Once these elements are resolved, the first sample is produced in the final materials and refined until it meets the brand's standards.

Before going into production, the finished bag is used by the founder or members of the team for seven to ten days. This real-world trial helps assess its comfort, functionality and practicality. Only after completing this final test is the design approved for production.



You work with loom cottons, jute, canvas, denim and velvet. Why was it important to keep the craft Indian and handmade rather than outsource or mass-produce?

For me, the true joy of making bags lies in the creative process itself, watching a material evolve step by step into an entirely new product. That transformation, from an initial idea to a beautifully crafted and functional piece, is what continues to make the journey so exciting.

As the brand grows, we are also looking to strengthen our manufacturing capabilities by bringing in dedicated support teams, allowing us to scale thoughtfully while remaining true to our design and quality standards.

Working with unconventional fabrics brings its own technical challenges. What has been the hardest part of translating textiles into bags that can withstand everyday use?

One of the greatest challenges lies in reinforcing a material sufficiently for it to achieve the intended shape and structure, while remaining mindful of its natural limitations. Every material behaves differently and must be approached on its own terms.

Expecting a fabric bag to perform or hold its form in the same way as leather would be neither realistic nor desirable. The silhouette and construction of each bag are therefore developed in response to the inherent strength, texture and character of the chosen material, allowing it to guide the design rather than forcing it into an unsuitable form.

You made a clear decision to remain leather-free, questioning the idea that leather is the default standard of luxury. What led to that conviction, and how has the response to vegan luxury changed since you began?

Having worked with remarkable fabrics with diverse textures and patterns, I wanted to give people the freedom to explore something different. Questioning “why” and “why not” has always been part of my nature, challenging conventions, experimenting and refusing to follow established norms simply because they are established.

It was equally important to me that the brand be cruelty-free. I never imagined vegan luxury would evolve into such a meaningful movement, and I’m truly happy to see this awareness and conscious approach gaining momentum.

You describe sustainability as a long-drawn process and a constant effort rather than a finished claim. What does conscious design look like behind the scenes at Etcetera?

Sustainability is a continuous and conscious effort for us. While achieving 100 percent sustainability in this industry is challenging, we remain committed to making responsible choices wherever possible.

Nearly 90 percent of our fabric waste is repurposed into alternative designs, while plastic is kept to a minimum and recycled options are used wherever possible. We have also introduced plant-based leather in some of our newly launched wallets and source surplus fabrics directly from weavers whenever possible.

By maintaining limited inventory and replenishing only as required, we minimize overproduction and avoid excess stock.

You describe Etcetera as consciously priced luxury. How do you balance craftsmanship and price without compromising either?



For us, consciously priced luxury is about creating something that feels special without making it expensive. We want our products to have a strong point of view, thoughtful design, good materials, beautiful craftsmanship and, importantly, a reason to exist.

We work closely with our karigars and manufacturing partners, produce in limited quantities and spend time getting the details right. We have a small design and operations team. Personally, I also take on multiple roles as and when needed.

We would rather invest in the things that genuinely matter, such as quality materials, craftsmanship, functionality and finishing, while keeping control of the overheads and excessive production. We also keep our mark-ups low.



The designs are bold and eclectic, with an emphasis on individuality rather than trends. Who is the Etcetera woman, and what do you want her to feel when she carries one of your bags?

The Etcetera woman is a free thinker with a strong sense of individuality. She is curious and experimental with her style, choosing pieces that express who she is rather than simply following trends.



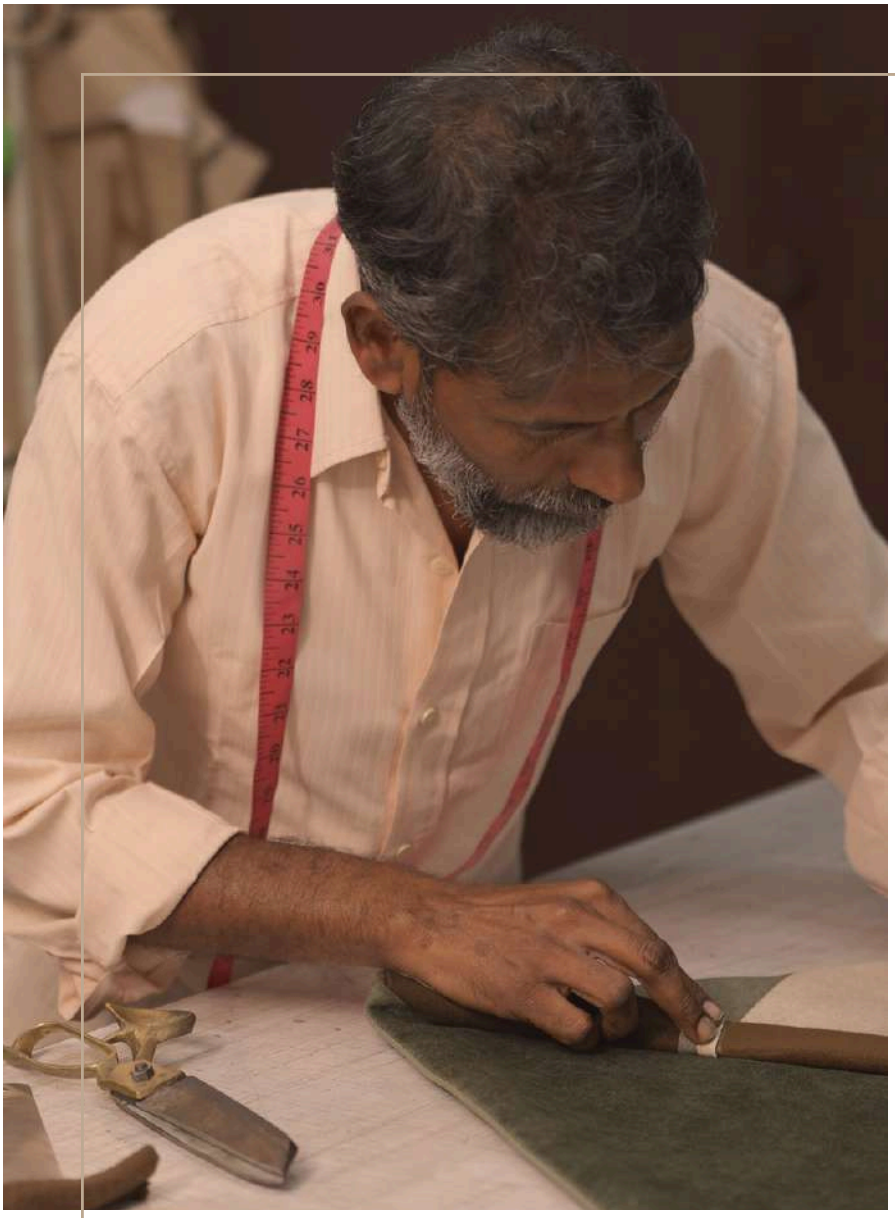
Conscious of her surroundings and respectful of nature, she makes thoughtful choices without compromising on creativity or self-expression. She is young at heart, mature in thought and confident, maybe a trendsetter simply by unapologetically being herself.

What has been the most rewarding moment so far, or is there a piece you are particularly proud of?

I have a few personal favorites that I am particularly proud of, with the Foldable Shoppers and Paris Festive Bags at the top of the list.



Both collections have also been warmly received by our customers and community. While they are equally lightweight and versatile, both have different personalities and serve very different purposes. The Foldable Shoppers are designed for everyday use and travel, whereas the Paris Festive Bags are created for celebrations, festive occasions and evenings out.



Looking ahead, where do you want to take Etcetera in terms of materials, reach and the conversation around Indian sustainable design? What would success look like five years from now?

I want Etcetera to grow thoughtfully, both in what we make and where we are able to reach people. We want to continue experimenting with innovative materials while expanding beyond our current range into fashion accessories and many more styles of bags.

In India, the focus is on building a wider presence through a stronger online offering alongside a more intentional offline presence, allowing more people to experience the products and the craftsmanship behind them.

Internationally, we want to be equally deliberate. Rather than trying to be everywhere, we would like to test a few carefully selected markets through the right strategic partnerships and build from there.

I also hope Etcetera can play a small but meaningful role in changing the conversation around Indian sustainable design, showing that sustainability, good design, functionality and craftsmanship can coexist without compromising on accessibility or aesthetics.

Five years from now, success would mean Etcetera being recognized internationally as an Indian brand with a distinct identity and point of view, while having built a strong community in India. More than scale, I would want that growth to feel intentional, staying true to our materials, our quality and the curiosity and integrity with which we started.

www.bagsetcetera.in

ERTH For Men

BY
BLOSSOM KOCHHAR

A GROOMING EXPERIENCE WORTH CONSIDERING

A good grooming routine does not need to be elaborate to feel rewarding. Sometimes, the difference lies in how comfortably products fit into everyday use and whether they make familiar rituals feel a little more considered. ERTH For Men, developed by Dr. Blossom Kochhar, brings this approach to a range of men's grooming essentials.



The selection received at the Style Essentials PR desk comprised Pre Shave Oil, Shaving Foam, Professional Fitkari Gel and Skin Brightening Face Pack. A male member of our family tried the products across his grooming routine, from shaving preparation and post-shave care to basic skincare.

The Pre Shave Oil and Shaving Foam were easy to incorporate into the shaving process, followed by the Fitkari Gel as part of post-shave care. Our reviewer experienced no irritation after using the products, making comfort a notable aspect of the trial. The Face Pack provided an additional skincare step without requiring a complicated routine. The brand lists white charcoal, vitamin C and turmeric among its ingredients.

The range also makes an impression through its presentation. The packaging feels premium, and the products work together as a coordinated selection rather than a collection assembled without a clear purpose. This gives ERTH For Men potential as a gift for a husband, father, brother or friend, particularly for someone who appreciates practical grooming essentials presented with care.

Our experience was positive, with ease of use, skin comfort and presentation emerging as the strongest points. Individual experiences may differ, but ERTH For Men offers a promising option for those who want to make everyday grooming feel more considered without adding unnecessary complexity.

Reviewed by the Style Essentials Edit Team

Products received at the Style Essentials PR desk through a brand representative.

VEIL of VEDA

GLOSS AND GLOW DUO



A fresh complexion and a hint of color can often do more for an everyday beauty look than multiple layers of makeup. Veil of Veda's Gloss and Glow Duo brings together Glow Drops 2-in-1 Serum Primer and Lip Veil in Hibiscus Blush, offering a simple pairing for skin preparation and glossy, tinted lips.

Glow Drops was the standout of the two. It spreads evenly, leaves the skin feeling smooth and creates a good base for foundation. Its dewy finish also works well on its own for days when a lighter makeup routine feels more appropriate.

Lip Veil in Hibiscus Blush complements the primer with a sheer, warm brown tint and glossy finish. Its balm-like texture makes application easy, while the cocoa fragrance adds a distinctive touch. The shade works for an understated daytime look and can be paired with a brown lip liner for greater definition.

Together, the products offer a straightforward approach to everyday beauty. Glow Drops prepares the complexion, while Lip Veil adds color and shine without making the overall look feel overdone. The duo is particularly suited to those who prefer a fresh, skin-focused finish over elaborate makeup.

Veil of Veda combines Ayurvedic botanicals with modern skincare ingredients. Our assessment, however, rests on the experience of using the products: the primer's smooth application and dewy finish, and the lip balm's texture, tint and fragrance.

For anyone looking to streamline their beauty routine, the Gloss and Glow Duo is a considered pairing of two everyday essentials.

Reviewed by the Shweta

Products received at the Style Essentials PR desk through a brand representative.

CASHMERE *edit*

Fine knits, fluid layers and tactile details that make a case for keeping things simple.



Ralph Lauren



The Cashmere Studio



Kashmina



Gabriela Hearst



Extreme Cashmere



Rise & Fall



QUIET LUXURY IS CHANGING

What Luxury Looks Like in Fashion in 2027



Kasturi Kundal's handwoven sarees explore the richness of Indian textile traditions through detailed weaving, rich colour and considered craftsmanship. The collection brings together textiles such as Banarasi Tanchoi and Kadhua alongside handspun fabrics and contemporary silhouettes, with richly embroidered and woven sarees offering a modern way to wear India's textile heritage. Photo Credit: Kasturi Kundal

Quiet luxury became one of the defining fashion expressions of the past few years, built around clothes that were expensive without appearing determined to prove it. Immaculate tailoring, cashmere, fine wool, soft leather, muted colours and discreet accessories replaced the overt branding that had dominated luxury fashion for much of the previous decade. The appeal was not simply the absence of logos. It was the idea that a woman could build a wardrobe around fabric, cut, proportion and quality and allow those things to carry the value of the clothes. The look suggested confidence without requiring constant recognition, and for a while it offered a welcome alternative to the highly visible status dressing that had become so dominant across luxury fashion.





Its influence was considerable. The aesthetic moved from a relatively specific group of luxury houses into almost every part of the fashion market, changing the way brands photographed collections, styled campaigns and spoke about investment pieces. Neutral tailoring, oversized jackets, relaxed trousers, cashmere knitwear, minimal leather goods and understated footwear became familiar components of a wardrobe that was presented as sophisticated precisely because it appeared uncomplicated. The language of quiet luxury also changed the conversation around buying expensive clothes. Fabric, construction, fit and longevity received more attention, while conspicuous branding became less essential to the perception of value.

The difficulty was that the aesthetic eventually became recognisable enough to form another uniform. Once the same proportions, colours and materials appeared repeatedly across luxury collections and were reproduced by contemporary and high-street brands, the original idea of individuality began to weaken. Understatement had become a visual code in its own right. A wardrobe designed to look as though it did not care about fashion could itself become highly fashionable, complete with its own set of expected pieces and styling rules. Fashion rarely allows a single idea to remain untouched for long, and the first collections of 2027 suggest that designers are beginning to loosen those rules.



Lacoste Spring/Summer 2027 takes the brand's tennis heritage beyond its traditional preppy codes, introducing a looser, more individual approach to dressing. Shown on the clay court at Roland-Garros, the collection combines relaxed tailoring with technical fabrics, garment-dyed cottons and vibrant shades such as cobalt blue, acid yellow and orange, alongside performance-inspired pieces that move easily between sport and everyday wear. Photo Credit: Lacoste

The change is not a rejection of the qualities that made quiet luxury attractive. The strongest luxury collections continue to place enormous importance on fabric, construction and proportion, but they are allowing more room for colour, surface, embellishment, romance, unusual combinations and visible craftsmanship. The wardrobe is becoming less concerned with maintaining a particular image of restraint and more interested in the individual personality of the person wearing it. That is an important distinction because it suggests that quiet luxury is evolving rather than simply disappearing.

