

HELLO!

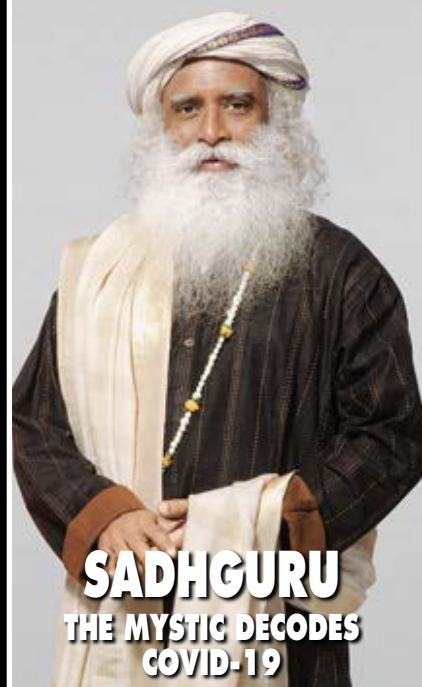
INDIA • VOL 14 ISSUE 2 • MAY 2020

COVER STORY
THOUGHT-LEADERS
SHOW US
THE WAY
FORWARD

REINVENTION

MEET THE SUPERSTAR
SALMAN KHAN

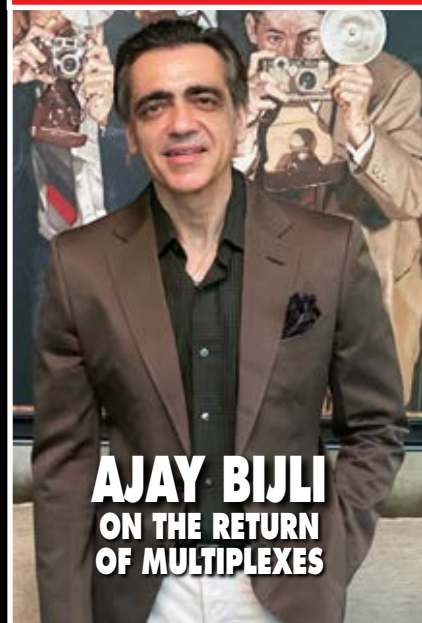
AS HE RISES TO
SUPPORT AND
INSPIRE A LOCKED
DOWN NATION



SADHGURU
THE MYSTIC DECODES
COVID-19



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ON THE FUTURE OF
LUXURY HOSPITALITY



AJAY BIJLI
ON THE RETURN
OF MULTIPLEXES

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SALMAN KHAN VS COVID-19



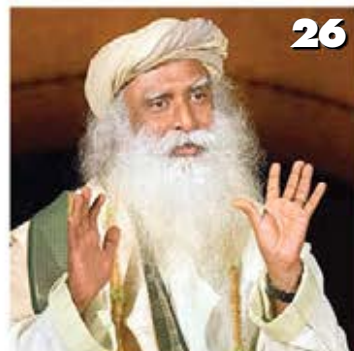
Machismo has a new avatar. Not only has Salman Khan's team been depositing funds directly into the accounts of daily wage earners across different bodies, but his self-composed ditty, *Pyar Karona*, warns citizens of India that being afraid and isolated is absolutely on track for dealing with this pandemic



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'This is the way of nature - you mess with it, and it gets back to you with a vengeance'



We are in the third phase of the official lockdown period. We are ready, and hoping, to come out of the rigorous imposition of the curfew, thanks to the pandemic Covid-19. The past few weeks have been like a lifetime of joys, sorrows, introspections, revelations, bonding, arguments, can't live with-can't live withouts, and, for a lot of people complete leisure and lazing. For once, the world was united in its current state of LOCKDOWN. Every single person on planet earth was forced into self-exile, living a virtual life. Work from home has become the new norm. Never has mankind had so much time on hand to do whatever one wanted to. There have been different views to this – For some it has been a time to reinvent and rediscover oneself catching up on what they always wanted to do but never had the time to – like cooking, reading, movies and pursuing their passions. For others, it has been the most dreaded period of their lives where they have lost jobs, went in for salary cuts, shut down businesses, lost their loved ones and slipped into a depressive state. While sooner or later we will all come out of this phase when the virus goes away, what remains to be seen is what will we come out to?

Post Covid, we will be entering a new world and

nothing will ever be the same again. Like they say – it will be a NEW NORMAL. And the new normal will be a new life with a new meaning, where we will never take life for granted ever again. All those things around us we never valued before, will suddenly be the most valuable. Friends and family will be precious, time will be cherished, and hopefully we will learn to live without a lot of things we always hankered for but never needed. Social distancing will be a given, the frills and fancies will be gone, lifestyles will have to be altered and toned down, and travel won't be the same again. This is the way of nature – you mess with it, and it gets back to you with a vengeance. Unfortunately, it had to be this pandemic which knows no class, creed, borders, religion, that shook us out of an ungrateful life that we all led in the most credulous manner. Sad, but true...

I hope this period has taught us some lessons that we don't need to run after things we can do without. There is a lot of stuff we have learnt to live without, and our lives were just fine. In fact, life is simpler, less complicated and less pretentious. Hopefully, before my next edit note, we would have all come out of our exile, into the NEW WORLD, learning to cope with the NEW NORMAL. Until then, stay safe.

Ruchika Mehta, Editor

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CROCS AND PC TO DONATE FOOTWEAR TO INDIAN HEALTHCARE WORKERS

In association with actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas, the casual footwear brand, Crocs, will be donating 10,000 pairs of footwear to healthcare professionals in Kerala, Maharashtra, Haryana and Karnataka, in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis. The duo have also announced a 10,000 pair donation for healthcare workers in The United States. Crocs shoes are designed with Croslite material that helps provide all day comfort.



THE ULTIMATE URBAN SPORT WATCH BY BVLGARI

Italian luxury brand, Bvlgari, has launched an urban, casual, sport watch in an ode to the label's cosmopolitan spirit. The new watches in the 'Bvlgari Bvlgari Cities Special Edition 2020' collection are inspired by one of nine cities — Rome, Tokyo, Dubai, Paris, London, Ibiza, Milan, Mexico City and New York — that have hosted Bvlgari in the past. Significantly, each City Edition boast of 12 artistic and youthful prints.

FENDI FAB FLAP BAGS FOR SUMMER

Add a vintage twist to your style with the new FENDI FAB, a flap bag featuring a new squared FF logo buckle designed by Creative Director Silvia Venturini Fendi. A part of the Spring/Summer 2020 Collection, the feminine crossbody leather bags have the traditional gold buckle or a more glamorous crystals buckle version, which makes them the ideal accessory for casualwear as well as elegant formals. The colour palette ranges from pop hues, such as acid green and yellow, to natural shades like pale pink, black and brown.



NUMI PARIS COMES TO INDIA

It's India calling for NUMI Paris which has just launched its products in the subcontinent. The French eyewear brand has come up with the global collection 2020 of sun and optical eyewear, with impeccable craftsmanship and exceptional attention to detail. The extensive range of eyewear has been designed to suit any occasion.



THE GOOD SAMARITANS



Dr Aneel Kashi Murarka



Dr Aneel Kashi Murarka and Sidhaant Murarka

numerous welfare activities for the society. He says “I am not doing this to get any mileage. I am doing it for my own solace; rather, I am trying to give back to society what I have got from society”.

It’s an encouraging trend to see philanthropists like Dr Murarka are investing more time and energy in building their own social organisation with their own capital, to be able to meet the growing expectations from the society and masses. Despite his hectic business commitments, he spearheads his social organisation Ample Mission founded by him along with his son Sidhaant Murarka, created it in a very different

The objective of philanthropy is to impact people’s lives positively and in turn evolve a better society and nation. Philanthropy for the sake of philanthropy is of no use at all

DR ANEEL KASHI MURARKA HE BELIEVES IT IS EVERY MAN’S OBLIGATION TO PUT BACK INTO THE WORLD AT LEAST THE EQUIVALENT OF WHAT HE TAKES OUT OF IT

Dr Aneel Kashi Murarka is a man on various missions in pursuit for betterment of the under privilege, seeking social justice to the deprived and marginal communities and bringing about systemic change in society. Philanthropist like him are successful in creating major change and impact in the life of people for betterment. He re-affirms “One needs to be true towards goals and missions, then the desired change can be achieved within a definite time period.” Today, he is the Managing Director of Mirachem Industries, a name to reckon with in the Asian textile markets as a leading producer of speciality chemicals – and is not too far to making its presence felt across the globe.

So the question is how the wealthy individuals can be motivated to share their resources in ways that make a difference to the lives of the less fortunate, and lead to progress in society, rather than merely passing them on to the next generation. The Mumbai based Industrialist, Philanthropist and Founder of Ample Mission Dr Aneel Kashi Murarka is one such Good Samaritan. He is widely followed on Social Media platforms for his inspirational work and thoughts. He is a multi-facet persona – Humanitarian, Social Worker and Film Producer, actively involved in overseeing his

format from traditional functionality of Trusts or Foundations. As the founder, he is directly involved in all the matters and allocation of funds, also execution of ample number of social projects for across Indian sub-continent, awareness campaigns and direct-action initiatives for masses. These include projects for betterment of fellow beings in the field of Education, employment creation, poverty and hunger elimination, inclusiveness of marginal communities, producing short public awareness films on urgent social issues and organising award shows to recognise the unsung heroes of the society as role models for youth.

Contrary to popular belief, philanthropy does not come naturally to the rich. Often it is the result of a human heart, an empathetic attitude and a god-fearing DNA. It’s evident that Good Samaritans like Aneel Murarka and his son Sidhaant are taking philanthropic decisions based on mind and heart, and are moving away from funding-only roles to becoming active collaborators for betterment of people. Aneel has realised the importance of giving over the years. “The objective of philanthropy is to impact people’s lives positively and in turn evolve a better society and nation. Philanthropy for the sake of philanthropy is of no use at all”, he concludes.

PART OF THE FAMOUS DEPARTMENT STORE DYNASTY

JAMES BLOOMINGDALE

AND WIFE NATALIE WELCOME US INTO THEIR FABULOUS CALIFORNIAN HOME

'The pace of life here is very fast and the atmosphere is a world away from Texas'
– Natalie



Property executive James and wife Natalie at their home in Pacific Palisades on the edge of Los Angeles. A tropical courtyard garden (above right) features banana trees, agaves, cacti and palms – Natalie's favourite sight in California



Their first stab at romance was thwarted by a Texan tornado, but it was a proper whirlwind second time round for James Bloomingdale – of the famous US department store dynasty – and feisty Dallas belle Natalie Bond.

A mutual friend had suggested James look up PR professional Natalie while on a business trip to her hometown, but inclement weather put the kibosh on the blind date. But when Natalie moved to Los Angeles for a new job, she waited just three days before meeting him for dinner at the Sunset Tower Hotel.

They've been together ever since and married three years ago, with Natalie, who comes from a wealthy farming family, gradually adjusting to the rhythms of California living.

From her Mediterranean-style home in Pacific Palisades, a celebrity enclave tucked in between the ocean and the Santa Monica Mountains, Natalie oversees her growing business, a buzzy e-commerce fashion site called The SIL (Stuff I Love), where she curates one-of-a-kind, hard-to-find pieces created almost exclusively by female designers.

James's formidable grandmother, the late, great Betsy Bloomingdale, would have approved. Eternally smiling, always swathed in couture and dripping in Harry Winston jewels, legendary socialite and philanthropist Betsy was an icon of post-war style and queen of a dazzling world that stretched from the ateliers of Paris to the White House and on to Hollywood. With her sparkling social circle including Nancy Reagan, Joan Collins, Joan Rivers, Lauren Bacall and Nan Kempner, she was a

**'Although it sounds like a cliché,
I just love the palm trees. Simply
seeing them every morning puts me
in a good mood'**
– Natalie

consummate hostess, her lunches as lavish and meticulously choreographed as any blockbuster production.

Perhaps it was just as well that her businessman husband Alfred almost single-handedly invented the credit card, coming up with the so-called Dine and Sign concept, which meant the well-to-do on a night out no longer needed to carry large sums of cash.

Here his grandson James fondly recalls the grandparents who brought swagger and style to sun-soaked southern California.

James, your grandmother Betsy was one of the most elegant and iconic women of her time...

"As a child, I knew that she was somehow different from other grandmothers. She was always travelling and she always had interesting guests over for dinner. I remember how our family lunches at home were supposed to be 'informal', but I have to say they were simply perfect. As a child, of course, there were lots of things I didn't know about her and it was only when I grew up that I realised how special and unique my grandmother truly was."



Natalie, wearing a dress by Keehn Deutch – one of her favourite designers – greets us in the main sitting room accompanied by her adorable dogs (above). The period-style kitchen is watched over by the Virgin of Guadalupe (left). The dining room boasts sweeping views as well as 18th-century candlesticks by London-based silversmith Paul de Lamerie (below)



With her social circle including Joan Collins, Joan Rivers and Lauren Bacall, Betsy Bloomingdale was a consummate hostess



Sandstone paving leads to the clapboard pool house. Seen below is the fireplace, above which is a reproduction of Frederick Hart's *Creation of Mankind* tympanum from the Washington National Cathedral



What was she like as a person? Do you have any special memories of her?

"She was always telling the most fascinating stories. And she was really fun – she had a great sense of humour. She was also able to have a conversation about anything. Both she and her great friend, Nancy Reagan, were assiduous readers of HELLO!'s Spanish counterpart HOLA!. Nancy had a subscription and every week she would pass it on to my grandmother. They would spend hours commenting on everything in the magazine. I was surprised that they knew almost everyone in it and how excited they'd be whenever a new issue arrived. She donated all those HOLA!s she had collected to the public library in Los Angeles."

Tell us about your grandfather Alfred...

"His brilliant idea revolutionised the lives of people everywhere. It all started one night when he went out to dinner with some friends and he'd forgotten his wallet. I still remember that his Diners Club card was number 0000 0000 0000 0001."

'My grandmother and her friend Nancy Reagan were avid readers of HELLO!'s Spanish counterpart'
- James



Sandstone paving leads to the clapboard pool house (above). The drinks cabinet houses artworks and Milanka tequila shot glasses (right)

Natalie, what has it been like for you to become part of a famous family like the Bloomingdales?

"It really was such an honour. The Bloomingdales well and truly revolutionised the business world in a remarkable way. Likewise, I'm also very proud to have been born into a family like the Bonds."

Tell us how did you go about decorating your home?

"Slowly! I'm not the kind of person who can do lots of things at the same time. I like to think carefully about each of the spaces and I always pay attention to all the little details. Fortunately, I got help from the interior designer Amy Meier. She understands perfectly my tastes and ideas and I fully trust hers."

How do you find living in LA?

"The pace of life here is very fast and the atmosphere is a world away from Texas. Although it sounds like a cliché, I just love the palm trees. Simply seeing them every morning puts me in a good mood. Everyone talks about the ocean, the climate, but for me there's nothing more beautiful in Los Angeles than the palm trees. However, I have to say that I do miss Texas a lot. Over time, I've become more nostalgic."

You have always been involved in the world of fashion. Do you consider yourself a fashionista?

"I'd never describe myself as such although I do



'The Bloomingdales truly revolutionised the business world in a remarkable way'
— Natalie



Natalie, here wearing an elegant two-piece by Jane Pendry, loves fashion – a trait she had in common with James's late grandmother Betsy Bloomingdale, who was considered one of the world's best-dressed women. "She was a truly unique woman," remembers James. Seen above is the garden, where there's space for alfresco dining. Pacific Palisades, one of America's most expensive neighbourhoods, counts stars like Ben Affleck, Hilary Swank and Steven Spielberg among its residents

love fashion. I love discovering new talents in design or the art world, because in my former career in public relations my job was to be their voice and to promote their work and tell their stories.

"My latest project, The SIL, is a vehicle: I want to shed light on the designers I admire most, as well as offer a way for customers who, like me, truly value finding pieces that nobody else has. My fashion selections are very specific and not everyone is going to understand them – which is perfectly okay by me. Each to his or her own!"

What might we find in your closet?

"Pieces by Tish Cox and Keehn Deutch, two of the brands that today define modern, classic style. Their designs are feminine and feel very comfortable, although they are unconventional, and even at times daring. I always end up wanting everything they come up with."

Have you thought about launching your own clothing line?

"Not really. There are so many women creating incredible brands and I admire their creativity. But I'm much better being on the other side of the counter!"

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MAKE-UP: PAULY BLANCH



BOY WONDER!

MEEZAN IS CONFIDENT PRIYADARSHAN'S HUNGAMA 2 WILL CREATE THE RIGHT NOISE. AKASH NIHALANI CHATS WITH THE HANDSOME ACTOR

Talent runs in his veins. Son of actor Jaaved Jaffrey and grandson of veteran Jagdeep, Meezan impressed with his debut film, Sanjay Leela Bhansali's production Malaal. The love story with Sharmin Segal won him hordes of young fans. The actor is now exploring yet another facet of his personality with Priyadarshan's Hungama 2. Excited about the future, Meezan reveals why the camera brings out the best in him...

Belonging to a film family, how was your childhood?

My family kept us children (Meezan, Abbas and Alaviaa) away from the filmi life. They weren't against it. But they never pushed us towards it. However, they were only too happy to support me when I wished to join the industry.

How did that happen?

One day I just ran into Sanjay Leela Bhansali while he was doing a costume trial for Bajirao Mastani. He told me, "You should become an actor." A week later, he revealed that he wanted to launch me with his production Malaal

(directed by Mangesh Hadawale). Then I told my parents (Jaaved and Habiba Jaffrey) about it.

Malaal won you praise. What was the feeling like?

Unfortunately, Malaal didn't do too well. But people appreciated Sharmin (Segal) and my performance. It's your first film. You get attached to it and you want the movie to do well. There are hundreds of people, who've put in effort to make it. My job as an actor, is to give my best. I'm glad that people recognised that.

Your next release, Priyadarshan's Hungama 2, is eagerly awaited...

Priyadarshan is such a respected name. As a kid, I grew up watching his films. He actually quizzed me about his movies, the dialogue, the names of his characters... I knew all of it. This movie is a dream come true for me.

Actors and directors on your wish list...

I'm hoping to do an action movie. I want to work with Rohit Shetty, Rajkumar Hirani, Zoya Akhtar and Sanjay Leela Bhansali – now as a director. I'd love to work with Alia Bhatt, Ranbir Kapoor, Amitabh Bachchan saab and of course my father and grandfather.

What kind of characters would interest you?

My goal as an actor is to first establish myself. After that, it would be about enjoying the process and challenging myself with different roles. I want to do something like Ranveer Singh. He's played such diverse characters with interesting graphs.

'We are delighted to bring our son, Rio, into this world. Gracia is eager to take on the role of a big sister. She's very excited'
— Priyanka

'We surely have a lot of fond memories of our childhood together. Priyanka's father was my mathematics as well as sports teacher and I attended the same class as her brother'
— Suresh

SURESH AND PRIYANKA CHAUDHARY RAINA

THE ACE CRICKETER AND HIS ENTREPRENEUR WIFE WERE YET TO WELCOME THE ADORABLE NEW ADDITION TO THEIR FAMILY WHEN THEY HOSTED HELLO! AT THEIR DELHI ABODE. IN A CONVERSATION SPRINKLED WITH LOVE AND LAUGHTER, THE COUPLE OPENS UP ON THEIR CAREER GOALS, PARENTHOOD, THEIR DARLING GRACIA AND LITTLE RIO

A few weeks prior to bringing their second child into this world, cricketer Suresh Raina and his wife, Priyanka, hosted HELLO! at their residence. Seen in the backdrop of their living room is a wallpaper full of news clippings. Suresh wears a jacket by Sahil Aneja and shoes by Joe Shou. Priyanka looks stunning in a Siddhartha Tytler dress and jewellery by Vaitanika



The left-handed middle-order batsman looks dapper in a sporty jacket by Sahil Aneja

'It's fun and challenging working with Priyanka. We both have different mind-sets and a diverse approach to things. Being a sportsperson, I'm always focused on the bigger picture and the outcome. Priyanka is more hands-on and process driven'

– Suresh

'There's no captain in the house, we back each other up and ensure that we are always available for the other'

– Priyanka

Let's begin with your love story... You both grew up in the same neighbourhood in Muradnagar, Ghaziabad, and were friends since childhood... Please tell us more.

Priyanka: "Yes, we've known each other since we were kids. We share a lot of fond memories – from school, playing in the neighbourhood, our favourite street food vendors... We often reminisce about those days and laugh about the silly games we used to play and how much we miss our favourite ice-cream parlour!"

Suresh: "We have a lot of fond memories of our childhood together. Priyanka's father was my mathematics as well as sports teacher and I attended the same class as her brother. We were all close to each other. After I went to sports college, Priyanka moved out for further studies and then, to the Netherlands. I was busy with my cricket as that was my sole focus and passion, at that time. Years later, we bumped into each other at the Mumbai Airport. We kept in touch and, here we are today!" (Smiles)

P: "It was a chance reunion of sorts and we re-connected. As for marriage, we didn't even have it in mind! But somehow, everything fell into place."

How do you complement each other? Are you vastly different as individuals?

P: "We are very different yet similar. We both like to go about our day in an organised manner. Suresh is extremely dedicated and disciplined, someone who can seamlessly juggle his career and family. I'm more involved with the family. His work involves quite a bit of travelling, but when he's home, the time he spends with the family is precious. As for me, I've moved countries, worked as an IT consultant, banker and now, I'm an entrepreneur. Somehow, everything I've done has been a passion project for me and I've been able to use my voice to stand for something that's close to my heart."

What's a typical day at home like for the two of you?

S: "If I'm not on the field, I make sure to spend adequate time exercising and working out. Fitness is my mantra. But, I make it a point



Priyanka, the ever-doting mother who also happens to be an entrepreneur and philanthropist, is radiant in a floral dress by Siddhartha Tytler



The cricketer says his professional journey has been hard yet rewarding. 'There's a sense of pride and victory,' Suresh adds

to prioritize and spend time with my family. Meanwhile, Priyanka balances the role of an entrepreneur and a mother perfectly.”

P: “There’s no captain in the house, we back each other up and ensure that we are always available for the other. This year has been crazy, but we’ve managed to keep everything on track. I’ve had my hands full with my latest venture, Maaté – a natural baby care brand that we launched in September 2019 – and work for our NGO, the Gracia Raina Foundation (GRF). Our daughter, Gracia has also started school, and we’ve just welcomed our second child!”

Please tell us a bit about little Gracia and the adorable new addition to your family, Rio...

P: “When Suresh is home, all his attention and love are for Gracia – she has him wrapped around her tiny fingers! He likes to take her swimming and they spend a lot of time outdoors. And we are delighted to bring our son, Rio, into this world. Gracia is eager to take on the role of a big sister. She’s very excited and understands that this is a wonderful new addition to our family. She’s looking forward to new beginnings!” (Smiles)

How would you describe motherhood?

“It comes with a lot of adjustments, but in the end, it’s very rewarding! It has taught Suresh and me to see life from a completely different perspective. We learn a lot on a daily basis, on how to go about life with patience and gratitude. Gracia has been our moral teacher. While we teach her new things every day and deal with her innocent questions, we also take a lot away from our conversations with her. It is how we relax after a hectic day.”

What inspired you to launch your own baby care brand?

P: “Maaté was always in the works for me. We started working on it in January 2017. Gracia was seven months old and like any new mother, I was keen on giving her the best care. One fine day, we decided to start this brand and bridge the gaps in expectations and reality. Following in-depth interactions with doctors, formulation experts and manufacturers, we found a good team that could relate to our philosophy. Inspired by Ayurveda, the brand turns to rich ancient practices and wellness solutions to provide the best care to a child. The term ‘Maaté’ means ‘mother’ in Sanskrit and the brand stands for how a mother nurtures her child. Our team consists of working mothers, who are trained in herb extraction, blending and storage techniques. Maaté also inducts rural women, enabling them to support their families.”

You and Suresh founded the GRF in 2017. Please share with us the kind of philanthropic work that your foundation engages in...

“The idea is to work closely with women and adolescent girls to empower them with knowledge about their reproductive and sexual health, so they are able to make better health decisions. In the last two years, GRF worked extensively to raise awareness on these subjects. We provide a platform where women and adolescents can easily interact with health experts about their concerns. We run several programs like ‘RightAge’ at the school and college level on the topic of adolescent health

‘One may have several opinions about you, but what you take out of it is what matters. I’ve been lucky to have the support of many legendary people, who have helped me stay focused and on my path’

– Suresh

‘Parenthood has taught Suresh and me to see life from a completely different perspective. We learn a lot on a daily basis, on how to go about life with patience and gratitude’

– Priyanka

and ‘EveryMother’ in hospitals, urban slums and prisons for women.

