



DESIGNING FOR LITTLE ONES

Baby Beri

When it comes to fashion and home linen children are as fussy and eager to have the best. With designer wear for adults being in demand, many of the top fashion labels in the country have realised that there is a big market in high fashion children's clothes as well as the style that surrounds the children at home.

By Meher Castelino



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RITU BERI'S **BABY BERI**



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Ritu Beri's high fashion creations have an international touch so it is but natural that her 'Baby Beri' brand launched in 2009 would be high fashion kidswear for newborn to 16 years. The USP of her line is the annual show for the support of under privileged children in India through the Blessed Hearts Foundation.

The line is colourful and fun for both sexes with style and personality. Keeping the fit and comfort in mind, Ritu states, "It's fun to dress up children since they are very particular about what they wear. Both parents and children are becoming extremely brand conscious, resulting in the multifold growth of the branded sub-segment. Parents are not the sole decision makers today, as children, from a very early age, take active part in the shopping process. Once they start

going to school, peer pressure and exposure to a wider range of media makes them much more aware of the latest trends, celebrity styles, their favourite cartoon characters, etc., as compared to the earlier generations. Thus, today's children know exactly what they want to wear and how they would like to be dressed. This has created another opportunity for designer brands and retailers in terms of expanding their product portfolio and attracting new customers."

The latest trends are an amazing combination of contemporary style blended with Indian sophistication. Breeches with angarkhas, styled and formal jackets with dhotis etc. are just a few styles from the latest trends. Keeping it simple yet very attractive is the guideline.

Fabrics should be chosen very carefully for kids. They should be very soothing, comfortable such as various cotton and silk blends. "We use brocade and other fine jacquards for highlighting, but always keep a soothing lining for the wellbeing of the children's skin and temperament. We also make collections that develop and create a bond with our Indian roots in a very unique and culture conscious collection. The range varies from ghagras to salwars, details of embroideries and appliqués, mix of our rich tradition with a contemporary look, a collection blending interesting traditional silhouettes with a modern outlook."

Prices are between ₹15,000 and ₹90,000 and they are retailed from the Ritu Beri Store in New Delhi.





ARCHANA KOCHHAR'S JUNIOR

Archana Kochhar's red carpet and bridal wear has a lot of glitz and glamour and she has designed kidswear for the past 2 decades ever since she launched her label. But the kidswear label 'Archana Kochhar Junior' was launched in 2016 at the Kid's Wear Fashion Week. Offering a wide range, the garments start with casual and party wear then move onto something more stylish like Indian couture wear for the little tots.

Archana is a specialist in creating bridal wear so for the little ones too from age 2 to 14 years she has something to wear at weddings for both sexes. "Designing garments for kids is slightly tricky as we have to keep comfort and ease in mind," she reveals. While many feel designer kidswear is over the top in style, she disagrees, "Kids enjoy dressing up extravagantly."

Parents prefer high fashion designer wear and kids too are more aware of what they want to wear. The best fabrics are cottons and linens and the latest trend for girls is ruffles, fringes, floral prints and stripes, while for the boys it is warm pastel shades with prints and solids. Archana's prices start from ₹5,000 and she retails from her flagship store in Mumbai and at Petit Royal.

PALLAVI SWADI'S COO COO

On her return from New York in 2012, Pallavi Swadi decided to create children's wear for her son and daughter under the label 'Coo Coo' when she could not find anything suitable. For Pallavi the motto 'less is more' for kidswear is important so it has to be pure cotton, chanderi, muslin thread embroidery, cotton satin and dobby. Quality ribbons, YKK zips, elastic and buttons are all export quality. For Indian wear, Pallavi even ensures the lace borders are soft and do not itch or harm the child, so crochet and soft pearl laces, gold borders and crochet buttons are used for the age group newborn to 12 years.

"Our Spring Summer collection in February include casual and semi-formal western wear. Our Autumn Winter collection in September include formal Indian wear. Last year we also launched a new line called 'Dressed Up by Coo Coo', our Indian and western heirloom inspired looks for weddings, celebrations and special occasions, featuring hand details, luxurious fabrics and finely crafted designer touches," she shares.

She further says, "It is harder to design and stitch kidswear since styles are graded up to 12 sizes. Each size has marginal changes in measurements and need to be perfect in order to fit and drape well. Unlike adult's clothes that have up to 4 to 5





sizes at the most and can be altered easily. For this reason you would see many kidswear brands jump sizes, for example 2 to 4 years, 4 to 6 years, etc. But at Coo Coo, we follow yearly size 2 to 3 years, 3 to 4 years, 4 to 5 years, etc. This ensures it fits the child perfectly.”