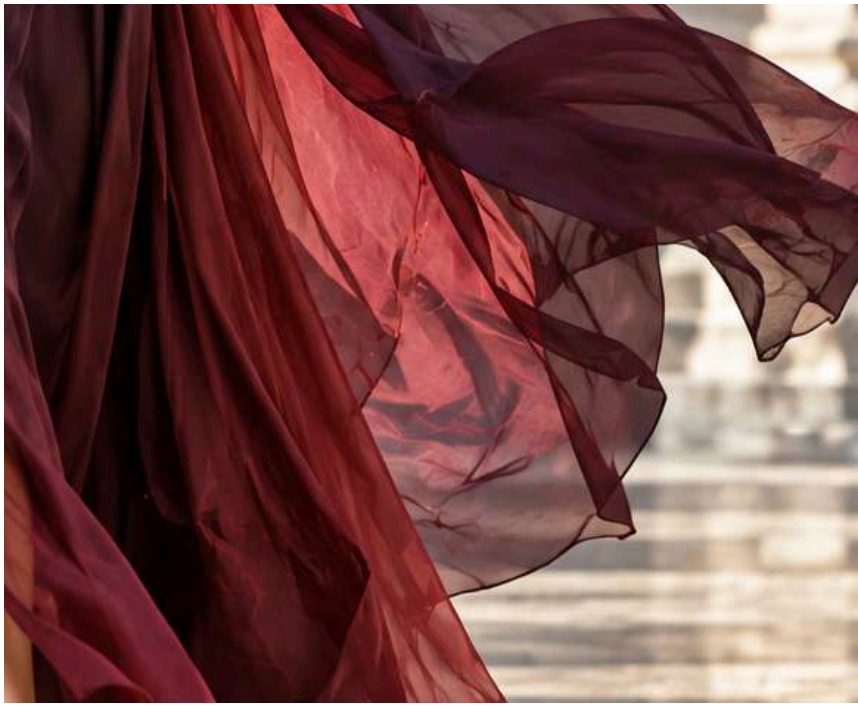
The Row is one of the clearest examples of this development. The house remains associated with precise tailoring, fluid silhouettes and exceptionally considered materials, yet its Spring 2027 collection introduced antique table linens, Victorian lace, tapestry-like ribbons, crochet, beading and details with a distinctly collected quality. The clothes retained the discipline for which the label is known, but the presence of older textiles and handcrafted elements made the collection feel more personal and less like a prescribed uniform. It was an interesting way of developing quiet luxury without abandoning its foundations.

Other designers are approaching the same shift through colour and silhouette. Across the Spring/Summer 2027 collections, stronger colour combinations, more relaxed proportions, sheer fabrics, decorative surfaces and more expressive styling are appearing alongside traditional tailoring. The change is particularly noticeable because it follows several seasons in which minimalism and controlled dressing were so dominant. Fashion is once again giving women permission to be visually interesting without suggesting that they have sacrificed sophistication.

That matters because luxury has never actually depended on minimalism. Some of the most important fashion houses have built their identities around embroidery, intricate eveningwear, jewellery, rich colour, elaborate textiles, distinctive prints and highly recognisable silhouettes. Their clothes have remained valuable because of the quality and expertise behind them, not because they were visually quiet. The current shift is therefore less a revolution than a broadening of the luxury vocabulary.



Craftsmanship is likely to play a particularly important role in that change. During the height of quiet luxury, craftsmanship was often something to be discovered inside a garment. A beautifully constructed shoulder, exceptional lining, precise trouser cut or unusually fine fabric could reward a knowledgeable wearer without being immediately visible to everyone else. As fashion becomes more expressive again, the work involved in making a garment can also become part of its visual identity. Embroidery, hand-finishing, lace, complex fabric treatments, sculptural construction and specialised techniques can be displayed rather than hidden.





This is particularly relevant in an industry where the finished image is increasingly easy to reproduce digitally. A photograph can communicate colour, silhouette and mood almost instantly, but it cannot fully communicate the knowledge required to make a difficult garment. The construction of a sleeve, the development of a textile, the placement of embroidery or the finishing of a complicated edge becomes more meaningful when consumers are looking for evidence of what makes a luxury piece different from an ordinary one. The human work behind the garment becomes part of its story.

There is also a growing appreciation for materials with character. The luxury wardrobe of 2027 is unlikely to be built entirely around perfectly uniform surfaces. Textured fabrics, vintage textiles, unusual weaves, aged leather, intricate lace and fabrics with visible variation can provide the individuality that plain luxury once achieved through simplicity. The attraction is partly tactile. A garment can be understood through the way it feels and moves as much as through the way it photographs.

This interest in materiality is closely connected to the renewed relationship between contemporary fashion and the archive. Vintage fashion has become increasingly important because older garments often contain qualities that are difficult to reproduce immediately. A vintage jacket may have a silhouette that no longer appears in current collections, a fabric produced using an older technique or a degree of construction that reflects a different approach to manufacturing. An antique textile can introduce irregularity and history into a new garment. These elements give fashion something that mass production cannot easily create: a sense that the piece has already lived a life before arriving in the present.



Not So Serious by Pallavi Mohan's Wilted Roses & Champagne looks to the hours after the formalities, bringing sculptural cocktail minis, embellished eveningwear and dramatic gowns into the wedding-season wardrobe. Sheer tulle, liquid satin, feathers, sequins and three-dimensional floral detailing appear across a palette of champagne gold, antique ivory, blush rose, deep berry and moonlit silver, giving the collection its deliberately romantic yet slightly undone character. Photo Credit: Not So Serious by Pallavi Mohan

That does not mean every luxury collection needs to look historical. The most interesting use of archive material is often contemporary precisely because the old and new are allowed to exist together. A modern tailored jacket can be made from an antique textile. A simple dress can carry an elaborate vintage-inspired embroidery. A familiar trouser can be paired with jewellery that belongs to another period entirely. The combination makes the wardrobe feel collected rather than purchased as a complete seasonal proposition.





This idea of collecting may become increasingly important to the meaning of luxury itself. The consumer who buys into a complete aesthetic every season is following a system created by the fashion industry. The consumer who builds a wardrobe over time, mixing new pieces with vintage, bespoke garments, inherited jewellery and clothes bought because they have a particular personal significance is making a different kind of luxury statement. The value lies in the edit.

Personalisation is part of that change. Made-to-measure and bespoke services have always existed at the highest end of fashion, but personalisation is becoming increasingly attractive as consumers become more familiar with the visual codes of luxury. If a particular handbag, coat or shoe has become instantly recognisable online, simply owning it no longer guarantees individuality. Choosing the material, altering the proportion, selecting the lining, commissioning embroidery or developing a piece around a particular wardrobe gives the customer greater ownership over the final result.

For luxury houses, this also creates an opportunity to deepen relationships with customers without constantly reinventing their visual identity. A house with a strong tailoring tradition does not need to abandon tailoring to remain relevant. It can offer more fabric choices, more made-to-measure options, new finishing techniques or different ways of styling the same underlying vocabulary. The product becomes more personal without losing the codes that make the house recognisable.

That is particularly important because the next phase of luxury fashion is unlikely to be defined by one dominant silhouette. The 2027 wardrobe is more varied. Tailoring remains important, but it sits beside fluid dresses, romantic pieces, relaxed sportswear, sheer layers, sculptural shapes and highly embellished eveningwear. There is greater freedom to move between them. The woman who wears an impeccably cut trouser suit can also wear a dramatic floral dress. Someone who prefers understated cashmere can still choose a brightly coloured handbag or a piece of jewellery with considerable presence.



The sophistication lies in the relationship between the pieces.

This is where personal taste becomes more important than the old rules of quiet luxury. The original aesthetic offered a fairly clear answer to the question of what a sophisticated wardrobe should contain. By 2027, fashion is becoming less interested in providing that answer. There is greater room for contradiction, experimentation and individual judgement. A wardrobe can be restrained in one part and expressive in another without appearing confused.

The return of colour is significant in this context. Colour was never absent from luxury fashion, but the quiet-luxury years encouraged a particular preference for shades that were easy to combine and unlikely to dominate an outfit. The renewed interest in saturated colour, unexpected combinations and stronger tonal contrasts changes the visual relationship between the garment and the wearer. A red coat, emerald dress or cobalt accessory does not have to be treated as a statement piece that exists outside a sophisticated wardrobe. It can simply be part of the wardrobe.

The same is true of embellishment. Embroidery, sequins, beads, feathers, lace and three-dimensional details are returning to collections in ways that feel less connected to traditional ideas of occasion dressing. Designers are using them on jackets, skirts, day dresses and separates, allowing craftsmanship to become part of everyday fashion rather than reserving it for eveningwear. This makes the discussion around luxury more interesting because the workmanship becomes visible in pieces that can actually be lived in.

Investment dressing is changing alongside it. For several seasons, the safest luxury purchase was often described as the piece that would never date: the perfect black coat, neutral handbag, tailored jacket or cashmere sweater. Those pieces remain useful, but longevity does not necessarily require neutrality. A beautifully made red coat can become an investment if its wearer continues to love it. An embroidered jacket can remain relevant because it has a strong design rather than because it looks deliberately timeless. A vintage handbag may become more desirable with age precisely because it develops a history.

The idea of longevity is therefore becoming more personal. A garment survives because someone wants to keep wearing it, not simply because it has been labelled a wardrobe essential. Emotional attachment, craftsmanship and individuality can be just as important as versatility.



That may be one of the more valuable legacies of the quiet-luxury period. It encouraged consumers to examine why certain garments were expensive and to look beyond obvious branding. It made fabric, cut, construction and longevity part of everyday conversations about fashion. The next stage does not need to abandon that awareness simply because the clothes are becoming more expressive.

Instead, fashion is taking those lessons into a more varied wardrobe.

For established luxury houses, this creates an interesting balance between heritage and change. The strongest collections are unlikely to abandon the qualities that define a house merely to participate in a new trend. They will reinterpret those qualities through new materials, proportions, techniques and styling. The challenge is to create clothes that feel relevant to the present without making the brand's history irrelevant.

For consumers, the result is a greater degree of freedom. There is no requirement to choose between a minimalist wardrobe and a highly expressive one. Excellent tailoring can sit beside vintage clothing, fine jewellery, embroidered eveningwear and statement accessories. The luxury wardrobe can be built gradually, with pieces acquired for different reasons and brought together through personal taste rather than through a single seasonal aesthetic.

That is perhaps why the phrase quiet luxury itself is beginning to feel less useful. It describes a particular visual moment very well, but fashion is moving into territory where restraint is only one possibility among many. What remains relevant is the attention given to how a garment is made, the quality of its materials, the expertise involved, the originality of its design and the reason someone continues to want it after the season has passed.

Luxury fashion in 2027 is therefore not necessarily quieter or louder. It is more individual. The most compelling clothes are likely to be those that combine excellent materials and construction with enough personality to create an emotional connection with the person wearing them. Some will be almost austere. Others will be romantic, colourful, highly embellished or deliberately unconventional. Their common ground will be the thought and skill invested in making them.

The quiet-luxury era may have begun as a reaction against visible status, but its more lasting influence has been the attention it brought back to the garment itself. As fashion moves forward, that attention can remain while the restrictions fall away. A beautifully made coat no longer needs to be neutral to be considered luxurious, just as an embroidered dress does not need to be restrained to demonstrate taste. The modern luxury wardrobe can accommodate both, provided each piece earns its place through design, material, craftsmanship and the confidence of the person who chooses to wear it.

That is where quiet luxury is heading in 2027: away from a fixed uniform and towards a more individual understanding of what makes fashion valuable. The aesthetic may become less literal, but the desire for clothes that are beautifully made, distinctive and worth keeping is likely to remain. And for fashion, that is a much more interesting place to be.

FEATURE

THE QUIET COST of CONSTANT AVAILABILITY

CONSTANT AVAILABILITY



As professional demands extend into evenings, weekends and holidays, the boundaries between work and personal life are dissolving. What is being lost in the process is not simply leisure, but the quality of our relationships, our attention and the increasingly elusive experience of being truly present.

The office clock may say the working day is over, but for many professionals, the last half hour before leaving is when another meeting begins. A conference call scheduled just before closing time stretches beyond the hour, sometimes continuing well into the commute, with conversations carried through a car, a cab or the back seat of a train. By the time home comes into view, another hour or two of the evening may already have been consumed. The time that could have been spent listening to a favorite podcast, enjoying music on the drive, calling a friend or simply allowing the mind to unwind after a demanding day has instead become an extension of the office. What makes this arrangement particularly difficult to question is that it rarely appears unreasonable in isolation. There is always one more discussion to finish, one message that needs an answer, one matter that cannot apparently wait until morning.

For much of professional life before the widespread use of mobile phones and digital communication, the working day had a more visible conclusion. An office telephone remained at the office, correspondence could wait, and a meeting that ran late was generally understood to have crossed into personal time. The distinction was never perfect, and many professions have always demanded irregular hours, but the possibility of being unreachable was considerably more ordinary. Email, messaging applications and smartphones have since made professional communication immediate, portable and remarkably difficult to contain. A request can arrive during dinner, a holiday or an otherwise quiet Sunday afternoon, and the ease with which it can be sent has gradually altered expectations about how quickly it should be answered. The technology itself offers genuine convenience, allowing people to work across locations and manage responsibilities with greater flexibility; the difficulty emerges when that flexibility becomes an expectation of continuous availability rather than a choice exercised by the individual.

The language of urgency has played its own part in this change. Matters that would once have been discussed the following morning now arrive with the implicit expectation of an immediate response, even when the sender has not explicitly asked for one. A message marked urgent may be followed by another, and the professional who responds promptly can find that the next request arrives just as quickly. Over time, responsiveness begins to acquire a meaning beyond efficiency: it becomes a measure of commitment, reliability and sometimes ambition. Employees may feel obliged to remain attentive to their phones long after their formal responsibilities have ended, not necessarily because a manager has instructed them to do so, but because they have come to understand that being available is part of being valued. The result is a working culture in which the boundary between an exceptional demand and an ordinary expectation becomes increasingly difficult to recognise.

Research into after-hours communication has begun to examine precisely this difficulty. A 2024 study published in Human Resource Management, which recorded 1,494 episodes of after-hours digital work engagement among 498 participants, found that such engagement was associated with reduced psychological detachment from work. Email and chat applications were particularly disruptive to the ability to mentally disengage. The distinction matters because leaving the office is not necessarily the same as leaving work behind. An individual may be physically at home, seated at a dining table or travelling through a familiar neighbourhood, while attention remains occupied by an unresolved conversation, an incoming notification or the anticipation of another request. Even a brief exchange can reopen the working day in the mind, making the hours that follow less restorative than they might otherwise have been. The evening remains technically personal, but its attention has already been divided.