“I’ve had the chance to interact with women, hear their stories and let them know that help is available if they have the right knowledge. It has been a challenge as not many want to open up on such issues, but once they do, they realise there are endless possibilities for them. I decided to work for and stand by women because I want them to be able to claim their rights and have a dignified existence.”

And, you also have your own radio talk show, The Priyanka Raina Show...

“When I became a mother, I realised there was a lot more that I needed to know, about myself and what changes to expect. I was not prepared, but luckily for me, I had all the help I could have asked for. There are so many women who don’t have the means to basic rights. It was the primary reason for starting GRF. I’ve been lucky to tie-up with various channels, doctors and even a radio show to get my message out there.”

Suresh, from leading Uttar Pradesh U-16s to becoming the first Indian batsman to hit a century in all three formats of international cricket and holding myriad records in your IPL career (first to reach 5,000 runs, maximum catches), you’ve come a long way indeed...

“The journey has been hard yet rewarding. Like every other sportsperson, you need to work hard to reach the top. And once you do, it’s a great feeling – the adrenaline, the rush... you see your hard work pay off. It was a great feeling when they announced that I was the first batsman to reach 5,000 runs with the maximum catches. There’s a sense of pride and victory. When you work hard, it pays off and the results show.”

But, a Ranji coach once called you a “reluctant cricketer”. How do you deal with such comments?

“Criticism is constructive – that’s always been my philosophy. I don’t let negative opinions get to me. One may have several opinions about you, but what you take out of it is what matters. I’ve been lucky to have the support of many legendary people, who have helped me stay focused and on my path. I’ve had people who wouldn’t agree with my ways and my game. But, introspection and self-improvement is something

that gets you through and helps you improve yourself with each passing day.”

And how is it to work with Priyanka as an entrepreneur?

“It’s fun and challenging. We both have different mind-sets and a diverse approach to things. Being a sportsperson, I’m always focused on the bigger picture and the outcome. Priyanka is more hands-on and involved in the details. As a mother, she adds a lot to the brand. While I’m a result-driven entrepreneur, Priyanka is more process-driven. So, we add very distinctive qualities to our businesses.”

Please tell us about your milestones, professionally and personally...

S: “Our lives have been very fulfilling, so far. We are full of gratitude for our achievements and consider our family to be a blessing. Every day that I find myself contributing to my family and my game is a new milestone. Professionally, there are many moments that are close to my heart, but winning the World Cup in 2011 is special.”

P: “I’m thankful for everything that we’ve achieved so far. Watching Gracia and Suresh play together makes me content. Gracia helped me prepare the nursery to welcome Rio! (Smiles) Professionally, be it the GRF or Maaté, every time I meet a happy mother, when she tells me how I’ve been able to contribute to her life, it gives me immense joy. It’s my assurance that I’m doing things right!”

Besides cricket, what are your other passions, Suresh? Priyanka wrote in one of her Insta posts that you are good singer and a great cook...

(Laughs) “Music is a big part of my life. I enjoy singing and I’ve also done a jingle for the radio! That was fun. Music began as a hobby, but I’ve dabbled with instruments, too – I’ve also tried my hands at the saxophone!”

“Cooking, yes, I love food. I love exploring different cuisines and I enjoy experimenting in the kitchen. So, that’s something I do whenever I have time in my hands.”

Priyanka, your Instagram blog is like a travel diary...

“I used to be a travel ninja but, of course, those were the days when I was single! (Smiles) I love exploring different cultures, cuisines and languages. I’ve travelled to over 40 to 50 countries so far, across the continents. I feel travelling broadens your horizons and enlightens you in many different ways. Speaking of memorable vacations, I went to Curacao in the Caribbean for my best friend’s wedding, which was special. Santorini we went for our honeymoon, and Turkey and Greece are our go-to places after becoming parents.”

On your bucket list...

P: “Driving a vintage car in Cuba, flying a Cessna, working on self-healing and meditation in the lap of nature...”

S: “Learning to cook my favourite dish with the locals in the mountains of Turkey, getting my boat licence next summer, giving back to society and supporting sports talent in India.”

INTERVIEW: SREEMITA BHATTACHARYA
PHOTOS: ANIL CHAWLA
STYLING: AMBER TIKARI



Shannon K

As her soundtracks garner over 15 million views, the young singer and songwriter – daughter of Kumar Sanu – opens up to HELLO! on her melodious journey thus far

Please share a bit about your musical heritage. We believe, not just your father, even your grandfather, Pashupati Bhattacharya, was a vocalist and composer...

“Yes, my Grandpa was a great composer and he used to sing and compose classical music. Dad used to play harmonium and tabla apart from singing, when he was young. I’ve heard all these things from my family and it’s quite inspiring. I’m so proud to be a part of this family – as you know, I’m their foster child and I don’t have music in my blood. I’m so thankful to dad who encouraged me to sing, otherwise I don’t think I’d have been able to sing today because I had a lisping problem. Also,

I was too much of an introvert to face the audience while performing.”

Tell us about your musical journey thus far – the path that led you to train under the legendary Eric Vetro...

“My musical journey has been like a roller coaster ride. Over the course of time, I got to learn a lot from my vocal coaches and from the artistes I collaborated with. I’ve learnt a lot from Eric Vetro and Billy Purnell. They helped me grow as an artiste. I guess the goal is to always keep learning.”

How did *A Long Time* and the association with American record producer Jason “Poo Bear” Boyd come about?

“It was back in December 2017 when I

acquired the courage to email Poo Bear for a collaboration. Luckily, he saw the email and we met. He complimented my voice and singing – he saw some talent in me and decided to collaborate on a song, which was titled *A Long Time*! It was like a dream come true because it happened so fast! I was recording in the first week of January. I clearly remember praying before my recording. I was nervous, mostly because he didn’t give me the song to listen or learn, prior to the recording. He asked me to sing directly on the mic and I did. It was definitely an experience for me! I was just 16-years-old and it was an achievement getting praised by such a great producer!”

You also wrote the lyrics for the *Give Me Your Hand*, which features stars like David Arquette, Ed Westwick and Freddie Smith to name a few...

“I’ve always maintained a little diary, where I pen my experiences and feelings in a poetic way. I guess that practice led me to professional songwriting. I was also inspired by my younger sister, Annabel, who’s an extraordinary songwriter and author. I remember when we first had this idea of writing a song on bullying, based on our personal experiences, we just knew what we wanted to say. We wanted to connect with young people like us as well as the elders, who got bullied at some point in their lives but never opened up about it. All the actors loved the song, especially the lyrics, and that’s how they chose to be in the video, directed by Fernando Ferro. I support anti-bullying charities like *Love is Louder* and *Boo to Bullying*.”

From international music giants, such as Jasper Leak and Infinity, to Sonu Nigam back in India, you’ve worked with them all. Please share some of your experiences from these collaborations...

“Working with Poo Bear was absolutely amazing. I never imagined myself working with such a great producer at 16, so it was truly an honour. I got to learn a lot of things from him as a songwriter and as an artiste. Kyle Townsend is an amazing producer, who has made some great tracks for artistes like Mariah Carey, Ariana Grande and Diane Warren. It was so easy for me to connect with his music and personality. For me, my music isn’t about looking for people who are guaranteed hit-makers. It’s about finding yourself first as an artiste and then collaborating with those who understand each key of my thoughts and do justice with them. It was an honour to work with such legends, whose songs I’ve always loved listening to. It was overwhelming to have Mr Nigam sing *OMT*, written by me and Annabel. He loved the song and took it to another level! I’ve heard his songs since childhood, and I never thought I’d get to sing with him! It was incredible working with him.”

Music icons you look up to...

“Apart from my dad, I look up to the legendary Whitney Houston, Celine Dion and Mariah Carey. These are icons I wish to sing like, and I hope to achieve at least a little of their excellence in singing.”

THE MAN WHO HAD EVERYTHING RISHI KAPOOR

'Ranbir has often confessed being a little afraid of his father, and I am not surprised. Yes, Rishiji is different, he has that strictness. He is not an easy father. But that's the kind of father Rishi himself had'

— Neetu Kapoor

**SANGEETA WADHWANI
REVISITS HER ENCOUNTERS
WITH THOSE CLOSEST
TO THE LATE SUPERSTAR
OF POPULAR ROMANTIC
CINEMA TO PRESENT AN
INTIMATE PORTRAIT OF A
MUCH-LOVED ACTOR**



A still from the film, *Mera Naam Joker*

History has a strange way of repeating itself. Rishi Kapoor was first noticed as a gamine child actor in Raj Kapoor's *Mera Naam Joker*, and did a much-talked about bum flash in that first appearance, in a bathing scene. Ranbir Kapoor, his son, did the same in his debut movie, *Saawariyaa*. But here's the difference. Rishi Kapoor's debut film may have tanked at the BO, as did his son's debut – but it earned Rishi Kapoor a National Award for Best Child Artist in 1971. The film *Bobby*, the actor often confessed, felt more like his commercial debut in cinema. Ranbir's debut with Sanjay Leela Bhansali did put him on the map, but his journey – rooted in a formal acting education from Lee Strasbourg, gained far more critical momentum than his father's, over time, because in Ranbir's era each story and each actor had to constantly break new ground. So Ranbir played a convincing and charming deaf and mute 'hero' in *Barfi*, opposite Priyanka Chopra (who played the autistic Jhilmil opposite him), and a far more ruthless heartbreaker than his father ever played, in *Bachna Ae Haseeno* – the title and the song, a resonant revisitation of his father's blockbuster hit from *Hum Kisi Se Kum Nahin*.

Rishi Kapoor had a pristine, vanilla presence onscreen, with brandy in his eyes and ruby lips. He became an archetype in the 70s of the dancing, romancing, blue-eyed hero, perhaps somewhat

boxed into his own image, in a time when formulas ruled the marquee. It must have been a bit predictable for the uber-talented actor to be cast in the same mould right from the 70s to his last role as a romantic lead opposite Juhi Chawla in 2000. That's 30 years of running around the trees, creating iconic cinematic imagery in such unforgettable films like *Kabhi Kabhi*, *Naseeb*, *Amar Akbar Anthony*, *Chandni*, *Prem Rog*, and those Naseer Hussain/Subhas Ghai musical blockbusters like *Hum Kisi Se Kum Nahin* and *Karz*. (I swear I actually saw the boredom in Rishi Kapoor's eyes in one romantic sequence, when he was twirling the heroine in some exotic location to some song – for he must have been well into middle age by then, and was still being asked to be chocolate boy!)

Yes, the Kapoor legacy – and the Show – must go on. Over the years, I have been lucky to have had soulful conversations with the anchor of the Kapoor household, Neetu Kapoor. The late Rishiji could not have asked for a more blessed life partner and soulmate. Also, their journeys were on par. Neetu Singh was cast as a child star in *Do Kaliya* – and this debut also earned her a National Award, handed over by no less than the PM! She was a fatherless child, working several shifts a day to support her mom, and juggling school as best as she could. When she married her screen soulmate at age 22,

she was quite done with greasepaint and studios, having made 70 films in seven years... she was happy to revel in raising a family.

Returning to our encounter, Neetu Kapoor suggested we chat over a cup of tea after we wrapped up a stunning photoshoot featuring her and daughter Riddhima, for a festive special in HELLO! Chatting in Krishna Raj, the family bungalow in Pali Hill, Neetu confessed that she had nothing against women who wanted to be busy, but "I am just savouring life, as it comes. I travel a lot – with my husband or with my friends. I am never in Mumbai. Like this past year, I have had eight trips – twice to London, twice to Dubai, with Cannes in between..."

What made this conversation especially prescient, was when she talked of her passion for healthy living, something that just never rubbed off on her food-loving husband.

Even when I had bumped into Rishi and Neetu years ago at a renowned Awadhi cuisine restaurant, Dum Pukht, in a suburban seven-star hotel, she had passed on her contact details and we had connected on her passion for healthy cooking and exercise.

"Every issue is obesity related today. Touchwood my kids know the meaning of food. They know where to stop. But there are people in my family I cannot stop... it's a very Kapoor thing. At lunch they will ask, 'what's for dinner?' And at dinner they'll ask, what's for breakfast?" she laughed. For her, an evening snack would be two walnuts, five almonds, and a few sunflower seeds. She shared, "in our rotis, we mix everything; bajra, jawar, whole wheat. We also prefer to have unprocessed brown rice. In the morning, I will have a poached egg, with just a little cheese dropped on it. Diet food can be interesting, it doesn't have to be boring."

While hubbie Rishi Kapoor was advancing his career, it was Neetu who was setting frameworks – values, lifestyles – for Ranbir and Riddhima. She confessed, "Ranbir has often confessed being a little afraid of his father, and I am not surprised. Yes, Rishiji is different, he has that strictness. He is not an easy father. But that's the kind of father Rishi himself had... they were not like buddy buddy, not having drinks together. There was a kind of respect. He referred to Raj-ji as 'Sir' when they were shooting. So Rishi is like that with Ranbir. So Ranbir is careful not to say or do anything to upset or anger his dad."

Living with a Kapoor man came with its challenges, and anybody who was a film buff would remember the famous *Stardust* cover story written by Ingrid Albuquerque as a gift for Neetu Singh when she was getting married. It was a cover story warning the young Neetu that there will be

PHOTO: RYAN MARTIS



Ranbir, Rishi, Riddhima, Neetu and Samara make a classic family portrait. Rishi and Neetu are captured in a light-hearted moment (inset)



'Rishi showed me the world! Our honeymoon extended over Japan, Vegas, Singapore; his friends had parties for us wherever we went. It was truly grand. Rishi was a big bully then, luckily now, 28 years later, the tables have finally turned and it's me who is calling the shots!'
– Neetu Kapoor, in HELLO!

rough edges to negotiate, demands to be prepared for, and the need to earn the love of an extended artistic family.

Neetu wanted so much for her dear husband to take better care of himself. She sighed, "Till today I have not been able to put that thing in his head... what is the right way to eat! To work on yourself! Now, I have given up... so much time has gone by, I feel let him enjoy. *Kuch bhi kaho, kuch bhi karo...*" she had laughed.

While Rishi was undergoing treatment for his leukemia in New York, Neetu confessed on *Times Now* that she nearly had a nervous breakdown just trying to figure out his medication. The couple flew out of Mumbai the very next day after his diagnosis was announced, and then had to

stay in NYC for nearly a year because the treatments had long time gaps between them. Rishi needed to be monitored on a regular basis for platelet counts, and it was too risky for him to fly in and out long distances. But Rishi being Rishi, confessed that he was missing his work! He was missing the ambience of the set, the camaraderie that is born there, the joy of creating a character. Well past his salad days (no pun intended), Rishi was reinventing himself as a 'character' actor.

He still had films on hand when the curtains came tumbling down. At 67, he still made miniature cinema in that viral video, where he is encouraging a young doctor to pursue his dream as a singer. Yes, the Show Must Go On in the Kapoor family. If you see *The End*, you will also see many new Beginnings. Little Samara, Riddhima's daughter, clearly carries the Kapoor love of entertaining. We noticed she cried more than a bucket when nobody was watching her during our shoot with Neetu and Riddhima, but blossomed at home when her *naani* made her sing all of Ranbir's hits and demonstrate the *Surya Namaskar*. Will Samara be her late grand-dad's pride and joy, like Kareena was for her grandfather? Only time will tell...

‘Change begins with the mindset’

Taslima Nasrin

THE MULTIPLE AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR DOESN'T MIND LIVING IN EXILE, AS LONG AS HER PUBLISHED WORKS FIND HOMES. IN CONVERSATION WITH HELLO!, SHE TALKS ABOUT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, HER BRAND OF LITERARY ACTIVISM AND 'THE UTOPIA' - WHICH IS ALL THAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR

Over two decades away from your homeland, Bangladesh, has it in any way become easier for you to come to terms with the description: “writer in exile”? Is it a little easier being Taslima Nasrin?

“Honestly, I don’t mind when people refer to me as an author or writer in exile. I believe, in a way it puts the message across that freedom of expression is still a luxury in many parts of the globe. Given the kind of attention span and memory retention people have in this fast-paced world, it makes sense to keep reiterating the fact that since time immemorial, writers have been targeted for speaking out against those who truly hold all the ‘power’.

“Also, I have always supported the cause of freedom of movement. Every individual has the right to live in any part of the world that they choose to – of course as long as they abide by the laws and regulations of that country. I have been banished from my own country for my written works, my words.

“It’s easier being Taslima Nasrin in India because our cultures, languages and customs are somewhat similar. But, here too – in West Bengal – my works have been banned. Yes, I have been living in exile for decades now, but I do wish to return to Bangladesh someday. I mean, who wouldn’t want to return home!”

Do you consider yourself to be a true “changemaker” in the world of literature?

“See, I consider ‘change’ to be a very subjective term. I had studied and practised medicine in Bangladesh – I had worked in the gynaecology as well as the anaesthesia departments of reputed establishments. The women I came across each and every day inspired my sense of feminism. Back when I started writing, the change I sought was in the patriarchal mindsets of people. I wanted to stop female oppression and religious bigotry. While there has been a visible change in society, my goals remain the same. I write for peace – for women and children. I write to challenge gender biases, inequality and religious fundamentalism. I believe only education can bring about a change in society. Reading books opens up the mind to newer, better possibilities. If my words have created more awareness on some of the most pressing causes in society, I consider myself to be a changemaker.”

How would you define “power” in your domain of literary activism?

“For an author, ‘power’ denotes the ability to have their written words read. And understood, by as many people as possible. I feel powerful when a reader comes up to me and says that my works have empowered them to think beyond. It inspires me when my readers feel inspired to fight for themselves and the world around.

“My works have been published in over 30 languages across the globe. But my homeland refuses to acknowledge me. They have banned me, blacklisted my books, sent me into exile. And by doing so, The Establishment has made me realise just how ‘powerful’ I am for they feel threatened by my written works.

“I don’t mind living in exile, at least allow my works to be published? Let my books find homes.”

Do you feel your works have led to a greater discourse on feminism, humanism and patriarchy, on a global scale?

“It truly warms my heart to see so many women – young and old alike – being vocal about the trials and tribunals they have been through, be it on Facebook, Twitter or any other social media platform. Women today are unafraid to take up the opposite sex on misogyny, religious tyranny, harassment or any form of oppression. Back when I started writing on these issues, in the 70s, few others had dared to take up such topics. It was all considered a taboo. The Establishment took offence when I wrote on feminism and sexual liberation. Women read my columns in one of the leading newspapers of Kolkata and immediately connected with my words because oppression continues to be a

reality in numerous households. Many women will connect with my struggles when they read *My Girlhood*, that’s just been published by Penguin – the English translation of my book, *Amar Meyebela*.

“But, today I feel proud that so many women have fought back with the MeToo Movement. There are more books on such ‘taboo topics’ and the world of cinema too supports the cause of women’s rights. The fact is,

in any domain, a lone fighter runs the risk of being disregarded or censored. But, if more people, including men, fight for basic human rights – no matter which gender – the world will be a better place to live in.”

Your words and your works have also contributed to challenging the male gaze in literature...

“I wouldn’t like to take sole credit for it. Several factors together have led to a slight change in the male gaze in literature or in cinema or even in society. I say ‘a slight change’ because crimes against women are still a reality, worldwide.

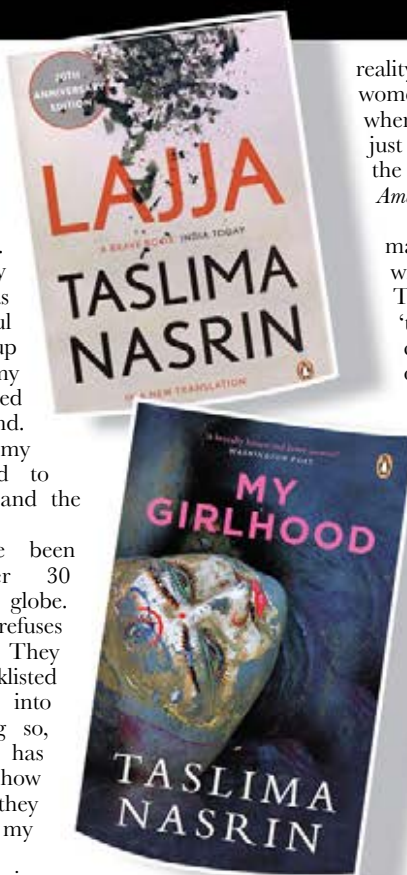
There’s a lot more to do if we truly want to bring about a change in the male mindset.”

A Charlie Hebdo commemorative edition finds pride of place in your home, on a wooden stand...

“Yes, a few years ago, I was invited to visit the Charlie Hebdo office in Paris and they had gifted it to me! While the tone of writing differs – theirs is a more satirical take on society and mine is a more direct and hard-hitting approach – I truly respect their works, their struggles. They fought for their freedom of expression, just like me.”

You often write about an ideal world that isn’t based on compromises. Please share more about this vision of an idyllic realm...

“It only makes sense that when we dream,



For an author, 'power' denotes the ability to have their written words read. And understood, by as many people as possible. It inspires me when my readers feel inspired to fight for themselves and the world around

Taslima's works have been published in over 30 languages across the globe

we envision the very best – be it for ourselves or the world at large. I dream of a society that isn't based on compromises, be it in terms of money, food or clothing. I believe in a secular society, where people are kind to each other. End of the day, isn't it the ideal, the utopia that we are all fighting for?"

And if you were called back to your homeland and allowed to live there in peace, what would you write about?

"I would continue writing on the same subjects and issues that I have been writing on. A lot remains to be done when it comes to human rights. It's why I became an author – to bring about a change in society. No matter where I live, I will continue on this path."

INTERVIEW: SREEMITA BHATTACHARYA

IN THE BOXING RING... COVID-19 VS SALMAN KHAN!

HE HAS FIXED THE ENEMY IN THE EYE, MANY A TIME. BUT SCREEN HEROICS RARELY HAVE TO DO WITH MICROSCOPIC VILLAINS THAT MULTIPLY WITHIN THE HUMAN SYSTEM, SABOTAGING IT. HELLO! CONNECTS WITH BOLLYWOOD'S ETERNAL 'BHAII', LOCKED DOWN IN HIS FARMHOUSE IN PANVEL, TO FIND HIM SELF-ISOLATING, ADVOCATING A 'SENSIBLE FEAR' AMONG HIS FAN BASE, AND WORKING ON NEW ANTHEMS WRITTEN FROM THE HEART

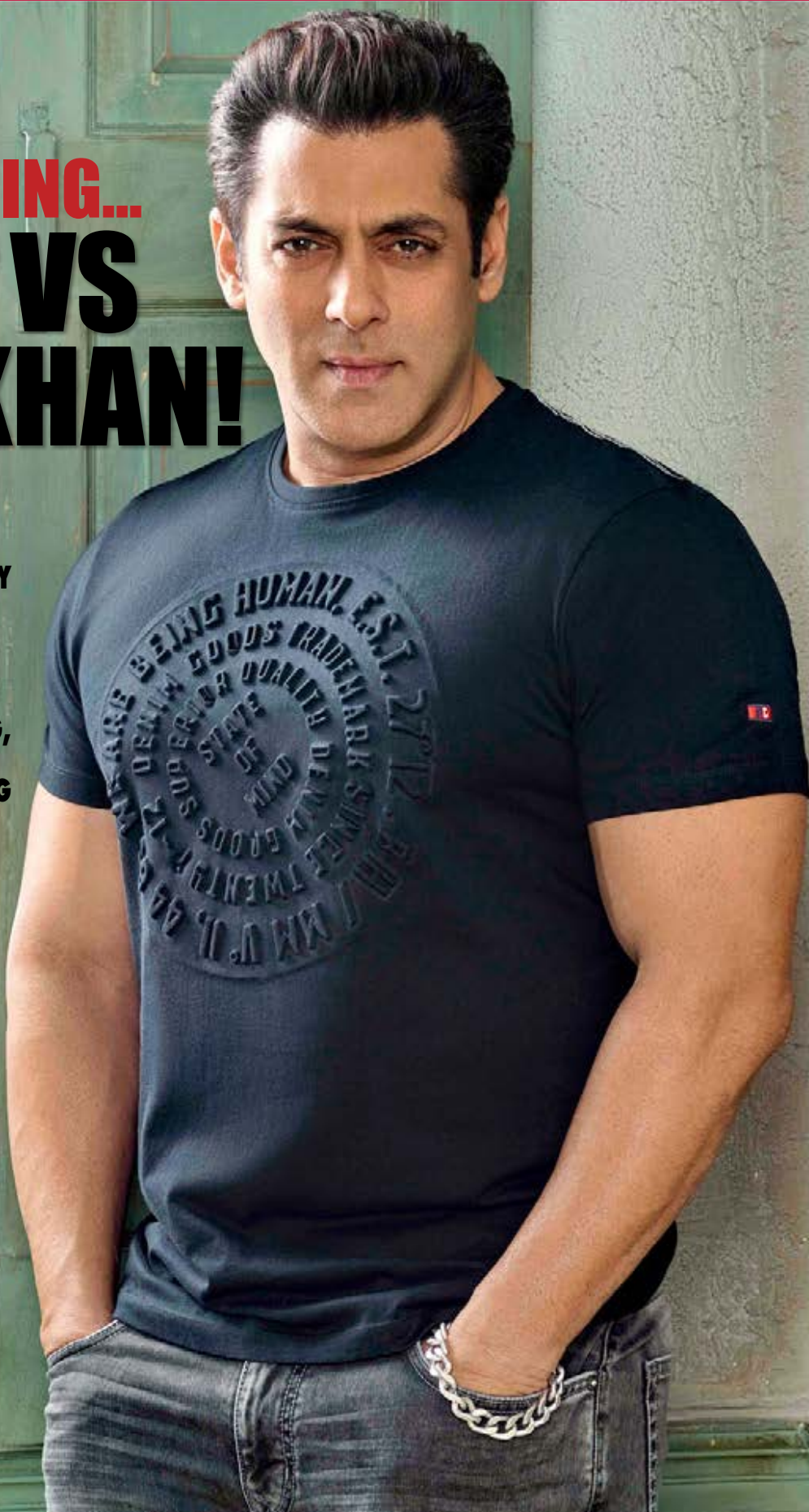
"Zindagi ka Big Boss shuroo ho gaya hai"

Salman 'Bhai' tells it like it is.

