

fashion

designer/showcase

INDULGE THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 2021 | BENGALURU

SPIRIT OF THE FOREST

Vandana Bhandare's new drop is geared towards leisurely brunches

LAST YEAR, JUST as the country was slowly limping back to its feet after the nation-wide lockdown, Bengaluru saw the launch of a new label — one that laid emphasis on refreshingly simple and clean silhouettes, solid colours derived from natural sources and exquisite tailoring with clever detailing. Vanaras by Vandana Bhandare went live in August 2020 and since then has unveiled two collections.

Like most new brands making their way into our wardrobes in the past few years, Vanaras, which translates to 'essence of the forest' has strong messaging on sustainability. All the fabric used is GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standards)-certified (which essentially means that it is organic), the dyes are AZO-free and the styles are season-less, making the clothes versatile and therefore reduc-

ing the need to buy more. "Vanaras was conceptualised with the simple thought that one should not hurt the planet to wear beautiful clothes," begins Vandana, who grew up surrounded by gorgeous silks as her father ran a silk manufacturing unit.

For Vandana, minimalism is important and this is reflected in the brand's aesthetic. "We try to keep the clothes as straight-forward and simple as possible. Elegance, gracefulness and minimalism are key," she explains.

Her latest collection, *Valley of Flowers*, is based on a situation or event. "I think they have more character than non-living objects. So I pick situations or real-life events to build my collections around," she shares. *Valley of Flowers* is inspired

Dresses, tops, and skirts from the collection



in conversation



by a brunch, where a group of school friends are reuniting after a decade. "So, the vibe is fun and informal and this is reflected in the clothes," she tells us.

The silhouettes range from midi dresses, gathered skirts and straight trousers to high-collar tops, halter tops and classic button-down shirts. While solids and clean lines are common, it's the detailing that puts Vanaras in a different league. There are tops with delicate ruffles, puffed sleeves, peplum hems and gathered cuffs. Dresses come with corded pintucks across the bodice, flap pockets at the chest and inverted pleats. "Our most popular style is the Manjal maxi top, which has slits all the way up to the waist on both sides," says Vandana. The colour story is composed of shades such as light pink, Cutch brown and bright yellow, which are derived from madder root, pomegranate rings, sea salt, turmeric, harda and burnt ash.

As popular as solids are, Vandana is also experimenting with prints and embroidery for her next drop. It will be interesting to see how she reinterprets these elements while staying true to her design philosophy.

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