This division becomes especially visible in the domestic sphere, where professional responsibilities meet the less visible work of maintaining a household and relationships. For many women, the end of a paid working day has never necessarily meant the end of work. Preparing meals, remembering school commitments, organising family schedules, attending to children and managing the small decisions that keep a household functioning continue alongside professional obligations. When work communication enters these hours, it does not simply occupy an additional block of time; it competes with responsibilities that are already waiting. A call taken during dinner may be followed by unfinished household tasks, a delayed conversation with a child or the familiar attempt to catch up after everyone else has gone to bed. The burden is not identical in every household, nor is it exclusively a women's experience, but the uneven distribution of domestic labour makes the consequences of constant availability particularly consequential for those who carry a larger share of it.

Children are growing up within a different understanding of attention altogether. Phones have become part of their social lives, their friendships and, increasingly, their sense of belonging, with conversations continuing through messages long after school has ended. The expectation of an immediate reply can extend from professional communication into family and peer relationships, where silence is sometimes interpreted as indifference, exclusion or a sign that something has gone wrong. Social media adds another layer, presenting a continuous stream of conversations, events, achievements and experiences against which ordinary life can begin to feel incomplete. The fear of missing out, commonly described as FOMO, is not simply about wanting to attend an event or know what friends are doing; it can also be the unease of being absent from a conversation, unaware of a development or temporarily outside the flow of social information. In this environment, being connected becomes less a practical convenience and more a condition of participation.

The consequences are not always dramatic enough to announce themselves as a problem. They appear instead in small interruptions: a glance at the phone while someone is speaking, a conversation paused to answer a message, a family outing accompanied by the quiet awareness that a professional response may be waiting. People can spend an evening together without giving one another their full attention, just as they can travel somewhere beautiful and remain mentally preoccupied with what is happening elsewhere. The issue is not that every notification is harmful or that digital communication should be abandoned, but that repeated interruptions alter the texture of ordinary experiences. Relationships depend on attention in ways that are difficult to measure, and the quality of a conversation often rests less on the amount of time spent together than on whether that time has been genuinely shared.

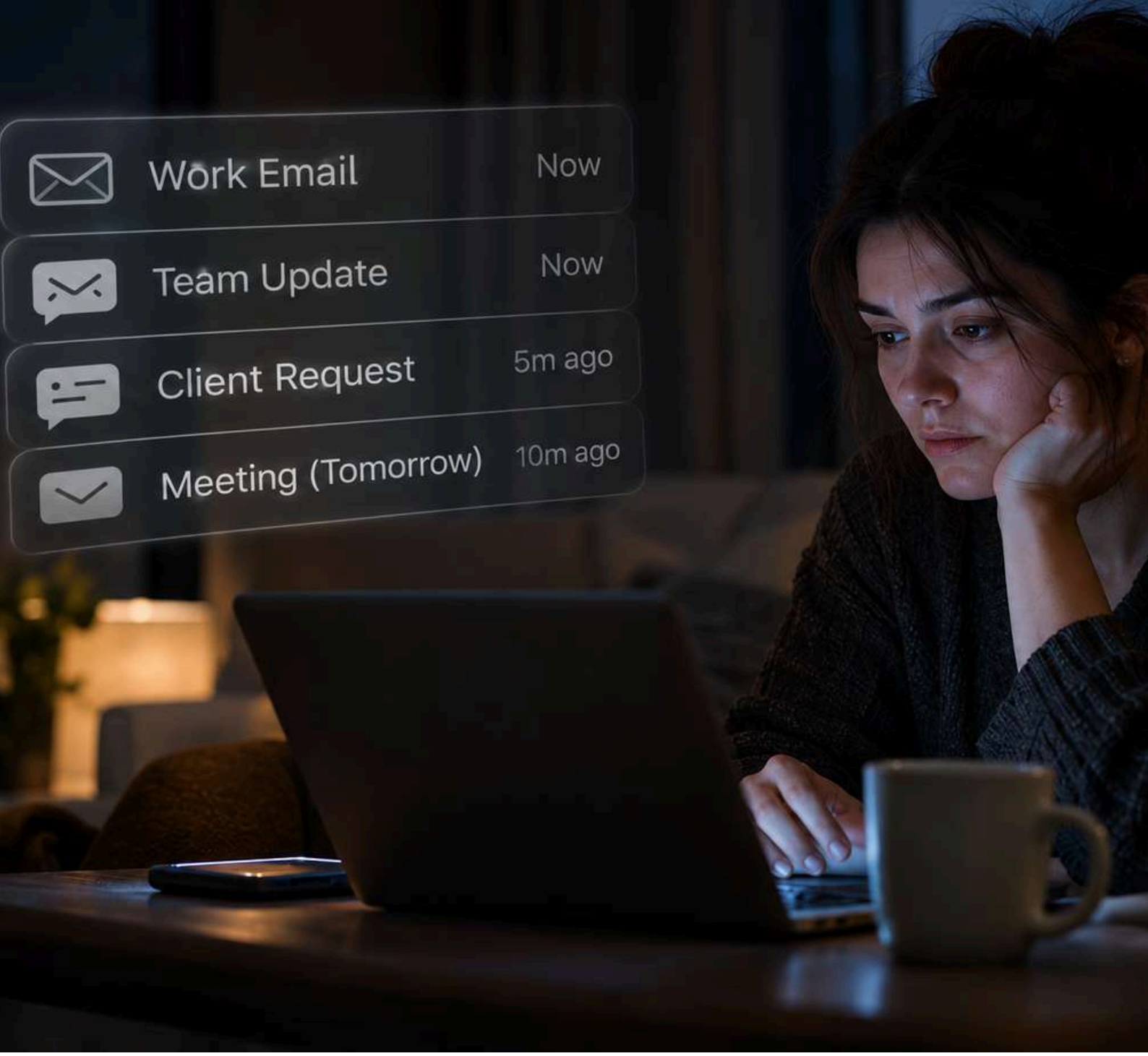
This is where the question of constant availability moves beyond the workplace and becomes a question of lifestyle. Luxury has traditionally been associated with the finest materials, exceptional craftsmanship, private spaces, beautiful destinations and experiences that are difficult to access. Yet the value of many of these things rests, ultimately, on the time and attention available to enjoy them. A carefully designed home can offer comfort and privacy, but those qualities are diminished when every room becomes an extension of the office. A long weekend at a secluded retreat may provide a change of scenery without providing a change in mental pace. An elegant dinner, an afternoon spent with friends or a holiday planned months in advance can lose some of its meaning when professional obligations remain present at the table, in the car or beside the bed. The experience itself may be extraordinary; the attention brought to it may not be.

There is a particular irony in the way contemporary life celebrates experiences while making it increasingly difficult to inhabit them fully. Travel is documented almost as soon as it begins, meals are photographed, evenings are shared online and personal milestones become occasions for communication with an ever-widening audience.

None of these activities is inherently at odds with enjoyment, but the impulse to record, respond and remain informed can sometimes displace the experience it was meant to preserve. A moment spent watching the sea, listening to music or sitting quietly with a book does not necessarily need to produce anything, reach anyone or become part of a larger conversation. Its value may lie precisely in being allowed to remain private, unhurried and unremarkable.

The difficulty, of course, is that reclaiming such time cannot be reduced to an individual's decision to put a phone away. Professional expectations are shaped by organisations, colleagues, clients and the habits that become established within teams. When a workplace treats evening responses as routine, one employee's decision to remain offline may feel less like a personal boundary and more like a professional risk. The same applies to social relationships in which constant communication has become the accepted norm. A meaningful distinction between availability and obligation requires some collective understanding of what can reasonably wait, what genuinely demands immediate attention and whether people are entitled to periods in which they are not expected to respond. Without that understanding, the responsibility for managing an always-connected culture falls largely upon the individuals already struggling to make room for themselves.

Perhaps the most valuable thing to recover is not a particular number of hours away from a screen, but the ability to experience time without anticipating its interruption. It is the unhurried drive home, the conversation that reaches its natural conclusion, the evening that does not require a second shift of professional attention, or the holiday in which the destination is allowed to occupy the mind more completely than the inbox. These are ordinary experiences, yet they increasingly require a degree of protection. In a culture that places considerable value on speed, responsiveness and access, being unavailable for a while can begin to feel almost indulgent.

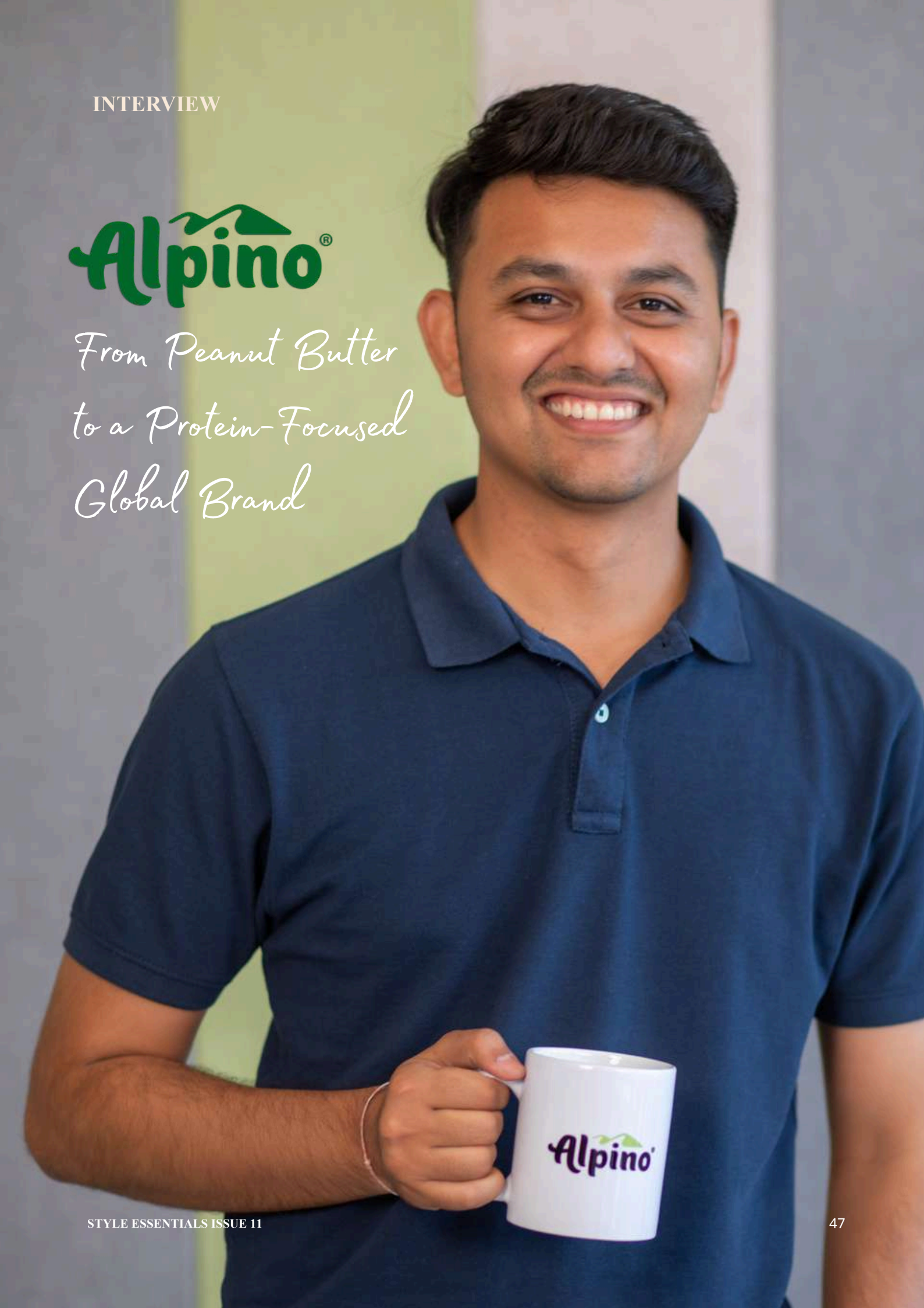


The quiet cost of constant availability is therefore not confined to fatigue or the hours that disappear from a calendar. It is also measured in the quality of the time that remains, in the conversations only half heard, the relationships attended to in fragments and the experiences that never quite become memorable because attention was elsewhere. We have become exceptionally good at reaching one another at any hour, but the ability to reach someone is not the same as having their attention, and the ability to respond immediately does not necessarily make a life more meaningful.

There may be a more considered idea of modern luxury in allowing certain hours to remain untouched by professional demands, social expectations and the persistent invitation to engage. Not because the world has stopped asking for our attention, but because our lives should contain moments in which we are free to give it elsewhere.

Alpino®

From Peanut Butter to a Protein-Focused Global Brand



What began in 2016 with six automobile engineering classmates, limited capital and an idea around peanut butter has grown into Alpino Health Foods, a brand that has expanded its portfolio into protein products, oats and other nutrition-focused foods. The journey has included an early export-led ambition, a pivot toward the Indian market, a first order worth ₹800, the disruption of the pandemic, an appearance on Shark Tank India, a warehouse fire in 2023 and the subsequent rebuilding of the business as Alpino 2.0.

Today, the company is expanding internationally while developing a wider portfolio around peanuts and protein. ***Shweta of Style Essentials spoke to Chetan Kanani, co-founder and CEO of Alpino Health Foods, about the company's beginnings, the lessons of scaling and rebuilding after the warehouse fire, the thinking behind its product development, the importance of taste in health foods and where Alpino goes from here.***



You began with five other automobile engineering classmates, very little FMCG experience and limited capital. What happened in those early conversations that made you believe the idea could work?

Honestly, at that time none of us knew whether it would work. We were six automobile engineering classmates, around 21 years old, with no FMCG experience, no business background and very limited capital.

What we did have was the confidence that if we could identify a genuine opportunity and learn faster than everyone else, we could build something.

Our first idea came from peanuts. We are all from Saurashtra, Gujarat, which is one of India's biggest peanut-growing regions. We could see that India was producing excellent-quality peanuts, but a lot of the value-added products were being built outside India.

Initially, our thought was very simple: why can't we make peanut butter here and export it abroad?

We started with around ₹5 lakh, one product and probably more confidence than knowledge, and we found a gap in the Indian market to build a homegrown brand. Looking back, not knowing too much actually helped us. Had we known how difficult building an FMCG company was going to be, perhaps we would have overthought it.

You initially built Estrella Overseas around an export-focused model before turning your attention to India. What made you see a larger opportunity in the Indian market?

Our original thinking was export-led. India grows some of the world's best peanuts, and we saw an opportunity to convert that raw material into value-added products such as peanut butter and take them to international markets.

But when we started studying India more closely, we found an even bigger opportunity at home. In 2016, peanut butter was still a very small category in India. There wasn't a strong Indian brand really owning the category, and consumer awareness itself was limited.

That looked risky, but it also meant that if we could educate consumers and build the category, we could create something much bigger. So instead of simply exporting a product, we decided to build a brand in India. That decision eventually became Alpino.



Your first order was worth just ₹800. What do you remember about that moment, and what did it tell you about the business you were trying to build?

The amount sounds very small today, but at that stage ₹800 meant much more than ₹800. It was validation.