The seventh handsomest man in the world and undeniably India's perennial powerhouse hero, has conceded that this kind of enemy, you can't just sock in the eye. You got to hide. Be cautious. Be logical. Be Scared.

Machismo died with the Covid-19 virus's infiltration into the bloodstream of India. And it is India that Salman seeks to save. The 54-year-old actor who was supposed to shoot for *Radhe: Your Most Wanted Bhai*, has been self-isolating, ever since the lockdown was announced. Staying at his languid Panvel farmhouse, where, apart from his usual fitness routines, connecting with nature, hanging out with family – he has been writing songs and toying with creative ideas.

Pyar Karo Na, his current viral track, written and performed by him, is a clever pun on 'corona', and urges people: "*Pyaar karona, madad karona, sabr rakhona*: lines that express exactly what I feel we should be doing right now. We should actually go out of our





way to help the poor and needy who are the most affected with this lockdown. We also need to have patience and I'm sure we are all in this together and this shall pass, too," says Salman, earnestly. This song was 'born' at his farmhouse, but it was then processed in Mumbai. "We shot it on a phone and the music video was completely in place. I have two more songs ready and they are to be launched soon," he shares.

When one is as charismatic as a 100-crore-blockbuster star, it's clear a video can do without cinematic direction, storyboarding, lighting. But even in its minimalism, it captures a Salman few have seen before: Unshaved, deglammed, sweet-voiced, and a *desh-bhakt*. When one hears him sing, *Saare Jahaan Se Achcha*, one feels a deep sense of pain and irony at the religious divisive mood around us. Salman may be a Khan, but he is first and foremost the darling of a 1.3 billion strong nation. Half Maharashtrian, half Pathan, he belongs as much in front of a Lalbagh Ganesha as he does in any Mecca.

Equating the lockdown with a national mission, his lyrics go on to acknowledge the non-starry population who truly are heroic, be they doctors, nurses, the police, the army, the humble people in the essential good and services supply chain, store vendors and chemists.

BEING HUMAN: SALMAN STYLE

Keeping to the traditions of his philanthropic foundation, Being Human, once the nationwide lockdown was announced, Salman Khan ensured that his team transferred money directly into 25,000 daily wagers' bank accounts, a process that ensured each beneficiary was clearly identified with their ID proof. The superstar then transferred funds into the new accounts of another 7,000 daily wage workers of the film industry as provided to him by BN Tiwari, President of the Federation of Western Indian Cine Employees (FWICE).

More recently, Salman deposited funds directly into the bank accounts of around 90 vertically-challenged wage workers associated with the All India Special Artistes Association (AISAA), a wing of FWICE.

He has also arranged for ration and essential food supplies for thousands of people from different corners of the state.

PARTING NOTE

Concluding this interview, the star says, "To make sure everyone is safe from the virus, we should stay at home and keep ourselves busy with whatever we like. I want everyone to also respect the Covid-19 warriors – the doctors, nurses, police force, etc who are working relentlessly, risking their lives at large in order to keep us safe. Take care of the elders at home. Go out only if you genuinely need something urgently."

INTERVIEW: SANGEETA WADHWANI

'THE VIRUS' INTENT IS NOT TO KILL YOU...'

DECODING COVID-19 WITH

SADHGURU

THE MYSTIC SHEDS LIGHT ON ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO LOOK AT THE PANDEMIC, WHAT THE ULTIMATE MYSTIC LORD SHIVA WOULD THINK OF THIS MICROSCOPIC VIRUS, AND WHAT IMPORT IT HAS IN HUMAN HISTORY RIGHT NOW...

From a spiritual perspective Guruji, how do you feel the pandemic has asked human beings and human ecosystems to 'reinvent' the way they exist and co-exist?

"Now animals are saying, 'Let's make the planet great again!' Peacocks are dancing on a Mumbai street. From Punjab, Himalayan peaks can be seen for the first time in 20 years, as the smog has cleared. For a long time, we have infested this planet, slowly taking the life out of it. Every other creature on the planet is terrified of the human virus.

"Humanity should take a three-week break every year from polluting technologies – all machines off. This break can be made use of to turn inward. If everyone uses this time to upgrade themselves physically, mentally, emotionally and in terms of their competence, we would be living in a fantastic world.

"The virus is slowly bringing mortality home, into everyone's minds and hearts. Once you see that you are mortal, you will naturally put your life in order. I don't want to make comments on people's lifestyles, but many times it amazes me. Once I was in a mall in the United States and there were 20 kinds of instruments just to trim your nose hair! So this is the time to rejig our life and see: can we live with a little less? If you make it a law, it becomes ugly, but if it happens consciously, it is wonderful."

If you had to pen a few lines where this virus 'speaks' to us all on ways to reinvent...right from our mindset to recreating our reality, what kind of speech would this virus make?

"Actually, the virus would like to see that you don't learn anything new! It does not want you to produce some antibodies against it. See, maybe the virus was living in some other

creatures in the animal kingdom, but its habitat shrunk. So it decided to come to us as there are so many of us. Its intent is not to kill you but to find a new habitat to live. It is just that it lives so virulently that we cannot withstand it and collapse. But scientists are estimating in a few months' time, the virus will mutate itself into a milder version, so that it can easily live in our bodies. So the virus is not interested in teaching you anything. But this situation is making people conscious that they are here for a brief amount of time. The very soil you walk upon is also the body that is so valuable to you. If we realize this every moment of our life, we would definitely tread much more gently upon this planet."

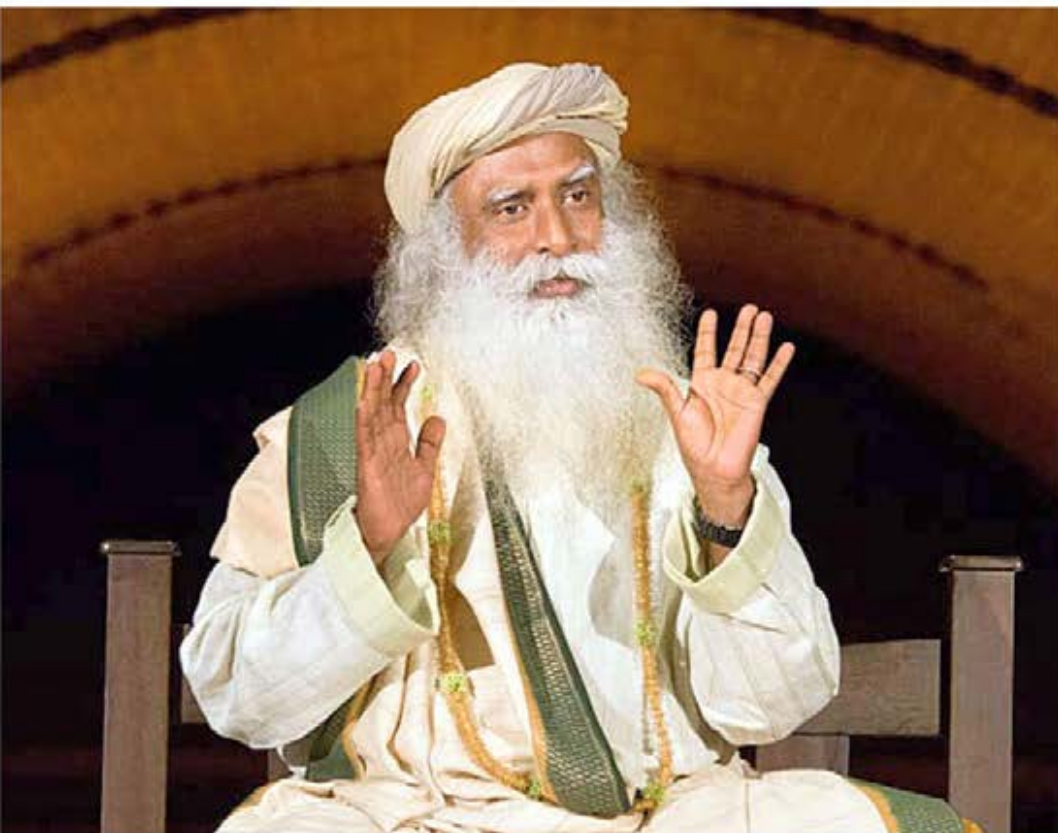
In our Indian societies, we somehow rally together during crisis time – a younger generation will go out and wait in grocery lines to bring groceries home for the extended family. In the West, where individualism is rife, it has been observed that older people have little care infrastructure. Do you feel the West will realise that individualism has limited appeal at some stage and in such circumstances?

"Don't imagine that every young Indian boy or girl is ready to pick up groceries for you. They are doing it because the economy compels it. Two or three generations ago, a family meant you, your spouse, children, parents, uncles, aunts, grandparents – a single family may have had 300-400 people. One important aspect to this was the economic binding in a family; one head of the family controlled all the economic power, so everyone stayed together because otherwise they would be destitute.

"Today everyone can go out, or even work from home, and earn money. There is no economic binding anymore. It is not just about the West. In India also, as more economic well being comes, people will opt to live alone more, because they cannot stand anyone. Today, family means husband, wife and children. If parents are very sick, sometimes they can visit you. Maybe in the West it has gone further; now a family is just one person – either a man or a woman – with a child. And people beyond a certain age are being left to fend for themselves; even those in community homes may get medical care but not necessarily an

PHOTO: ASHISH CHAWLA





'You must understand, the virus is also life and it is conducting itself very smartly right now. It has mutated itself into around 10 different strains. Even if you come up with a vaccine, it may only kill one of them'

'Lord Shiva is a Pashupati, the master of all life. He will not discriminate between you and a virus simply because it is smaller and you are bigger!'

– Sadhguru

is with life. You must understand, the virus is also life and it is conducting itself very smartly right now. It has mutated itself into around 10 different strains. Even if you come up with a vaccine, it may only kill one of them. So when it is really that smart, I think Shiva will bless it. He is a Pashupati, the master of *all* life. He will not discriminate between you and a virus simply because it is smaller and you are bigger.

atmosphere of inclusion.

"We must be sincere enough to admit that human families and societies are still need driven. If there are no needs it will fall apart. This is why it is very important to form a conscious society, where everyone is there by choice and a deep sense of inclusiveness. Many families still enjoy this but many are losing it, unfortunately."

What have been the most powerful revelations to you personally, about this pandemic? Since one of your biographical books says you are directly in touch with Mahadev, what has He shared about this occurrence, and its place in human history?

"That is a biography not an autobiography, so don't blame me! The nature of that which you call as 'Shiva' is fine with the virus. As long as the virus is dancing strong, he says, 'My blessings are there with you.' Because he



Seen top, Sadhguru has been busier than ever during this lockdown, addressing live *darshans* online – a leading voice in webinars. Here, he is seen addressing a live audience. Above, Sadhguru with Radha Jaggi. Seen left, Sadhguru talks to the internationally renowned filmmaker, Shekhar Kapur

That would not be fair. So you better get your brains in order, handle this responsibly and beat the virus. At this time, you must do social distancing just like Shiva; if everyone sat alone and meditated for 15 days, the virus would go. Not a government imposed lockdown but a responsible *Ekanth*."



INTERVIEW: SANGEETA WADHWANI
PHOTOS COURTESY: ISHA CENTRE, COIMBATORE

A portrait of Priya Paul, a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a dark blue and gold patterned saree with a gold border. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. She has gold earrings and a gold bangle on her right wrist. Her hands are resting on her lap, with red nail polish visible.

**'I'M COMMITTED TO DO WHATEVER
I CAN FOR MY TEAMS'**

PRIYA PAUL

HELLO! SPEAKS TO THE CHAIRPERSON OF APEEJAY SURRENDRA PARK HOTELS LIMITED TO ASSESS THE CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS THAT WILL DEFINE THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN THE NEAR FUTURE

The hospitality industry has been at the frontline once again, pitching in to help Covid warriors. How did the industry brace itself in the early days to meet the newfound challenges?

"We are party to and proud of the fact that the global and Indian hospitality industry is coming forth to help Covid warriors as well as the needy and the homeless. The restaurant and hospitality industry has used its collective strength to feed people. At the Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels, we started #THEParkHeartOfHope initiative wherein we are distributing wholesome meals and rations throughout the country to the truly needy in Bengaluru, Goa, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Mumbai. One of our key initiatives has also been the Neighbourhood Services wherein we are assisting the elderly in the neighborhood in five cities, where our hotels are offering medicines and supplies. A few of our hotels are also offering accommodation to medical staff, who are unable to go home. The social fabric is under stress and situations are evolving daily. The safety and security of both our guests and team members is of utmost importance to us and that has been the primary focus in the first few weeks. While the crisis was still evolving in February and March, we had a strategic preparedness and response plan in place. Body-temperature screening, adhering to strict safety and cleanliness guidelines by the government bodies and the WHO were actioned, provision of liquid hand-wash and alcohol-based sanitizers was made across the hotels."

'To start with, the promotion of local and state destinations should be our focus. Gradually, the promotion of cross-state travel and leisure can be explored and later for international travel and tourism'

What were your personal learnings in the aftermath of this sudden global development, one which no one was really prepared for?

"I have learnt new ways to keep my teams motivated. Also, I have been constantly taking stock with our leadership across the organization daily, to address any unexpected issues that may have arisen. In the meantime, with almost no revenues, we are examining every single cost that we incur."

With tourism taking a back seat in the coming months, what are the contingency

plans to save jobs in your industry?

"Next year will be challenging. As of now it is



Priya Paul is hopeful that hotels will slowly start welcoming guests once the lockdown is over

difficult to comment but I am committed to do whatever I can for my teams.”

How are you as a group planning to re-invent to be able to cope with current and future challenges?

“We are currently in a very fluid situation that is changing every day. Currently, out of 22 Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels, 11 hotels are operational. As we have strongly positioned restaurants in our hotels, our guests are confident about the food quality, strict hygiene, and safety with which we operate. In the current scenario, we have been able to build a strong foothold in the online food delivery business across cities while working with delivery partners. We are also looking at offering laundry services in select cities. Our teams are working on multiple scenarios to address the constantly changing environment. It is too early to share anything but we are evaluating various business and revenue models.”

How soon do you think we can inch back towards being able to welcome guests back at hotels?

“We are hopeful that the hotels will slowly start welcoming guests once the lockdown is over. Essential travel, including business travel, will commence first and I think driving holidays will see a strong growth, in the next few months. A big growth in travel will depend on aviation being back on track. I feel that our brand, Zone by The Park will bounce back sooner as it is well priced.”

What about restaurants? Do they have a future in this era of

social distancing?

“The concept of restaurants and bars hinges on social interaction. I know we are all looking at introducing new ways of cooking, dining and interacting with guests. Despite all the increase in home cooking, a restaurant will still have a place in people’s lives – be it for the food experience, a special occasions or for the sheer convenience. Restaurants will be back for sure.”

Tourism hubs have taken virtual initiatives such as city and museum tours to keep people interested in destinations. Has the hotel industry got any such digital ideas to promote itself through digital interactions?

“We at the Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels are constantly innovating and finding newer ways to re-connect with our audiences on digital platforms. We are driving ‘Anything But Ordinary’ campaigns like: #THEParkHeartOfHope – we are providing nation-wide support to the needy and healthcare workers, were party to the Hon’ble Prime Minister’s 9PM 9Min campaign, and switched on façade lights in a heart shape to be in solidarity with the corona-warriors. #StaySwell – sharing mindful wellness, fitness and beauty tips to help our customers remain sane in times of uncertainty. #FoodReimagined – sharing simple recipes curated by our chefs that people can make with limited resources at home. We also understand that people are constantly looking for a new form of entertainment. We have always ruled in our music and nightlife business and hence bought two initiatives in music: #SomeplaceElseLive – spreading positivity through music, we have collaborated with a repertoire of artists to perform Someplace Else’s Facebook page, bringing music to every household, every day from 7- 8 pm. #TheParkAquaSunset

‘All the stakeholders in Aviation, Tourism and Hospitality along with industry bodies with the support of Ministry of Tourism have been ideating and presenting the views to the ministry of finance to drive home the urgency of the action that is required to keep our industry alive and kicking’

– We have just recently launched mixtapes from the best artists that have collaborated with us, every Sunday at 5 PM. Our first set in less than a week was trending top 3 in chillout and 4th in the Electronica category in India (Mixcloud). It just goes to show, how our customers want something beyond the ordinary.”

What is the role that big business stakeholders have at this crucial juncture in order to keep the financial ship from sinking?

“All the stakeholders in Aviation, Tourism and Hospitality along with industry bodies with the support of Ministry of Tourism have been ideating and presenting the views to the ministry of finance to drive home the urgency of the action that is required to keep our industry alive and kicking. We all are working together and talking in one voice to navigate the current situation.”

How can business houses and governments work together in the new environment?

“In hospitality, many of our roles rely on physical presence to operate effectively and have high fixed costs attached. It will be great to create partnerships with state and the central governments, Ministry of Tourism, and all stakeholders to stimulate demand, first domestically and then internationally. To start with, the promotion of local and state destinations should be our focus. Gradually, as the situation evolves for the better, the promotion of cross-state travel and leisure can be explored and later for international travel and tourism.”

How is the Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Limited geared to revamp its functions to be able to survive these uncertain as well as adventurous times ahead of us?

“Even though we are 50 years old, we are extremely responsive not only to our customers but also to business situations and are able to adapt very quickly. I’m confident that we will be able to face the uncertainties with equanimity.”

INTERVIEW: SANGHITA SINGH



AJAY BIJLI

THE TOUGH GET GOING

HELLO! SPEAKS TO THE DYNAMIC CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF PVR LIMITED AND DISCOVERS A MAN WHO IS READY TO MARCH FORWARD WITH MILITARY ZEAL, DESPITE THE SLEW OF CHALLENGES THAT HIS INDUSTRY IS FACING CURRENTLY

What are some of the immediate challenges that were posed in the new COVID-19 climate that you had to take on?

"Nobody has ever experienced anything like what the world is going through right now – both from the point of view of a human crisis and from an economic standpoint. I don't think the world was prepared for anything like this and we are very much part of the global predicament. Our industry, per se, was the first one to be asked to shut down because of the confined spaces we operate in, and most likely will be the last ones to open up. In the US, things are a little different – they are going to be opening sporting stadiums and live shows later than cinemas. They have already started showing old movies in certain states. Having said that, India is different and the real concern is that we are able to allay the fears of our consumers and make sure we take all the precautions possible when it's time to open the cinemas."

How do you see the future unfold in front of you?

"Eventually, we definitely want people to come out because the only way we will fight this virus is by not getting bogged down. But once the government has allowed people to come out I think it will be important for them to get rid of their mental blocks. We are also looking at the film industry for their continued support to the traditional theatrical window of releasing movies through us. One of the key areas for us, is to get the support of the government, on wage subsidies, liquidity, deferring local taxes and GST as well as providing soft loans with a quick moratorium period. Our industry employs around 200,000 skilled personnel and today most companies are talking about survival rather than profitability. Another thing that the government can do is try to bring COVID-19 under the ambit of force majeure (unforeseeable circumstances that prevent someone from fulfilling a contract) so that resolutions can be achieved between the developers and the retailers."

What are some of the steps you are planning to take to make cinemas safe once we open up?

"Given the fact that the lockdown is slowly getting partially opened, it's a matter of time that we feel the government will give us permission to function again and I see that happening any time between May end and June. As I mentioned earlier, in the current scenario, consumer trust and confidence is paramount. We already have some steps chalked out – from digitising cinemas, and the box-office, to drastically reducing touch points where food and beverages are concerned, we are also reassessing seating to comply with social distancing norms, in foyers and auditoriums. Cinemas will go into deep disinfecting and cleaning and we will follow global standards that are being worked out for industries such as ours, airlines and the hospitality sector."

What is your suggestion for the industry to bail itself out of this crisis? Have you been in touch with people from your sector to understand and ideate on the next steps? What are your expectations from the government?

'The Multiplex Association of India has written to the Prime Minister requesting relief measures, which include interest-free loans, exemption on taxes and duties'

"The multiplex association of India has written to the Prime Minister requesting relief to the sector. Some of the measures we have asked for include interest free loans, exemption on taxes and duties, waiver of minimum demand charges on electricity, as well as salary subsidies whereby the government can offer assistance to cinemas by reimbursements of employee salaries for the non-operational period to the extent of 75 per cent during the lockdown. On our part we have suggested precautionary actions such as seat separation, seat allocation capping, planned intermissions, continued hygiene efforts as well as building awareness amongst guests to battle the virus so that we continue to operate as a responsible industry. Meanwhile the association has also reached out to landlords and developers of multiplexes expressing our inability to pay rent during the lockdown owing to zero earnings during this period. We have also urged all studio partners, producers, artistes and content creators to support the cinema exhibition sector by holding and releasing their films in the theatres once we open again."

What are some of the vital lessons for business in India to learn from this sudden outbreak?

"This is something that is unprecedented. Businesses can prepare for volatility where some months are good and some not so good. But these are not usual recessionary times. This is a complete lockdown of operations and revenues which are suddenly down to zero. Despite the fact that every industry has taken a hit, the universality of the crisis has not made it easy for business houses. Having learnt from this, I



Ajay Bijli with Sanjeev Kumar Bijli and seen below with Selena Bijli

would say if we were to come to face this in the future again, it would be still difficult to plan ahead and prepare for it in any manner. The only thing to do would be to make sure that balance sheets remain healthy and companies keep overall costs under control. The other aspect to look at would be to diversify businesses and not put all your eggs in one basket. In the event of a pandemic if one aspect of your business gets affected, a diversified portfolio can ensure some other sources of revenue to be able to survive."

How does the system need to reinvent itself especially as far as the entertainment industry goes?

"An aberration or extraordinary circumstances like these should not result in a knee-jerk reaction where we just change everything overnight. I would not look at any major structural changes in the way the business was going, because I think it is a matter of time that a vaccine will arrive and things will start to look up again. If we make dramatic structural changes to the dynamics of the business, we would be inflicting more damage. However, I do feel that digitization and automation could be one thing that the industry would be looking at, so that the touch points get reduced."

Were Indian businesses designed to take on such contingencies or would you say that we were completely unprepared?

"I don't think anybody in the world was prepared for this – from the most advanced economies to under-developed economies, this pandemic has taken the entire globe by storm. After the Spanish flu took place in 1918, we didn't really see such an outbreak affecting us. But now having faced this crisis, I think

humanity will have to look at a lot of things differently. Not just in India, but governments across the world will have to rethink strategies and invest heavily in healthcare systems, which currently looks like a big gaping hole. Once we have recovered from this, we have to remember a few key lessons. I think people will approach things more conservatively and not indulge in excessive costing -- in discretionary expenditure, travel or meeting people."

At an individual level how do you think this pandemic has transformed you? What are the responsibilities as a leader to steer the ship forward?