The styles for boys include baby rompers, shirts, shorts, bow-ties, Indian kurtas and bundies along with matching father-son outfits. For girls there are baby rompers, playsuits, dresses (casual & formal), tops, shorts, hairbands, handbags, Indian kurtas, ghagra cholis, crochet payals, ghungroos and matching mother-daughter clothes.

The price range is ₹300 to ₹4,500 for boy’s wear and ₹300 to ₹8,000 for girl’s clothes. “All parents are sensitive to price when buying kidswear, especially

casual wear as kids outgrow clothes very soon. Also with competition from international brands like Zara, H&M and Gap, pricing is important. Parents in India are willing to spend more on formal kidswear for weddings or special occasions and festivals like Diwali,” she explained.

Prints in bright and pastels like floral-garden, butterfly-beetle, heart-star and strawberry-polka prints for girls are in all collections. Detailing favoured is box pleats, frill collars, peter pan collars, frilled neck and sleeves, belts, ribbons, flower brooches and contrast colour buttons and matching hairbands.

Indian wear has crochet laces and pearl embellishments. Ghagras are provided with handmade crochet gunghroos, jhumkas, tassels, crochet dupatta brooches in gold and silver crochet, gold-silver bangles are complimentary with each Indian outfit.

For boys it’s nautical, horses, dots and transportation prints in different shades of blue, pink, tomato red, pastel, lime green, white and cream. There are contrast coloured collars, buttons, roll up sleeves, pocket squares and matching fabric buttons. Pallavi retails in Mumbai at Scootsy, The Oak Tree, The Club and Petit Royal. In Kolkata, it’s available at Style Creche and online from her site as well as www.jaypore.com and www.littlemuffet.com.

A unique concept from Coo Coo—Dress Up Closet & Pop-Up Shop—a unique idea for return gifts at a child’s birthday party. The gorgeous closet displays Coo Coo dresses and shirts handpicked at the party, where little guests can choose their back present from the closet during the party and have their back present packaged and handed to them before they leave.





RINA DHAKA'S SMALL WONDERS

Rina Dhaka's sexy, glitzy, designs are well known for the trendy women but in November 2017, she turned her gaze on the small dresses and decided to design clothes for the little beauties in formal gowns and Indian wear.

"I present my particular look for girls' wear and only design for the age group 2 to 8 years. There is no compromise as far as comfort goes for children's wear,"

remarks Rina who loves to work with tulle, fluffy organdie and cotton, as they are ideal for girls' dresses.

Sizing is not easy she admits, since it is quite different with several additions that one has to keep in mind. Rina says, "My kidswear business is at a nascent stage so I am going about it cautiously."

"Most of the girls want what their

mothers' wear so we have shararas, lehengas, cholis, dupattas and maxis," she informs. Prices for jackets are at ₹5,500 and then could go up to ₹19,000 for an ornate festive outfit.

"We use happy colours with lots of block, digital and screen prints along with gotta patti work." Her creations for little darlings are only sold online on the site www.littletags.com.

NACHIKET BARVE'S LITTLE REPLICAS

Nachiket Barve is known for his great talent for fabric manipulation and intense detailing. He brought this to the junior fashion followers when he started designing kidswear in 2012. The clothes are usually festive wear and Nachiket only designs on special orders. His USP is obviously beautifully made clothes that convey effortless style. "Designing kidswear is not difficult but it is important to realise that the fabrics and embellishments are skin friendly and styling matches the age of the child," informs Nachiket who creates for the age group 1 to 12 years for both boys and girls.

He adds, "However the points to keep in mind are ergonomic fits, easy fabrics skin friendly embroidery and most important lengths that can adapt to the growing children." Priced at ₹8,500 upward, he adds thread embroidery, flat sequins, gotta work, appliqués, dyeing technique, fabric manipulation and uses only pure fabric.

"The latest trend is the 'Mini-Me' looks that reflect the parents' clothes. Depending on the occasion I do festive wear for weddings and Diwali of course, it is value for money. I tweak the designs to provide quality but not break the bank. We take great care to make the clothes stylish and timeless," concludes Nachiket.