A skincare doctor from Surat, who didn't know us personally, had seen our product, trusted it enough to pay for it and wanted to consume what we had created. For six young founders who had never built a business before, that feeling was incredible.

Early entrepreneurship is full of very small wins that feel enormous. Your first order, first repeat customer, first retailer who agrees to stock you, each one gives you the confidence to keep going. That first phase taught us not to underestimate small beginnings.

By 2019, you had built your first warehouse to keep up with demand. What surprised you most about scaling in those early years?

The biggest surprise was that growth creates a completely different set of problems. Initially, your only concern is, “How do we sell more?” Once sales start growing, suddenly you're thinking about inventory, warehousing, working capital, production planning, hiring, returns, logistics and customer service, all at the same time.

We were learning everything while doing it. Going from a few cartons to managing a warehouse sounds like a natural progression today, but for us it was a major transition. It made us realize that building a brand is only one side of the business; building the systems behind that brand is equally important.

The pandemic became a major test for the company, while health, fitness and nutrition were also becoming much more prominent in everyday conversation. How did that period change the way you built a relationship with your customers?

COVID was probably our first major survival test. For almost two months, operations were heavily disrupted. All six founders took 100 percent pay cuts because our priority was to protect the company and our team.

But something interesting also happened. Health, immunity, fitness and nutrition suddenly became everyday conversations. We started working much more closely with athletes, fitness creators and communities rather than communicating like a traditional FMCG company.



That taught us a very important lesson: people don't build relationships with advertisements; they build relationships with people, ideas and communities they trust. Many of the creator and athlete relationships we developed became long-term associations. Even today, community-led marketing remains an important part of Alpino.

Your appearance on the first season of Shark Tank India brought considerable visibility to Alpino. What changed inside the company once that response arrived?

Not at all! We had been watching Shark Tank USA since our college days, so appearing on the first season in India itself felt surreal. But we were completely unprepared for the scale of the response.

When our episode aired, more than 25,000 people were live on our website, and we saw over 17,000 active carts. Suddenly, millions of people knew the founders, knew Alpino and knew our story.

We were also offered an all-shark deal, which we eventually chose not to accept because we couldn't agree on the valuation. At the time, it was a difficult decision, but it became an important part of our journey.

Internally, Shark Tank forced us to think bigger. We were no longer just selling peanut butter online; we had suddenly become a nationally recognized consumer brand, and our systems, supply chain and organization had to catch up with that visibility. Even today, people meet us and say, “We remember you from Shark Tank.” That kind of recall is difficult to put a value on.

The warehouse fire in February 2023 destroyed almost your entire inventory. What do you remember about those first few days, and how did the six of you respond?

Those were probably the hardest days of our entrepreneurial journey. The fire happened on February 16, 2023, during working hours and destroyed almost our entire warehouse: more than one lakh units, along with packaging material and inventory worth over ₹2 crore.

Thankfully, nobody was injured. That will always remain the most important thing.

But once the fire was controlled and we saw what was left, it was devastating. We were bootstrapped for most of our journey, so it felt like years of our work had disappeared in a few hours. Operations stopped. Products started going out of stock across online platforms and offline stores, and sales dropped by almost 90 percent.



For a brief period, you naturally start questioning everything. Then the six of us sat together and said something very simple: “We built Alpino from zero once. Why can't we build it again?”

That changed our mindset from mourning what we had lost to thinking about what we could rebuild.

The rebuilding eventually became Alpino 2.0. What did you decide to change rather than simply recreate what had existed before?

The most important decision was that we didn't try to rebuild the old Alpino exactly as it was. We treated the fire almost like an unwanted reset button.

We looked at everything: products, packaging, positioning, operations and even what we wanted Alpino to represent for the next decade. That led to Alpino 2.0.

We redesigned the entire brand, became far more focused on peanuts and protein, strengthened manufacturing and launched a new generation of products. One of the biggest strategic shifts was deciding that Alpino shouldn't simply be another health foods company. We wanted to become a protein company powered by peanuts.

That clarity changed the trajectory of the business.

In 2023, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi also recognized Alpino during Mann Ki Baat in the context of nutrition and protein. What did that recognition mean to you beyond the visibility it brought to the company?

In the last episode of Mann Ki Baat in 2023, Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi recognized Alpino and our young team for the impact we're creating in the health foods and protein space in India.

For us, recognition of the larger mission means much more than recognition of the company. When six engineers started selling peanut butter in 2016, we weren't thinking that one day our work could become part of a national conversation around nutrition and protein.

Our mission today is to contribute towards making India protein-sufficient. So, when that purpose receives recognition at such a level, it reminds you that you're building something that can have an impact beyond revenue and valuation.

Personally, moments like these make me think about how far the six of us have come, but they also make the responsibility feel much bigger.

You are now present in more than 15 countries. What has surprised you most about taking an Indian peanut butter brand into international markets?

The biggest learning has been that good products don't really have borders. We initially thought international consumers might have very different expectations, but the fundamentals remain the same: quality, taste, consistency and value.

What makes it particularly interesting for us is that the core ingredient itself comes from India. Junagadh and the wider Saurashtra region produce exceptional peanuts, so when Alpino products reach consumers internationally, we're also taking an Indian agricultural ingredient to the world in a value-added format.

For us, that's very satisfying. The ambition is not simply to become an Indian company exporting products. We eventually want Alpino to become a genuinely global consumer brand that happens to have been born in India.



Shilpa Shetty joined Alpino as a brand ambassador and investor. What made her a natural fit for the brand, and how has her involvement extended beyond marketing?

Shilpa was actually a very natural fit for us. Our core philosophy at Alpino is “Making Health Fun.” We don't believe healthy eating should feel restrictive, boring or like a punishment.

Shilpa represents that balance very well. She is extremely disciplined about health and fitness, but she is also fun, relatable and someone who genuinely enjoys food.

What made the partnership even stronger was that she didn't come on board simply as a celebrity face. She became a key investor in Alpino, which created a much deeper relationship with the company. She has tasted products, shared feedback and even influenced product development.

For example, after trying some of our chocolate peanut butter products, she encouraged us to explore versions without added sugar, which pushed our R&D team to work on naturally sweetened alternatives. So yes, her involvement has gone well beyond advertising.

We recently tried your peanut butter and protein peanut powder ourselves, and the taste stood out. What goes into getting that taste and texture right, particularly with an ingredient as familiar as the peanut?

Taste has always been non-negotiable for us. We believe consumers may buy a health product once because of its nutritional claims, but they will only buy it repeatedly if they genuinely enjoy eating it.

Peanuts are also very close to us personally. All six founders come from Saurashtra, and peanut farming has been part of the ecosystem around our families for generations. So, we naturally developed a deeper understanding and appreciation for the ingredient.

We primarily use high-quality peanuts from the Junagadh region. But raw material is only the starting point. Roasting profile, moisture, grinding, texture, formulation and ingredient combinations all dramatically affect the final product.

Peanut protein was an even bigger challenge because most plant proteins naturally have an earthy or chalky taste. It took extensive R&D, and many failed trials, before we were happy with the final product.

Our rule internally is quite simple: nutrition gets the consumer interested; taste brings them back.

You've also expanded into categories such as chocolate-flavored oats. How do you decide which new products are worth developing, and how do you make sure taste doesn't take a back seat to health positioning?

Most of our best product ideas begin with a consumer problem rather than an R&D meeting.

For example, we observed that customers were regularly buying oats and peanut butter together. At the same time, most oats available in India were plain, and consumers often found them boring.



That insight led us to combine the two and develop peanut butter-coated, high-protein chocolate oats.

Our product development process usually starts by defining the consumer, the problem we're solving, the use case and the nutritional target. Only after that do we start developing the actual product.

And taste always has veto power. If something looks fantastic on a nutrition panel but people don't enjoy eating it, we don't consider it successful. Healthy food has to compete with normal food on taste, not ask consumers to compromise because it's healthier.

You had once set ₹100 crore as a major milestone, and you have now reached it. What does the next chapter look like, and how have the roles of the six founders evolved as the company has grown?

₹100 crore was once a very ambitious milestone for us. We have now closed FY 2025-26 at approximately ₹100 crore in net booked revenue, representing around 2.5 times growth in one year and about five times growth over two years.

So naturally, the ambition has moved. For FY 2026-27, we're targeting around ₹250 crore, while continuing to build the organization for much larger scale over the coming years.

The founders' roles have changed significantly. In the early days, all six of us did everything: packing orders, answering customers, managing marketplaces, finding suppliers and even loading cartons when required.

Today, each founder leads a specialized function, and our job is increasingly about building leaders, systems and culture rather than personally executing every task.

What's interesting is that despite having six founders, we've remained together for almost a decade. We disagree all the time, which is healthy, but the larger vision has always kept us aligned.

If the six of you could sit down today with the versions of yourselves from 2016, what is the one piece of advice you would give them?

I would probably tell them, “Don't try to predict the entire journey. Just become good enough to solve the problems one at a time.”

If someone had shown us in 2016 everything we were going to face: COVID, cash-flow challenges, Shark Tank, a warehouse fire, rebuilding the company and all the uncertainty in between, I'm not sure we would have had the courage to start.

But life doesn't show you ten problems together. You face one, solve it, learn something and move forward. Nine or ten years later, I think that's still how we operate.

We're just solving bigger problems now.

The New Rules of Dressing Bright

Neon has moved well beyond its associations with clubwear and sportswear, finding a place in contemporary luxury through sculpted evening dresses, sharply tailored silhouettes and fabrics that intensify the impact of color.



ILK | Neon Yellow Circle Smocked Dress
Shop: ELAHE



RAHUL MISHRA | Leaf Textured 3D Hand-Embroidered Trench Coat with Trousers
Shop: RAHUL MISHRA



RETROFÊTE | Lee Dress
Shop: RETROFÊTE



THE ATTICO | Neon Pink Midi Skirt
Shop: THE ATTICO



TOM FORD | Shiny Crepe Mock-Neck Column Evening Dress
Shop: TOM FORD

From electric pink and fluorescent lime to sequined green, these pieces make a compelling case for wearing color without restraint.

Compiled by Alisha M.



LUXURY TRAVEL TRENDS 2022



A view from a Rosewood Hong Kong residence towards Victoria Harbour, illustrating the property's relationship with Hong Kong's skyline and waterfront setting.

What Are Affluent Travellers Looking For Now?

There was a time when luxury travel could be described almost entirely through the hotel. The larger the suite, the deeper the bath, the more elaborate the lobby and the longer the list of amenities, the easier it was to understand why a property belonged at the top end of the market. That vocabulary has become less useful. A traveller arriving at a private island in the Maldives may barely encounter a conventional hotel lobby at all, while someone checking into a beautifully designed property in Kyoto may remember the garden, the silence and the relationship between the building and its setting more vividly than the size of the room. The definition of luxury is becoming more personal, and increasingly it has less to do with visible extravagance than with how precisely a journey has been shaped around the person taking it.

The change is particularly interesting because affluent travellers are not discovering luxury for the first time. They already know the difference between a good hotel and an exceptional one, between a conventional resort and a property where service can be arranged around their individual preferences. What is changing is the value they place on those distinctions. Time, privacy, access, space and a sense of place are becoming harder to separate from the idea of luxury itself. A beautiful room is still important, but it is increasingly the beginning of the experience rather than the experience in its entirety.

That shift is visible in the way travellers are planning 2027. Hilton's latest global research, based on more than 14,000 travellers across 14 countries, identifies a growing preference for flexibility, personal meaning, trusted expertise, nature and shorter trips that make better use of limited time. Among Indian travellers, 80 per cent say they like planning trips that allow them to experience a lot in a short amount of time, while 87 per cent say fresh air and the outdoors are essential to how they relax while travelling. The research also found that 69 per cent of Indian travellers trust hotel staff as a resource for travel planning. The figures are significant, but what matters is the behaviour behind them. Travellers are becoming more selective about what deserves their time, rather than simply looking for more things to fit into it.

For some, that means removing other people from the equation altogether. Soneva Secret in the Maldives is an example of how far the private-island experience can be taken. With only 13 villas, the property operates on a scale where privacy becomes part of the architecture. A boat carries the guest away from the more populated parts of the atoll, the horizon opens out and the villa becomes a private world surrounded by water.



A day can begin with breakfast overlooking the sea, move into an excursion arranged around the weather or the tide, continue with time in the villa and end with dinner somewhere chosen specifically for the occasion. There is no need for the guest to follow the rhythm of a large resort because the property is designed around a much smaller number of people. The luxury is not simply having a beautiful villa. It is having very little between the traveller and the experience they have come for.



A Singita private villa set within the African wilderness, where expansive views, private outdoor spaces and proximity to nature shape the experience.

In Africa, Singita's private villas place the idea of a luxury residence within some of the continent's most extraordinary wilderness settings. A private host, chef, housekeepers, butlers, field guides and private safari vehicles mean that the day can be organised around the guests rather than around a shared lodge schedule. A family can leave before sunrise while the air is still cool and the landscape is only beginning to emerge from the darkness, follow a herd across the reserve and return when they choose. Lunch does not necessarily have to happen in a dining room, and an evening can be spent outside as the last light disappears over the bush. The villa provides the comfort and service expected at the highest level of hospitality, but the wilderness remains the reason for being there.

That distinction becomes even more compelling when the landscape itself is the destination.

This is one reason private villas have become so relevant to the luxury market. They solve a problem that traditional hotel accommodation cannot always solve, particularly for families and groups travelling together. Several generations can share one property without necessarily sharing the same schedule. Children can have their own space, grandparents can retreat when they want to, meals can be arranged around the group and evenings can remain private. For a milestone birthday, anniversary or family gathering, the villa becomes more than accommodation. It becomes the setting in which the entire trip takes place.



The meaning of exclusivity is therefore changing. It does not necessarily mean occupying the most famous suite in the most famous hotel. It can mean having an entire villa, lodge or island to yourself, having a private vehicle and guide for a safari, or simply knowing that the property can adapt to the people staying there. This is also why the familiar language of five-star and so-called seven-star luxury has become less useful. “Seven-star” is not an internationally recognised hotel classification. What matters at the highest end is what sits behind the description: the privacy of the arrival, the amount of personal space, the level of staffing, the ability to arrange experiences that are difficult to access independently, the quality of the food and the degree to which the service can respond to individual preferences without becoming intrusive.



Aman Kyoto emerges quietly from the surrounding forest, with dark timber screens, stone steps and mature trees shaping the arrival experience.

Design has become part of that equation because the best luxury hotels are no longer simply expensive buildings filled with expensive objects. They increasingly understand that architecture can determine how a traveller experiences a destination. Aman Kyoto provides a particularly clear example. Set within a wooded landscape and influenced by the visual and spatial language of traditional Japanese hospitality, the property does not attempt to compete with Kyoto through spectacle. The movement through the grounds, the gardens, the quiet relationship between buildings and landscape and the sense of separation from the city all become part of the stay. The experience begins before the guest enters the room.