"At an individual level it has made me pause, think and introspect about what is important in my life and what is not. I think most of us have realised the significance of finding a balance between our personal and professional commitments. We are suddenly viewing relationships with our family and friends with a new lens. One of my personal learnings has been to set my pace right and not just be in a rush to grow the business indiscriminately. The positive side to this crisis is that it has made everyone come closer to the correct value system one should have in life. The responsibility of being at the helm of affairs is that you have to take it head on, whatever the challenges are. It is going to be an uphill task to resuscitate the company and industry, confronting every challenge and remaining optimistic through it. We have a large team and the team must not look at a leader who is fickle or bogged down but one that has clarity of vision, energises those around him and maintains a positive atmosphere, no matter what."

INTERVIEW: SANGHITA SINGH





**'LUXURY - BESPOKE AND COUTURE
- IS HERE TO STAY!'**

SUNIL SETHI

IN THE WAKE OF THE PANDEMIC, UP-AND-COMING DESIGNERS AND SMALL BUSINESSES HAVE FOUND THEMSELVES OUT ON A LIMB. IN A TÊTE-À-TÊTE WITH HELLO! FDCI CHAIRMAN, SUNIL SETHI SHARES HIS INSIGHTS ON FASHION'S REINVENTION AND WHY LUXURY IS HERE TO STAY!

Earlier last month, a video message expressing gratitude by the Union Minister of Textiles, Smriti Irani, went viral on Instagram, garnering close to a million views. This message was addressed towards the Sunil Sethi-led Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) for creating the Covid-19 Support Fund (CSF), to provide financial assistance to small businesses and young designers. An eminent businessman, Sethi serves as the President of FDCI and has held many positions on the Board of several government and private organizations in the past. With over a decade in FDCI and enormous efforts towards understanding the several facets of the business of fashion, he is the fashion fraternity's beloved messiah.

For the uninitiated, it is under Sethi's leadership that the Indian fashion industry managed to strike collaborations with bodies such as PETA and the Ministry of Textiles in 2012, followed by the Indian Cotton Council International to promote home-grown fashion.

From working closely with the Ministry of textiles to bringing Indian craftsmanship to light and more recently the 'FDCI Insights' program on their digital platforms – the silver haired tycoon is keeping up with the lockdown spirits with much panache! Excerpts from the interview.

'For at least a year, business will be tough. Only the fittest will survive, and there will be many casualties'

To begin with, for a person of your stature, how has the lockdown affected you and your work personally? How has it been working from home?

"Well, I am personally a bit technologically challenged, but I believe I possess a forward-looking vision. In this time, while working from home with an efficient team of only five individuals, we have managed to pull off the 'FDCI Insights' campaign on our digital platforms. Some young team members have been working from home for close to 12 hours, which is way beyond their call of duty."

On being asked about ways to stay positive during the lockdown, Sunil Sethi quoted French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's play, *No Exit*, saying, "You are your life – and nothing else"

wear fashion weekdays before its opening show in early March. As the President of the largest fashion body in India, how difficult was that decision?

“It wasn’t a tough decision as there were lives at stake and when you weigh that with anything, everything seems to blur in comparison. We took a decision in keeping with the health of thousands who would be part of an event of this magnitude.”

The FDCI was among the first ones to put into action the CSF that attempts to look out for young designers on the threshold. Tell us how that came about...

“The support has come from my sponsors who immediately sent me a cheque. The industry has come forward, including senior designers, multi-designer store owners. For the CSF, our first aim will be to make sure young designers and small businesses are looked after, especially the artisans, weavers, embroiders, tailors and all others who assist in the day-to-day job. A letter has been drafted by the Board and sent to the government only in this direction, to seek help for those who are the backbone of the industry, so it is expected and is a kind of a mandate that if a fashion designer is helped, he will look after his tailor, embroiders and other artisans as they are the ones who truly make our business.”

How did it feel when Smriti Irani lauded your efforts towards setting up the CSF, which was further shared by various eminent personalities of the fashion fraternity?

“The Textile Ministry has always supported us. They have given some credibility and seriousness to Indian fashion by trying to connect weavers and designers, and significantly promoting handloom – that’s been the flavour of the last decade. Yes, somebody has to lead and that is what I am here for. In my head and heart, my only responsibility is to see that the fashion platform gets what it deserves, and I am happy that the Ministry has helped us.”

What, according to you, will be the immediate economic impact of the crisis on the fashion industry?

“For at least a year, business will be tough. Only the fittest will survive, and there will be many casualties. But that is because of the lack of customers. One needs to understand, that when there is a global pandemic, there are of course no parties – then why will people buy? So, yes, unless things come back to normal this scenario may prevail.

‘If you have the talent of creativity and confidence in your product, nobody can take that away from you. We can learn from our experiences and become better in all our techniques of marketing and selling’

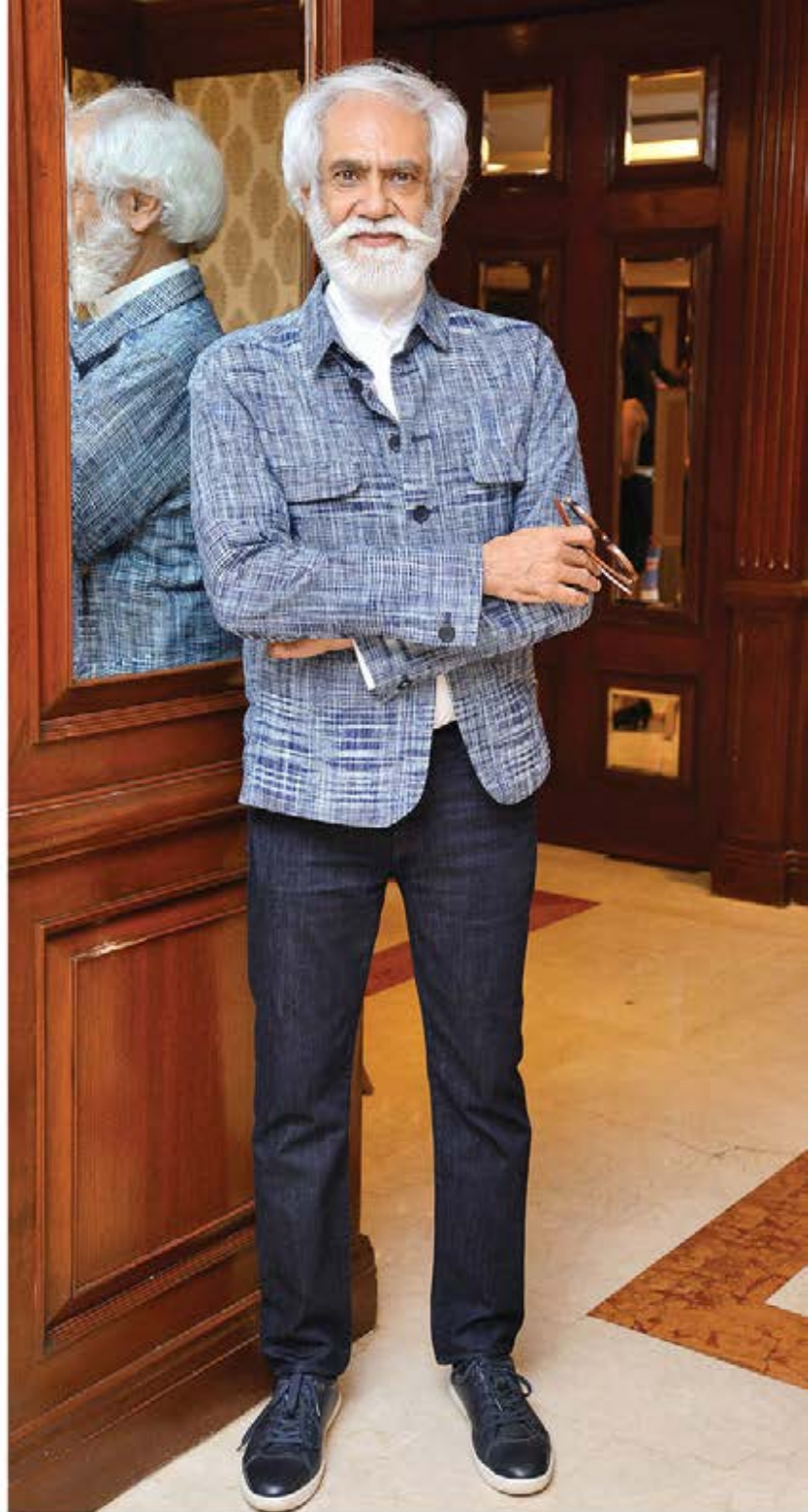
But I don’t believe that Diwali will not happen with the same fanfare. I don’t believe marriages will not happen with the same zest. Yes, intimate gatherings may become the norm, but I don’t think brides will not wear their dream outfits. Luxury – bespoke and couture – is here to stay.”

What according to you will be the new world order?

“If you have the talent of creativity and confidence in your product, nobody can take that away from you. We can learn from our experiences and become better in all our techniques of marketing and selling. So, let us talk about two years hence and focus on a more forward view. Consumers may understand the virtues of upcycling and recycling, and how to buy more classics. But this gloom and doom scenario will only last for a while. I see a future beyond a year, as soon as there are no social distancing norms, things will go back to normal. The Spanish flu happened 100 years ago – but how long did it last? People don’t even remember it anymore. And similarly, life must go on.”

Has the FDCI considered moving to a more digital friendly approach to make sure ‘the show must go on’. What’s happening with the fashion week?

“My personal preference would be for the fashion week to continue with the same grandeur and fanfare as an on-ground event. But if you can’t beat them join them. We must change with the time, and if digital is how the fashion week will go, then we will give it a shot. But what about our models, set designers, choreographers, hairdressers, make-up artists – what about all those people? It has to be done in a way where things can go hand-in-hand. And we need to find a way to integrate everything together.”



The FDCI President says people should self-introspect to remain positive

So, you’re saying that it can’t be a digital only format?

“Absolutely. I don’t mind trying a small digital capsule collection. Yes, that is the way forward, but since it is a new format it might take time. Right now, our immediate action plan is to focus on the business of fashion. It is to make sure collections are being seen by my international buyers. I am not interested in the world seeing my collection. Because right now, we need to sell and produce and make sure our profits are going steady.”

Share a little something on staying positive during this time...

“Read. Clean up your wardrobe. De-clutter your mind. Meditate. Look at this crisis as a means to self-introspect and do all the things you couldn’t because you never stopped to see the wonder of being laid-back. As Sartre said in the critically acclaimed play, *No Exit*, ‘You are – your life, and nothing else’.”

INTERVIEW: ANKITA RATHOD

Unlock creativity with Sid Mallya

Battling anxiety and depression while also attempting to give up alcohol isn't easy, but Sid Mallya shows the way... leading by example! He's also utilising his time during the Covid-19 pandemic to create, and inspire...

Are you self-isolating? How do you stay occupied?

"I'm self-isolating with my dog! I've been using this time to continue developing some of the TV projects that I have going on, and also to continue the work on my mental wellbeing. The *conSIDerThis* series took up a lot of time, which kept me very busy. But WhatsApp and Zoom have made it pretty easy to stay connected with people!"

How has involving yourself in creative endeavours impacted your mental health?

"For me, acting as well as writing have served as amazing outlets – they have helped me in ways that I can't put into words. Being an only child, I've always had a wild and strong imagination... the performing arts have given me a way to put that imagination to good use, that has had a major positive impact on my mental wellbeing. Also, being able to create together with people has helped me deal with my loneliness issues."

There is a common perception that talking about creativity, therapy or mental health is elitist, perhaps more so in times of a pandemic, when there are millions who are jobless and hungry... how would you respond?

"I completely understand how people may feel this way, given that not everyone has access to therapy. But I think the bigger message to get out here is that EVERYONE can suffer from mental health issues, and although therapy is great, it isn't the only way to look after one's own mental health. This is what I've tried to get across in my series *conSIDerThis*. Things such as depression and anxiety don't discriminate due to background or social status! Therefore, we must take every opportunity we have to spread awareness and continue the conversation around mental health. And I really can't see a better time to do that than during a pandemic, when more people will be suffering and feeling the effects of such things."

Tell us a little bit about your show, *conSIDerThis*...

"For me, it was about creating something where

I could get the message of mental health out there in a way that people didn't feel like they were being 'preached to'. So, I thought the best way was to talk about my own experiences in an open and honest manner and share some of the things that helped me get through it. I just wanted to show people that it's totally fine to admit you might be suffering, and to inspire or help others out there going through similar things and feel less alone."

You've also been off alcohol for a while now... How's that going and what was the point at which you decided to call it quits?

"It has been great! Coming up to 21 months now. I decided to stop in August 2018. It wasn't that I was a frequent drinker, but whenever I did drink, be it 10 drinks or two, I'd wake up with extreme levels of anxiety the next morning. That, in turn, was having a negative impact on my productivity and overall happiness. I decided to stop as I felt my mental wellbeing was more important to me than the alcohol!"

It could be particularly challenging for someone who is battling substance abuse issues along with mental health problems at the same time, as they often go hand-in-hand... would you have anything helpful to say to any such readers?

"All I'd say is that don't be afraid to seek help. A lot of people seem to think that asking for help is a sign of weakness. However, the truth is that surrendering and admitting you need help is one of the biggest shows of strength there is!"

Finally, what would you like people to take away from your personal battles and how could they apply some of your learnings to their own lives, during and after the pandemic?

"For far too long there has been a stigma around mental health, and words such as 'depression' and 'anxiety' were almost seen as taboo. All I really want to show people is that it is OK to talk about mental health and it is OK to admit that we suffer. It's also OK to seek help and do things (like stopping drinking) that benefit our own mental wellbeing. I just want to show people that they aren't alone either and everyone has the power to make changes in their lives if they so wish."

INTERVIEW: SURYA HARKRISHNAN

Rohit Gupta

Laughter Is His Best Medicine

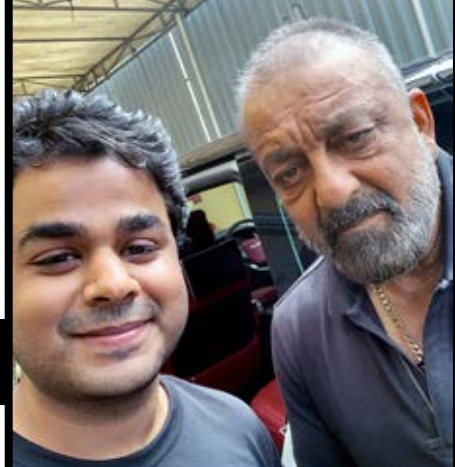
HELLO! meets the mimicry artiste, who is uplifting India's spirits with his unique brand of comedy and entertainment, during the pandemic

There is something to say about Rohit Gupta, who shot to instant fame on digital media ever since his first video appeared in 2016. Now, this social media sensation boasts of a gargantuan fan-following of 700K on Facebook and 195K subscribers on YouTube, making him four times more sought-after than most Bollywood biggies and highly-rated television stars. In fact, he's the first Indian actor and YouTuber to be interviewed by *BBC Radio*, slowly making way from being a national favourite to a global entertainer.

So, what does it take to go beyond the big league in the digital world? "I think I gave time to the digital era when nobody else was trying, so that worked for me. I started attracting a lot of people. I started making people laugh," explains Rohit, who caught on to the pulse of social media early on. He officially started his career with short Facebook videos, which became instant hits with his audiences, as he regaled them with his quintessential style – often being the prankster that he is! In fact, Rohit has the unique gift of being able to copy almost every Bollywood celebrity and now, often uses his skills to unleash his shenanigans on to unsuspecting strangers, including many Bollywood celebrities. His popularity with the masses, especially with the millennials, has helped him rope in new projects in the film industry, including *Batta House* (T-series), *Ujda Chaman* (Panorama Studios), *Jago Mohan Pyare* (Rajshree Marathi) and *Student of the Year 2* (Dharma Production).

His prankster stories are legendary, too! Right from doing a prank video with RJ Malishka to promote the movie *Sanju*, he has pulled his act on Nora Fatehi and Rajiv Lakshman by mimicking Sanjay Dutt, Shah Rukh Khan, Ranbir Kapoor and Nawazuddin Siddiqui, whose voice he can copy like no other. Rohit is his usual exuberant self as he explains how he enjoys every bit of what he does. "Who doesn't want to see their favourite stars falling prey to hilarious pranks, especially when it involves fooling them in the voice of their best friends or idols?"

Despite his meteoric rise in the digital universe, success has not eroded his simplicity. "I often ask myself – is it even for real? Am I really that loved and watched by people," he confesses, dismissing the hullabaloo



Rohit with Sanjay Dutt (top) and with his father, Anil Gupta (above). He's seen below with Nora Fatehi

around him.

So what's next? Rohit now wants to expand his creative palette and is looking to act in movies. In fact, acting was an early dream for the mimic artiste who studied the craft with actor Ranveer Singh. With the ease he has with languages – from Hindi to English, Arabic and South Indian, Sindhi and Punjabi, which he often uses as a weapon to establish his comic reign – acting is naturally his next stepping stone. "You must believe and have faith – when you embark on the journey of life, it isn't success that shapes you into who you are, it's always the struggles that define the person you are going to be! The lesson I've learnt is to never crumble under pressure," the mimicry artiste philosophises.

And that's the message that he's sending out to his fan-base during this pandemic. "At a time when there is an atmosphere of fear and gloom, I'm being inundated with calls for some laughter. I'm glad I can contribute my bit and offer some respite to people.

I truly wish for this time to get over as soon as possible and for everyone to be safe," he concludes. We couldn't agree more!

INTERVIEW: SANGHITA SINGH



EXCLUSIVE

REVEALING ALL ABOUT LOCKDOWN LIFE IN HER HEREFORDSHIRE HOME

ELIZABETH HURLEY

ON HER GARDENING SECRET, FAMILY CELEBRATIONS
AND HOW SHE HOPES TO FALL MADLY IN LOVE



Like it has for millions of people all around the world, life for Elizabeth Hurley has changed drastically over the past month. The actress, model and businesswoman normally spends her days in a whirl of photoshoots, glamorous gowns and a seemingly endless supply of bikinis, but she is now spending them in her garden with some “lady tools” and in her kitchen, cooking for nine people.

The star of TV series *The Royals* is hunkered down during lockdown in her country home in Herefordshire with eight family members and friends.

“We feel like the family in the 70s TV show *The Waltons*,” she tells HELLO! in our exclusive interview.

Despite the challenging circumstances,

Elizabeth hasn’t lost her sense of fun and has been lifting the spirits of her 1.6million Instagram followers with updates on her life in lockdown. Few weeks ago, she posted a photo of herself holding a chainsaw, and pictures of her son Damian, who turned 18 on 4 April.

“Happy 18th to the light of my life,” she wrote alongside a series of images of her and Damian throughout his life. The family celebrated the milestone with a dinner, complete with music, flashing lights and balloons.

Damian shared photos on his own Instagram account, including one of him posing in his dressing gown the night before his birthday.

“Isolation drastically altered the plans for my last night as a minor,” he wrote alongside.

He spent some of the big day itself messing

'Acknowledging that the big picture is beyond our control is frightening'



The star of TV series *The Royals* is hunkered down during lockdown in her country home in Herefordshire with eight family members and friends



Above, Damian Hurley and Boris Becker's daughter, Anna Ermakova. Seen right, a younger Damian with Elizabeth Hurley

'I still brush my hair and put on make-up, but the curling iron is gathering dust'

about with the family dog, Mia. Alongside a photo of the playful pair, he wrote: "IT'S DAMIAN DAY! Finally 18!!! It felt too strange to celebrate properly during such a terrible time out in the wider world (and social distancing meant there was no question of a party) so instead I've settled for running around a field euphorically because EIGHTEEEEEN HURRAHHHH YAY."

While Elizabeth is doing her best to remain upbeat during the crisis, she says she feels "sick with panic" as she strives to keep her house guests, including her widowed mother Angela, safe.

"Keeping everyone as safe as possible – and fed – is a full-time job," she tells HELLO!. "We all are full of the highest admiration for our wonderful NHS staff and are doing everything we can to not add to their burden."

LIFE IN LOCKDOWN

With her modelling career on hold, Elizabeth, 54, is looking forward to the launch of her next campaign – she is the face of Kurt Geiger's Spring/Summer 2020 collection.

The upmarket British retailer recently announced it is donating £5M-worth of shoes and bags to NHS workers to thank them for their efforts during the coronavirus crisis. This is in addition to the company giving NHS workers a 50 per cent discount for a year in its stores once they reopen, and the £100 gift cards it is giving NHS workers in the critical care units of hospitals local to its 55 stores.

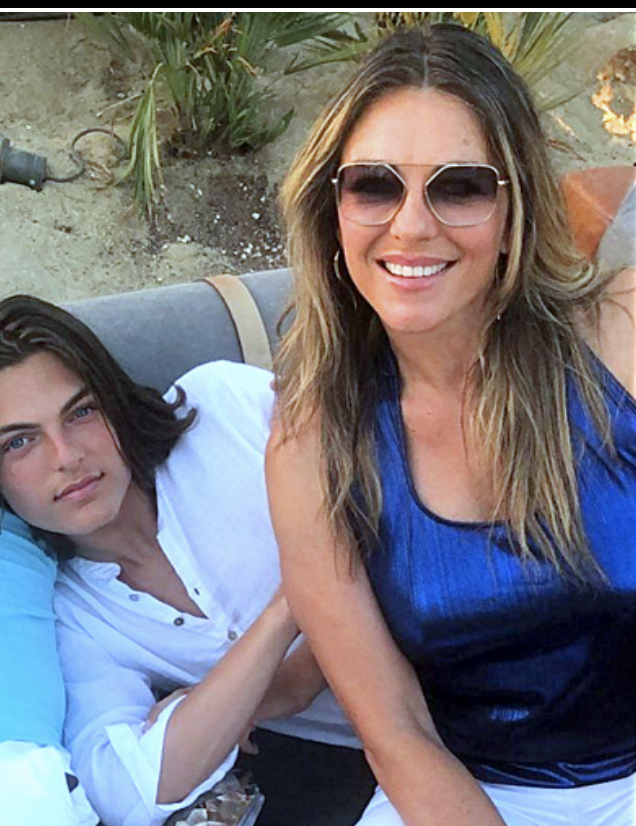
"Kurt Geiger have really shown they're a great company," says Elizabeth proudly.

The launch of the campaign isn't the only bright spot on the horizon. Elizabeth, who





With her modelling career on hold, Elizabeth, 54, is looking forward to the launch of her next campaign – she is the face of Kurt Geiger's Spring/Summer 2020 collection



Damian celebrated his 18th birthday in lockdown, in the presence of his actress mum

was previously married to businessman Arun Nayar, tells HELLO! she would “love to fall madly in love” again.

In the meantime, she is focusing on making the most of life in a time of corona...

Elizabeth, how are you

coping during lockdown?

“These are very disturbing times. Acknowledging that the big picture is beyond our control is frightening. I’m trying hard to concentrate on things I can control, like feeding people, otherwise I feel sick with panic. I couldn’t sleep for the first few days of lockdown as I was so scared for my elderly mother.”

Who is with you?

“There are nine of us. I have my whole family here, including my mother, an aunt and a friend who has severe respiratory problems. I am completely paranoid that I won’t be able to keep them safe, and I haven’t let anyone leave the house apart from me.

“I just nip out to local food stores and wear a mask and gloves. I am terrified of bringing the virus back to my vulnerable guests.”

Is everyone well?

“Thankfully, we’re all well.”

Who’s doing the cooking?

“We feel like the family in the 70s TV show *The Waltons*. We’ve all got designated jobs, which I couldn’t resist putting

'I sincerely hope I won't be modelling my swimwear in my 60s. I'll still wear it though'

on a colour-coded Excel sheet. I'm in charge of meal planning, food shopping and laundry.

"If it weren't for the fact that we're terrified of losing loved ones, we're actually quite happy cocooned up together. The TV isn't allowed to be turned on until 6pm so we don't turn into couch potatoes."

You're gardening, too...

"Secretly, I'd much rather be gardening than doing anything else. I've been outside doing things for at least five hours a day. Apart from the elderly ladies, everyone is doing masses outside – three hours minimum a day. "We are lucky to have a huge garden, and we spent all of yesterday hacking our way through an overgrown bit with machetes and chainsaws. Today we're building raised vegetable beds. I've been reading up on growing salads and have become an armchair expert on bolting lettuce."

Are you doing other forms of exercise during this time?

"I don't have a fitness routine in real life, so this is no different. But I rarely do this much manual labour so I may emerge fitter. We're eating as healthily as we can but, like everyone everywhere, getting supplies is a big headache as the nine of us get through so much. Luckily, I always have a well-stocked freezer and had done





About these challenging times, the actress says, "Keeping safe has to be everyone's aim. We're all vulnerable"

'I'd love to fall madly in love with someone.. Maybe when this is over I'll put my headlamps on full beam'

and my back. I have a prolapsed disc and have to watch that I don't do anything too violent to enrage it.