Amare



Amare



Amare

HARSHITA GUPTA'S **AMARÉ**

If designer clothes are a big hit with kids can home linen be far behind?

A mother always wants to create exciting things for her children and make an impact. In June 2016, Harshita Gupta was arranging her 2-year-old toddler's wardrobe when she realised she wanted to cherish her child now 4-year-old's memories and thus was born Amaré a bespoke line of memory quilts, duvets, cushions, swaddles, bags, birthday gifts, return gifts that grows with the child and family refreshing memories each moment.

"Amaré is an emotional connect providing visual art of memories, a journey being born as a poetry in patchwork quilt, wall hanging, wedding gift as a bundle of memories. Amaré lives ever after, lives with you, shares your moments of smile, tears, love, nostalgia," expressed Harshita.

The USP of Amaré is that it is specifically customised for each client. "We discuss with the child's mother understanding her emotions in making the product and our design team does the necessary creative to best express a mother's emotions. Amaré

products address a certain section of people who are aware of memory, emotional connect products. Families who understand our products want the best not the cheapest."

Creating an emotional visual for the parents was exciting for Harshita, a trained jewellery designer, but the challenge was to translate a mother's emotion in the visuals of the product. The points kept in mind by Harshita are that visually the product must emotionally connect with high quality. "We get the child's family's pictures printed onto fabrics, use embroidery to write names and messages and use 100 percent combed pre-washed cotton in woven or jersey," she says.

The age group is 0 to teen and Harshita has had parents, wanting to create memory quilts, cushions for them. She shares, "They say our child will grow and fly away so in our old age we can live with these quilts, touching their clothes, bibs, socks, shoes which they once wore and bring memories of the days gone by." The memory quilts are between ₹6,000 to ₹25,000, duvets ₹2,000 to ₹12,000 and cushions ₹300 to ₹1,000. The sale is through social media.



Amare

CHANDNI AGARWAL'S LITTLE TAGS

Online sales of children's designer apparel are one of the big attractions for parents and children alike in this fast paced cyber world.

Little Tags is one of Asia's largest kidswear portals with a long high-profile roster of designers and products. The brainchild of Chandni Agarwal, the site started in November 2017 has become a one-stop-shop of designer kidswear. In the list of 28 designers are top fashion names like Monisha Jaising, Anand Bhushan, Rina Dhaka, Pallavi Mohan, Ridhima Bhasin, Sahil Aneja, Nishka Lulla, Karishma Shahani Khan, Ashish Soni, Pawan Sachdeva, Siddharth Tytler, Roserom Couture, NooNoo, Masaba and even swim wear experts Shivan-Narresh.

There is a wide selection for parents to choose from. Ashish Soni's Indian and western boys wear is priced at ₹2,500 to ₹23,000. Karishma Shahani Khan offers prints and ombre dresses for ₹4,000 to ₹8,200. Masaba's quirky prints for dresses and tops cost ₹950 to ₹1,690 and Anand Bhushan's sweatshirts and dresses are for ₹6,500 to ₹11,000. Nishka has boys and girls western and Indian clothes at ₹4,500 to ₹18,750. Pawan Sachdeva's tuxedos are between ₹12,000 to ₹14,000 while Sahil Aneja's boys wear is from ₹2,500 to ₹28,700. Monisha Jaising caters to toddlers and goes up to 10 years priced at ₹1,299 to ₹6,200. Ridhima Bhasin's Indian wear is for ₹14,500 to ₹16,600. Pallavi Mohan offers girls western and Indian garments for ₹4,900 to ₹21,700. Shivan-Narresh beachwear starts at ₹2,500 up to ₹8,400.

"We provide parents with the convenience of getting their hands on the best designers in India. Since it's kidswear, we discuss with designers the special requirements for boys and girls from 0 to 14 years, as functionality and comfort are the main concerns. Parents look at kids as an extension of their personality so they want them dressed impeccably. We endeavour to provide value for money, so Shivan-Narresh shorts for boys and the swim dress for girls can be worn in and out of the water. Many parents want affordable clothing but when it's a special occasion they don't mind shelling out the extra bucks," reveals Chandni.

Many designers like Anand Bhushan, Rina Dhaka and Ridhima Bhasin have created special prints and styles for the portal. Prices start at ₹1,000 and go up to ₹25,000 for garments, while accessories are from ₹500 to ₹5,000.



Little Tags



Masaba



Nishka Lulla



Shivan Naresh