Capella Bangkok takes a different approach, using its position beside the Chao Phraya River as an important part of the hotel's identity. The river changes with the light, the weather and the movement of boats, giving the property a setting that cannot be reproduced elsewhere. The architecture and interiors are designed around that relationship rather than simply placing a luxury hotel beside a view. A traveller can move from a private room to a terrace overlooking the water, then into the city and back again, with Bangkok remaining present throughout the experience. It is this sense of connection that increasingly distinguishes design-led luxury from hotels where design functions primarily as decoration.

The most successful properties of this kind understand that a traveller should feel where they are. Kyoto should not feel interchangeable with London, Bangkok should not feel like a hotel that could exist in any major Asian city and a safari lodge should not look as though it has been dropped into the wilderness without reference to the landscape. Materials, food, architecture, landscape and service all contribute to a sense of place. For affluent travellers who can stay in beautiful hotels almost anywhere, that specificity becomes part of the reason to choose one property over another.

Wellness is undergoing a similar shift. The luxury traveller is not necessarily searching for another elaborate spa menu or a week organised around treatments. Increasingly, wellness is built into the structure of the journey itself. The quality of sleep, the amount of time spent outdoors, the opportunity to disconnect, the food, the pace of the itinerary and the relationship with nature can be more important than the number of treatments available at the spa. Hilton's research found that 82 per cent of Indian travellers actively seek experiences that calm the body and reset the nervous system, while 86 per cent say travel enables them to recharge mentally and physically in ways they cannot easily achieve at home.

This helps explain why landscape has become such an important part of luxury wellness. A forest path in Kyoto, the sea outside a Maldivian villa or the first light over an African reserve can provide a form of restoration that cannot be recreated indoors. A morning walk, a swim before breakfast, an afternoon spent outside or an unhurried meal overlooking the landscape may never appear on a spa treatment menu, yet these experiences can define how restorative a journey feels. Wellness becomes less about adding another activity to the itinerary and more about changing the conditions in which the traveller spends the day.

Food is moving in the same direction. Luxury dining is no longer necessarily defined by formality, ceremony or the number of courses. The more interesting question is whether food provides another way into the destination. A meal prepared around local ingredients, a private dinner in an unexpected setting, a visit to a market with someone who knows the region intimately or an opportunity to understand a traditional technique can become part of the cultural experience. The best luxury hospitality increasingly allows food to tell the story of the place rather than simply providing another highly polished restaurant within it.

The same demand for personal knowledge is reshaping cultural travel. A traveller who has already seen the major museum, monument or palace may now be more interested in the person who can explain what lies behind it. That could be an artist, architect, chef, collector, historian or craftsperson, depending on the destination. It could mean seeing a private collection, entering a workshop, learning how a regional material is made or gaining access to a part of a city that does not appear on a conventional itinerary. In an age when almost anyone can search for information instantly, knowledgeable human guidance becomes more valuable, not less.



Inside a Venice Simplon-Orient-Express sleeping compartment, where polished wood, period craftsmanship and large windows create an intimate setting for slow travel.

Celebration travel benefits particularly from this level of personalisation. A milestone birthday, anniversary, wedding or family reunion can turn an ordinary holiday into a much more carefully considered journey. Instead of simply upgrading the room, travellers can choose a private property where everyone stays together, organise meals around the group, build excursions around different generations and create private moments that would be difficult to arrange within a larger hotel. The occasion becomes part of the destination rather than an event added to it.

Adventure is also becoming more sophisticated. The old assumption that adventure requires sacrificing comfort has little relevance at the highest end of the market. Travellers increasingly want access to remote landscapes, wildlife, oceans and mountains without giving up privacy, excellent food, architecture or personal service. The luxury safari, expedition vessel or remote lodge therefore becomes a bridge between two expectations that were once treated as opposites. The traveller can spend the morning in an environment that feels genuinely wild and return to a carefully designed private space in the afternoon.

Perhaps the clearest expression of this changing idea of luxury is the growing importance of the journey itself. On an ordinary flight, the distance between two cities is something to reduce. On the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, the distance becomes the reason for travelling. The polished carriages, dining rooms, changing landscape outside the window and ritual of dressing for dinner transform the passage between destinations into the experience itself. The traveller is not simply trying to get from Paris to another European city. The hours spent moving through the landscape are part of what has been purchased.



India has its own expression of this idea through the Palace on Wheels, where the train becomes accommodation, dining room and travelling environment during a journey through Rajasthan and Agra. The landscapes outside the windows change from one region to another, while the interiors provide a continuous sense of place. There is something inherently different about waking up and discovering that the destination has changed while you were asleep. The journey becomes slower, but the experience becomes richer because movement itself has been given value.

At the other end of the spectrum is the rise of shorter luxury breaks. Time has become one of the most valuable resources for travellers whose professional and personal lives are increasingly difficult to separate from one another. A three-night journey can therefore be meaningful if every part of it has been considered carefully. A design-led city hotel, a private villa close to a cultural destination, a wellness retreat or a highly focused food and art itinerary can provide a sense of escape without requiring a long absence from work or family.

-

For this traveller, the question is no longer simply where to go. It is what deserves the time available. One person may choose three nights at a private island because privacy matters more than sightseeing. Another may choose a city hotel because architecture, restaurants and galleries are the reason for travelling. Someone else may prefer a safari because the landscape itself provides the escape. The luxury lies in being able to make that choice rather than following a standard definition of what an expensive holiday should look like.



This is where the different strands of luxury travel in 2027 begin to connect.

The private island in the Maldives, the safari villa in Africa, the forest setting of Aman Kyoto, the riverfront experience of Capella Bangkok and the slow movement of a luxury train appear to belong to completely different categories. Yet each is built around the same principle: the experience has been made specific to its setting and, increasingly, specific to the traveller.

For a market that has already experienced the conventional vocabulary of five-star hospitality, that specificity may become the more meaningful measure of luxury. Privacy without isolation, service without ceremony, design without unnecessary spectacle, wellness without an over-programmed schedule, food that belongs to the destination and experiences that could not simply be reproduced somewhere else all carry greater value when the traveller has the ability to choose between almost unlimited options.

Luxury travel in 2027, then, is not necessarily about travelling further, staying higher or spending more. It is about getting the journey right. It may be the silence around a villa in the Maldives, the first light over the African bush, the sound of water moving past a Bangkok hotel, the stillness of a Kyoto garden or the slow rhythm of a train crossing a landscape. The most valuable part of the experience may not be the extravagance that is immediately visible, but the feeling that very little has been left to chance.

That is perhaps the most significant change in luxury travel now. The traveller is no longer simply buying a better version of a holiday. They are buying a journey that feels distinctly their own.

Hancocks London









JEWELLERY *across* GENERATIONS





Established in 1849, Hancocks London has spent more than 175 years building a distinguished place in the world of fine jewellery, bringing together historic craftsmanship, exceptional gemstones and an enduring appreciation for design. Its collection moves across centuries of jewellery-making, from Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian treasures to Art Deco creations, vintage pieces and contemporary designs.



The house's approach to jewellery is rooted in individuality, where the character of a gemstone, the intricacy of a setting and the proportions of a piece determine its appeal.





Old-cut diamonds, richly coloured gemstones and carefully considered gold and platinum settings feature prominently across its selection, offering a perspective on fine jewellery that extends beyond prevailing trends.





Sculptural forms, distinctive stone arrangements & elegant silhouettes give the collection its varied character, whether expressed through rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets or brooches.

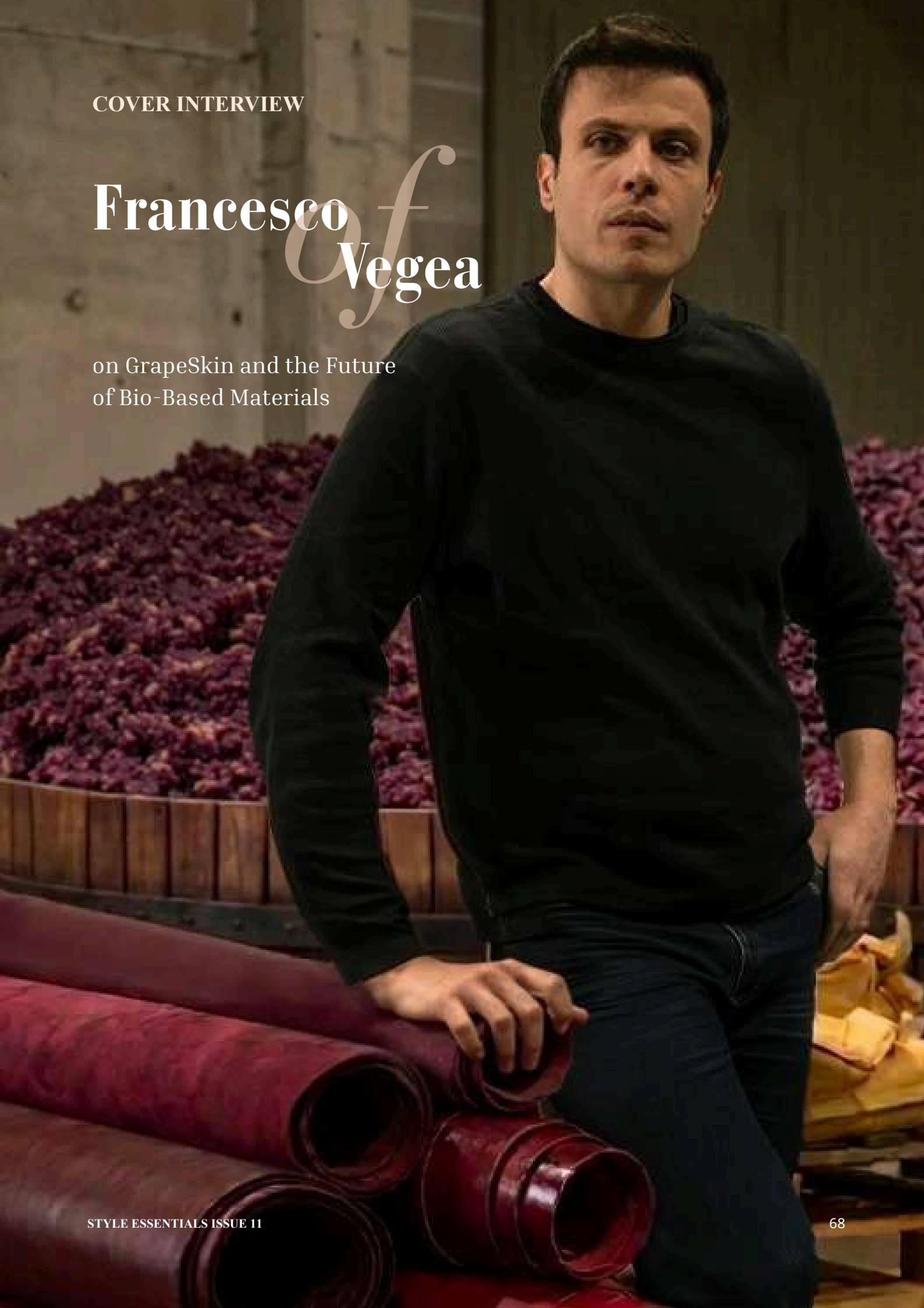


Alongside its carefully curated antique and vintage jewels, Hancocks creates contemporary pieces that draw upon the visual language of historic jewellery while maintaining their own identity. The result is a collection in which craftsmanship and design remain central, and jewellery is valued not simply as an adornment, but as an object to be collected, treasured and passed between generations.

COVER INTERVIEW

Francesco *Of* Vegea

on GrapeSkin and the Future of Bio-Based Materials



Grape marc has been part of Francesco's life since childhood. Growing up in Sicily, close to the wine sector, he saw the production of wine from the vineyard and harvest through to the commercial side of the business through his grandfather's wine shop. His background in chemistry later gave him another way of looking at the same material. Instead of seeing grape marc simply as what remained after winemaking, he began asking whether it could have another function beyond the wine industry.

That question led to Vegea and the development of GrapeSkin, a grape-derived material developed for fashion, design and other applications traditionally associated with animal leather. The process has involved years of experimentation, formulation and testing, with the challenge of moving from an interesting prototype to a material that can be developed, specified and used in real products.

Alisha Maindola of Style Essentials spoke to Francesco about the origins of Vegea, the development of GrapeSkin, the challenges of working with grape marc, the realities of sustainable materials, collaborations with global brands and the future of bio-based materials.



What did you see in grape marc that others walked past?

Grape marc had always been part of my life, long before I began to think of it as a possible material. I grew up close to the wine sector in Sicily. On one side of my family, I experienced the production of wine, from the vineyard and the harvest to the transformation of the grapes. On the other, through my grandfather's wine shop, I saw the commercial end of the same value chain.

So, when I looked at grape marc, I was not looking at an unfamiliar waste stream. I was looking at a material I had known since childhood, but from a different perspective. My training in chemistry allowed me to ask a new question: could what remained after winemaking continue to generate value in another industry?

I did not immediately see a finished material. I saw unexplored potential, and the possibility of connecting a world I came from with the textile, fashion and design industries I encountered later in Milan.

What did those experimental years actually look like, and was there a point where you nearly gave up?

Those years were experimental in the most literal sense. Each result answered one question and immediately created several others. The first challenge was to understand how grape marc could be processed into a stable and workable vegetal component. Then came the question of how that component could interact with the materials and coating systems already used in textiles.

We discovered that a finely processed grape-derived component could be dispersed in a coating formulation and contribute to the hand of the surface. That was encouraging because it showed that the grape component was not there only to support a story. It could perform a real function.

But it also revealed the scale of the challenge. Simply increasing the amount of vegetal powder would not automatically improve the material or its performance. If we wanted to increase the bio-based contribution while preserving durability, flexibility and industrial usability, we needed to work on the polymer system itself and investigate other fractions of grape marc, including grape-seed oil.

There was no single dramatic moment when I decided to give up. There were many moments when the next step was unclear. What kept the project alive was that every difficulty also revealed another possibility: a different formulation, a different thickness, a different color, a different mechanical behavior. The material kept showing us that it had more than one possible expression.



What does it do to your sense of value to build a business on what the world throws away?

I would be careful about saying that grape marc has no value. It can already have different uses and destinations. What I saw was that its potential in materials had not been explored deeply enough.

My scientific training taught me that we should not define a substance only by where it comes from or by the value it has in one particular process. Value can also come from what we learn to do with it.

For me, this is the most interesting part of innovation: using knowledge to give matter another function. Grape marc is secondary to the production of wine, but it does not have to remain secondary in every other possible application.

For someone who has never touched GrapeSkin, what surprises them most?

People often approach GrapeSkin through the story of the grape. Then they touch it and realize that the material has its own identity.

I think the first surprise is the hand of the surface: it does not feel like someone has simply added grape residue to a conventional material. It feels designed. The finish, thickness, color and tactile quality can be developed in relation to the intended application.