"My brother bought me a set of what he calls 'lady tools', which are lightweight. I have my own shed with all my tools in it, and woe betide anyone else who uses them. Otherwise, I think I'm okay with everything."

Are you managing to retain your beauty regime?

"Even on lockdown I'm using all my skin products, especially SPF on my face."

Recently you posted a photo of yourself wearing a dress you'd had for 15 years. Do you still have the safety-pin dress you wore to the premiere of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* in 1994?

"Sadly, I don't. I gave it straight back to Versace after the premiere. But I do have many of the gorgeous dresses I've worn over the years.

"I love digging through the boxes and, if I can squeeze into them, giving them another outing. I think the shopping-from-your-closet movement is a great one."

You were dating its star Hugh Grant at the time. Do you still see one another?

"I'm always in contact with Hugh. He's one of my best friends. He's a fantastic father and his kids are enchanting. He and his lovely wife Anna seem incredibly happy."

And what about now? Would you like to find love again?

"I'd love to fall madly in love with someone, which certainly won't happen whilst I'm locked down with blood relatives.

"Maybe when it's over I'll put my headlamps on full beam and make an effort."

What are you most looking forward to doing when this pandemic crisis and the lockdown end?

"I'm going to be itching to get back to work and won't want to cook or tidy up for a very long time."

INTERVIEW: TRACY SCHAVERIEN
CO-ORDINATED:
THOMAS WHITAKER

quite a lot of cooking ahead."

Is it nice to spend more time together than usual?

"We always spend a lot of time together anyway, but not being able to leave does make it very different. And not knowing how long we're going to be here makes me feel anxious on so many levels. "I just try to deal with it one day at a time. Until there's a vaccine, I don't think we'll ever want to let my mother out."

Are you enjoying not having to put make-up on and being dressed down?

"I still brush my hair and put on some make-up every morning but, yes, the curling iron is definitely gathering dust, and I wear my ancient gardening clothes every day."

What tips do you have for our readers on getting through these challenging times?

"Keeping safe has to be everyone's aim. We're all vulnerable. We just have to stay home, look on it as an adventure, and catch up on all the jobs we've been putting off for years. We don't have any young kids here and I appreciate that would add another enormous strain on the household."

Your son Damian should have been doing his A-levels this summer...

"It's really tough for the kids who have had their exams cancelled and have left school so abruptly

without having a chance to say goodbye to anyone. I really feel for them. Damian was taking a gap year anyway before deciding what he wants to continue studying."

How is he coping?

"He hasn't complained once about anything and is really pitching in. He celebrated his 18th birthday in lockdown. We had to cancel his party, of course. My mother will turn 80 in lockdown, too. We'll celebrate properly later."

Hopefully it won't be long before we see you fronting Kurt Geiger's new campaign. How do you feel about the company being so generous to NHS workers?

"Kurt Geiger have really shown they're a great company. It's hard to think about one's professional life right now as more pressing matters seem to be peeling potatoes and worrying about running out of flour, but real life will resume one day. I was very flattered to be asked to do the new campaign and I'm looking forward to it coming out."

What else is in the pipeline?

"I should have been in Los Angeles right now shooting a pilot for a new TV show. This has been put on hold, of course. I was very disappointed but it doesn't matter in the great scheme of things. I was also supposed to shoot a movie in May."

What's happening with your beachwear label Elizabeth Hurley Beach?

"All the factories and shops are shut so we'll have to see what happens. It's beyond my control so I try not to worry unduly about it."

Will you still be modelling your swimwear in your 60s?

"I sincerely hope not. I'll definitely still wear it though."

Your figure is as amazing as ever. How do you do it?

"I eat fairly healthily. I have a cast-iron rule about not eating between meals but I eat pretty much what I like three times a day.

"I try to make 50 per cent of everything I eat vegetable, which means that if I have a piece of toast I have to have an apple, too. Once you get into the habit, it becomes second nature.

"We don't have processed food in the house and, apart from tuna and tomatoes, don't have any tins either. I cook everything from scratch, not that I'm a good cook. My cooking is reasonably competent but fairly dull. I unearthed an old breadmaker yesterday which we're planning to use – if I could buy any flour."

How is getting older affecting your life?

"I have to be careful with power tools. I can easily hurt my shoulder, which I injured a few years ago,

WHAT ARE YOU 'UP' TO?

AS LIFE IN LOCKDOWN CONTINUES, PEOPLE ARE THRONGING THEIR TERRACES AND ROOFTOPS FOR DATES, WORKOUTS, MUSICAL GIGS AND MORE

A pianist performs a piece from his balcony, near the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, Spain

For over a month now, numerous people around the world have been in lockdown – confined to their rooms, apartments and houses. But as they say, necessity is the Mother of Invention. Highlighting a fascinating new trend, people are taking their activities to rather unique spaces – rooftops, balconies and terraces! And the view is exceptionally picturesque to say the least! While couples are thronging rooftops for cozy dates, parents are assembling playgrounds on terraces for their kids. Fitness enthusiasts have joined the trend by taking their workout sessions to the terrace, indulging in the fresh air. And, not surprisingly, jamming on balconies with an instrument or even setting up music systems on terraces has emerged as the new normal for celebration. Here's the view from the top!



A Californian neighbourhood is serenaded with a song and some melodious notes on the guitar

A DJ live-streams a set from his roof in Brooklyn, New York, with the skyline in the backdrop





A fitness trainer conducts a workout session with neighbourhood residents, in Nantes, France

Gone are the days when "soaking in some sun" only happened at a beach

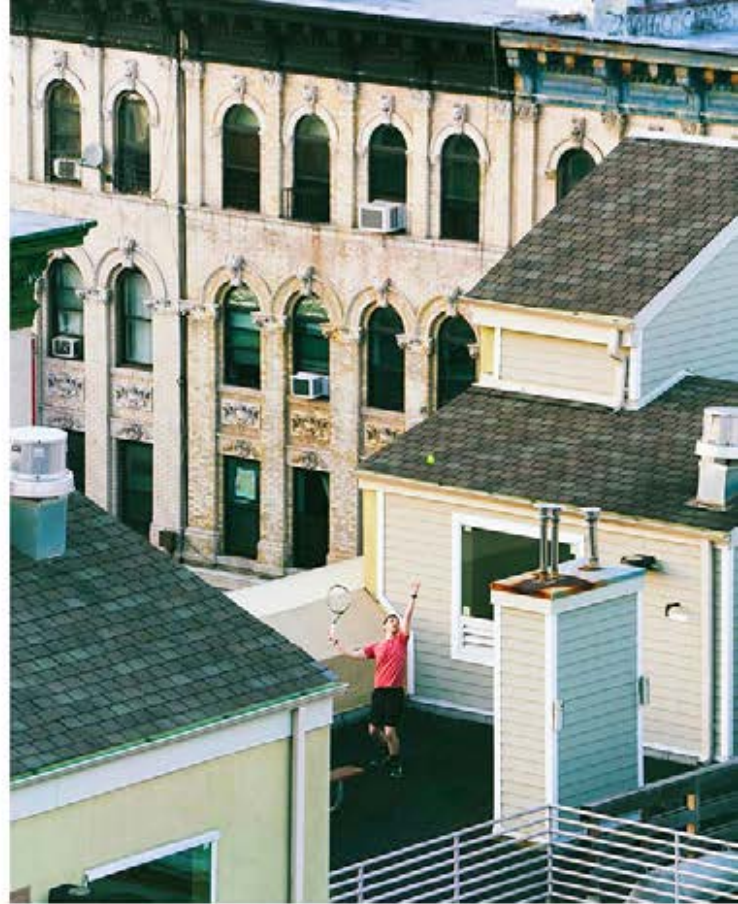
And because pets miss their outings to the park...





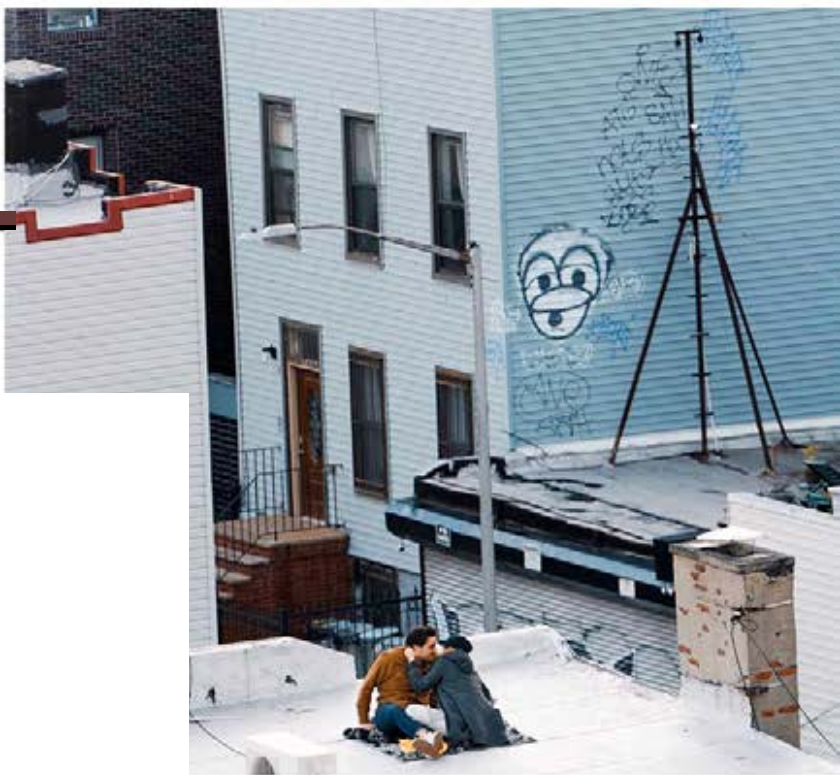
A man polishes his tennis skills on a rooftop in New York

Revisiting childhood pleasures to remain positive during the lockdown.



A man plays the violin while a delivery person cycles past him, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

A moment of love shared on the rooftop during self-isolation



TEXT: KARMA DHINGRA
COMPILED BY: SONAM POLADIA
PHOTOS COURTESY: REUTERS

THE DIARY OF A COVID SURVIVOR



FROM CAPTURING BEAUTIFUL SUNRISSES TO DECKING UP WITH BASIC HOOPS, CATALOGUING CUTE DOCTOR-PATIENT MOMENTS TO MISSING MOMMY DEAREST - ACTRESS **ZOA MORANI'S** COVID-19 DIARY GIVES US A GLIMPSE INTO HER "NOVEL" JOURNEY OF SURVIVAL



Before hospital

I don't remember falling ill at all in the past six years, and then to suddenly find out that I've tested positive for Covid-19 – it was unbelievable!" says the soft-spoken Zoa. The 32-year-old had just returned from Rajasthan – where she had been "prepping in bliss, in the beautiful *havelis* around Bikaner and Nawalgarh" for the shoot of one of her biggest projects, a web series – when the virus caught up with her. Excerpts from the survivor's diary...

LIKE A BULLET TO THE HEART

"The funny thing is, in the initial days when the symptoms showed up – before my tests results came in – I was behaving like a lioness saying, 'Oh, it's the virus and it's okay, I'm managing...' Then, our worst fears were confirmed and I found myself alone in a hospital. That's when the news hit me like a bullet to the heart and all my bravery went down the drain in seconds. I cried like a baby in front of my doctor! But my doctor and my nurse friend, Tabassum, were both so caring."

MISSING MOMMY DEAREST

"On returning from the hospital, I still had a bit of cough, so I was advised to isolate for another 14 days, which meant I couldn't meet my mom. I had to self-isolate for over 10 days before I was admitted, too. So, it was a little upsetting to stay away from mom for so long. But I'm grateful for having recovered and I'm looking forward to sharing my first meal with her after almost a month of coexisting in the same house."

THE COVID TIMELINE

THURSDAY, MARCH 17

"My sister, Shaza, and I shared Nutella straight from the jar while watching a movie."

FRIDAY, MARCH 18

"It's the day my sister complained of fever. The day after, I had fever too, which got us worried. But we persisted, saying 'Let's give it a few days'. As the week progressed, my sister started getting intense headaches while I coughed. I also experienced a tightness in my chest that made breathing difficult and a lot of fatigue."

SATURDAY, MARCH 26

"The fever didn't subside and I started feeling as if my

heart rate was getting erratic. Eight days later, a new symptom popped up: early in the morning, I woke up sans fever, but my body temperature would start rising around 11:00 AM and, eventually, the other symptoms would catch up by the afternoon. Every day!”

TUESDAY, MARCH 29

“It’s my birthday, so I had excitedly stayed up till midnight. But the over-exertion was a bad idea. That morning, my head started pounding miserably and my body was burning up with fever! But encouraged by all the FaceTime calls and wishes, I ignored my ailment. So, the next day was worse. It made me realise that resting was necessary to fight the symptoms.”

SATURDAY, APRIL 2

“Over 10 days after the fever showed up, I finally decided to get tested. Surprisingly, my sister’s symptoms had already subsided, but she got herself tested too. Turned out, she was Covid-19 positive but without any symptoms!”

TUESDAY, APRIL 5

“My sister and I got admitted as per the BMC’s directions, but in different hospitals. The staff at the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, Mumbai, was absolutely well prepared. They took me to an isolated ICU ward via the back entrance, transferring me like a dangerous explosive package that had to be locked up immediately. I was only allowed to carry my phone and a book into the ward. Once inside, it felt like I had landed on the moon and everyone was walking around in space suits!”

THURSDAY, APRIL 7

“Following some blood tests, I was given medication as per my doctor’s advice. They also added an IV drip and gave me some antibiotics.”

FRIDAY, APRIL 8

“I was already feeling better. My heart rate had normalised. Inside the ward, my phone was my life and I kept myself distracted, so time flew. But there were others in there who were experiencing severe conditions, so I thanked my stars for being able to breathe without an oxygen mask.”

MONDAY, APRIL 11

“My sister was discharged!”

TUESDAY, APRIL 12

“Got my freedom back; I could go home!”

WEDNESDAY,

APRIL 13 onwards...

“I was allowed to self-isolate in the comforts of my room. Books, prayers, Netflix, plenty of water, yoga and Pranayam (twice a day) have been healing me with each passing day. Today, now that the shock has worn off, I’m more at ease with myself. Strange are the ways of God, but my 29-day journey to recovery has taught me the significance of being your own best friend – because sometimes, all you have is you.”

COMPILED BY: ANKITA RATHOD

ZOA’S ALBUM OF RECOVERY

MY DOCTOR, MY ROCKSTAR

“My rockstar, Dr Saurabh Phadtare, broke the news that I had tested Covid-19 positive in the best way possible. He made light of the situation to ease me into the situation. I was embarrassed that I broke down in front of him, but he joked about that too, and before I knew it, I was laughing and crying at the same time.”



THE FEARLESS FRONTLINERS

“Everyone in the hospital was so helpful and sensitive. All the nurses were like mother-figures, who would check on me every 10 minutes.”

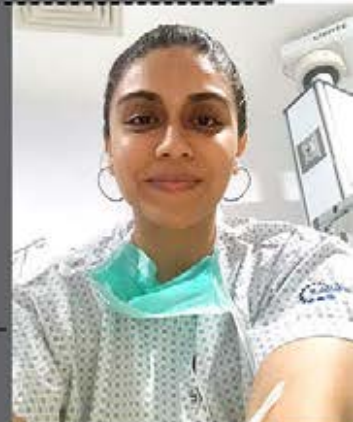
THE ‘IV’ PARANOIA

“It was my first time being administered an IV drip, so I was super-paranoid, but the medical team made it absolutely painless. All the medicines made me a bit woozy, so I felt as if I had consumed a few drinks! But they had instantly numbed the pain I had endured for 21 days.”



INSTA-LIVE WITH VARUN DHAVAN

“Just before I agreed to go live with Varun on Insta, I was checking to see how I’m looking. Initially, I was worried to talk about the disease – it’s a sensitive topic and I lacked the energy to be politically/morally correct in the way I spoke publicly. Also, I hadn’t showered in five days, had no make-up, no face cream or face wash! My only saviour was a pair of hoops that I’d wear as soon as I woke up, every day. It made me feel pretty!”



A HEART-WARMING MOMENT

“When one of my best friends, Puneet Gupta, stepped out of his house one day to buy essentials and stopped at the signal for three seconds just to say ‘Hi’ to me... I could see him from my hospital window, he couldn’t. But it was just so cute!”



THE PERFECT SUNRISE

“I captured this from my hospital bed. It also happens to feature the building where I go for my yoga sessions. Yoga helped me immensely in these trying times, so it felt ironic that the building was right there in front of me.”



KEEP THE FAITH ALIVE

“Six days after I returned from the hospital. I really wish to thank the government for doing such a commendable job in keeping people safe. Our country seems to be doing very well compared to others.”



"I CONTINUE TO CHANT DAILY
TO KEEP MY ENERGY IN LINE
WITH THE UNIVERSE"

**SHERINA
DALAMAL**

WHERE: Los Angeles

WITH: "My husband, Vanceesh, and our baby, Alaia."

MOOD: "I'm feeling grateful and my current mood is comfort. Comfort eating, comfort dressing and comfort cuddles with my loved ones."

POSITIVITY MANTRA: "I continue to chant daily to keep my energy in line with the universe and to make decisions from an elevated life state."

LAST VACAY: "New York. We went for a walk to Central Park in the cold sunshine and had lunch with a friend at L'Avenue, Saks Fifth Avenue. Then we went for some retail therapy in the cute SoHo boutiques, caught up for drinks with friends at the Baccarat Bar and finally, I ended the evening with my husband at our favourite date night spot, Nougatine!"

FAVE HOME MEAL: "Nothing like *keema, bhindi* and rice, followed by some dark chocolate bark thins for dessert."

LAST DINE-OUT: "Nougatine at Jean-Georges – we had a warm shrimp salad with champagne dressing, lamb chops and a martini to drink."

FITNESS REGIME: "Yoga, long walks with Alaia, aqua aerobics in our pool, weekend runs with my husband."

GO-TO SPOT AT HOME: "My kitchen and the bedroom and our couch."

LOCKDOWN STYLE-FILE: "Kaftans, tracksuits and stretch-pants."

BINGE WATCHING:
"The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel."
CURRENTLY READING: "Scratch by Rudy Francisco."
LISTENING TO: "iHeartRadio."
LOCKDOWN HOBBIES:
"Sketching, yoga and cooking."

DIVAS

UNDER LOCKDOWN

THE COVID-19 MAY HAVE GOT ALL OUR GORGEOUS WOMEN CONFINED AT HOME, BUT NOTHING CAN STOP THEM FROM SELF-ISOLATING IN STYLE, BALANCING THE HOME AND CAREER WITH ELAN. HELLO! CHATS WITH A CHIC SET OF 10, WHO ARE BASED ALL ACROSS THE GLOBE





**"I'VE BEEN MAINTAINING
A DIARY ON LOCKDOWN STYLE
ON MY INSTAGRAM"**

AISHWARYA NAIR
MATHEW

WHERE: Singapore

WITH: "My husband."

LAST CITY I TRAVELLED TO:
"Malta, to see my sisters. We went to the restaurant Naan Bar, where we entertained the then Maltese Prime Minister for dinner."

FAVE HOME MEAL: "I love beyond meat patty, naked salads with vegan cheese, toasted almonds and pickles and the occasional dairy free ice-cream with dark cherries."

LAST DINE-OUT: "Zen and Olivia, Singapore – it's possibly one of the best restaurants in the world."

POST-PANDEMIC

WISHLIST: "Get to my gym!"

HOBBIES: "Cooking, designing sketches, collages and also pattern boards."

FITNESS REGIME: "I do Tracy Anderson's at home workouts regularly."

GO-TO SPOT AT HOME:
"My study table or my spot on the couch."

LOCKDOWN STYLE-FILE:
"I have been maintaining a diary on lockdown style for my Instagram stories, donning a new outfit every day. I have to wear semi-formals for my Zoom meetings every day and I enjoy the act of dressing up for something. It's a morale booster!"

SHOPPING LIST: A Ryan Roche nude dress, a Aleksandre Akhalkatsishvili top, an Orseund Iris corset skirt and Ancuta Sarka shoes."

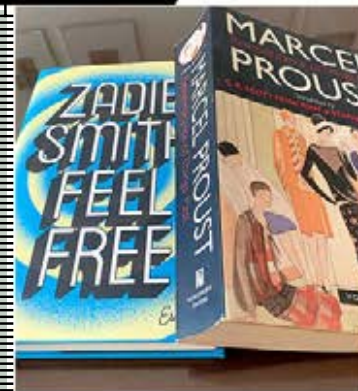


BINGE WATCHING:
"The Good Fight and Veep on Apple TV."

CURRENTLY

READING: "Proust, Metahuman by Deepak Chopra and Feel Free by Zadie Smith - it's exquisite!"

ONLINE COURSES:
"I'm doing an online Art history course from the Museum of Modern Art and Sotheby's on contemporary art."





"IT'S A GREAT TIME TO POLISH MY FRENCH"

UJJWALA RAUT

WHERE: Nokomis Island, Florida
ISOLATED SINCE: Five weeks

WITH: "My daughter Ksha, my shoe-designer girlfriend Leona Ezriak and her 12-year-old son."

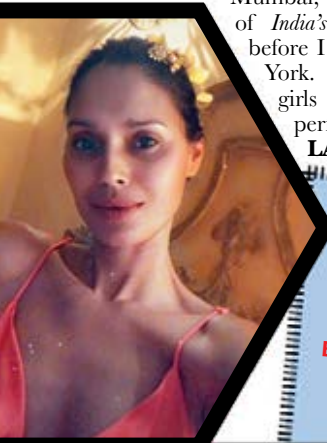
CURRENT MOOD: "Trying to stay alive from this invisible enemy."

MY COVID HEROES: "My sister in Chicago and her husband are doctors, and they are fighting this pandemic on the front lines."

LAST CITY I TRAVELLED TO:

"Mumbai, for the shoot of *India's Next Top Model*, before I returned to New York. Mentoring the girls on the show was perfect for me."

LAST DINE-



CURRENTLY READING: "The Bhagavad Gita."
LISTENING TO: "Kygo."
BINGE WATCHING: "Ozark and Tiger King on Netflix."



OUT: "Drinks at Carlyle Hotel, then we went to Lure for Sushi, Pastis (French food), Soho House (love the truffle fries), Daniel, which is a very high-end restaurant uptown. I also went to Waverly Inn with my dear friend Bibhu Mohapatra, after NY fashion week."

LOCKDOWN HOBBIES:

"I'm working on my French with my girlfriend. It's a great time to polish my French. I lived in Paris for six years, so I'm excited to finally perfect it."

GO-TO SPOT AT HOME:

"My bedroom because I have the pool and a bay view. Also, to watch a bit of news and to give my feet a break."

LOCKDOWN STYLE-FILE: "Mainly tees and underwear as it's very hot here. I prefer bikinis as I don't want too many tan lines, silk slips to sleep in, and shorts and flowy dresses. I've been braiding my hair a lot, too!"

POST-PANDEMIC WISHLIST: "When flying is safe, I'd love to go kiss my man as he could not travel to NY and I could not travel to Europe."



"I LOVE HANGING OUT IN THE GARDEN WITH MY SON"

SARAH TODD



WHERE: Melbourne

WITH: "My son, Phoenix."

ISOLATED SINCE: Six weeks

MOOD: "I'm experiencing mood swings and no two days are the same. One day I feel motivated so as to take on the world and on others, I feel low and uncertain with the way things are heading."

LOCKDOWN SCHEDULE:

"I'm trying to make the most by staying positive, productive, bonding with my son, having a routine in place, looking after my



health, skin and more.”

LAST DINE-OUT: “Well, my last cooked meal was an exquisite eight-course one created by me at Restaurant Sarah, if I were to call it that. It included my favourites like Hasselback black potatoes in a *laas-maas* gravy with a creamy, cauliflower mash along with a lip-smacking chicken Xacuti dish.”

BINGE-WATCHING: “I’m not much of a TV buff but my son, Phoneix, loves watching shows on Netflix. We are watching *Raising Dion* together.”

KEEPING BUSY: “A clean house helps keep the mind at peace. So, I’ve been decluttering around my house. From spring cleaning to closets and even windows, I’m keeping busy re-organising everything.”

FITNESS REGIME: “My fitness routine includes indulging in self-care with an at home beep test with my son. Every 20 metres, we set up little pillars and we run up to the pace of the beep. In addition to that, we do squats and sit-ups too.”

GO-TO SPOT AT HOME: “I’d have to say my beautiful garden. The incredible space also has a little swing for my son, making it an ideal area to hang out at.”

