

VOGUE

INDIA

OCT 2008
RS 100

THE
GLAMOUR
ISSUE

CELEBRATING VOGUE'S
1ST ANNIVERSARY
WITH AISHWARYA RAI BACHCHAN





IMRAN AMED

"Fashion Rocks' in London last October. During the intermission (with all of the red-carpet posing and preening now complete), I strolled down the corridor behind the VIP boxes and watched the fashion elite doing their thing in a more intimate setting, away from all the paparazzi: Tom Ford, leaning up against the wall, in intense conversation with Daphne Guinness; Kate Moss sashaying down the corridor in a shimmering silver dress; and Donatella Versace, having her make-up retouched in between air-kisses..."

Who: Writer. Amed works as a strategic business advisor to global fashion brands and upcoming designers, and is editor of www.businessoffashion.net.

What: Indian designers in London are almost as popular as chicken tikka masala. Amed meets the city's top contenders in *The Brit Pack*, page 161.



SEBASTIEN QUINET

"My friend's wedding in Marrakesh: three days of festivities at a sumptuous Arabian palace. On the last night, a famous DJ played with traditional musicians. I love parties themed around The Thousand and One Nights, when everyone dresses up in sublime costumes."

Who: Hairstylist. Always inspired by his travels and the various people he meets on the move, Quinet has a style that's frequently in demand.

What: In *Iron Maiden*, page 240, Quinet uses shine to high effect, effortlessly syncing with the metallic overdrive.



ROBIN PAWLOSKI

"Last summer, when I was dancing the Tarantella, dressed head-to-toe in pink, in a small village on the mountains of Scario in southern Italy."

Who: Hairstylist. Pawloski and his work are both colourful, cheeky, happy and full of life. It's what he believes fashion should reflect.

What: The varied visions of a fairground are reflected in Pawloski's coiffure creations in *Fairground Attraction*, page 218.



MATT HIND

"Getting measured for my first suit."

Who: Photographer.

London-based Hind is inspired by reportage and early documentary photography that help him explore British and American cultural themes.

What: Shoots designer Sita de Vesci and her exceptional collection of baubles in *Possessed*, page 170.



TARUN KHIWAL

"The most glamorous moment of my life was when my two kids were born. Every moment I spend with them, my wife and my parents makes life most glamorous. Nothing can take its place. No red carpet, no award."

Who: Photographer. Self-confessed family man Khiwal is one of the industry's most renowned artists, equally at ease detailing the works of Manish Arora and taking portraits of Geoffrey Boycott.

What: Autumn's metallics shine in Khiwal's lens in *Iron Maiden*, page 240.



SEJAL SUKHADWALA

"At a premiere, some friends and I accidentally walked onto the red carpet at the same time as the star of the film, Will Smith. The paps were clicking away in a frenzy. I thought, 'Mmm... I could get used to this!'"

Who: Writer. Sukhadwala is a well-established restaurant critic in London. She is currently working on her first cookery book.

What: The latest Indian chefs in London are tossing out tandoori chicken for tomato makhani ice cream and blue cheese naan with truffle oil. Sukhadwala profiles the trendsetters in *Curried Away*, page 390.

STYLE, TRENDS, PEOPLE, NEWS AND OPINIONS

VOGUE

EDITED BY BANDANA TEWARI

view

MADE IN INDIA

THE BRIT PACK

In a city that loves all things Indian, in a country where chicken tikka masala is the unofficial national dish, it's no surprise that Indian designers are gaining popularity for their unique perspective on London fashion, discovers IMRAN AMED

Portraits by RICHARD LEGGE

“Where are you from?” It’s a simple but sure-fire way to start a conversation in London, one that goes beyond platitudes like “What do you do?” and “Where did you go to school?”, common elsewhere.

This speaks volumes about a city where more than 300 languages are used and one-third of the residents are foreign-born; where Japanese Harajuku girls rub shoulders with American ladies who lunch and Turkish kebab shops are as common as French bistros.

For years, this cultural vibrancy has been a magnet for aspiring fashion talent the world over. London launched the careers of Gibraltar-born John Galiano, Turkish Cypriot Hussein Chalayan and, more recently, all-Indian Manish Arora. And when designers like these move on to more commercial fashion capitals, a new generation of talent, much of which has links to India, is waiting in the wings.