There is also a moment of surprise in realizing that something connected to the grape and to winemaking can become this kind of refined surface. The origin attracts attention, but the material has to justify that attention through the experience it offers.



What was the single hardest thing to get right before showing it to Bentley or Calvin Klein?

The hardest step was moving from an interesting prototype to a controllable material. Producing one attractive sample is not enough for a demanding brand. We needed to understand how formulation, thickness and construction influenced color, hand and mechanical behavior, and how those characteristics could be repeated or adapted for a specific application.

Before showing the material at that level, we had to move from saying, “This can exist,” to saying, “This can be designed, specified and developed with you.” That transition is one of the most difficult thresholds for any new material.

Why should a material born from waste be expensive, and are you pushed to make it cheaper?

The initial value of a by-product does not determine the cost of the material that can eventually be developed from it. Between grape marc and a finished surface there are research, processing, formulation, quality control, manufacturing, testing, customization and the need to maintain consistent specifications.

GrapeSkin is primarily positioned for luxury fashion and other demanding applications. It is developed and produced in Italy, and brands can work with us on color, texture, thickness and other application-specific requirements. They are not buying unprocessed agricultural matter. They are buying the result of a specialized transformation and development process.

Of course, we are asked to improve efficiency and cost, and this is part of industrial development. But making the material less expensive by compromising the properties that make it reliable would not be progress. Our objective is not to make it expensive. It is to produce it properly and to create the conditions for greater efficiency as capacity and continuity improve.



What makes you uncomfortable when brands talk about being sustainable?

Sustainability becomes uncomfortable when it is presented as an absolute quality that can be added to a product through language. An interesting origin story is not sufficient evidence.

A material has to be considered through its composition, process, durability, manufacturability, traceability and actual application. Claims also need boundaries: what has been measured, what refers to a particular version of the material, and what still needs to be improved.

I am cautious when sustainability is used to simplify complexity. No material exists without impact, and no single material can solve the problems of an entire industry. What we can do is make better choices, document them, improve the areas we control and communicate precisely rather than absolutely.

What are you asking designers to give up, and what are you offering in return?

We do position GrapeSkin as an alternative for applications traditionally associated with animal leather, and the vegan dimension has become an important part of both my personal path and Vegea's mission. But this does not mean that we claim to replace leather completely, in every application, or to replicate its entire cultural and material history.

We are offering designers something new: a material with a different origin, a different development path and the possibility of being adapted to a specific design intention.

I do not think we should ask designers to give up craft, beauty, emotion or performance. Those values should remain. What we ask is that they consider whether those qualities can also be expressed through new materials and new forms of collaboration.

GrapeSkin should not succeed because people feel obliged to choose it. It should succeed because it allows them to create something meaningful that could not have existed in exactly the same way before.



What is harder now, and what is easier?

At the beginning, the hardest part was proving that the possibility was real. Today the challenge is different. It is maintaining consistency, supporting different levels of customization, providing reliable availability and responding to projects that may have very different technical and production requirements.

What is easier is the first conversation. Ten years ago, the idea of a material derived partly from grape marc required a long explanation. Today, material teams, designers and brands are more familiar with bio-based innovation and ask more informed questions.

Those questions are also more demanding, but that is positive. It means the conversation can move more quickly from curiosity to color, thickness, finish, performance, application and production.

Is there a decision you made early on that nearly everyone advised you against?

In the beginning, many people told me that the idea was not possible, or that even if we produced an interesting sample, it would never become an industrial material.

The important decision was to continue treating those objections as technical questions rather than final answers. If a result was not durable enough, repeatable enough or suitable for existing manufacturing processes, the response was not to insist that the market should accept it. The response was to return to the material and improve it.

I do not think one decision saved the company. What made the difference was the decision, repeated many times, not to confuse an attractive prototype with a finished technology.

Is there a detail that gives you quiet satisfaction?

I look at the points where the material has to become part of the product rather than remain a visible statement about sustainability: the way it bends around an edge, how the finish behaves near a seam, or how consistently the surface follows the designer's intention.

The person using the bag, shoe or interior may never know how many decisions sit behind that small detail. For me, that is the satisfaction. The innovation has become quiet enough for the product to speak.

What will be different if Vegea succeeds completely?

Vegea is already demonstrating that a material connected to the wine sector can move beyond a prototype and enter real products, different industries and long-term relationships with brands. Some of our collaborations have continued and evolved over the years, and that continuous exchange is important: the material grows through the needs, questions and ambitions of the people who use it.

The recent production expansion represents another part of that evolution. It is not only about producing more square meters. It is about giving brands greater continuity, more reliable availability and stronger support when they decide to develop a material over time.

In ten or twenty years, I would like bio-based materials no longer to be treated as exceptional demonstrations or temporary sustainability stories. They should be part of the normal vocabulary of design and manufacturing, selected because their origin is meaningful, but also because they perform, can be developed and are industrially available.

If Vegea succeeds completely, the question will no longer be whether grape-derived resources can enter a bag, a shoe, a notebook or a car interior. We are already answering that question. The next question is how far designers and industries can take these materials when research, production and long-term collaboration continue to evolve together.

THE SUNSCREEN EDIT

Picks for 7 Everyday Protection

01 **SALVE PHARMA | SUNPROTEK 50+ GEL**
Shop: SALVE PHARMA

02 **LA ROCHE-POSAY | ANTHELIOS ULTRA-FLUID SPF 50+ FACE SUNSCREEN**
Shop: LA ROCHE-POSAY



03 **ISDIN | ERYFOTONA ACTINICA TINTED**
Shop: ISDIN

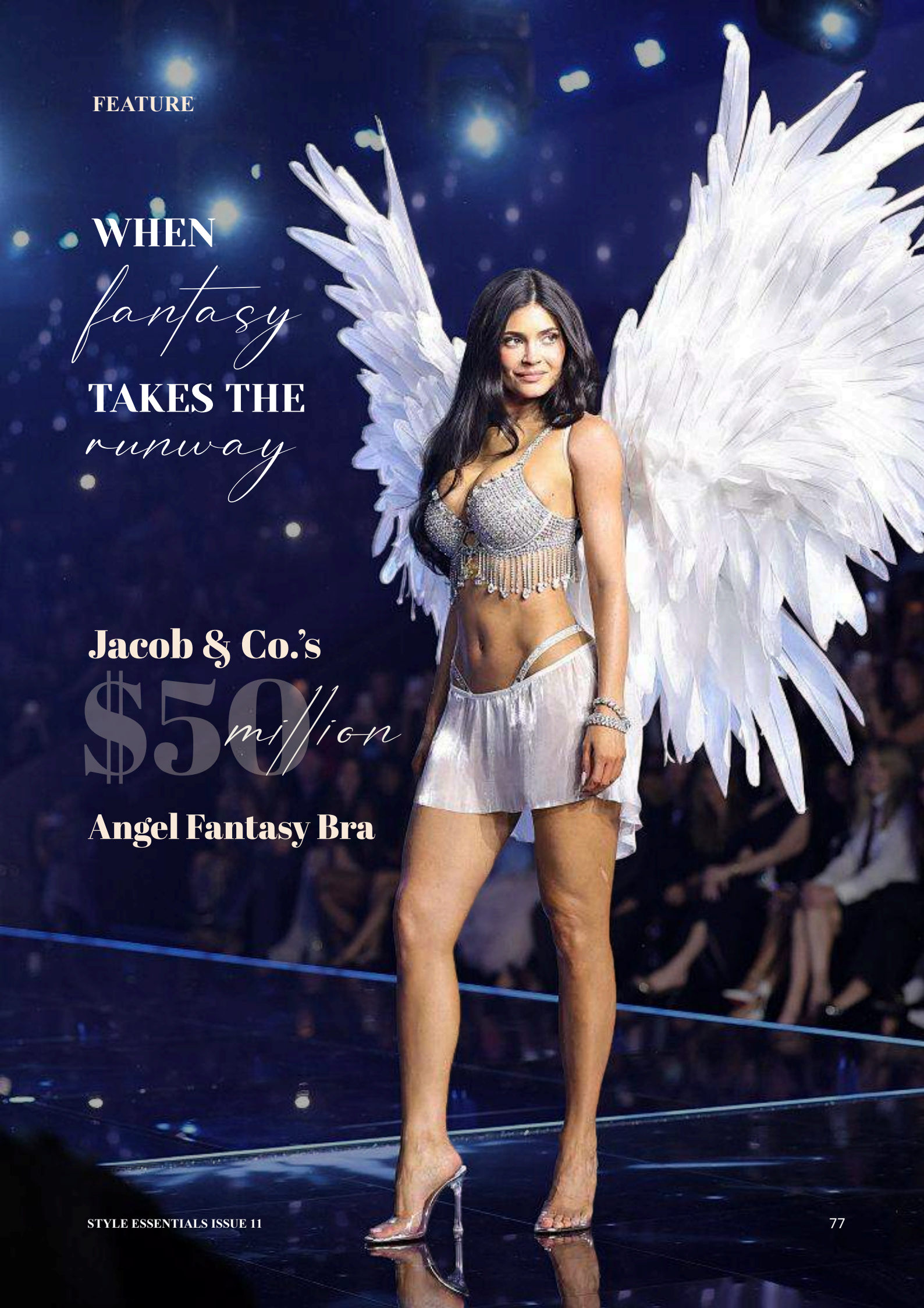
04 **SHISEIDO | ULTIMATE SUN SUN PROTECTOR CREAM SPF 50**
Shop: SHISEIDO

05 **ELTAMD | UV CLEAR BROAD-SPECTRUM SPF 46**
Shop: ELTAMD

07 **BEAUTY OF JOSEON | RELIEF SUN**
Shop: BEAUTY OF JOSEON

06 **SUPERGOOP! | GLOWSCREEN SPF 40**
Shop: SUPERGOOP!

WHEN *fantasy* TAKES THE *runway*



Jacob & Co.'s $50 *million* Angel Fantasy Bra



With 4,410 natural diamonds and a 75.54-carat yellow diamond at its centre, Jacob & Co.'s creation for Victoria's Secret returns the Fantasy Bra to the runway with a proposition that goes beyond extravagance: what happens when a piece of lingerie is imagined entirely as jewellery?

Luxury has always understood the appeal of the extraordinary, but few houses have built their identity around it as insistently as Jacob & Co. A watch can become a miniature universe, its moving parts arranged like celestial bodies; another can take its cues from the mechanics of a Bugatti hypercar. The New York-founded house has repeatedly approached familiar objects as opportunities to make something unexpected, drawing on watchmaking, gemstones, engineering and spectacle. Its collaboration with Victoria's Secret brings that sensibility into fashion, transforming the Fantasy Bra into a piece that belongs as much to the world of high jewellery as it does to the runway.

The Angel Fantasy Bra, unveiled for the 2026 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show, is valued at $50 million. Its construction dispenses with fabric altogether, relying instead on articulated structures of precious metal and diamonds designed to follow the body. At its centre is a 75.54-carat natural Fancy Vivid Yellow diamond, graded VS2 by the Gemological Institute of America. The surrounding composition contains 4,409 additional natural diamonds, bringing the total to 4,410 stones weighing approximately 1,373.39 carats. Fifteen artisans spent more than 1,000 hours creating the piece, which comprises 3,218 individually designed components.

The figures are extraordinary, but the idea behind the creation is more interesting than the price tag. A Fantasy Bra has traditionally taken an intimate garment and elevated it through precious stones, turning it into a centrepiece for one of fashion's most theatrical shows. Jacob & Co. has taken that premise further. Rather than placing diamonds on a textile foundation, the house has treated precious metal as a substitute for fabric, building a structure that must retain the recognisable form of lingerie while responding to the body's movement.

It is a distinctly Jacob & Co. approach: begin with something familiar, then push its defining characteristics into unfamiliar territory.

A house built around the extraordinary

Founded by Jacob Arabo in New York in 1986, Jacob & Co. began as a jewellery business before expanding into watchmaking. Over time, its work has become associated with conspicuous gemstones, technically ambitious timepieces and designs that resist the restrained conventions of traditional luxury. The house's own guiding phrase, "Inspired by the Impossible", captures an approach in which mechanical complexity and visual impact are not treated as opposing priorities.

Consider the Astronomia Tourbillon. Introduced in 2014, it reimagined the wristwatch as a miniature celestial system, with rotating elements arranged beneath a domed sapphire crystal. A diamond moon and a blue-lacquered Earth are set against a star-like aventurine base, while the tourbillon and other moving elements turn the passage of time into a visual performance. The watch does not simply display hours and minutes; it gives the mechanics of timekeeping a spatial, almost theatrical presence.

The Bugatti Chiron Tourbillon takes a different route to a similar destination. Developed through Jacob & Co.'s partnership with Bugatti, it translates the visual language of the hypercar into a watch case and movement. Its miniature W16 engine-block automaton brings the automotive reference into the mechanism itself, with pistons that move when the animation is activated. The power-reserve indicator resembles a fuel gauge, while the case draws on the Chiron's grille, bodywork and other recognisable details. Here, the inspiration is not merely decorative. The car's identity informs the watch's architecture and operation.





These creations help explain why the Fantasy Bra is a natural extension of Jacob & Co.’s wider design vocabulary. The Astronomia turns a watch into a moving celestial display; the Bugatti collaboration brings the theatre of a hypercar to the wrist; the Angel Fantasy Bra takes the same willingness to rethink an object into the territory of fashion. Each begins with a recognisable form and asks how far it can be transformed without losing its identity.

The Angel Fantasy Bra



4,410 Natural Diamonds
Totaling 1,373.39 Carats. In Six Shapes.
Over 1000 Hours And 15 Artisans To
Produce.



The diamond at the centre

The Fantasy Bra's most immediate point of attention is its yellow diamond. At 75.54 carats, the natural Fancy Vivid Yellow stone establishes the colour and visual focus of the entire piece. Its radiant cut combines a rectangular outline with brilliant-style faceting, creating a strong geometric form while allowing light to travel through the stone. The GIA's Fancy Vivid designation refers to the intensity of a natural coloured diamond's hue; it is not simply a description of its size.

Around it, white diamonds create a more varied rhythm. Jacob & Co. specifies six cuts across the design: Angel-Cut, pear, round brilliant, heart, oval and marquise. The house's proprietary Angel-Cut is particularly fitting for a collaboration with Victoria's Secret, although the significance of the name should not distract from the role of the cut itself: it adds another shape and facet pattern to the composition. The different outlines prevent the surface from becoming visually uniform, allowing the eye to move between the centre stone, larger diamonds and the closely set pavé.

The gold framework is as important as the gemstones. The components are cast in 18-karat white gold and assembled into articulated sections that follow the contours of the body. Larger stones are secured with settings suited to their individual dimensions and positions, while pavé fills the smaller spaces between them. The result is intended to appear as a continuous jewel, although it is made from thousands of separate parts.

