

Luxe ride for young guns

Meet young entrepreneurs who've made a mark in the luxury sector with their bright ideas



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THE ASIAN AGE

For the current generation, it's a simple mantra to earn big and spend big, but for some people this lifestyle mantra is not good enough as they crave to achieve bigger things in life. With a marked upsurge in the luxury market in India, a recent trend that's worth mentioning is the entry of young entrepreneurs playing a key role in niche segments that were once regarded as the territory of experienced players.

For the young guns in luxe department, at times USP also poses a big challenge. Karan Bhangay, CEO, The Indian Luxury Expo, started his company in 2012 with the idea of bringing all the luxury products under one umbrella. Karan shares, "When we started with this concept, we tried to curate everything so that our consumers could pick and choose. From cars, watches, jewellery to luxury travel and hospitality, we got everything together and started taking them to various cities. I had an experience in publishing and marketing so I understood the dynamics of supply and demand."

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(From left) Karan Bhangay, CEO of The Indian Luxury Expo, hopes to establish Made in India into a mark of quality. Sharnamli Mehra-Adhar of The Pink Post-It, says maintaining exclusivity of our luxury exhibition was a challenge



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Karan adds, "Our USP and the biggest challenge was that there were no competitors in the market, and we had to set our own standard. Our next challenge is to promote "Made in India" as a mark of quality and luxury across the globe, and break into the international market."

Whereas for journalist-turned-entrepreneur Manisha Mayur Shekhar, founder of The Luxe Café, to create luxe consciousness in the tier 2 towns was her focus as well as her ultimate goal. She mentions that the idea behind starting a B2C e-zine on luxury was to reach out to consumers in tier 2 and 3 towns like Udaipur, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Nashik etc.

She says, "As India witnessed the bloom of the luxury industry, the critical population of brand conscious, high-spenders in the non-metro cities became an important market. Through this venture we get the selected industry experts to directly engage with the readers to play a strate-



(From left) Young entrepreneurs Gayatri and Anushka; Manisha Mayur Shekhar



gic role in the evolution of the 'luxe consciousness' in India. It is for all those who wanted to get first-hand, authentic information and advice on premium brands, and also for those who do not have convenient access to such brands/information.

For us the biggest challenge was to find a designer who could implement the editorial vision with the same passion." At the beginning of their careers these professionals face resistance not just from the rivals but also making a mark in the field. Sharnamli Mehra Adhar, co-founder The Pink Post-It, says, "Maintaining the exclusivity of our showcase was the

biggest challenge for us, we didn't want to publicise it and at the same time wanted our brand to get maximum sales. Our consumer target was very specific, and every season we invited only select high-end luxury brands to be a part of our event. We measure our success with the amount of sales each label makes and that's why keeping the quality consistent is our USP and challenge at the same time."

Similarly, Anushka and Gayatri Kakkar, founders of Divin-e-licious, a 100 per cent vegetarian luxury bakery, point out how breaking into the luxury food market in Delhi was the biggest test for them.

Anushka says, "When we started this bakery, we luckily got a big order from a luxury brand that had just set foot in the capital. Then onwards, we started retailing through word of mouth, and kept our clientele limited to maintain the exclusivity of our brand. Right from our packaging to creating special cupcakes, we made sure that everything was unique and not available anywhere else. For us the most interesting part was to convert regular recipes into eggless ones, and convince people that bakery products can taste good even without addition of eggs."