Master of the clutch
Aseef Vaza at his home studio in London's trendy Notting Hill

ASEEF VAZA

Accessories designer Aseef Vaza is half-Indian and half-Persian. After spending time in New York and Florence, Vaza stumbled upon his design signature while assisting at Carven, one of Paris' oldest haute couture houses; he was asked to design two clutches to accessorise some of the maison's couture designs. Little did he know that this would be the start of

his own business just a few years later.

Today, his exquisite, architectural clutches are so distinctive that customers work the other way round, starting with the bags and accessorising them with clothes. The Vaza collection was first picked up by American socialite Catherine Prevost two years ago; the relationship has helped nurture his talent and build his expertise.

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“The mastery of the clutch originated in the 1930s. And so this period massively influences my thought process,” he explains to me at his home studio in London’s Notting Hill. “A nod to the clean masculine lines and geometry of this era is a good starting point, but I try to stay away from being too literal.”

He has become a huge proponent of clutches over the massive bags that have dominated fashion. “For me, the clutch is ultimately more valuable than the oversized ‘It’ bag. Oversized bags overpower

you, while clutches empower you.”

Vaza’s well-formed designs have been picked up by a troika of prestigious stores in emerging markets, including Podium in Moscow, Villa Moda in the Middle East and Daslu in Brazil.



Fan base
Patricia Field and
Sarah Jessica Parker

RETAILS AT

Daslu (Brazil), Villa Moda (Kuwait), Podium (Moscow), Joseph (London)

CELEBRITY CLIENTS

Sarah Jessica Parker, Cate Blanchett, Tilda Swinton, Patricia Field

Signature style
Clutches from Vaza’s
Autumn/Winter
2008 collection



Sex and the city
Gupta finds
inspiration in the
London landscape

ASHISH GUPTA

Ashish Gupta’s story is one of those wonderful, fateful tales of disappointment turned to triumph. From a young age, he planned to study at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in his native city, Delhi, only to be rejected when he finally applied. But instead of accepting this fate, Gupta set his sights on London, a city he says has felt like home since he first set foot here in 1996.

Gupta went on to Central St Martins for an MA in womenswear, where he studied under almost-legendary course director Louise Wilson; she is known for forcing her pupils to look within, making her course as much a psychological journey as a technical and creative one.

After graduating in 2000, fate dealt Gupta another bad hand. En route to a job interview in Paris, his portfolio was stolen at the Gare du Nord. Dejected and unable to imagine showing up at Sonia Rykiel without a portfolio, he turned around and took the next train back to London.

It’s easy to imagine Gupta on the Eurostar, looking out as the blur of the Parisian suburbs turns into the rolling hills of the English countryside, immersed in the uncertainty of what might happen next. As we chat, he slowly reveals himself to be the kind of designer who derives his inspiration, at least in part, from life’s vicissitudes, especially its more calamitous moments.

“I like the darkness in things,” he admits. “Perhaps that’s why I’m so drawn to London. I like the rubbish weather. There’s something cleansing about it.”

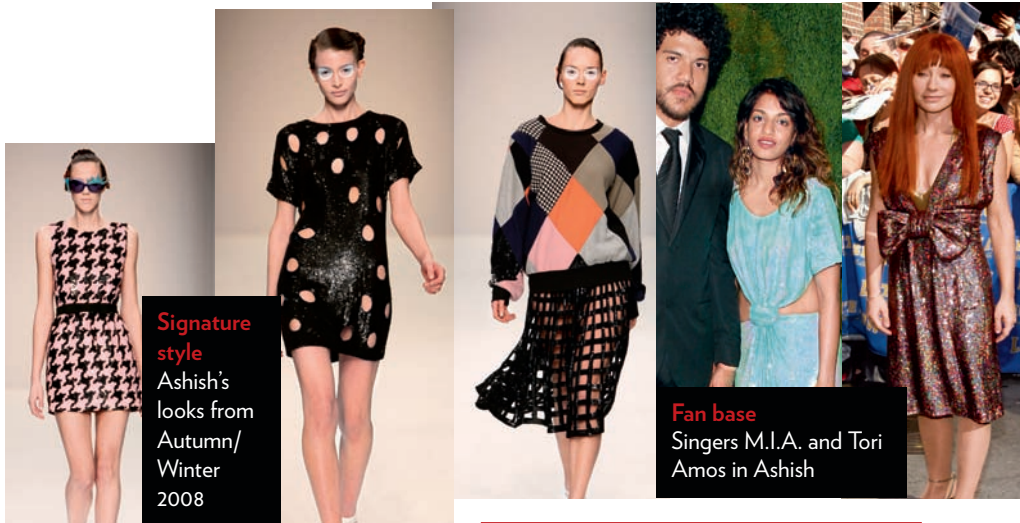
It wasn’t long after that train ride that Browns, the famed London boutique, came knocking on his door after one of its buyers spotted Gupta’s designs on a customer. And so the Ashish collection was born. “I’ve never been bothered by trends,” he says. “I just want to do things that I love. For me, clothes are about two things: sex and comfort. My dresses are designed to be taken off. But, to make that work, you’ve also got to make a woman feel comfortable.”