The distinction matters because this is not a necklace or a rigid ornament placed on a display stand. The bra must sit on a body, maintain its shape and move with its wearer. Its design therefore depends on the relationship between the stones and the structure holding them. The metal cannot overwhelm the diamonds, and the settings cannot compromise the flexibility required of a garment.
The technical work is not an incidental detail behind the spectacle. It is what allows the spectacle to happen.

From the jewellery case to the runway

The Fantasy Bra has been part of the Victoria's Secret story since 1996, when Claudia Schiffer wore the first edition. Over the following decades, the designs became some of the fashion show's most anticipated features, with exceptional gemstones and high valuations helping to turn each edition into a widely reported event. The last Fantasy Bra before the 2026 return was worn by Elsa Hosk in 2018.

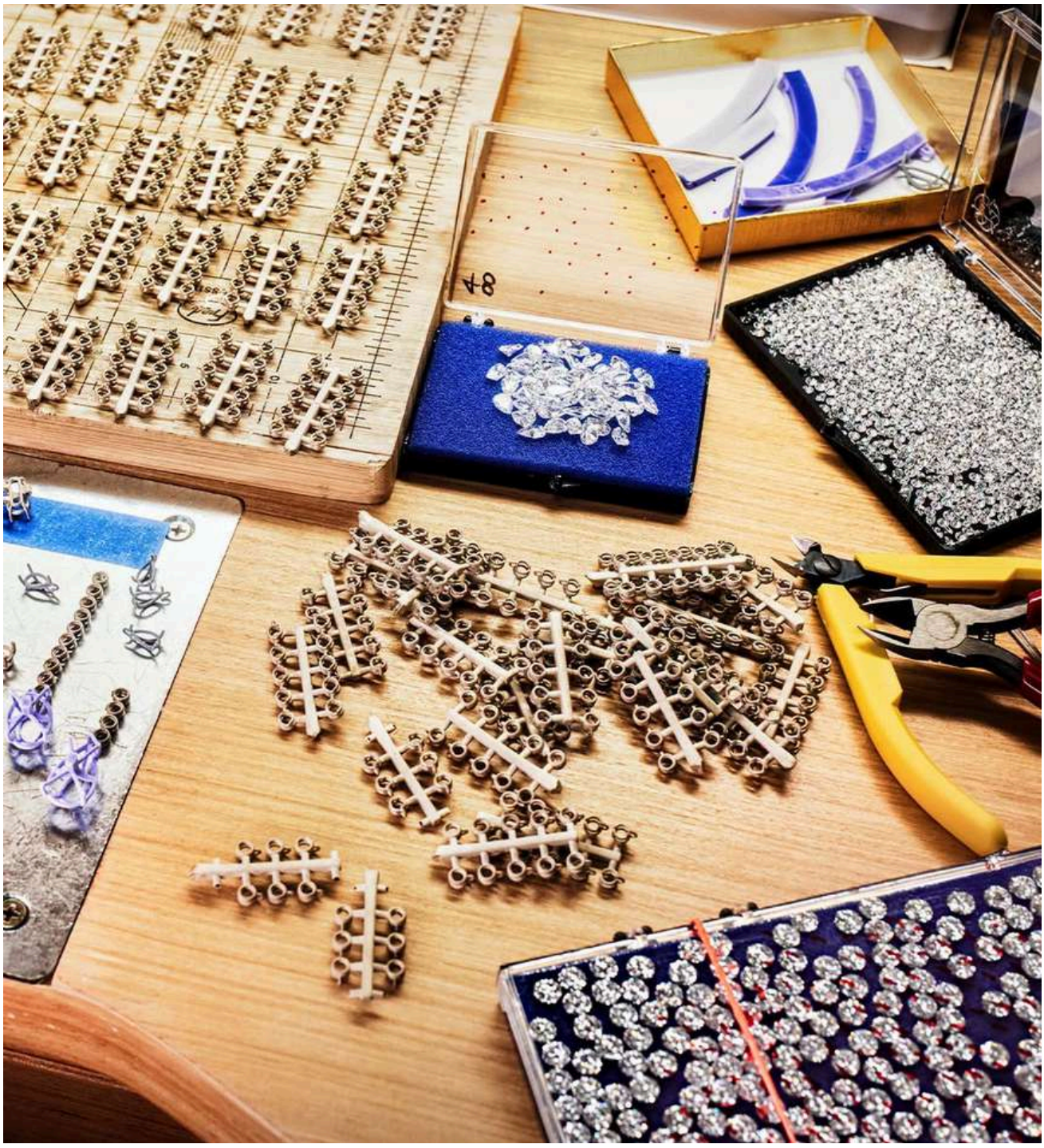
Its return is significant not simply because the piece is expensive, but because it restores a particular kind of fashion spectacle: one in which a single object becomes the centre of the show's visual narrative. The runway provides a different context from a jewellery salon. Light changes as the wearer moves, the piece is seen from multiple angles, and its relationship with the body becomes part of the design. An intricate object that might otherwise be studied in stillness has to hold attention in motion.

The Angel Fantasy Bra was worn by Kylie Jenner at the 2026 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show, placing the creation within a contemporary fashion landscape where celebrity, luxury and digital visibility intersect. Yet the wearer is only one part of the story. The bra itself was conceived to be seen as a complete visual statement, with the scale of the central diamond, the density of the surrounding stones and the articulated construction working together under runway lighting.

This is where the collaboration becomes more than a meeting between a jeweller and a lingerie brand. Victoria's Secret has a long history of using wings, elaborate styling and statement garments to create images that extend beyond the runway. Jacob & Co. brings a design philosophy in which the object itself is expected to command attention. The Fantasy Bra gives both houses a shared stage.

The luxury of imagining beyond the ordinary

There is a difference between making something expensive and making something that captures the imagination. The value of the Angel Fantasy Bra inevitably invites attention, but its more enduring interest lies in the decision to remove fabric from a garment traditionally defined by it. The challenge was to create the visual language of lingerie using materials more commonly associated with fine jewellery, while retaining the ability to move with the wearer.



That is a more revealing expression of Jacob & Co.'s design philosophy than the headline valuation alone. The house has made a watch behave like a planetary system, borrowed the mechanics of a hypercar for a timepiece and now used articulated gold and diamonds to reinterpret lingerie. The projects belong to different disciplines, but each depends on a similar impulse: to take an object people already understand and give it a form they have not seen before.

For Victoria's Secret, the return of the Fantasy Bra restores a piece of runway history. For Jacob & Co., it extends a body of work in which craftsmanship is inseparable from visual drama. And for the wider luxury audience, it offers a reminder that fantasy has a particular role in fashion. It allows design to move beyond the practical requirements of an object and ask what else it might become.



The Angel Fantasy Bra does not need to be wearable in the everyday sense to fulfil its purpose. It exists for a particular moment, on a particular runway, where jewellery becomes garment and craftsmanship becomes spectacle. Its achievement lies in making that transformation visible, turning an extraordinary collection of natural diamonds into a form that still reads as lingerie.

In the end, the most compelling aspect of the creation is not that it costs $50 million, or even that it contains a yellow diamond of remarkable size. It is that Jacob & Co. has taken one of fashion's most recognisable fantasies and reimagined its very construction. On the runway, that idea becomes tangible: not simply diamonds worn on the body, but a garment conceived from the beginning as a piece of jewellery, designed to move, catch the light and hold the imagination.

CRAFT YOU CAN WEAR







A watch can tell you the time.
The best ones also tell you where they were born.





In Jaipur, a tiger watches over a natural-stone dial, flanked by a tiny chhatri and Khadi muslin. In India's Argos, a Japanese movement beats beneath a malachite-green dial of mother-of-pearl. On the Isle of Man, Roger W. Smith builds each piece around the Daniels co-axial escapement. In America, RGM revives vintage Hamilton railroad movements behind real Grand Feu enamel. And at Jaeger-LeCoultre, a movement first made in 1929 now hides inside a gold bangle set with 158 diamonds. The prices differ and the countries differ, but the idea is the same: a watch matters most when it has something to say.



Circadian Health

Living in Sync with Your Body Clock



Light, daily routines and biological rhythms are shaping a new understanding of the relationship between modern living and the body's natural sense of time.

Of all the species on Earth, human beings may be the most capable of altering their surroundings, yet we are also remarkably adept at ignoring the conditions under which life evolved. We have invented artificial light to banish darkness, built cities that remain awake through the night and created schedules that allow work, entertainment and communication to continue at almost any hour. In the process, we have come to treat the natural distinction between day and night as increasingly irrelevant, even though the human body continues to depend on it. Birds, meanwhile, do not negotiate with the arrival of daylight or persuade themselves that night is an inconvenient interruption. Their activity follows the changing conditions around them, guided by biological rhythms that have evolved in close relationship with the natural world. The contrast is worth considering: despite everything we know and everything we have built, how well have we actually learnt to live in accordance with our own biology?

A walk through a garden in the early morning offers a rather different experience of time from an evening spent beneath the uninterrupted glow of indoor lighting. The first hours of daylight bring a gradual increase in activity across the natural world, while the approach of darkness changes the behaviour of birds, insects and other living organisms. Human beings have always shared these environmental cycles, although the way we inhabit them has changed considerably. The body still responds to the rising and falling of light, regulating sleep, alertness, body temperature and several hormonal processes according to a daily pattern. These recurring fluctuations, known as circadian rhythms, are among the most fundamental features of human physiology, operating continuously whether we acknowledge them or not.

The relationship between light and the body's internal clock is governed by the suprachiasmatic nucleus, a cluster of nerve cells in the hypothalamus that receives information about light through the eyes and helps regulate the daily sleep-wake cycle. Morning daylight helps synchronise the body's timing with the external day, while exposure to bright light late in the evening can delay the onset of biological night. This is one reason that the timing of light exposure matters so much. A morning spent indoors beneath artificial illumination, followed by an evening in brightly lit surroundings, presents a very different pattern of environmental signals from a day that includes natural daylight and gradually diminishing illumination after sunset.

Melatonin, often referred to as the sleep hormone, is part of this daily transition. Its secretion rises as the body approaches its biological night, helping signal that the period for rest is beginning. The hormone does not simply switch sleep on, nor does its presence guarantee that someone will fall asleep immediately. Sleep is regulated by several interacting processes, including the accumulation of sleep pressure during waking hours and the timing established by the circadian clock. Bright light in the evening can suppress melatonin secretion or delay its onset, shifting the body's internal timing even when bedtime remains unchanged. The familiar difficulty of feeling alert late at night and struggling to wake the following morning is sometimes less a matter of unwillingness to sleep than of biological timing working against the schedule we have imposed.

The modern day has become remarkably flexible, though the body has not acquired an equivalent freedom from its rhythms. Work can continue across time zones, meals are available long after conventional dining hours, and entertainment no longer depends on the time of day. For people whose professions involve irregular hours, these arrangements may be unavoidable. For others, the extension of the day has become an ordinary feature of life, with late meetings, evening correspondence, social commitments and screen use gradually displacing the hours once associated with winding down. The distinction between a genuinely occasional late night and a recurring pattern of irregular sleep is important, particularly when the body is repeatedly expected to adjust to different schedules within the same week.

Circadian health is also closely connected to the way we eat. The body's digestive and metabolic processes follow daily patterns, and research has increasingly examined how meal timing interacts with biological rhythms. Organs such as the liver and digestive system possess their own molecular clocks, which operate in coordination with the central clock in the brain. The timing of food intake can influence these peripheral rhythms, making the relationship between meals and metabolism more complex than the nutritional composition of food alone. Eating late into the biological night, for instance, takes place under conditions that differ physiologically from eating during the active part of the day. Although there is no single meal schedule appropriate for everyone, the emerging research suggests that regularity and timing deserve greater consideration in conversations about metabolic health.



Physical activity, too, forms part of this relationship. Exercise influences sleep and can interact with circadian timing, although its effects vary according to the individual, the nature of the activity and when it takes place. More important than following a fashionable hour for exercise may be establishing a routine that can be maintained comfortably. The same applies to sleep and waking. Some people naturally become sleepy earlier in the evening and wake easily in the morning, while others experience their strongest alertness later in the day. These tendencies, known as chronotypes, are influenced by biological factors and change across different stages of life. They are not simply a reflection of discipline, and the difficulty experienced by someone whose natural timing conflicts with early professional or school schedules is not necessarily resolved by going to bed earlier.

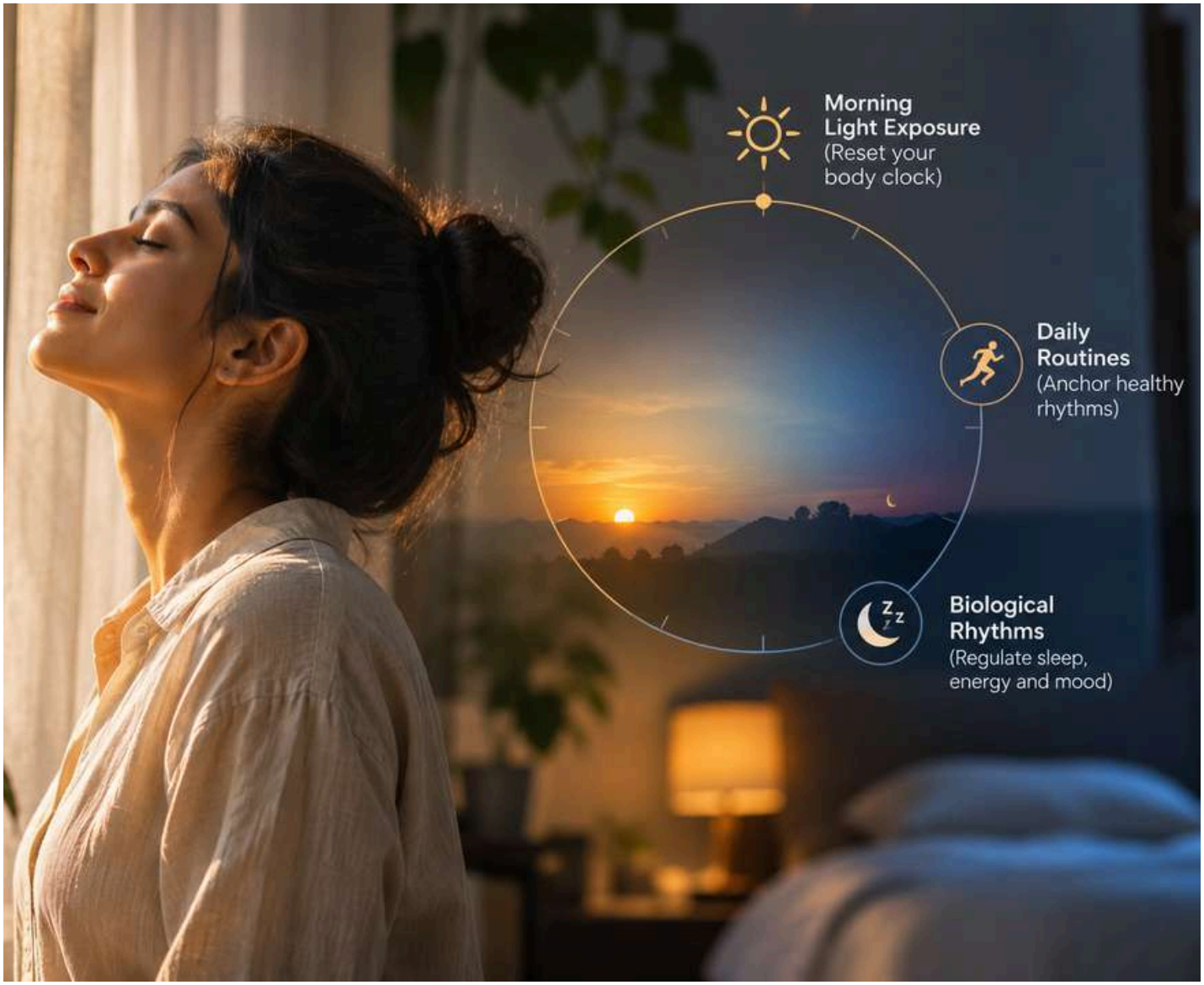
The difference between working days and weekends illustrates how easily these rhythms can become unsettled. After several mornings of early waking, a person may sleep considerably later on Saturday and Sunday, only to find Monday morning difficult once again. This recurring shift between social schedules and biological timing is commonly described as social jetlag. It does not require travelling across time zones, although the experience can resemble the disorientation of doing so. The body is being asked to accommodate different hours of sleep and wakefulness within the same week, and the resulting irregularity may affect how rested and alert a person feels.