LOCKDOWN STYLE-FILE: “It’s pretty much casual. My dressed down look would include a pair of jeans and a baggy sweater or cashmere whereas my dressed-up version for shoots includes dresses, tops with trousers etc. I feel like dressing up for the videos I share across social media – it helps me stay sane.”

“POST THE PANDEMIC, I WANT TO GO CLUBBING AND DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY”

DIIPA KHOSLA



WHERE: Amsterdam

WITH: “My husband.”

ISOLATED SINCE: Six weeks

MOOD: “I’m super happy and relaxed.”

MAJOR CHALLENGES: “I definitely go through a roller coaster of emotions – from worry and anxiety to calm and hopeful. I try to remain positive by reminding myself to be grateful of everything life has given me and for my amazing family and beautiful friends.”

LAST CITY I TRAVELLED TO:

“Milan, Italy, for the Milan Fashion Week. It was actually the craziest memory as the coronavirus hit Italy literally the same time I was there. The energy at the fashion week was definitely the weirdest that I have ever felt.”

FAVOURITE HOME MEAL: “Biryani!”

LAST DINE-OUT: “Lion Noir in Amsterdam.”

POST-PANDEMIC

WISHLIST: “Go clubbing and dance the night away!”

FITNESS REGIME: “I run five kms thrice a week, do a P.volve workout three times a week and 10 mins abs every day.”

GO-TO SPOT AT HOME: “My dining table. I’m there pretty much the whole day.” (laughs)

LOCKDOWN STYLE-FILE: “Fitness and athleisure wear.”

SHOPPING LIST: “A Bottega bag, Salvatore Ferragamo sunglasses and a pressure cooker!”

BINGE WATCHING: “Game of Thrones!”
LOCKDOWN HOBBIES: “Cooking and fitness.”





"I WANT TO RUN TO
THE BEACH AND WATCH
THE SUNSET"

SHRIYA
SARAN



WHERE: Barcelona, Spain

WITH: "My husband."

MAJOR CHALLENGES: "We've gone out only four times in the last month. There is an uncertainty; you don't know where you are going to be."

LAST VACAY: "Tel Aviv."

FAVE HOME MEAL: "Avocado salad with tomato."

LAST DINE-OUT: "Shakshuka Hummus that I ate in Tel Aviv in the middle of a market is what I'm currently craving for."

POST-PANDEMIC WISHLIST: "Run to the beach and watch the sunset!"

BINGE-WATCHING: "Andre and I got ourselves a projector, so post sunset, we watch a film – a classic that is. We dress up for a movie night and head to our 'living room theatre'. *Modern Love*, *Panchayat* and *Naked* are what we're watching at the moment."

LOCKDOWN HOBBIES: "Learning a bit of Spanish. I have also started baking and cooking. Today, I made an amazing Spanish omelette."

LOCKDOWN STYLE-FILE: "Every day at 8.00 PM we go to the balcony and everyone gathers to clap for the medical staff here. That's when you realise, 'Oh my god, I'm wearing the same stretch pants even today!' (laughs) Jokes apart, once in a while, I like to dress up but otherwise it's just shorts and a white T-shirt."

FITNESS REGIME:
"An online yoga
Zoom class."
**CURRENTLY
READING:**
"A lot of cooking
books."

"TRYING TO GO BACK TO MY
VALUES AND COMMUNICATE
WITH MY AUDIENCE"

AISHA SARAF KOTHARI



WHERE: Antwerp, Belgium

WITH: "My husband and puppy."

MOOD: "Productive, calm and decluttered."

MAJOR CHALLENGES: "My business is in luxury goods and in bridging the gap between Europe and India. Not sure how that is going to progress with current regulations around travel and cross border businesses. I am trying to go back to my values and really communicate to my audience why I started this business – to connect with them on similar grounds of love for unique fashion."

LAST VACAY: "New Delhi, for my sister's wedding. I have to say I feel blessed that we got to celebrate as a full family before the pandemic struck and separated us, across continents."

FAVE LOCKDOWN MEAL: "Pastas! The last few favourites have been butter lemon pasta, wilted



BINGE-WATCHING:
"Self-Made, Money
Heist and Four More
Shots."

**LOCKDOWN
HOBBIES:** "Teaching
myself how to
cook!"

FITNESS REGIME:
"Kayla's BBG –
Swear by it!"



spinach and cherry
tomato aglio olio, cacio
e pepe and more!"

LAST DINE-OUT:
"Puro 26; Melanzane and
spicy pasta arrabiata."

POST-PANDEMIC WISHLIST: "Travel to London or
Paris!"

GO-TO SPOT AT HOME: "My porch overlooking the
garden, which gets tons of sunlight through a clear roof.
It's best enjoyed with a glass of wine."

LOCKDOWN STYLE-FILE: "Silk pants with loose
printed T-shirts or shirts."

SHOPPING LIST: "A body suit by Alexia Hentsch, a
versatile silk dress and statement kitten heel shoes."





"A MEAL ON A FLIGHT
SEEMS SUCH A DISTANT
LUXURY NOW"

**SHEETAL
MAFATLAL**



WHERE: London

MOOD: "Asymptomatic with an optimistic mindset. I'm enjoying taking a break from my hectic lifestyle, particularly the flight every week. This new forced pace of life has given me the luxury to spend time at home and enjoy the beauty of my surroundings."

MAJOR CHALLENGES: "The struggle to continue being positive/optimistic while being inundated with a daily barrage of negative news."

LAST CITY I HAD TRAVELLED TO: "It was Gstaad, Switzerland."

FAVE HOME-MEAL: "Nothing beats my homemade Gujarati *thali*."

LAST CHERISHED SUPPER: "Caviar and champagne in the clouds. A meal on a flight seems such a distant luxury now."

POST-PANDEMIC WISHLIST: "Make a bonfire of my used N95 masks, latex gloves and all things COVID related to mark an end to this dark period."

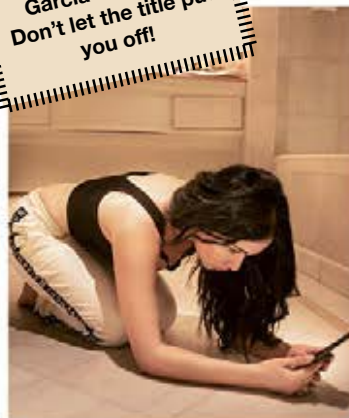
LOCKDOWN HOBBIES: "Being technologically challenged, I'm using my time to finally embark on a mission to become the next Steve Jobs. I have also rediscovered my love for jewellery design and have been enjoying my time creating new designs."

GO-TO SPOT AT HOME: "My bathroom sink, to repetitively wash my hands."

LOCKDOWN STYLE-FILE: "Karl Lagerfeld famously said, 'Sweatpants are a sign of defeat. You lost control of your life, so you bought sweatpants'. So, keeping my icon's profound yet ironic words in mind, I wear only high fashion athleisure and trendy trainers, accessorised with masks and gloves."

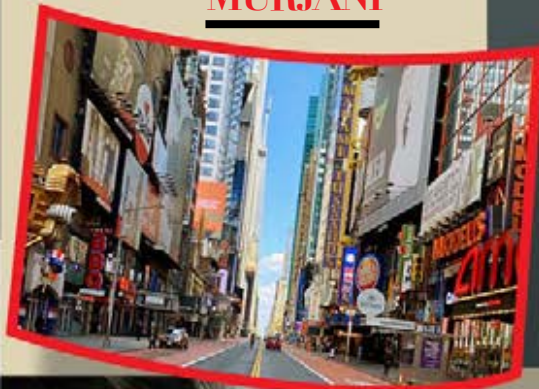
ON MY SHOPPING LIST: "Sanitisers, limited-edition designer masks/gloves and a one way ticket to planet Mars."

**CURRENTLY
READING:**
"Aside from
catching up on
the daily news,
I've actually been
reading *One
Hundred Years of
Solitude* by Gabriel
Garcia Marquez.
Don't let the title put
you off!"



"I LOOK FORWARD TO FAMILY ZOOM CALLS!"

MALINI MURJANI



WHERE: New York
WITH: "My daughter, Amalya."
SINCE: Seven weeks
EERIE MOMENT: "Living in a city that never sleeps, it's eerie to go out for a walk and be able to hear myself breathe."
POSITIVITY MANTRA: "Group meditation with friends at 9:15 AM helps us start the day on a positive note."
LOOKING FORWARD TO: "I look forward to family Zoom calls and happy hour drinks with friends. I love the 7:00 PM cheering session for the frontline workers – it's meant to show them some support, but it also feels nice to see some form of life outdoors."
LAST VACAY: "Miami in February."
LAST DINE-OUT: "Carbone-penne alla vodka, a martini at the Carlyle with a stop at the hairdressers!"
LOCKDOWN HOBBIES: "Drawing, cleaning out closets and redesigning parts of my home."
FITNESS REGIME: "Lyons Den yoga, The Class by Taryn Toomey, Pelaton – I livestream one of these classes at some point of the day."
LOCKDOWN STYLE-FILE: "Anokhi PJ's or Beyond Yoga workout leggings. I can't imagine getting dressed up for some time."



FAVE HOME MEAL:
 "Anything Indian!"
CURRENTLY READING:
 "Anything written by Bill Gates."
BINGE WATCHING:
 "CNN."



"MY GO-TO SPOT IS MY SWING CHAIR IN THE GARDEN"

AYESHA DEPALA



WHERE: Dubai, UAE
WITH: "My children, Leah and Neel."
MOOD: "I'm feeling very centred and grateful in this time as we have the privilege to lead healthy lives and attend to most of our needs."
FAVE LOCKDOWN MEAL: "I'm happiest with *dal, haak* (Kashmiri spinach) and rice."
LAST DINE-OUT: "Chinese at the FIVE Palm. Chef Bing makes the best Schezwan food in town!"
LOCKDOWN STYLE-FILE: "I wear track pants on most days or yoga shorts in the mornings. I have developed a small line of daily comfortable separates, such as modal jersey skirts and pants that I wear when I'm social, like on a Zoom call!"
ON MY SHOPPING LIST: "Some new swimwear, Barbara Sturm products from net-a-porter and some Indian Ayurvedic plants for my home garden."
POST-PANDEMIC WISHLIST: "I'd love to go visit my dad in New Delhi and have my loved ones come over. I'm also excited to be going for a pilgrimage to Vrindavan with my Guru Mathuraji."

FITNESS REGIME:
 "A combination of Ashtanga yoga, Hatha Yoga and some light weights and pranayama in the mornings."
GO-TO SPOT AT HOME:
 "My swing chair in my garden!"

INTERVIEWS: ANKITA RATHOD
 CO-ORDINATED BY: AVANTIKKA KILACHAND AND SONAM POLADIA
 CONCEPT: SONAM POLADIA AND ANKITA RATHOD

MEET THE **LOCK**DOWN GENIE!

WE ASKED AN ECLECTIC GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS, TO IMAGINE A GENIE RISE UP FROM AN ARTEFACT AT HOME, ASKING THEM WHAT THREE THINGS THEY WOULD MOST WISH TO DO, ONCE THE LOCKDOWN IS CALLED OFF...

For most of us, the lockdown felt a bit like a divorce from a rushed but richly varied reality as we have long known it. In our urban bubble, we haven't dusted or examined many corners of our domestic souls, and have perhaps had that rare opportunity to peep under the carpet – into our own subconscious minds – after aeons. They say this kind of phenomenon will only cross our paths once in a lifetime. HELLO! felt it was time to nudge people back into the lives they have known and the lives they seek to know again! And our responses to the question, 'What three things would you rush to do once the lockdown eases?' brought a vast range of 'wishes.'



LISA RAY
ACTRESS, AUTHOR

Host a house-warming party in our new home in Singapore, where the price of admission is a bear hug from each and every friend!

Play tennis!

Take a long, rambling walk with Sufi and Souffle (my twin daughters) through the botanical gardens with a stop for ice cream...



SUNEET VERMA

FASHION DESIGNER, PHOTOGRAPHER

I want to absolutely rush to work!

I really truly miss my work – the day to day interactions with my design team and the whole creative process. The one thing I have learned about myself in this lockdown period is that I love what I do and could never retire!

Go see my mom. I haven't seen her in over a month now – it's difficult, but I want to keep her protected from any chance of an infection. But I do miss seeing her...

Buy potted plants and bonsai and put them inside my home and in the balcony and make a terrace garden. I can't live without plants so if we can't spend too much time outside, I will create my own little haven!



PAYAL SEN

ENTREPRENEUR

Meet my family and friends physically. Video calls were a saving grace, but they can't compare to the warmth, comfort and joy of human interaction! I want to savour moments of our journey so far and share with them the positives of my quarantine time and hear their's too, from an online class to sampling dishes which looked mouth-watering on camera!

Self-Empowerment. I want to empower myself with knowledge so that I am able to resist the Powers of Persuasion. In the last six weeks what really hit me was the nonstop news broadcasts and religious sermons. I was snowed under WhatsApp messages, appeals for charity etc. And what were they all doing? Playing with my mind. I want to continue post lockdown, to cross-question everything and interact with people of diverse viewpoints.

Continuing to chant. I had taken to chanting and prayers with a group of people online, through which I found great peace. I look forward to meeting this group physically and continuing our journey of chanting together.



PRINCESS SIDDHI KUMARI

MLA, BIKANER EAST

Delve deeper into Buddhist chanting. This was something I always wanted to learn and now I will make it a point to learn and chant.

Meet my family, as I have not met them in sometime and given my profession it's quite difficult to meet frequently so I want to manage more efficiently to divide time between work and family.

Hit the gym. This is most important as mental and physical fitness go side by side. I will be more regular and spend more time to become a fitter version of myself.

RISHAB TONGYA

CREATIVE DIRECTOR, DIACOLOR

Acquaint myself with the changed world. We definitely are headed to a changed world in times to come and hence with the lockdown opening up, I would acquaint myself with the dynamics of this new world.

Travel... I still have a bucket list of places to visit! **Get a reservation at Cipriani and Nobu at the earliest...** last but definitely not the least!



SUJATA BAJAJ

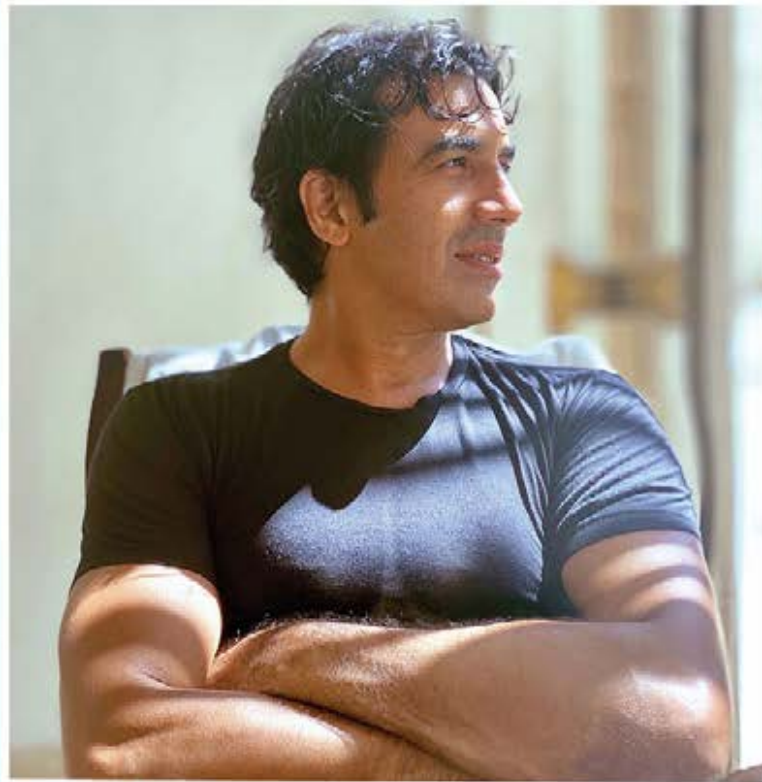
ARTIST

Would love to take a long walk. I want to walk by the water, somewhere by the ocean. I'm craving fresh air, the sound of waves, the feel of feet in the sand. The colour of the sky and the water as well, I find most relaxing and rejuvenating. That being said, at this point, any nature at all would be a treat! Forests, gardens, lakes... Anything natural usually enhances my creativity, even just the sight of organic materials such as stone, wood, etc.

Fly to Bombay! This will be the longest I haven't been back to India. Whenever I land in Paris, I usually always have a ticket booked for my next trip over. This is part of the deal I once made with myself when deciding to settle down in France: in a way ensuring that I never truly leave my country, and always have a plan to be back. Back to my art-world, friends, family and *paani-puri*.

I miss external artistic stimulation. Be it exhibitions, visiting galleries and museums featuring unique shows or meeting new inspiring people and having interesting conversations... Or even just going to art material shops and going through paints, brushes, new tools... Travelling again out of curiosity as well would be a wish. As a family we travel a lot - I am sure when this is over we will be keen to prepare where to explore next. Thoughts are on Botswana at the moment. Good to daydream a bit even in these times!





NIKHIL CHIB

MANAGING DIRECTOR, BUSABONG & CO

Reconnect with nature and do something with it in a non material way. Because I have done that in this time. I hear more birds and I can actually feel that I'm breathing cleaner air. And the silence I've experienced in this time is something I don't want to lose a connection with. The importance of need over want is the path I want to adopt.

Work on connections with friends and family. This time together has taught me how much time we've had apart. How unnecessary this distance has been. I realise I was most connected to my phone, whereas now I have learned the connections I need to work on are my friends and family.

Redfine the 'Good Life.' In my business, I've always followed selling the so-called good life, but now the good life means much more to me. I am working on adding immunity bowls and a healthier and more holistic approach to eating and feeding people. I am enjoying cooking and experimenting and want to share this with my customers.

Listening to my inner voice. During this lockdown I've started listening to my inner voice, I'm more in touch with my body and mind. I am doing a lot functional training, yoga, swimming, Krav Maga and this has just reinforced my belief that health is more important than wealth. It's important to take good care of oneself.

Sing and re-learn the piano. With time on my hands, I have decided to use the many generous online tools, classes, apps, that are at my fingertips. This will make my soul sing and play even if it doesn't make others – hahahaha....!



MALVIKA TIWARI

ACTRESS

Catch the first flight back home to Goa! I wish to be with my *bacchas*.

Make conscious lifestyle choices. I would like to incorporate the minimalism that I have lived with earlier during treks and rafting expeditions and in the past few weeks as a conscious lifestyle choice.

Maintain social distancing. I will most certainly continue with social distancing.



ANITA RATNAM

CONTEMPORARY DANCER

See my sister and her adorable grandchildren. I want to drive across town to see them, catch up, laugh and be around them all.

Eliminate termites! I want to get my 60-year-old family home treated for termites in all the storage areas (I found infected areas while clearing and cleaning).

Get a parlour appointment. I need a hair cut. Threading. Waxing. A facial. A mani-pedi even though this reeks of privilege! But it's the truth...!



KABIA GREWAL SHAH

CO-FOUNDER,
OUTHOUSE JEWELLERY

Accessorising my home. I believe your safe space should reflect who you are, and I'd love to buy some art pieces. I want to expand my library post lockdown. During this period, I did work with what I had. I've been working on mood boards and elaborate plans on how each nook and cranny needs to look and I can't wait to get to execute all that. I'd also like to finish up my office in Mumbai.

Hug my family and friends. A simple hug or a handshake is something we took for granted. Now, being comforted by your loved ones is an inherent need. Keeping in touch digitally is great but I can't wait to hug my mom. The first thing I'm going to do is hop on a plane to Delhi and see my family and friends.

Travel: I believe exploration is tied to a human's well-being. We were never made to be stagnant – and I'm incredibly passionate about traveling. It makes your memories richer. There's just something about going to an unknown land to explore and absorb its culture, revel in the beauty of nature and just breathe that outside air. I can't wait.

SUCHITRA KRISHNAMOORTHY

ACTRESS, SINGER, AUTHOR

Have an entire bottle of Malbec in a fancy restaurant dressed to the hilt.

Get a massage. I have never missed anyone as much as I missed my masseuse during this lockdown!

Fly to Coimbatore and hug my parents.



RAMONA ARENA

VJ, ACTRESS, MODEL, SINGER, YOGA EXPONENT

Reconnect with the earth. I would go for a long barefoot walk in a garden.

Visit my favourite restaurants I long to meet my friends and family at my favourite restaurants.

Take the first flight out to the mountains and woods. Like all animals and plants across the world, I loved being in isolation, so this has been very easy for me. But I am not a city person, retreating out in nature would be my dream. I really dislike the pollution, insane honking, awful traffic and lack of green or cleanliness here!



SEEMA KOHLI

ARTIST

Meet my 90-year-old father.

Though we are talking with family on Zoom, WhatsApp, but meeting in person is something else. He stays just five minutes from my home. Now a five minute walk is also something to aspire for!

Travel with my children. I miss my children terribly; my daughter stays in Defence Colony in Delhi and my son in Goa. I miss spending quality time with them, travelling with them. We would travel together whenever we could escape our work. I don't know when the borders will open and we will travel again.

Hang-out with my friends casually at my home or theirs. We do hang out virtually, discussing books or our common concepts but it's different meeting them personally.

INTERVIEWS: SANGEETA WADHWANI AND AMBER TIKARI

Diana Penty

A class apart

HELLO! meets the supermodel and actor, discovering an ageless beauty, whose biggest ornament is her humility

She isn't just a model and an actor who meets the tick boxes. What makes her stand out from the rest of her ilk is the fact that despite more than a decade in the glamour world, Diana Penty has managed to preserve not only her looks but also an inherent rootedness in her nature that time and success have not managed to erode. HELLO! talks to the *Cocktail* and *Happy Bhaag Jayegi* actor, who has recently been chosen as the international face of an iconic cosmetic brand.

What is the secret to your eternal youth and beauty?

"My genes, I would have to believe! Honestly, I don't have any major beauty or skincare regime that I follow. I stick to a very simple routine of cleansing, toning and moisturising, with a little sunscreen thrown in whenever I remember to use it. I like keeping things simple and practical because I have no patience for anything elaborate."

Early on in your career, you were so committed to modelling that you even overlooked big Bollywood offers. Do you regret that?

"The thing with me and my life is that it has always been unplanned. Before I became a model, I never ever dreamt or imagined I would be one. I was studying marketing and was considering doing a Masters in Global Marketing Communications and Advertising, when modelling suddenly happened. Similarly, when I was modelling, I was so happy and excited about my life, that not once did acting even occur to me. But as usual, life happened and a film opportunity came by – the one I couldn't resist. It's only after I started acting that I realised how much I love the craft. Until then, acting was never in my scheme of things. So the

one thing I can safely say is that I've never had any regrets so far and I truly believe that everything in my life has happened at the right time and because it was meant to."

While growing up, did you want to become a model or were there other career plans?

"I wanted to be many different things while growing up, including an astronaut! When I passed out of school and had to decide what to study next, I was so lost and confused, I had absolutely no idea what direction to take. I ended up doing a mass media course specialising in advertising and realised how much I enjoyed the marketing world. I had big plans to study abroad post my graduation and do a Masters in Global Marketing Communications, but that's when modelling happened and my life took a completely different turn!"

When did you really think of modelling as a serious career option?

"When modelling first happened to me, I decided I would do it part-time as I was still in college and wanted to focus on completing my degree. When I graduated is when I started taking up more and more assignments and before I knew it, I was modelling full time. The rest is history!"

You've had the rare opportunity of modelling in India and on international platforms. How did the international offers start pouring in?

"I started my modelling career with Elite Models India and was soon signed on by Elite Paris, after which I moved to Paris for a year. A couple of years later, I decided to try the American market, so I signed with Muse Models and worked in New York for a couple of years until *Cocktail* happened."

Despite being one of the most successful supermodels of this country, you have also been known for your humility –

Diana Penty looks demure in a *gota*, pearl and Swarovski embroidered *lehenga*, paired with a matching silk blouse by Dabiri Couture. She accessorises the look with a vintage English *polki* and ruby interlink necklace by Birdhichand Ghanshyamdas Jaipur as she poses against the backdrop of the JW Marriott poolside



Diana exudes timeless elegance as she poses under a *chattri* by the poolside, in a mirror work and embroidered short *anarkali* by Dabiri Couture. She wears a stunning custom-cut interlaced diamond and emerald choker with an emerald, diamond and pearl tassel necklace, all by Birdhichand Ghanshyamdas Jaipur





Diana wears a diamond and pink sapphire choker with matching earrings by Birdhichand Ghanshyamdas Jaipur

Diana poses against the backdrop of the stunning marble *jaali* work of the terrace in a thread and crystal work embroidered tulle jumpsuit by Tarun Tahiliani. She accessories the look with a diamond and pink sapphire choker with matching earrings by Birdhichand Ghanshyamdas Jaipur



The leggy model stands tall in an appliqué ensemble by designer Rahul Mishra. She wears a pair of exclusive *polki* earrings and a stack of bracelets by Birdhichand Ghanshyamdas Jaipur



The actress wears an organza blouson teamed with pearl and stone embroidered pants by Dabiri Couture. Diana's orchid necklace, studded with blue sapphires and diamonds, is by Birdhichand Ghanshyamdas Jaipur



where does that come from?

