



Shoes for the sunrise Libra

FEET OF AN astro nature

DESIGNS THAT GET INTO THE SHOES OF SUN SIGNS

Even though Swati Mohindra wanted to be a designer, her passion for shoes began as a beautiful accident. Post Class 12, she chanced upon an advertisement in a newspaper for shoe designing. And the rest simply fell in place.

From designing custom-made shoes to ankle accessories, Swati has come up with unique shoes based on astrology.

She explains, "My fascination and love for astrology and shoes gave birth to Sunsign shoes based on one's sun sign and zodiac. A right pair of shoes can make one's life much easier and it's fashionable too."

Talking about how these shoes are different, Swati says, "These shoes are specially crafted based on characteristics of individual sun sign personalities etc that function on chronophysics. Kundali shoes are based on specifications derived from one's birth chart like colour, material, metal, wood etc. We have all the planets on the base of our feet and these soles help the corresponding planets to derive energy from earth." She further adds, "These shoes are made after thorough research and under an astrologer's supervision and guidance. The shoes are in the range of ₹1,000 and go upto ₹8,000 for sun sign-based shoes and ₹15,000 for astro shoes."

Her passion for shoes is evident when she says, "Each shoe is a work of art and women love shoes. A person is defined by the shoes s/he wears! Come to think of it, I am living my dream!"

As told to Saumya Bhalla



Bright red shoes for Aries



Jazzing up junk

THIS SISTER DUO RECYCLES, REUSES AND REJUVENATES OLD KNICK-KNACKS INTO INTERESTING HOME DECOR



Up-cycled beer bottles designed with intricate thread work that can be used as vases or showpieces

• NIDA AND HUDA KHAN, DESIGNERS

My sister Huda and I are inspired by the tatted card The Fool, which is adventurous and creative. We realised how similar the fool's character traits are with ours. Hence, our brand is called The Fool. Our latest collection focuses predominantly on up-cycled products. We hate to see things being wasted, especially wood. We take this to our advantage and use junk to create products. The products are a combination of eclectic, contemporary, novel and offbeat designs, with a constant effort to achieve zero wastage.

Since we are from a design background, both our minds are tuned into the design process. Spoons and fork chandeliers, clocks, an iron, a wooden trunk, a vinyl record converted into a bowl, beer bottles redesigned to be used as vases or showpieces, a candle stand from plumbing fittings, blackboard beer bottle that one can draw on, a table out of wooden crates, etc are some of our products.

The jewellery organizer is another highlight of this collection. This is a product that will accommodate accessories a woman needs to store. The best part about this is that it can be stuck to the wall making it compact. We predominantly work with bright and vibrant colours — reds, blues, yellows and greens to name a few. Our home is a junkyard. We utilise everything we can recycle and reuse.

As told to Khushi P. Mathew



KITCHEN AT HOME: The vinyl recorder bowl (above), a spoon and fork chandelier (above right) and an iron box of yare

Creative carpentry

• ROOBLAD SHROFF, ARCHITECT AND DESIGNER

Architecture was subconsciously engraved into my DNA. I come from a family of architects, starting with my great grandfather down to my father. My childhood was a continuous initiation into the design world, be it on family holidays that involved visits to mansions and galleries, or going to my father's office and sketching over blueprints as a kid. Architecture is more than just constructing buildings. It's an art, a passion for creativity that gives one the ability to think creatively and create a design sensitive environment.

Though trained as an architect, I have always been drawn towards other fields of design. I have experimented with products, furniture and fashion. The absolute freedom in design, not being restricted by codes has made my interest in furniture and product design grow.

My first collection of furniture, the C-Series attempts to highlight the amazing carpentry work that is done by craftsmen in Rajasthan. The series is a range of pieces that are handcrafted without any power tools and devoid of metal screws and fasteners. The defining feature of the series is the use of the traditional joinery techniques like dove tail joints that allow for all pieces to be dismantled easily. Be it architecture or a piece of furniture, I tackle most of my design projects keeping in mind the end user and the interaction with the human body — so the process of creating is similar, though at different scales, both are equally demanding and challenging.

Traveling is the greatest form of gaining inspiration and widening one's horizon. Such influences mould my thinking, which is then reflected in my work. But my dream is to work on a contemporary arts museum in India.

As told to Aneeta Talwar



ANGLES AND ATTITUDES: (Clockwise) The C-Chair series, a Bombay platter and a wine rack



Designs by Uttara Shah (above and below)

A knot that is so inviting

• UTTARA SHAH, WEDDING CARD DESIGNER

Over the years, design trends in wedding cards have evolved. Wedding cards have also become a lot more thematic. We just did a wedding card in December where we had a royal animal theme. The horse, elephant, peacock and camel, instead of an overused floral pattern. We spent a lot of time detailing it and the animals were rendered in a particular style.

Another card we did had the five elements — earth, wind, fire, water, air — and we explained what the word implied. Fire to keep the warmth in a relationship alive, air for being the wind beneath the other's wing and so on. I think a card stands out when you manage to touch an intangible chord. For one wedding where the gift was a silver diplo that opened up like a lotus and the decor of the venue had a lotus pond, we designed a card that opened up into a lotus.

We don't do 300 cards a year, it takes us four to six weeks just to develop the concept. I love designing wedding cards because there are so many elements to play with, from the design, material to the graphics.

Uttara has designed wedding invites for Jeevan Khosla and Anushka Mehra and leading business families like the Mittals, Khoslahandias and Ahtas

As told to Rohini Nair



Uttara Shah



Pottering in eloquence

• NEHA RAMAIA, FOUNDER, YELLOWSPIDERS POTTER'S CLUB

I love spiders — the web they intricately weave meets the demand of the perfect golden geometry ratio of a design. They have always inspired me, and will continue to. Being a design student, I have always felt that there is a thin line between an artist and a designer. I've been working with clay for three years, and I enjoy teaching the art as much. I'm not into commercial pottery. I like to work on designs that are personal and replicate my thoughts.

I'm very spontaneous — I can't work on a piece, thinking of a particular design. It needs to happen naturally. There are not many colours that one can dabble with while working on stoneware. Though red is my favourite, I use a lot of yellow and green too. But I'm still striving to get the perfect dull red.

There is no perfect piece that's my claim to fame. For me, the exploration never stops. I do a lot of stippling work. Unlike pen on paper, I use chopsticks — well, that's my other obsession. It gives a different feel when working with clay. For me, pottery is therapeutic. It is also great for healing purposes, and it's meditative. While I'm working with clay I strive to make people understand the relationship between the designer and his tool. It's how the mind works on it and the body reacts to the same.

As told to Ganeshree Kodfala



Neha Ramaia



Dipsy get contemporary with these designs by Neha