Research into circadian disruption has expanded considerably, particularly in relation to shift work, sleep irregularity, metabolic health and cardiovascular function. The evidence is complex, and associations between disrupted rhythms and particular health conditions should not automatically be interpreted as direct causation. Nevertheless, the importance of biological timing is increasingly recognised. Adequate sleep, nutrition and physical activity remain essential, but their relationship with the body's daily rhythms adds another dimension to how health is understood. The hours in which we sleep, eat, work and exercise are not entirely separate from the physiological processes taking place during those activities.

The implications reach into the spaces in which we live. For much of the day, artificial lighting allows homes and offices to remain visually consistent regardless of the changing conditions outdoors. Bedrooms may remain brightly illuminated until the moment someone decides to sleep, while mornings begin with closed curtains and the immediate glow of a phone. Natural daylight, when it is available, provides a different quality of illumination and a more direct connection with the external day. The growing interest in circadian lighting within architecture and interior design reflects a recognition that lighting is not only a question of aesthetics or visibility; it also influences the biological signals received by the body. Thoughtfully considered daylight and evening illumination can make living spaces more responsive to the rhythms of the day without requiring dramatic changes to how people use them.

There is something worth reconsidering in the way contemporary life has come to value the ability to remain active at almost any hour. A late evening can be productive, entertaining or socially rewarding, and the convenience of modern technology is not something most people would willingly surrender. The difficulty lies in the assumption that because an activity can continue through the night, the body should be expected to accommodate it without consequence. The natural world offers a rather different lesson. Daylight and darkness remain distinct, and the biological systems of living organisms continue to respond to their changing presence, even when human surroundings have been designed to make the difference less apparent.



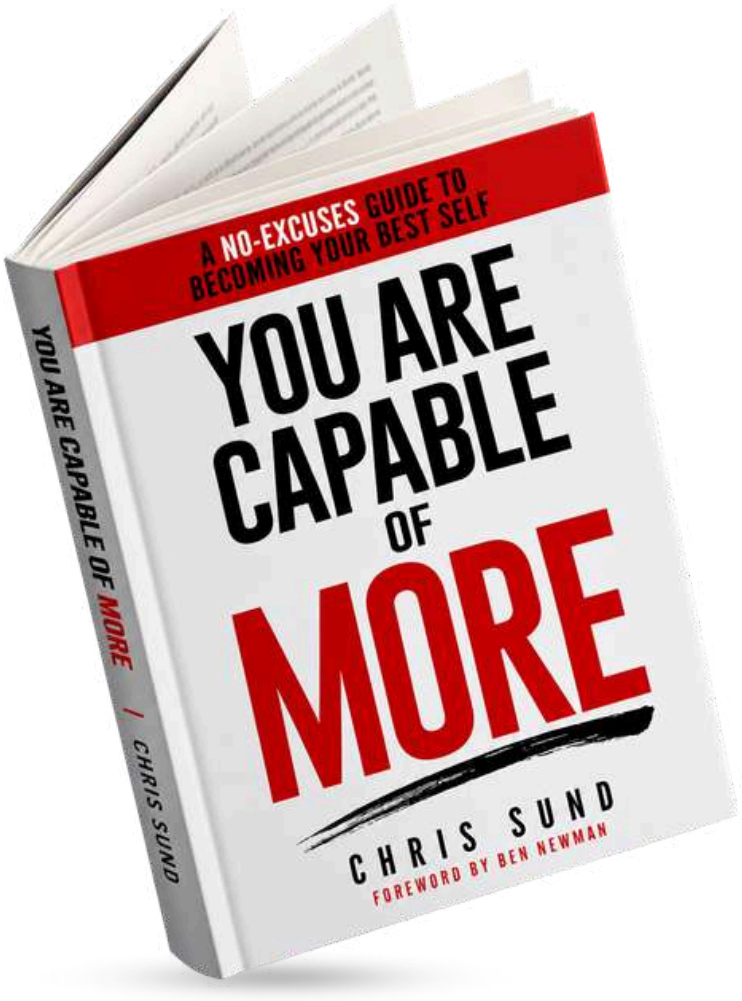


Living in sync with the body clock does not require a return to a life governed entirely by sunrise and sunset. It calls for a more considered relationship with the daily cycle: exposure to daylight, reasonably consistent sleep and waking hours, routines that do not continually shift, and evenings that allow the body to recognise the approach of rest. These are ordinary aspects of life, yet they can become difficult to maintain when work, social expectations and personal schedules repeatedly extend beyond the hours for which the body is prepared.

Perhaps the most revealing part of circadian health is the reminder that human intelligence has not made us independent of nature. We can alter our surroundings, extend the working day and illuminate the night, but the body continues to operate according to rhythms shaped over an extraordinary span of evolution. The birds outside the window have no need to understand the science of biological clocks to respond to daylight. We have the advantage of understanding why these rhythms matter. What remains is to decide whether that knowledge will influence the way we live.

YOU ARE CAPABLE OF MORE

by Chris Sund



Chris Sund's You Are Capable of More: A No-Excuses Guide to Becoming Your Best Self, published by Game Changer Publishing, examines the everyday decisions, habits and excuses that shape the direction of our lives. Beginning with a reckless college prank that ended in his arrest, Sund draws on personal experiences involving fatherhood, professional challenges, leadership and loss to explore what it means to take responsibility for one's choices.

The book's central argument is straightforward: recognising the need for change means little without the willingness to act. Sund addresses accountability, time management, self-talk, feedback and continuous improvement, encouraging readers to examine their behaviour rather than attribute every setback to circumstances beyond their control. His advice is direct, occasionally demanding, and grounded in the belief that personal growth begins with an honest assessment of one's own decisions.

Some of the book's most thoughtful observations concern the relationship between ambition and personal relationships. Reflecting on the demands of work and family life, Sund writes, "Being present and being available are not the same thing." His account of losing his father adds a more personal dimension to the discussion, reminding readers that productivity and achievement cannot replace time spent with the people who matter.

Although familiar themes run throughout the personal development genre, Sund's practical approach offers readers a useful opportunity to reconsider their priorities and daily habits. You Are Capable of More ultimately asks a simple but demanding question: do our actions reflect the life we claim to want?

Book Review by Shweta Dhyani

Book: **You Are Capable of More: A No-Excuses Guide to Becoming Your Best Self**

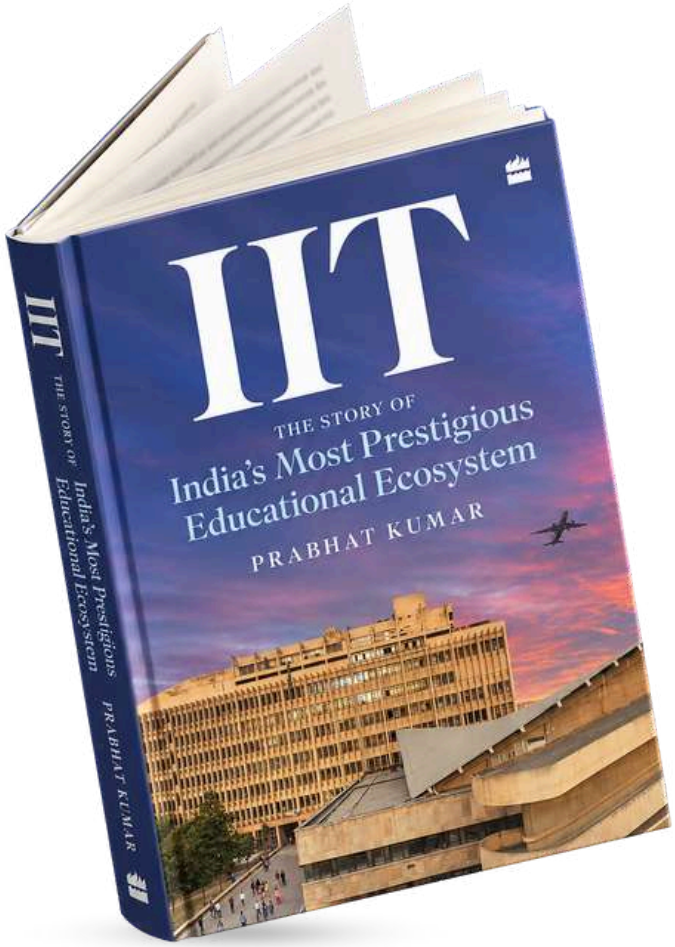
Author: **Chris Sund**

Publisher: **Game Changer Publishing**

BOOK REVIEW

IIT: THE STORY OF INDIA'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS EDUCATIONAL ECOSYSTEM

by Prabhat Kumar



For generations of Indian students, securing admission to an Indian Institute of Technology has represented a defining academic ambition, shaped by years of preparation and high expectations. In IIT: The Story of India's Most Prestigious Educational Ecosystem, Prabhat Kumar examines how these institutions evolved after independence and became influential in India's technological and economic development.

The book traces the growth of the IIT network and the contributions of its graduates to technology, research, entrepreneurship and global business. It also considers the pressures surrounding admission, from intense entrance examination competition to the expansion of the coaching industry and the expectations placed on young students.

Beyond their academic reputation, the IITs reflect India's changing national ambitions. Their graduates have established careers across the world, extending the institutions' influence beyond the classroom while raising questions about the relationship between global opportunity and national development.

Kumar's subject invites readers to look beyond examination results and placement figures to consider the wider purpose of education. As India places increasing emphasis on research, innovation and advanced technology, the IITs face the challenge of preparing students for a world that demands more than conventional academic achievement.

The book offers a perspective on an educational system closely tied to India's aspirations, examining both its accomplishments and the pressures accompanying its prestigious status.

Book Review by Shweta Dhyani

Book: **IIT: The Story of India's Most Prestigious Educational Ecosystem**

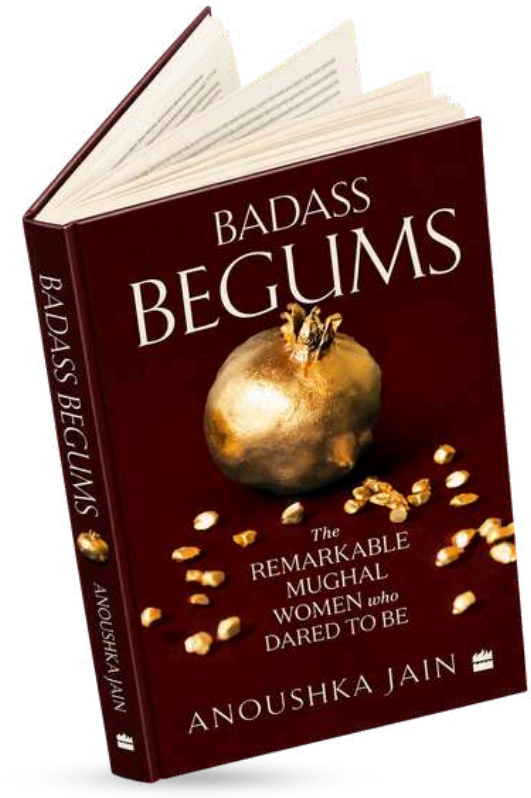
Author: **Prabhat Kumar**

Publisher: **HarperCollins India**

BOOK REVIEW

BADASS BEGUMS

by Anoushka Jain



I have always been drawn to women who built their own place in the world without waiting for anyone to hand it to them, the ones who ruled, dominated and refused to be pushed into the background, and this book is full of exactly such women. Anoushka Jain takes ten chapters and ten Mughal begums and walks us through Delhi, and what she shows is that the city I thought I knew had women standing behind almost every lane of it. Jahanara Begum, who the author tells us shaped Chandni Chowk with her serai, her hammam and the canal that once ran down its middle, is only the beginning. There is Begum Samru, who began as a tawaif named Farzana and ended up commanding her own battalions and ruling Sardhana, and whose old haveli is today a crowded electrical market that most shopkeepers there cannot place in history. There is Qudsia Begum, a courtesan who rose to run the empire for her son, and Roshanara, the kingmaker whose garden now mostly belongs to cricketers.

There is Zeenat Mahal, whose haveli is now a girls' school where, when the author asked a student whether she knew whose name her school carried, the girl only shrugged and grinned. I put the book down for a minute after that page.

What I loved, honestly, is that these women are not polished into saints. The author says plainly that she wants to show them as they were, ambitious, cunning, fiercely protective of their sons and sometimes cruel, and she points out that a man doing the same things would have been called a visionary. She also keeps reminding us how thin the records are, that most of what we know comes from European travellers with their own biases, and that is a kind of honesty I respect in a historian. The tone is chatty, personal and full of Delhi, with rickshaw bargaining, chaat stalls and pigeons on statues, and the illustrated maps make you want to put on walking shoes and go find these places yourself.

For a reader like me, who admires women that refused to stay small, this book felt like a long overdue introduction. Priced at just Rs 399, it is a very easy recommendation for every Delhi reader, every history lover and every woman who has ever been told she is too much.

Anoushka, thank you for giving these women their names back and for making a city so many of us pass through every day feel new again. I will look at Old Delhi differently from now on.

Book: **Badass Begums**

Author: **Anoushka Jain**

Publisher: **HarperCollins India**

Available on Amazon and Flipkart


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