“It’s funny, but all through my life – through the ups and the downs, I’ve always felt very centred and grounded. And I know this is one of my biggest strengths because along with it comes the ability to be extremely objective about things, which I think is so important in an industry that can sweep you off your feet in a heartbeat. A lot of this is my upbringing and I couldn’t thank my parents enough.”

INTERVIEW: SANGHITA SINGH
 PHOTOS: TARUN VISHWA
 MAKE-UP & HAIR: SHRADDHA MISHRA
 CREATIVE DIRECTION: AMBER TIKARI
 LOCATION COURTESY:
 JW MARRIOTT JAIPUR RESORT & SPA
 JEWELLERY COURTESY:
 BIRDHICHAND GHANSHYAMDAS, JAIPUR

Akshi Jogani

Halfway between prêt-à-porter and haute couture, this 20-something is creating a unique stir across borders, catching on to the rising trend of demi couture. HELLO! chats with the young designer on reinventing fashion with a dollop of psychology

MULTI-CULTURAL INFLUENCES

"I grew up in Antwerp, Belgium. However, I have always been connected to my roots due to the large Indian community there. Having partially moved to Dubai with my family while continuing to remain very connected to Mumbai, I have always been drawn towards the aesthetics of multiple cultures. It had a great impact on me. I was only 10, when I was bullied for my choices of attire. It instilled in me the habit of keenly observing the style preferences of individuals around."

PURSUE FASHION PSYCHOLOGY

"The evolution of my fashion sense was gradual. Being intrigued by human behaviour led me to study Psychology from Regent's University London, but my creativity continued to grow. Towards the end of the course, I chose Fashion Psychology as a module, which tapped the creativity in me."

MARRYING THE MIND WITH THE ATTIRE

"I strongly believe that what we wear is a reflection of who we are. I design to make women feel more confident and empowered. Having studied the art of Psychology,



I brought both my passions together, ultimately to ask myself one question: what are the psychological effects that garments may have on an individual? The answer to this gave inception and a fundamental basis to my designs – a garment that not only feels comfortable, but gives you a comfortable state of mind. And that was the idea behind my bespoke label."

SARTORIAL STYLE: CLASSIC-CHIC

"Clothing is a part of our identity and it enables us to align with particular groups, but which group do I belong in? As I move through life, my style is constantly evolving and changing. What remains constant is my chic style. I'm not necessarily trend-oriented; I prefer sticking to classic and elegant pieces."

DELVING INTO DEMI COUTURE

"I get inspired by aesthetics, whether it's in the form of nature, art or simple everyday objects at home. So far, I have experimented with various embroidery techniques, which add an Indian touch to my collections. But the travel restrictions now have compelled me to draw inspiration from things and patterns I see around me, daily. So, you will see more prints in my upcoming collection. I'm working on interesting silhouettes and transforming my colour palette from pastel to bolder tones."

REINVENTING DURING LOCKDOWN

"The lockdown has given me a different perspective towards life in which I see a much bolder version of myself. Besides experimenting with designs, I have also redefined my wardrobe. I was always very girly; the lockdown has pushed me towards a more empowered and fresh look."

SIGNING UP FOR IVY LEAGUE COURSES

"Since we are confined in our homes and our regular routines have hit a pause, I decided to utilise this time by boosting my productivity. The lockdown has given me the perfect opportunity to pursue various online courses, including the Negotiation course from Yale and the Ancient Egypt & Archaeology by Harvard professor Peter Der Manuelian. You will probably see a greater influence of their culture in my upcoming collections."

COMPILED BY: ANKITA RATHOD

Fashion Reinvention 2.0

THE MIDDLE-EASTERN FOCUS

DUBAI MAY HAVE PARTIALLY LIFTED THE LOCKDOWN, BUT LOOKS LIKE THE 'VIRAL' EFFECTS ARE HERE TO STAY. FIVE MIDDLE EASTERN DESIGNERS SPEAK TO HELLO! ABOUT COPING WITH THE CRISIS AND THE FUTURE OF HAUTE COUTURE, AFTER THE PANDEMIC ENDS



MARMAR HALIM

Marmar Halim, Dubai

"Creativity is on hold for now. We are planning a production shift towards medical products, i.e. masks and disposable gowns. A part of it will be used as donation to the community and our medical frontliners, the rest would be sold on cost-price basis, but only to ensure we can pay our employees' salaries and help them and their families survive this crisis. We are also avoiding layoffs, as it may lead to the collapse of an industry, in the long run."



GEORGE AZZI AND ASSAAD OSTA

Azzi and Osta, Beirut

"We are looking into using our digital platforms to communicate more on our brand values. We've always been against using animal skins, and we apply sustainable practices in our work. We believe donations should now seek to spread awareness and steer the conversation towards developing more sustainable lifestyle practices in fashion design. We want to spread positivity and delve more into storytelling and fantasy fashion to create a sense of escapism, much needed during these times."



RAYAN AL-SULAIMANI

Atelier Zuhra, Dubai

"Social distancing has taught us many things, most importantly, to value the little things of life, to help people and focus more on the good, rather than the bad. I'll be taking part in a lot of fashion shows that will donate money for good causes. I will keep doing my bit for the society through auctions and charity, for social welfare. Next year, I plan to initiate my own charity project for underprivileged women, more on which I will be revealing soon."





ALINA ANWAR KHAN

Alina Anwar Couture, Dubai

"We should try to work for the betterment of humanity in whatever we do. During this period, I've set up an online charity store to help those affected by the Covid-19 outbreak.

Also, it was really important for me to keep my staff motivated and to enhance their creativity. So, we sent across some working plans to them, which have made everyone more efficient in planning and more creative in delivering their tasks. I'm thinking of making it a regular exercise, post the crisis."



YUSEF ALJASMI

*Yousef Aljasmī Haute Couture and
Yousef Aljasmī Bride, Kuwait*

"I see a more aware audience and buyer, in our near future. People will surely look towards more sustainability, across the sectors. We will be making some major changes as global citizens as we seek to achieve our long-term goals, rather than pursuing something that is within reach but not mutually beneficial."



COMPILED BY: ANKITA RATHOD
COORDINATED BY: SONAM POLADIA

HELLO!

Beauty

Get the look!

How to slay Hailey Bieber's endearing and flawless make-up look

• GET THE LOOK •



- 1) Brow Primer + Color, **URBAN DECAY**
- 2) Liner, **LANCÔME**
- 3) Two Tone Blush, **GUERLAIN**
- 4) Prep Set Glow, **ICONIC**
- 5) Liquid Lipstick, **SMASHBOX**
- 6) Pearly lip gloss, **MYGLAMM**
- 7) Illuminating powder pearls, **GUERLAIN**
- 8) High lighter, **TOO FACED**
- 9) Lip Glow, **DIOR**
- 10) Shade & illuminate Palette, **TOM FORD**
- 11) Matte Powder Foundation, **BAREMINERALS**

Floral Fantasy

Let's celebrate summer
by splashing out on
new fragrances

- 1) Rosa Mocengina, **THE MERCHANT OF VENICE**
- 2) Love Perfume, **VICTORIA SECRET**
- 3) Flower Bomb, **VICTOR&ROLF**
- 4) Donna, **VALENTINO**
- 5) Amo Flowerful, **SALVATORE**
- 6) Mon Guerlain Bloom Of Rose, **GUERLAIN**
- 7) Guilty Love Edition Femme, **GUCCI**
- 8) Rose&Rose Perfume, **ISSEY MIYAKE**
- 9) Twist Perfume, **MIU MIU**
- 10) Cool water intense, **DAVIDOFF**
- 11) Rose Goldea Blossom Delight, **BVLGARI**



Summer Glow

Beauty essentials that will keep you fresh and gleaming!

12

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Miranda Kerr

1) Vitamin C Facial Wash, SOAP & GLORY

2) Moisturizer Hydratant, KYLIE SKIN

3) Cherry Balm, GLOSSIER

4) Makeup Fridge, GLOW RECIPES

5) Glow Oil, HERBIVORE

6) Moisturizing Cream, LA MER

7) Night Mask, THE BODY SHOP

8) Skin Recovery SPF 50, DERMALOGICA

9) Anti Ageing Cream, DERMAFIQUE

10) Glow Mist, PIXI

11) Cellular Youth Serum, BIOTIQUE



Must Haves

We're shining a spotlight on the latest beauty skincare and more



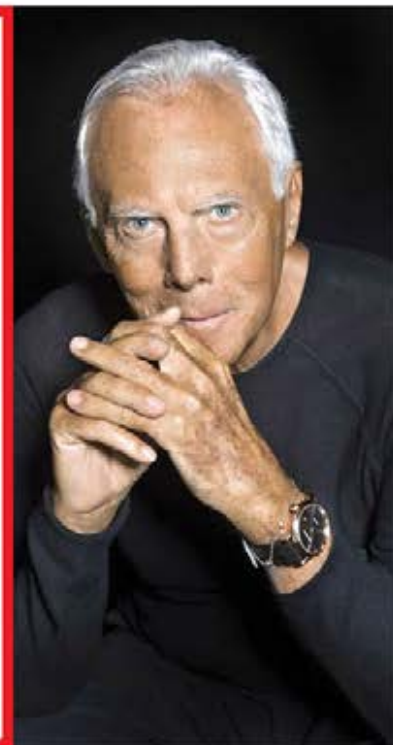
- 1) Peel Off Mask, FLORENCE BY MILLS
- 2) RevitaLift, L'ORÉAL PARIS
- 3) Allure Facial Serum, BIOTIQUE ROYAL
- 4) Night Serum, BLISS
- 5) Skin Calming Mask, VENEFFECT
- 6) Cleansing Complex, IS CLINICAL
- 7) Dream Mask, YOUTH TO THE PEOPLE
- 8) Lip Sleeping Mask, LANEIGE
- 9) Hand Cream, THE BODY SHOP
- 10) Tinted Moisturizer, LAURA MERCIER
- 11) Serum, N°7
- 12) Eyeshadow Palette, KIKO MILANO
- 13) Facial Device, FOREO
- 14) Lipstick, NYKAA
- 15) The Rouge lipstick, HERMÈS
- 16) Makeup Brushes, IRIS
- 17) Lipstick, GIORGIO ARMANI
- 18) Water Fresh Tint, CHANEL

THE LUXURY OF AID

LUXURY BRANDS ACROSS THE GLOBE ARE DOING THEIR BIT TO HELP THE FRONTLINERS BATTLE THE PANDEMIC BY MANUFACTURING MASKS, HAND SANITIZERS AND MORE. HELLO! OFFERS A LOWDOWN

THE ARMANI GROUP

After making considerable donations to medical facilities in Italy, the Armani Group – which owns the brands Emporio and Giorgio – has announced that it will produce single-use medical overalls at their manufacturing plants for now, instead of luxury goods.



NOT SO SERIOUS BY PALLAVI MOHAN

Pallavi Mohan is involved in production of face masks with her team of 30 workers. The designer is making 350 masks daily. The brand is using printed cotton fabric, available in their factory, to produce three layered masks.



HOUSE OF MASABA: 'MASKABA'

Masaba Gupta announced that her brand, House of Masaba is going to contribute by manufacturing non-surgical, washable and reusable masks at one of their production vendors. A team of three workers are transforming fabrics that were meant for garments into masks.



BURBERRY

The British luxury brand is using their global supply chains to expedite the delivery of 1,00,000 surgical masks for use by medical staff at the UK National Health Service. The brand's trench coat factory in Castleford, Yorkshire, is producing non-surgical gowns and masks for patients in hospitals.



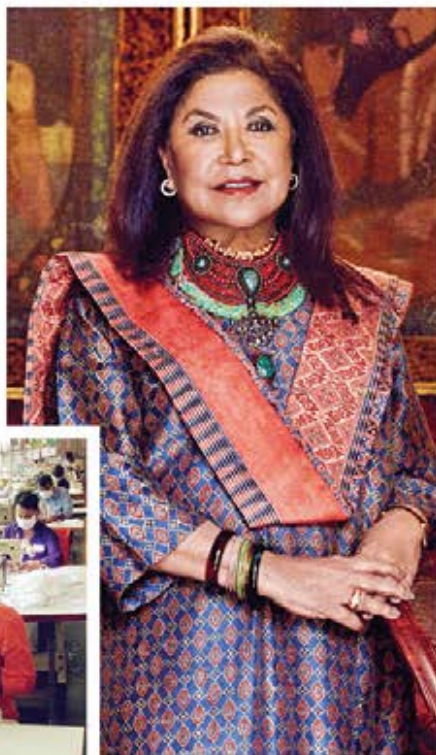
GUERLAIN

The units that once manufactured fragrances, make-up and skincare products are now making hand sanitising gel. Guerlain's production sites at La Ruche and Orphin in Chartres, France, are producing the gel in significant quantities, to be provided to French health authorities.



RITU KUMAR

The Indian designer sought permission from the authorities to start the production of 50,000 non-surgical masks at her factory. The designer has 10-12 workers working in their production unit to help fight the battle against the pandemic.



HERMÈS

The French Luxury brand has committed to the donation of 30 tonnes of hand sanitizers, that are being produced at its fragrance manufacturing site in Vaudreuil. The brand will also contribute 31,000 masks.

#bvlgarisupportsitaly
#safehands



ANITA DONGRE

Anita Dongre has set up production of protective reusable masks as well as special disposable masks for doctors, nurses and medical staff at their tailoring units. The efforts of 24 women employees are contributing towards this noble cause.



BVLGARI

The Italian luxury jewellery brand, in partnership with their fragrance partner, ICR (Industrie Cosmetiche Riunite) has collectively decided to manufacture 1,00,000 bottles of hand sanitizing gel. The sanitizers would be distributed across medical facilities in Italy, with the help of the Italian Civil Protection Department.

CHRISTIAN SIRIANO

The luxury womenswear designer and his team in their New York studio are stitching colourful masks for healthcare professionals and essential workers. He recently posted a picture of a beautiful crystal mask on his Instagram page.



TORY BURCH

The luxury brand has promised healthcare workers US\$5 million in products, including sneakers, fanny packs and easy-to-wash clothing to wear under scrubs. In addition, they have donated fabric required to make masks and hospital gowns and are producing fabric masks, as recommended by the CDC.



HOW WE ARE
HELPING OTHERS
DURING COVID-19



Made shoes
yesterday.
Making masks
today.



NEW BALANCE

The American brand has developed and started production of urgent use face masks as part of personal protective equipment (PPE). The company aims to produce 1,00,000 masks weekly at their Massachusetts, Lawrence, Norridgewock and Maine factories.

We are in the process of converting our American factories to start producing 150,000 masks per day to help protect health care workers and others battling the spread of COVID-19.

Brooks Brothers

BROOKS BROTHERS

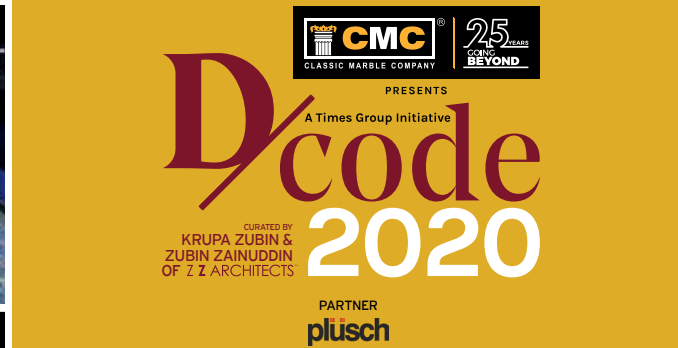
America's oldest retailer is in a process of manufacturing masks and gowns for the nation's hospitals and healthcare facilities and has mobilized its New York, North Carolina and Massachusetts factories for the same. The company aims to produce 1,50,000 masks daily on to help support the heroes in the frontlines.



M.A.C COSMETICS

The beauty brand is giving a #MACKissOfGratitude as their contribution in the battle against the pandemic. It has announced the donation of proceeds from every sale of the M.A.C VIVA GLAM LIPSTICK to provide essential healthcare services to vulnerable communities.

TEXT: KARMA DHINGRA
COMPILED BY: SONAM POLADIA



An initiative by Home & Design TRENDS magazine, D/code is India's first curated luxury living show presented by the Times Group. Redefining the way we experience the luxe life, D/code brings together the best of design under one roof to create a platform that celebrates and recognises creative thought.

D/code 2020, presented by Classic Marble Company, with Plusch as partners was once again curated by Krupa Zubin and Zubin Zainuddin of ZZ Architects. In its third edition, D/code showcased over 50 luxury design brands, specially curated events and power talk sessions. Here, we give you a glimpse of D/code 2020 held at Dome NSCI, Worli.

1. Amit Shah of Classic Marble Company, Editor in Chief Ronitaa Italia, Subodh Shah of Classic Marble Company, Sunil Wuthoo, Business Director, Worldwide Media 2. Sukriti Sharma of Plusch Living, Architect Krupa Zubin, Rati Sharma of Plusch Living, Architect Zubin Zainuddin, Rupal Maru of Plusch Living 3. Editor in Chief Ronitaa Italia, Amit Shah of CMC, MasterChef Sarah Todd, Architect Xerxes Talati 4. Yogesh Chaudhary of Jaipur Rugs 5. Miti Jhunjhunwala of MJ Label 6. Sunil Wuthoo, Business Director, Worldwide Media, Keki Shah of C. Bhogilal West-End, Sanjay Arora of D'Décor 7. Chef Pallavi Nigam 8. Hazel Wolf, Editor in Chief Ronitaa Italia, Sonal Das, Project Head, D/code, Jürgen Wolf, Managing Director, Häfele 9. Guest with Falgun Shroff of Sources Unlimited, Architect Krishna Murthy, Aamir Fruitwala of AK International 10. Artist Radhika Rawat Chopra, Khanakh Sharma, Jai Sharma, Abhimanyu Chopra 11. Architect Ahmad Furniturewala, Architect Noshir Talati, Architect Xerxes Talati 12. Mandeep Singh of Emery Studio with guests 13. Architect Rooshad Shroff, Designer Ravi Vazirani, Architect Rajiv Parekh, Architect Annkur Khosla, Designer Iram Sultan, Editor in Chief Ronitaa Italia 14. Guest, Dhruv Chandra of The Carpet Cellar, Purav Mehta of Sources Unlimited, Subodh Shah of CMC 15. Architect Zubin Zainuddin, Keki Shah of C. Bhogilal West-End, Architect Krupa Zubin with guests 16. Iram Habib, Designer Aakif Habib, Sonal Das, Project Head, D/code 17. Sanjay Arora of D'Décor 18. Hamendra Sharma of Plusch Living, Editor in Chief Ronitaa Italia 19. Designer Monica Chawla, Falgun Shroff, Sources Unlimited, Keki Shah 20. Guests at the VIP lounge





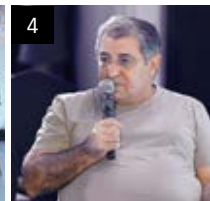
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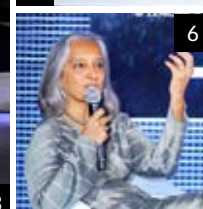
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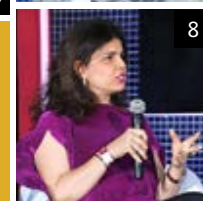
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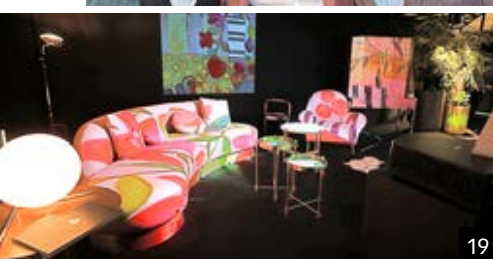


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1. Sunil Wuthoo, Business Director, Worldwide Media, Editor In Chief Ronitaa Italia, Designer Shantanu Garg 2. Guests at Trends Excellence Awards 3. Designer Iram Sultan, Architect Rajeev Thakker, Artist Arzan Khambatta, Architect Anand Menon 4. Architect Nozer Wadia 5. Architect Husna Rahaman, Architect Zubin Master, Architect Annkur Khosla, Architect Rajeev Parekh, Designer Iram Sultan 6. Architect Shimul Javeri Kadri 7. Architect Abha Narain Lambah 8. Architect Seema Puri 9. Architect Zarir Mullan 10. Designer Shabnam Gupta 11. Architect Nandini Somaya Sampat 12. The Design Corridor curated by Home & Design TRENDS 13. Jaipur Rugs 14. D'Décor Blinds 15. Valcucine 16. C Bhogilal West-End 17. Sources Unlimited 18. Title Sponsor Classic Marble Company 19. The Souk of Emotions, curated by Designer Shantanu Garg in collaboration with six branding partners – Tejas, S&B Designs, Orvi Surfaces, Credo Planters, Chopra's, Attitudes Deco. 20. Amit Shah of CMC, Falgun Shroff of Sources Unlimited, Kunj Shah of Sources Unlimited 21. Sameer Wadekar, Architect Zaki Sheikh, Designer Jannat Vasi, Meghna Jain of Orvi Surfaces, Designer Shantanu Garg, guest, Designer Fenny Ganatra, guest, Designer Neesha Alwani 22. Designer Shantanu Garg, Designer Iram Sultan, Kunal Maniar 23. Title Sponsor Classic Marble Company 24. Partners Plush Living



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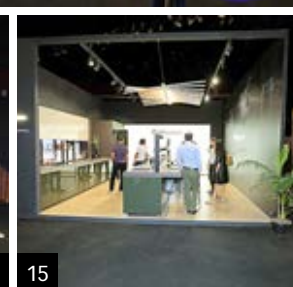
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Celebrity

LOCKDOWN DIARIES

HERE'S WHAT OUR FAVOURITES ARE DOING TO MAKE THE MOST OF SELF-ISOLATION



JACQUELINE

on loving horses

When "Mrs Serial Killer" isn't busy promoting the new titular Netflix series from the comforts of her home, the actress indulges in some power yoga. Jacky also posted videos of herself spending quality time with her equestrian beauty, recently.



THE ROYALS

are all for health

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge announced the Covid-19 mental health scheme after Kate was "moved to tears by the stories of frontline staff" at the NHS. The Royals have set up 'Our Frontline scheme' in association with Mind, Samaritans, Hospice UK and Shout to offer round-the-clock mental health support to key workers.



Full house for RONALDO

It's a tough job being one of the greatest sportsmen alive and the coolest dad of four, but Cristiano Ronaldo has mastered this art. The football star has been sharing glimpses of his workout alone or with his mini assistants. He has been enjoying the downtime, arranging movie nights or cozy meals for his family. He also got a haircut from his girlfriend, Georgina Rodriguez.



KUNIS AND KUTCHER

Instagram talk show

Actors Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher announced the launch of 'Quarantine Wine' in a bid to support coronavirus relief measures. The couple is donating 100 percent of the profits to various charities to help feed families, supply PPE equipment to frontliners and aid small businesses. The couple had fun tasting the wine, produced in partnership with Nocking Point Wines and Battle Creek Vineyards, and they wrote "You!" on the bottle, raising a toast to health workers out there.



SHARAPOVA

the queen of video conferencing

Video conferencing being the ideal way of connecting with people during the lockdown, tennis ace Maria Sharapova has been conducting several such conferences for work as well as fun. Her video hangout session with fans, called the #SharaFamilyHangout, features some wine or tea, too!



OPRAH'S

home of self-care

Reading a book, painting Easter eggs, preparing comfort food while drinking fine wine and dancing away to various melodies, she has been doing it all. Oprah Winfrey has been conducting video talks with different leaders, doctors, nurses and journalists to help appraise her fans of the on-ground situation. Winfrey is also hosting book clubs and prayer sessions with pastors on her Instagram!

THE ONE WORLD CONCERT *at home*

Global Citizen organised a livestream benefit concert recently, which raised US\$127 million to help in corona relief work. As part of the concert, celebs joined in from the safe confines of their homes. While Italian opera singer Andrea Bocelli performed *Grace for Easter Sunday*, Billie Eilish, Celine Dion, Camila Cabello and Shawn Mendes performed *What a Wonderful World*. Legends like Elton John, Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder also sang on the livestream.



