



All images: @Ayurgnanic by Lecoanet Hemant

When Fashion Marries Ayurveda

Ayurgnanic by Lecoanet Hemant is a label that epitomises all things environment with clothes that are based on the principles of Ayurveda. **Bindu Gopal Rao** writes.

Lecoanet Hemant has been using Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)-certified cotton that is hand-treated following centuries-old Ayurvedic recipes. He is focused on creating garments that are free of synthetic chemicals and toxic irritants. The manner in which he treats the garments has been developed over time by a family of vaidyas, or doctors of Ayurveda. These form the core



of Ayurganic, a clothing line created in South India, following confirmed Ayurvedic principles. Lecoanet Hemant tells us more in this exclusive tête-à-tête.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE BRAND AND THE RATIONALE BEHIND IT?

The pillars of couture have always been about individuality, expression of the soul, and luxury. Today, sustainable fashion is not too different from this definition. We, at Lecoanet Hemant, were always able to connect these dots; and this ideology gave birth to Ayurganic, our organic line. Ayurganic is a stay-at-home collection, which is produced, exclusively, using GOTS-certified cotton, handwoven using ancient Ayurvedic recipes. The garments, which we call 'Ayurveda' (from a combination of *ayur* and *vastra* meaning health and cloth respectively in Sanskrit) have been permeated with special herbs and oils, freeing them of synthetic chemicals and toxic irritants. Wearing these garments will help restore balance within the body and strengthen the immune system.

WHAT IS THE DESIGN PHILOSOPHY OF AYURGANIC?

Ayurganic believes in the term 'unfashion'. The idea is to create silhouettes that never go out of style. When it comes to Ayurganic, the fabric is key, which is processed to give back to earth what it takes from it. The fabric helps in regeneration, be it the fishes of the Neyyar river in Kerala or the skin cells of the wearer. The fabric strengthens, provides, and nourishes.

WHAT WAS THE REASON BEHIND LAUNCHING A LINE BASED ON AYURVEDA?

Ayurveda is an ancient Indian science, spanning centuries of Vedic healthcare. We had been wanting to promote conscious fashion and we stumbled upon an amazing Ayurvedic dyeing

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BRAND PROFILE

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technique that presented itself as the perfect opportunity to spread the word about investing in something that helps to regenerate and sustain. Like haute couture, Ayurganic products are also one of a kind and seek inspiration from the uniqueness of couture as well as the mindfulness of sustainable clothing.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU CRAFT NEW COLLECTIONS?

We, at Ayurganic, do not believe in collections. The idea is to cut down on our industrial carbon footprint, to be able to best serve our customers and Mother Earth. We work on evergreen styles



that our customer always comes back for. So far, we have launched one range to which new styles have been added recently, adhering to the increasing consumer demand in styles and silhouettes.

WHAT, ACCORDING TO YOU, IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF SUSTAINABLE FASHION IN THE COUNTRY?

Sustainable fashion, with no doubt, is slowly making its way into our country as we are starting to understand the importance of the elimination of rampant consumerism. Apart from educating the customer about slow fashion, we also face added pressure when talking about Ayurveda in India. The international customer loves the touch and feel of the product along with the properties it exudes, however, the Indian customer is still reluctant about believing in the healing properties of Ayurvedic clothing as opposed to international slow-fashion concepts that they appreciate. So I think we still have a long way to go. But the silver lining is the relatively growing demand for sustainable products, which cannot be substituted with fast fashion.

The fact that the Indian consumer has started to react to sustainability differently and in a positive way is one milestone that has already been achieved. The next step is to get a similar reaction to Ayurvastra.

ANY MOMENT IN THE BRAND'S JOURNEY THAT YOU ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF?

We are extremely proud of the fact that the washing of Ayurganic fabrics in the Neyyar river of Kerala has led to a steady increase in the fish population of the local water body, reversing some of the damage that has previously been done. Ayurganic is pure Ayurvastra that is





that does not just give back to earth but also employs a large population of workers. What makes Ayurganic unique is its uncompromised quality and authentic processes that we follow in the making of every unit, along with recyclable and reusable packaging. Apart from that, most garments of Ayurganic are gender-fluid and have been so since the start of the brand a decade ago. We do not want to restrict the consumer to wearing a said style because of their gender. Though it is rooted in ancient practices, Ayurganic is all about the philosophy of a soul being a soul, no matter how it chooses to identify itself.

WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES THAT THE LABEL FACES?

In a world of consumerism, believing in sustainability and reflecting it clearly in the brand message is of utmost importance. We constantly strive at sending out the right message and making the consumer aware of the distinct principles the brand follows. For example, all Ayurganic garments are of the same colour because, of all herbs used in our dyeing process, a major percentage is taken up by turmeric. In a way, this binds the brand with traditions of Ayurveda, and promotes health and wellness more than anything else.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

It is no secret that sustainable living is the future of wellness and lifestyle. Rooted in authentic Ayurvedic practices, Ayurganic is focused on the concept of clean living. With a sound design background and an eye for innovation, we aim to spread more awareness about the benefits of Ayurveda and ways in which Ayurveda can lend stability to the mind, body, and environment in the long run. ■



processed in the heart of Kerala. The herbs used in the dyeing process of the Ayurganic fabric are sourced specifically from the tribal communities of Agastya forest. The fabric is washed in the local water body, the Neyyar river, transferring the herbal properties of the dyed cloth to the river, which helps in regeneration.

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE UNIQUENESS AND PREMIUM PRICING OF THESE CLOTHES TO CUSTOMERS?

Today, sustainability means luxury, which does not make it that hard to justify the premium pricing. The customer understands the concept and is willing to shell out more for something that is unique and organically made; something