

Inside a Fashion Fantasy

Everything that stood out at this year's FDCI Hyundai India Couture Week By NOOR ANAND CHAWLA

Fashion icon Donatella Versace said, "Fashion is about dreaming and making other people dream." The statement certainly rings true for the pinnacle event of India's sartorial calendar—Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) Hyundai India Couture Week 2023. Over nine nights this July-August, 16 of the country's best couturiers showcased their collections to a rapt audience. On display was creativity of the highest order, ranging from traditional lehengas and *achkans* to contemporary gowns, jackets and dresses. Let you feel overwhelmed, we summarise here the trends that are sure to make their way off the ramp in the coming season.



JJ Valaya



Varun Bahl



Rajesh Pratap Singh

Winsome Veils

Whether for the sake of modesty or to add a spark of romance, veils have long ornamented the dresses of traditional Indian brides, no matter the culture they identify with or the region they belong to. They seem to have caught the attention of many designers this season. From resplendent red *ghoonchats* accompanying full-bodied lehengas at Tarun Tahillani and JJ Valaya shows, to the soft black netting that was part of Varun Bahl's modern floral ensembles, there was a wide spectrum of veils on display. The most unique take, however, was Rajesh Pratap Singh's, who used jewellery and face masks as veils for added drama.



Falguni & Shane Peacock



Gaurav Gupta



Rimzim Dada

Naked Dressing

Fitted, sheer dresses that strategically hide certain parts of the body have taken over international runways and red carpets in recent years. India's couture industry couldn't be far behind. From embellished and sheer tops to voluminous see-through bottoms, everything was geared towards playing a game of sartorial hide-and-seek. Debutant designer Isha Jajodia had a playful take on the trend with skirts of lace and sheer churidar bottoms peeking out under short, fitted kurtas. Rohit Gandhi & Rahul Khanna took the temperature up a notch by dressing their showstopper Shobhita Dhulipal in a high-slit skirt made out of a see-through embellished silver fabric.



Rohit Gandhi, Rahul Khanna



Isha Jajodia



Rahul Mishra

Mermaidcore Magic

With the release of Disney's *The Little Mermaid* a few months ago, mermaidcore has been a trending aesthetic internationally. One may not have expected it to creep into couture, but the many iterations of fishtail skirts paired with tiny sequined bralettes prove otherwise. Its strongest advocate was Rimzim Dada, whose outfits were recreations of literal tides in the ocean, perfectly complemented by modernist jewellery made by Varuna D Jani. Gaurav Gupta also took inspiration from the five natural elements, as seen in his structural gowns and skirts. Falguni & Shane Peacock incorporated the silhouettes for their traditional bridal lehengas. Rahul Mishra showcased a red dress with petal-like structures that mimicked fish scales.

Corsets for Queens

In keeping with the royal aspect of bespoke couture, many designers looked to Victoriana for inspiration. The biggest sign were the varied types of corsets seen on the runway. Rina Kumar, known for her traditional mastery, wowed the crowd with a zari-embroidered corseted one-piece bodysuit paired with a floor-length jacket. Shantanu & Nikhil coupled theirs with flowy *lungis* to balance the proportions, while Rajesh Pratap Singh created printed plastic corsets to offset his designs for a truly dramatic take.



Rajesh Pratap Singh



Shantanu & Nikhil



Anamika Khanna



Suneeet Varma



Kunal Rawal

Fusion Flair

There is nothing new about designers combining Western aesthetics with traditional crafts. This time, however, they chose to fuse different traditional aesthetics. Kunal Rawal's showstopper, Ranbir Kapoor, was dressed in a *lungi*-pant hybrid paired with an embroidered *bandhgala*. Suneeet Varma's new age sequined blouses perfectly complemented his graceful old-school lehengas. Yet, it was the queen of kitsch, Anamika Khanna, who truly made a mark by recreating actual works of art from her home and embroidering them on oversized capes, well-cut blouses, structured *achkans* and brocade dresses.