TEXT: KARMA DHINGRA

Good Living

FOOD **TRAVEL** ENTERTAINMENT **INTERIORS**



Chef Dharshan Munidasa

His culinary exploration began in his university dorm, but the world-renowned chef and restaurateur credits his pledge to deliver what's promised on the menu for his success.

A tête-à-tête with HELLO!

Pepper Crab by Ministry of Crab, Mumbai



From being a Computer Engineering and International Relations student at the Johns Hopkins University, USA, to becoming a celebrity chef and restaurateur, please tell us about your journey...

"The journey from Hopkins to where I am today has been one of discovery. Discovering ingredients was the key as I couldn't import interesting ingredients from Japan, since the duty structure in Sri Lanka was so high that I had to start looking inwards. That's how I found the tuna that was being exported to Japan and the crab that was being exported to Singapore. That's how my restaurant, Nihonbashi was born and it started to make a difference in the culinary landscape of Sri Lanka. With regards to the crab, we always knew that the best ones left our shores. I was, somehow, able to find suppliers and learn the pricing methods and the fact that the prices of all these commodities were not set in Sri Lanka, but outside. Having this understanding of how the markets work has immensely helped me on my journey to cook with the best ingredients Sri Lanka has to offer."

Is it true that your culinary explorations

began in your university dormitory?

(Laughs) "I started cooking because the dorm food was unpalatable to me, after one semester. When I first started cooking, I slowly realised that I needed to have a "method to the madness", so to speak. I began developing menus with corresponding grocery lists. I started making Japanese pickles out of salt taken from Sri Lanka. I was doing things like deboning chicken and saving the bones to create stock. I was buying the cheapest part of the salmon – its head – to make *Shio Yaki* using the oven in my dorm. It always mattered that I made something that's good to eat and tasty. My roommates were witness to all these shenanigans that ensued as a result!"

How has your dual heritage (Sri Lankan and Japanese) inspired your cooking style?

"My dual heritage has become the backbone of who I am. Being in Sri Lanka and thinking as a Japanese

would, I'd go fishing or walk through the fish markets looking for the freshest fish. In Japan we appreciate nature so much that children are connected to where the fish comes from – be it rivers, lakes or the ocean and they would go fishing for them. In Sri Lanka, when we realised that there was a river around our house, my brother and I'd go fishing. We would also go to the sea to fish once a week. That connection to nature is important. It's that connection which gives you the ability to understand that good ingredients are close by – you don't need ingredients that come from a packet or are imported from another country. The preciseness of Japanese cuisine, the knives we use and the various tools that we have for every possible scenario in the kitchen, are prevalent in all my kitchen and carry a strong influence on how I believe food should be cooked."

Your restaurant, Ministry of Crab has been featured in 'Asia's 50 Best Restaurants List', not once but thrice! Your thoughts...

"Asia's 50 Best Restaurants List' is a great place for a restaurant to be featured in, especially in a country where we do not have a *Michelin Guide*. Nihonbashi has been on the list since its inception, but two years later, MoC propelled me to become one of the only two people having two restaurants on this list. We don't do anything special to be featured on this list and it's a great honour to be featured. All we do is to make sure we deliver what we promise on our menu to every guest we serve."

Is it love for good food that spurred the collaboration with Sri Lankan cricketing legends Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara on MoC?

"I met Kumar at Nihonbashi many years ago, long before MoC happened and realised his love for food and his passion for what I was cooking. A great friendship ensued, and I met Mahela later on. They were kind enough to be a part of my TV show in 2009 and that's how we became great friends. This was how, eventually, they became involved with MoC. The love for good food is the most important reason that holds us together and it's great to have that relationship based on food."

You made your India debut with MoC, last year. How has it been so far in India?

"I forayed into the subcontinent with the Gourmet Investments Pvt. Ltd (GIPL) as we both believe in a similar philosophy – of serving simple food cooked well. While most restaurants try to substitute home food, GIPL aims to create restaurants that feed the soul not stomach. The commitment that Ramith and Joey have shown us is very powerful and we are very glad to be working with them in India." 

FAST FIVE

An ingredient/dish that denotes "luxury" to you...

"The luxury of an ingredient is to be able to have the freshest version of it in its home country."

An Indian chef you admire...

"Chef Manish Mehrotra."

Your biggest indulgence...

"Not champagne!"

Your idea of comfort food...

"Ramen."

If not a chef, you would have been...

"A house husband."

TEXT: SREEMITA BHATTACHARYA

GOURMET LOCKDOWN RECIPES

Rustle up some lip-smacking fare as you self-isolate. From a perfectly-assembled avocado toast to mouth-watering butter chicken *kulchas* and flavourful spinach rolls – you can make it all at home! HELLO! tells you how...



BUTTER CHICKEN KULCHAS

Chef Manish Mehrotra

Indian Accent

INGREDIENTS

- Chicken *tikka* 75 gms
- Oil 1 tsp
- Ginger, chopped ½ tsp
- Garlic, chopped ½ tsp



- Makhni gravy 2 tbsp
- Mild cheddar cheese, grated 1 tbsp
- Dried fenugreek leaves (*kasuri methi*) ¼ tsp
- Salted butter 1 tsp

METHOD

PREPARE STUFFING: Chop the chicken *tikka* and keep aside. Heat oil in a pan and sauté chopped ginger, garlic and chicken *tikka* pieces. Add makhni gravy. Allow it to simmer till the mixture has dried. Remove and allow it to cool. Add grated cheese when the mixture has cooled. Mix well and keep aside.

PREPARE KULCHAS: Divide the dough into two parts and the stuffing into two equal portions. Make a hole in the centre of each ball, fill it with stuffing and reshape into a ball. Apply a little oil over the dough balls to prevent them from drying out. Flatten each dough ball with your hand into a round shape of 3-inch diameter. Sprinkle dried fenugreek leaves on top. Place kulchas in a hot tandoor and cook till golden brown. Remove carefully, taking care not to break the *kulchas*. Serve hot, drizzled with some butter.



AVACADO TOAST

Chef Mayur Tewari

The Three Kitchens,
The Ritz-Carlton, Pune

INGREDIENTS

- Bread 4 slices
- Avocado 1 nos
- Lemon 1 wedge
- Salt to taste
- Pepper to taste
- Cream cheese 4 tbsp
- Pistachio dukkah 2 tbsp

- Olive oil 1 tbsp

FOR PISTACHIO DUKKAH

- Pistachio (toasted) half cup
- Coriander seeds 2 tbsp
- Chili flakes 1 tbsp
- Salt to taste

METHOD

PREPARE PISTACHIO DUKKAH: Toast the pistachio and broil the coriander seeds. Put the pistachio, coriander seeds and chili flakes in a mortar pestle and pound to make a rough mixture. Add salt and mix. Keep aside to be used as toppings for different dishes

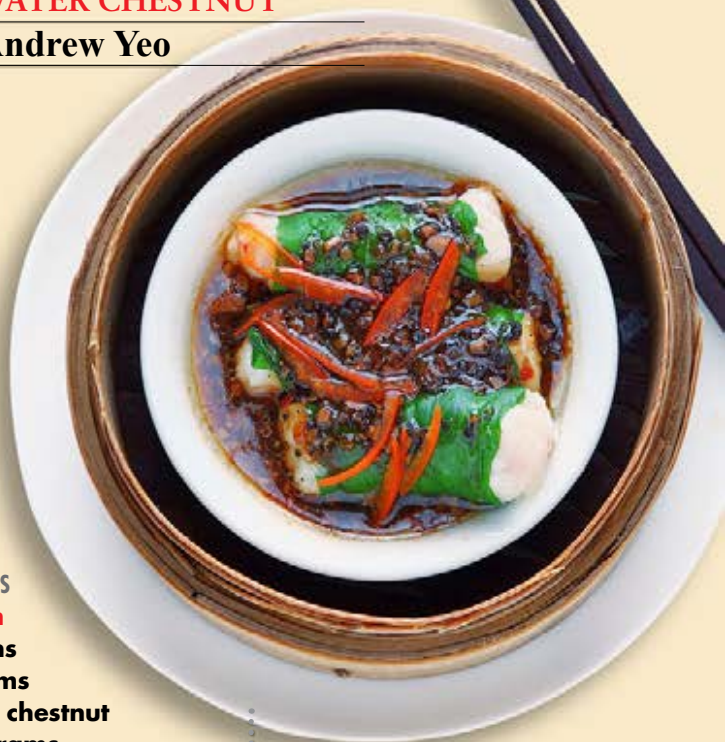
PREPARE THE BREAD: Toast the bread, muddle the avocado, season with salt, pepper and lemon. Spread the cream cheese and spread the avocado mix on the toast. Sprinkle the Pistachio dukkah and serve.



SPINACH ROLL WITH PRAWN AND WATER CHESTNUT

Chef Andrew Yeo

Yauatcha



INGREDIENTS

Dim Sum

- Prawns 600 grams
- Water chestnut 600 grams
- A pinch of salt
- Sugar 30 grams
- Potato starch 25 grams
- Spinach 4 leaves

Black Bean Sauce

- Shallots 30 grams
- Red chilli 10 grams
- Chopped garlic

- 30 grams
- Black Bean 75 grams
- Chopped ginger 20 grams
- Potato starch 25 grams
- Water 500 ml
- Oyster sauce 20 grams
- Oil 50 ml

METHOD

PREPARE DIMSUM: Chop the prawns and water chestnuts and season them with salt, sugar and potato starch. Boil the spinach in water and then put it under cold running water. Dry the spinach leaves and roll the seasoned prawn and water chestnut filling in the boiled spinach. Steam the rolled spinach in a steamer for about four-five minutes.

PREPARE BLACK BEAN SAUCE: Cook the onion in a pan until it turns pink. Add in garlic, ginger and red chilli and stir for a while. Add black beans, oyster sauce and water and boil for five minutes. Add the potato starch to thicken the sauce and then pour the sauce over the spinach roll and serve hot.



Above: At the JW Marriott Phu Quoc, the story is everything. The Pink Pearl Restaurant, one of Bill's favourites, is a destination restaurant named after the wife – Pearl Collins – of the very first Dean of Lamarck University, back in 1889. Below: Bill Bensley – architect, interior and landscape designer – studied at Cal Poly Pomona and Harvard before making the big leap across the Pacific to Asia in the early 1980s, when hospitality development was in its infancy

BILL BENSLEY: DESIGNING STORIES



AS HE DISMISSES THE RAMPANT "GREENWASH" IN THE LUXURY ECO-TOURISM INDUSTRY, THE LEGENDARY INTERIOR DESIGNER TELLS HELLO! THAT THE MODERN TRAVELLER IS NO NOVICE, AND SEES PAST WHAT WOULD HAVE MADE THE PREVIOUS GENERATION GASP

In one of your past interviews you mentioned "storytelling in hospitality". What's the process that you follow to weave a narrative around a location?

"I am a storyteller by nature – I love to read and write. Therefore, it feels only natural to integrate stories into our designs. To me, creating a hotel is like making a movie – you need a great story that will become the heart of its DNA. Once you have that, you can design anything! One of the projects I'm most proud of is the JW Marriott Phu Quoc, where we told the story of 'Lamarck University', complete with a race track and departments like zoology, conchology and chemistry! Once we have the primary DNA, we develop every aspect of

the hotel, from the interiors to signage and uniforms. We have stories for days!"

"The same principle is being used at my new project near the Opera House in Hanoi. Here, every room tells the story of a boutique hotel at the turn of the century, which was home to all who went to the opera, from costume designers to opera singers and ballet dancers. A shopping spree in Europe led me to find the most wonderful antique theatre prints, opera spectacles, gloves, handbags, gowns... All of these together tell the tale of the characters who once walked the halls there. Upcycling is sustainable, ever so much fun, and lends authenticity to any project."

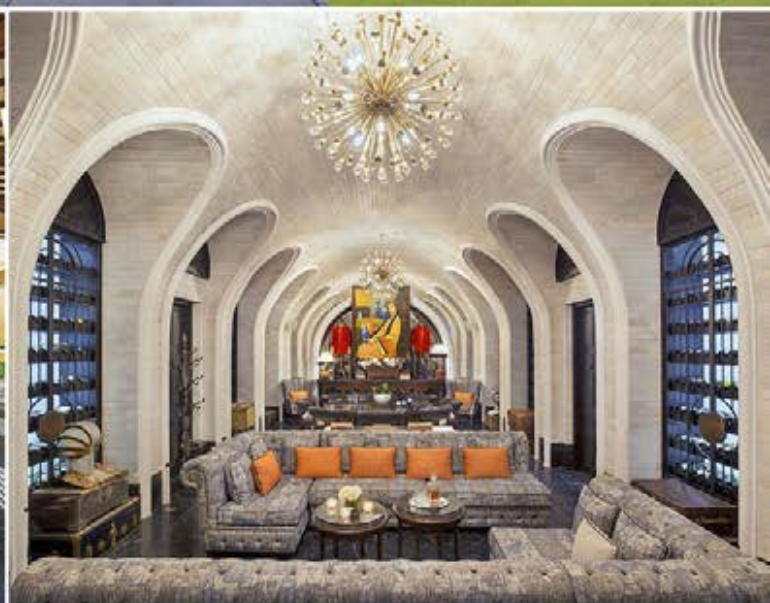
Please tell us more about the narrative you weaved at Phu Quoc...

"I have an aversion to beach resorts! I've designed dozens of beach resorts, but to be honest, I'd never vacation at one. When I was hired to design this JW Marriott in Phu Quoc, the brief was to build 250 rooms, with all the usual extras: a deli, beach bar, pools, yadda yadda yadda! It sounded like just another big hotel on the beach. Then I got thinking, almost all of us enjoyed our college times. So, why not build a resort based on those happy times? And maybe, some would visit a university dedicated to the study of things natural. I named it after the French naturalist, Lamarck.

"I wrote an elaborate script for this resort. It has everything from a university track to a sports hall of fame, Frat suites, the Lamarck Auditorium. We designed 36 uniforms, which the staff wears every day to play their part in this glorious resurrection of the old Lamarck University. Guests don't just retire to a room number, they are marked present at one of the 16 different departments; botany, astronomy, zoology, ichthyology, entomology, oceanography... For two years, we collected over 3,000 vintage pieces to give the university authenticity. Many departments display original etchings of natural studies dating back as far as

'Nothing is made more perfectly than what Mother Nature presents to us. Eventually, what one loses in floor space is gained in atmosphere and privacy'

Right: As a dog lover, Bensley chose Ridgebacks as the university's mascot and celebrated them in no small way as he placed a pair of adorable sculptures flanking the drive – some 7 metres high and 40 metres long! The Sports Hall of Fame is full of hundreds of silver trophies, including one over 10 feet high, reading Lamarck Ridgebacks Champions of Champions 1908



Above: The smallest of the “campus buildings” make up a charming Rue de Lamarck, a village-like area of the resort, where turn of the century posters adorn the walls. Above right: The wine cellar – once a favourite hangout for all University professors – now welcomes guests with an amazing selection of wines, as well as antiques, all sourced personally by Bensley during his travels. Below left: The inner courtyard of Pink Pearl where guests can dine under the stars or enjoy afternoon tea under the shade of frangipani trees and vines chosen especially by Bensley's landscaping team. Below right: This mural in the spa relaxation room, overlooking the meditation pool, was hand-painted by Bill's team of artists, as were many of the artworks around the hotel





Above: The one bedroom villa is a perfect example of Bensley's sustainable approach to design: the villa's many windows are flooded with natural light, but protected from the heat by overhanging eaves. In his latest white paper, *Sensible Sustainable Solutions*, Bill shares simple ways to design sustainably. Left: The walls of this gorgeous lookout spot are inlaid with thousands of hand-placed stones – it is a favourite for photos at the resort, which is Insta-famous across Asia. Below left: The Chanterelle Spa, named after a French mushroom, was inspired by Alice in Wonderland. The Spa ceiling houses an incredible collection of vintage Mycology prints

1760. At the deli, we curated a collection of dozens of period scales, coffee grinders, typewriters and a magic American cash register that I found in Paris. I've never had more fun putting together a boring beach resort!" (Smiles)

Considering you are a legend in the world of luxurious interior designing, what does "luxury" personally mean you to?

"I believe that the luxury that once was – that of Frette sheets and a lobby where the flowers were changed every two minutes – is dead. The modern traveller is no novice, and sees past what would have made the previous generation gasp. For me, luxury is a unique experience: enjoying true wilderness in solitude, being awakened by bird calls in the morning, swimming naked under a waterfall. And on a personal level, luxury is the ability to help those less fortunate with a hand up – not a hand out – that can change their life."

Please share an anecdote from a vacation somewhere that has truly inspired you...

"I go somewhere new every year, and have travelled to 100 countries or more by now. However, there's one place that never fails to inspire me, no matter the number of visits – Rajasthan. And I'm not just saying that cause this is for HELLO! India! The vibrancy of colour in Rajasthan is so utterly unabashed, uninhibited, almost feverish – it feels to me that there's no bad

colour in the Rajasthani vocabulary, no bad combination. Inevitably, every time I visit, I bring that burst of colour back to our work. The use of colour is, I think, second only to Mexico – it allows one to see life in technicolour. Colours are shot from the hip there: interiors can be green and crimson and purple, fearlessly, whereas in the West, I feel we are constipated against the use of wild colour, and it is such a shame."

Your love for Asia is well-documented. What are your thoughts on Indian architecture – the kind of regal tales they narrate?

"Asia has been my home for more than 30 years now. Not long after I hung up the sign for BENSLEY in Bangkok, I found myself working on the Oberoi Rajvillas, Udaivilas, and the Leela Palace, Udaipur. There's no doubt that I fell in love with Indian architecture, from Mewari architecture to traditional Mughal gardens and the regal method of *Thikri*. I find that in India, often the craftspeople have a far better sense of all things beautiful and eternally stylish than those who draw up the plans and direct the projects. Another highlight was a little house nearby that sold the best hot *chapatis* and *saag* – a delight!"

You went beyond just ensuring sustainability in hospitality when you took up the responsibility of conserving a Cambodian forest and supporting the local community at the Shinta Mani Wild...

'The vibrancy of colour in Rajasthan is so utterly unabashed, uninhibited, almost feverish - it feels to me that there's no bad colour in the Rajasthani vocabulary, no bad combination'



Bill in his warehouse of wonders at BENSLEY Bangkok studio, where he keeps all of his latest design finds before they get sent off to projects all over the world – or to his own house! He is an avid painter – the two portraits are of a friend who often comes and models for him on the weekends in his wild garden @baan_botanica. The fish are from a trip to Papua New Guinea late last year, where he painted daily, recording every encounter as seen on his Instagram as well

“Sustainability is getting more and more popular, but for many, it's more greenwash than actual change. It drives me nuts to see how so many hotels have banned straws – and are applauded for it – and yet, they offer plastic for takeaway and cover useless amenities in plastic! If we build our hotels with a bit more foresight, and try and consider the communities in which we build, we can change so many lives. At Wild, my big thrill is about being one step closer to our goal – that of being able to control the poaching and logging in ever-expanding directions, while protecting the forest and its inhabitants. It's about helping folks that need it, in a sustainable fashion that will continue long after I'm gone.”

Please tell us about your theory of “minimal intervention in design”. How do you implement it?

“Minimal intervention means respecting the land one works on. Rather than ripping out the natural features of the land to plonk down something new, one gets to know it, and tries to complement it. Nothing is made more perfectly than what Mother Nature presents to us. Eventually, what one loses in floor space is gained in atmosphere and privacy. “I love the idea that the Capella Ubud, with its handful of tents telling the story of Dutch settlers shipwrecked in Bali, disappears into the forest. Bali is so overbuilt now, the LAST thing she needs is another in your face multi-storied brick monstrosity, which is exactly what this

project was set to be originally, before I came on board and dashed those plans. The client was persuaded to swap a 120 room hotel for a 24 tent camp that tip toes ever so softly on the land, and did not change drainage patterns. It allowed us to save the forest, a valley which is sacred to the Balinese.”

Do you source the quirky interior elements before designing a place or vice versa?

“A bit of both. I'm known to disappear to the Marche Aux Puces in Paris or antiques fairs in Lincoln to unearth the most wonderful, quirky pieces. These will then be shipped back to my studio in Bangkok, where they await their next posting in my warehouse – a wonderland in itself! There's a set of absolutely wild antique medical glass eyeballs just waiting for the right project to call home as well as a delightful spiral staircase. My motto, which I even have on a T-shirt, is ‘Buy First Think Later’.”

How do you feel when you look back on your decades-long career – designing over 200 hotels and resorts in 30 countries?

“I feel very fortunate to be garnished with lifetime achievement awards, but honestly, I feel as though we are just beginning to figure the hospitality industry out... and that our best is yet to come!”

INTERVIEW: SREEMITA BHATTACHARYA
COORDINATED BY: SONAM POLADIA





Riyaaz Amlani

In conversation with HELLO!, the brains behind some of the most 'social' cafés in the country says, change is indispensable for economic and industrial reformation in the F&B industry

How easy or difficult was it to make a cult brand out of a café, in a diverse consumer landscape like in India?

"There was no Cafe Coffee Day or Barista when Mocha was about to launch, and I didn't want to start yet another Italian-inspired American chain. In India, people don't often need espresso shots or takeaway coffee. They are looking for a nice space, where they can park themselves for the price of a cup of coffee. I found my inspiration in the Kahwah Khanas, the original coffee-houses of Morocco. These places were the social fabric of these cultures and we wanted to create a contemporary Kahwah Khana in Mumbai. People wanted to hang out, so we gave them an all-day café. By pooling our savings and convincing a third friend to invest, we acquired 500 sq ft in Churchgate, and the brand Mocha was born. It became this roller-coaster ride I could not jump out of and, before I knew it, we were expanding the premises and starting one in Bandra."

How do you conceptualise the unique themes of your various cafés, like Social, Smoke House Deli, Mocha, Flea Bazaar Café, Slink & Bardot, Prithvi Café, and Salt Water Café?

"I think, while customers want innovation, they also want the comfort of their old favourites. So, it's like walking the fine line between creating new ideas and maintaining your standards and also making sure that people come back for the consistency that's delivered to them. When it comes to restaurants, there are some who keep returning to the same establishment for quality food, some return for the vibe and a few for the service. We try to give our customers a mix of it all. A patron's tastes keep changing, and we need to evolve with it as well as the requirements of this industry. You need to spend time in the trenches and follow behavioural patterns to figure out what the patrons really want."

What were some of the key aspects of the

F&B industry that you worked upon as the former president of the National Restaurant Association of India?

"Bringing Mumbai to life, literally 24x7, was a dream I had conceived many years ago. During my tenure with the NRAI, I initiated conversation on it with the authorities. But, I knew it would be a long battle and will take time to yield results. Back then, everyone was more concerned about licenses and special permissions. Security was a major concern. But now, the authorities and consumers are viewing 'change' as necessary for economic and industrial reformation."


Having completed over 18 years in this sector, how would you say has the F&B industry evolved in the last decade?

"We have a phenomenal amount of headroom for growth. Over the last two decades, the consumer's preferences have evolved; social media has had a big impact on this industry and it has allowed local and global boundaries to merge into homegrown global food experiences. Today, international brands and homegrown concepts are both easily available to Indians. Perceptions around food are changing. Restaurants are adapting to interesting ways to make 'dining out' a novel experience for patrons. The sector has evolved to a point where we have dedicated media outlets for food and travel. Aggregator brands for homestays and boutique hotels are offering local food experiences to attract a new client base. Cloud Kitchens are gaining momentum and so are home delivery formats, as we see many double-income homes doing away with functional kitchens. Monthly food subscription packages are also becoming the norm rather than the exception. But, the myriad regulations and the difficulty in procuring licenses are a hindrance. Also, the quality of real estate is not very developed."

You've recently been inducted into the exclusive 'Keepers of the Quaich Society' that recognizes outstanding commitment to Scotch whisky...

"They just launched their India chapter last year, and wanted to have some Indians on board. The Blair Castle in Perthshire, Scotland, was quite a spectacular, and the induction ceremony had Dukes and Lords in attendance. There was this Australian guy who was outraged that Colin Scott, Chivas Regal's master blender, drinks his whisky with ginger ale! He has always been a firm believer that you are the master and the drink is the servant, not the other way around. (Laughs) These days, whisky ambassadors regularly debunk the 'to splash or not to splash' theory at every opportunity, but ginger ale is news to me. Things really do seem to be loosening up. Even Moët and Chandon are okay with people icing their champagne and adding sliced fruits in it."

Do you consider yourself a foodie? Is that why you ventured into the F&B industry?

"I'm not a foodie. I'm really not that picky about my food. I can eat anything!" (Smiles) 

INTERVIEW: SREEMITA BHATTACHARYA