

DEEPAVALI PLUS



FASHION

TRADITION WITH A TWIST



PHOTO: SHEETAL

Buying new clothes on Deepavali is one holy diktat that everyone faithfully obeys, and happily too! After all, if Deepavali signifies new beginnings, then what better way to do that than by revamping your wardrobe with the latest in togs and trends.

"As Deepavali is a traditional festival, women like to flaunt their ethnic sartorial sense. Few break convention by wearing purely Western clothes," says Mr Mahendra, director of the Indian fashion store Sheetal in Singapore. He feels that fabrics such as chiffon and georgettes are very popular this season in everything

from tops to sarees. "Young women are also going for the leg-hugging churidaar sets in a big way, while the mature generation opts for lustrous silk sarees and heavily embellished salwar suits. For men, the look is split between kurta pyjama sets, formal western wear or ethnic kurtas (chikankari, cotton, linen, silk) over formal pants," he adds.

Television shows beamed on Star, Sony and Zee TV and Vasantham Central have also influenced 'SingIndian' fashions. Blouses are now cut in innovative ways, necklines are not longer chaste, and accessories are an integral way to accentuate the striking look. With its proximity to India, Singaporean fashion has blended Indian with local fashion sensibilities. So you have raw silk blouses cut in the cheongsam and kimono styles, kurtis with Chinese collars, gypsy skirts, layered-broomstick skirts, ethnic accessories and thematic sarees.

For all the festive gatherings with friends and family, the trend for some time has been 'desi with a twist' or what is called 'Indo-Western' fusion. This fad started a few years ago, and is now coming into its own in India and across the globe, with most major

designers and stores carrying a contemporary-ethnic range.

The versatile kurta is bound to be a hallmark this Deepavali too in it can be teamed up with formal pants, skirts, or worn over jeans for a casual fusion look. However, it is the younger generation who are really pushing the envelope, when it comes to experimenting with pieces like short tops and scarves,

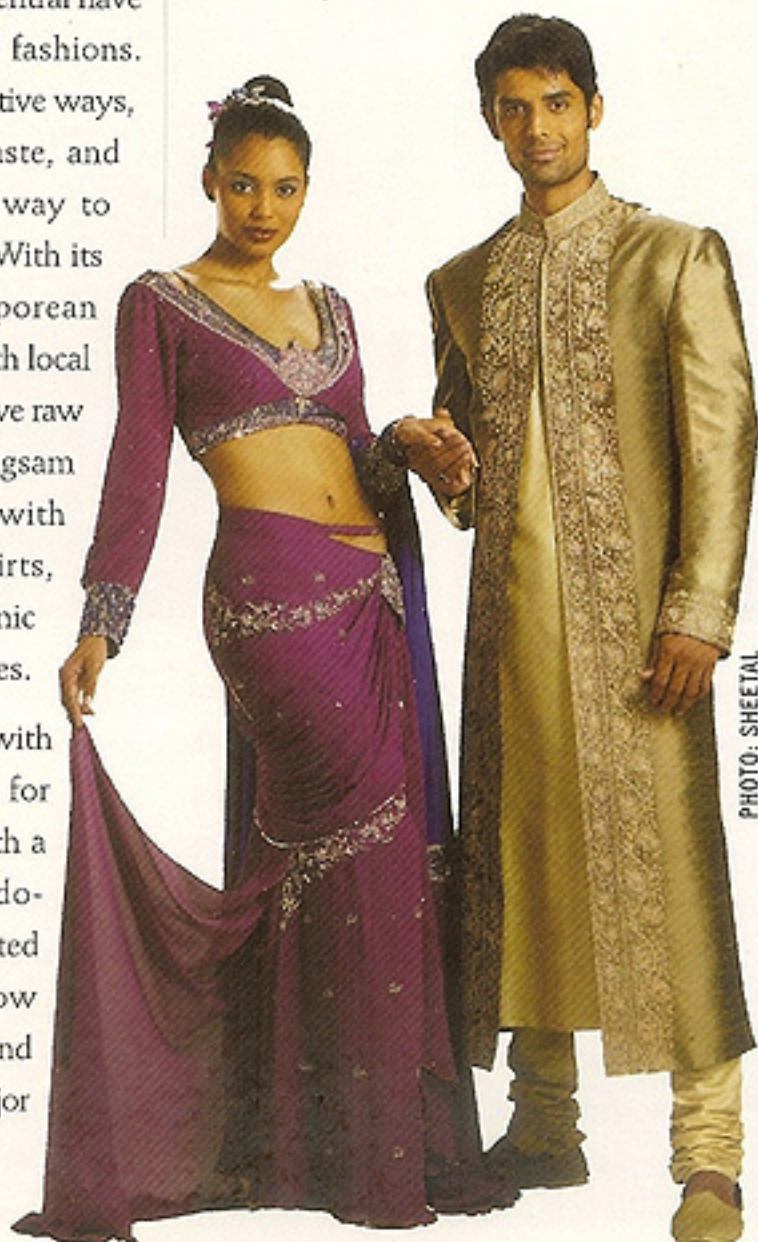


PHOTO: SHEETAL



PHOTO 2 & 4: MUMBAI SE PHOTO 1 & 3: JET AIRWAYS



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chiffon and georgette kurtis in asymmetrical cuts, crystals, beads and sequins in floral motifs, sequined sleeveless tops over broomstick skirts, zipped sarees, light weight lehngas, and bustiers/ corsets over jeans.

Mrs Sajni Gill, who is behind the high fashion store Mumbai Se in Singapore that stocks leading Indian designers such as Rocky S, Ranna Gill, Geisha, Renu Tandon and Satya Paul, predicts that heavily embroidered apparel and flowing skirts will rule the roost this festive season. Crinkled skirts, sarees and men's ties are the fastest-selling items at Mumbai Se. "Colours such as bright orange, turquoise blue & fuschia pink, along with long tunics and kaftans using georgettes and Swarovski crystals, are going to be popular," says Mrs Gill. Her fashion tip for the season:

a sure way to stand out is to combine sarees with tank tops from Zara, or Mango.

Ms Rashmi Gogna, proprietor of the hip Indian clothes store Pure Earth in Singapore, feels that a definitive trend this season is going to be layered skirts with short tops. According to her, Indian fashions in the Singapore context tend to be a bit more toned down than its counterparts in India, where ladies vie with each other to be seen as one cut above the rest. Says Ms Gogna: "Singapore has an easy, fluid contemporary fashion culture. Indian women here tend to seek out cleaner cuts with more attention to their own personal styles instead of just buying what is in, even if it does not suit them."

The popular Stylemart stores in Singapore are coming out with a special Deepavali 2005 collection with over 125 garments "This year, the focus is on innovative dresses like the two-piece saree, with pleated skirt and separate pallu in two different sections as opposed to the traditional six yards," says owner Kavitha Thulsidas. Also showcased are bustiers and corsets that go well with bias-cut and straight-cut skirts. Let's not forget that saree retailers, like the famous Nalli store in Singapore, Selections of India, or India Saree Emporium on Selegie Road, are stocked with the latest range of sarees for your buying pleasure. In fact, some retailers even have special sarees designed for the occasion.

So gear up to collect the compliments this Deepavali season in chic chiffons and stylish silks. ■