Fantastic Four

Interior stylist Janavi Javeri picks out the top vintage trends that continue to rule the roost world over



Art Deco Drama
The lavish and luxurious Art Deco movement of the 1920s and 1930s continues to influence contemporary interior design. That's because the use of geometric shapes, mirrored surfaces and metallic accents can still infuse a sense of timeless elegance into modern spaces. It remains a beloved choice for those seeking to add a touch of glamour to their homes.



Victorian Grandeur
Popular during the reign of Queen Victoria, the style is characterised by opulence, ornamentation and eclectic influences from different historical periods and cultures. Style elements such as elaborate chandeliers, intricately patterned wallpaper and richly upholstered furniture can be thoughtfully integrated into contemporary interiors to achieve a unique and captivating look that showcases the best of both worlds.



Farmhouse Chic
Farmhouse chic is all about combining the rustic charm of a simple farmhouse with the sophistication of a modern home. A versatile and inviting style that can suit any home, it's a way to create a cosy and comfortable space. Its key elements are reclaimed wood in furniture, flooring and ceiling beams, a neutral colour palette and vintage accessories that add personality and charm.



Mid-Century Modern
Popular across the US and Europe in the post-World War II period, roughly till the late 1960s, the style is characterised by clean lines, streamlined forms and lack of embellishment. A subset of modern design, but with a more retro and colourful flair, it has greatly influenced architecture as well as product and graphic design.

(Javeri is founder of Walls and Things, a platform for interior styling and photoshoots)

Leading Lights



When it comes to luxe lighting, few do it better than Vikram Jain's innovative Lighting Design Limited. The bespoke brand curates some of the best solutions in the field in South and Southeast Asia, as well as partners with international lighting brands to bring their products to India.

Its latest offering is a range of statement fixtures by Czech premium lighting brand Brokis. It includes Big One which, as the name suggests, is a large-format light with a matte core by designer Lucie Koldova. The sophisticated design of a bubble suspended in the centre of a large sphere evokes a sense of levitation, and embodies simplicity, purity and balanced proportions.

Then, there's Macaroon, a table light that pays homage to the beauty and complex structures of crystal. Enclosed in opposing domes of delicate hand-blown glass, the stone becomes a moonscape afloat in its own cosmos. There's also the Orbis collection, which is based on a universal shape rendered in handblown glass that has been abruptly severed across the top to accommodate an elegant multiangular metal fixture.



PICK OF THE WEEK

Hello, Yellow

The Yellow Dwelling unveils its New Delhi store, showcasing sustainable home furnishings



After creating a substantial retail presence down south—Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai—and in the west—Mumbai and Pune—home furnishings store, The Yellow Dwelling, has now moved up north. First, with an outlet in a Gurugram mall, and now, a full-fledged store in Ghizoni.

Spread over 600 sqft, the store's contemporary and inviting ambience reflects the brand's commitment to creating bespoke and eco-friendly spaces. It features a diverse selection of items, including curtains, cushions, bedding, throws, rugs, table linen and handwoven baskets made out of premium cotton and other natural fibres. Distinctive showpieces are also part of the collection. Each product is thoughtfully crafted, drawing inspiration from global trends and seasonal influences.



The Yellow Dwelling was founded in 2017 by Abhinav and Nandakumar with an aim to bring a fresh and vibrant aesthetic to the Indian market. The brand first opened its doors in Bengaluru's Kammanahalli locality with cheery yellow windows on its facade as a signature look. Besides a selection of in-store pieces, it also offered customisation services. The overwhelming reception of the store led the duo to open a second one in HSR Layout.

This too, was a runaway success, bolstering them to take a leap of faith and expand in other cities. The latest Delhi store is clearly the cherry on their ever-expanding cake. Indeed, a great place to shop if you love natural fibres, pastel hues and rustic elements in your home. Besides their brick and mortar stores, you can also shop their wares at www.theyellowdwelling.com.