Over the years, his fans have included Madonna, Tori Amos and even one of Gupta’s childhood icons, Jerry Hall. Because of patrons like these

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and encouragement from London's fashion community, he has managed to build a healthy business. "London is multicultural, young and supportive of new people. Let's face it: I'm an immigrant here; to have found so much support has been a wonderful surprise. I have a career today because I am in London." Gupta's spring/summer 2008 collection incorporated the Pearly Kings technique (borrowed from London's East End) into a shift dress, while autumn/winter 2008 featured a kaleidoscope of tiny, hand-embroidered flowers on a skirt and jacket.

But his connection with India, where all of his clothes are produced, doesn't do



Signature style
Ashish's looks from Autumn/Winter 2008

Fan base
Singers M.I.A. and Tori Amos in Ashish

him any harm either. "I can't stop seeing India as my home, and I love the fact that I have its resources," he notes. "It enables me to be very ambitious with my designs at a price that is not ridiculous."

SALONI LODHA

Saloni Lodha doesn't hesitate to avail herself of India's remarkable craftsmanship. Born in Nashik to a traditional Marwari family, Lodha showed an artistic streak early on, cutting up her grandmother's rich brocade saris into sexy skirts at the age of 16. "I loved the colour, the feel, the textures of fabrics from a young age," she says.

At first, her creative energy was channelled into graphic design, but eventually, her love of fabrics and textiles couldn't be contained. When she moved to Hong Kong with her Italian boyfriend (now husband), she explored the textile markets of Sham Shui Po and cobbled together one-off pieces that she sold in pop-up boutiques and private trunk shows.

Her designs were worn by the local *tai-tais*, women with plenty of time and money, and when a leading fashion magazine featured her work, Lodha realised

it had become more than just a hobby.

In the summer of 2004, she registered for a couture hand-tailoring course at Central St Martins in London. She was enraptured by London's cultural melting pot, shuttling between the contrasting suburbs of posh Belgravia and edgy East London, which, at the time, was just becoming the fashion hotspot it is today.

"I could finally be who I wanted to be," she explains. "In London, everyone is an individual... textile designers, artists and even people with city jobs. Everyone has something distinctive about them."

Once the St Martins course had taught Lodha the basics, she convinced her husband to move to London, and a few months later was working in public relations for the label Issa. Next, she worked for a fabric sourcing company, where she was put in touch with textile mills in India. Her combination of design sense, PR skills and

girly aesthetics helped her capture the attention of local style mavens and the international press after a single season.

Her dresses all have names—Alexia, Mia, LouLou. Sometimes they recall imaginary characters, sometimes they refer to a special person in her life, but they always reflect the easy style she personifies. Lodha's stunning looks are useful for marketing her wares, but she is wary of being classified as a socialite designer and wants people to take her designs as seriously as she does.

RETAILS AT
Selfridges (London), Henri Bendel (New York), Shine (Hong Kong)
CELEBRITY CLIENTS
Kelly Osbourne, M.I.A. and Tori Amos

RETAILS AT
Harvey Nichols (London), Al Othman (Kuwait), www.my-wardrobe.com
CELEBRITY CLIENTS
Divia Cadbury, Prerna Goel, Gabriella Windsor, London 'It' girls Fiona Scarry, Poppy Delevigne and Margo Stilley



London calling
Saloni Lodha in a dress of her own design, photographed in London



Signature style
Looks from Lodha's Autumn/Winter 2008 collection

Fan base
American actress Margo Stilley and Mumbai fashionista Prerna Goel in Lodha's designs