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# All things Indian

*From jewelry to home decor, the subcontinent's influence on design is obvious*

By **Liza Foreman**

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## Jewelry

The Paris-based jeweler Adeline Roussel may get her inspiration from Europe's high-jewelry houses of the past, but she designs her jewels in Jaipur, India.

So too do a growing number of jewelers from the West. Think Marie-Helene de Taillac of Paris and London-based Emma Chapman – all of whom spend several months a year around Jaipur's fabled jewel resource, the Gem Palace.

Ms. Roussel divides her time between her Gem palace workshop, where she has access to master craftsmen and fine jewels, and her Adeline boutique in Paris. Her designs sell to high-end customers, including the former model Ines de la Fressange, at fashion spots like Barneys New York, Browns in London and Colette in Paris. She also has opened Boutique MHT stores in Paris and Tokyo.

In India, Ms. Roussel works with the type of semi-precious stones made famous by the woman she considers a master: the late Suzanne Belperon of the old fine-jewelry house Boivin. "She never went to Jaipur," said Ms. Roussel. "But she is really my inspiration. She introduced the cabouchon, which is coming back into fashion."

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Ms. Chapman is big on India for her exotic creations. Current lines include her Mughal Empress collection's Raj Pear Necklace with purple zircon garnets and pearls, which retails for £229, or \$325 Her Indian Princess tumble drop necklace with prehnite and aqua marine in 22 carat gold sells for £343.

"I draw much inspiration from India for our East meets West designs," said Ms. Chapman, whose sales points include The Orient Express and the Victoria & Albert museum in London.

## Home décor

India and its ornate designs have long been favored in the home décor market. But when Mehmet Iksel and Dimonah Iksel met in a Jaipur hotel 20 years ago, they decided that the city's age-old craftsmen were the right people to fill a perceived gap for good decorative arts, Indian style. In an act that they have described as born out of "sheer madness," and involved "painting through miles

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and miles of canvas," they spent years perfecting a technique for hand-painted murals and wall coverings, and then printed versions of their Orientalist designs for their Paris-based Iksel Decorative Arts.

Iksel's designs have sold to Indian royalty, and they currently are working on the U.S. market through a collaboration with Stark Carpet. "We were very interested in the painting tradition in India, which goes back to the Mughals," said Mehmet Iksel. "We employ people who were born into painting and do it from a young age. They work very much like the ancients."

Initially producing everything by hand, Iksel now has developed printing techniques that allow the company to recreate both historic designs and Iksel's hand-painted images.

### Clothing

The designer Lisa Fine and India have always had a lot in common: a love of color and spicy food, just as a start. But when the design fanatic finally visited the country 10 years ago, she discovered there was much more to it than dal and colorful wedding confetti.

A long-term fan of all things textile, she has since launched three businesses capitalizing on the beauty and craftsmanship that she witnessed on that trip.

Her stay in a luxury tented camp that year led her to a local tent maker, who created a tented room for her exotic apartment in Paris, and then to local craftsmen who made a hand-embroidered headboard, resembling one in an Indian palace, the finishing touch for her bedroom. Ms. Fine now sells these custom-made headboards worldwide. She also designs Indian rugs through the Langham & Fine rug label, with the decorator Keith Langham, which are sold at Todd Alexander Romano in New York.

Ms. Fine and Caroline Irving, an editor at American Vogue, have created the Irving & Fine clothing label, which features hand-made hippie-chic clothing made in India and beyond, and includes tunics, dresses and furs.

"Irving & Fine began with our love of color, textile and embroidery," said Ms. Fine. "Each region in India has special crafts and we travel all over sourcing and working with the village craftsman who specialize in chikan embroidery in Lucknow, mirror work in Kutch, or, say, Ikat weaving in Hyderabad."

Irving & Fine sells at Maria Luisa in Paris; Savannah in Santa Monica, California; The Sugar Mill on Harbor Island, Bahamas; and beyond.

### Scarves

Historically, scarves and shawls have been among the most important elements of the Indian wardrobe, signifying status, occasion and community -- or so say the designers behind the Indian label Abraham & Thakore.

Scarves also have been an integral part of Abraham & Thakore's own journey. The founding designers, David Abraham and Rakesh Thakore (they have been joined by Kevin Nigli), went door to door in the early 1990s with a suitcase stuffed with scarves and kimonos. They landed at deal at The Conran Shop, then Liberty, and now more than 40 stores worldwide.

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