



The green light

From Oorja to The Purple Turtles, four Bengaluru labels that are changing the game when it comes to sustainable decor. **By Bindu Gopal Rao**



Prateek Sabharwal

If you are doing up a new home or are looking to give your home a spanking new makeover, one element that must be a top consideration is sustainability. Products that are ecologically conscious can mean many things, not just the way they are manufactured. Think handmade, handcrafted, local, artisan made and traditional. We help you pick the best with some of our recommendations.

Escape by Creatomy

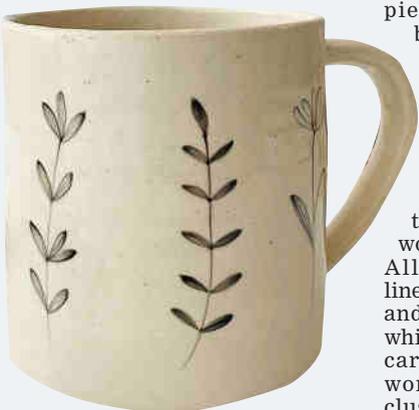
Escape aims to usher in a new age of Indian furniture. One that is meticulously detailed, technologically forward and beyond the mundane. All while being very respectful of the traditional Indian crafts and creating a platform to allow our crafts to take centre stage. "Among the many industries that have taken measures to protect the environment, furniture stands out as one of the most important products. Sustainability is essential in many aspects of the process, ranging from using FSC-certified wood to finishing a complete furniture line with the utmost thought of keeping it all environmentally friendly," says Prateek Sabharwal, Founder, Escape by Creatomy.

At Creatomy, the focus is on minimising environmental impact and on moving towards greener production. Their key goal is to make the best use of most of our resources by creating various products and by reusing the surplus materials in other product categories as well, resulting in minimal wastage. "Here, at our manufacturing unit, we hold elaborate hardware and the required software to plan and execute the entire process to minimise wastage holding up sustainability. We produce high-quality furniture with a timeless design that can be passed down many generations. Natural wood being our most used material not only dispenses with harmful substances but also has a positive effect on the indoor climate in your home," adds Sabharwal.

Escape is conscious at every stage of their design process and employs almost 100 artisans. The team is also obsessed with using every inch of their raw material. "We are constantly designing using our offcuts and that helps us create interesting objects that help us contribute towards the education of our little partners," says Sabharwal.



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Minimal Indian

PURE, minimal. handmade and hand painted, these are four words that best capture the ethos of Minimal Indian. Adrita Sarkar, founder and artist, Minimal Indian, says, "I have always appreciated the beauty of old-world charm and a true believer of minimalistic living. The brand is conceptualised to celebrate these two philosophies, where I could blend the ideas of slow living and my passion for art, design, and traditional Indian crafts. These products are made for people who appreciate artisanal products and a simple design language."

The brand has a range of ceramics that are first skillfully handmade by studio potters, one piece at a time. Every piece is wheel thrown and hand glazed. Then, Sarkar hand paints every piece herself. Which means each piece here is unique and as bespoke as it can get. "Mindfully crafted, every detail on our tableware is hand painted with fine brush strokes. The minimal yet complex nature of these motifs makes the painting process long, yet the details make it totally worth the time," says Sarkar. All the ceramics and home linens are made in small batches, and they do not mass produce which automatically reduces the carbon footprint. The brand works with various artisan clusters across the country to

translate their signature patterns into handmade blocks, screens, and hand embroideries. "Our exquisite home linens reflect the essence of artisanal make and our simplistic design language. Minimalist design composed of botanical motifs; geometric lines translated onto natural earthy tones," says Sarkar.

All their packaging boxes are made from recyclable paper and the team reuses most of the packaging materials. "We do not discard or throw away our production seconds, instead we reuse them in the best possible way," shares Sarkar. They also do a 'Minimal Imperfection' sale every year for the second pieces to find new homes. "We work with stoneware clay. The final glaze and painting underglaze we use are completely lead-free and food safe. We work with only natural cotton fabrics and there is no harmful chemical used in our fabric dyeing process. The future is all about mindful consumption. We continue to promote sustainability through our products. We plan to explore more artisanal clusters that align with our brand's philosophy in future. We plan to expand our decor category, as we see the immense scope of mindful decor objects in the coming days," concludes Sarkar.

Adrita Sarkar



Radeesh Rathnakar Shetty



The Purple Turtles

THE Purple Turtles is one of the most eclectic brands working with various local vendors to create unique home décor and their products are testament to the finest craftsmanship. From handcrafted sculptures, heritage paintings, timeless furniture, eclectic lighting, and décor to gifting for every occasion, the brand has a wide range of products to choose from.

"We design with freedom and source with responsibility, all for the love of collecting, curating, and creating. We are conscious of sourcing locally. We have been working closely with a lot of craft clusters and artisans. We do not mass produce our products and all our products are sourced from across India and handcrafted by local artisans. Our designers work in coherence with artisans to create unique designs while keeping the essence of the art alive. We are making a

conscious effort to make Indian art and handcrafted décor accessible to people and to give them unique pieces with which they can create spaces that reflect their own style," explains Radeesh Rathnakar Shetty, founder and director, The Purple Turtles.

Handpicked from labyrinthine bazaars, crumbling havelis, quirky studios and local craftsmen, all their products have a unique story to them. "We restore and repurpose a great deal of products. For example, you may find an old haveli window upcycled to be used as a dining table or repurposed as a mirror. The products that we curate are handcrafted by Indian artisans and the materials used are sourced locally," avers Shetty.

They intend to work more closely with craftsmen from across India and offer them a chance to showcase their work. They also intend to incorporate local art and craft into corporate and hospitality projects and bring visibility to Indian art.





Jenny Pinto



Oorjaa Lighting Design

A PIONEER in crafting artisanal and sustainable lights, Oorjaa's ethos is anchored firmly in the concept of sustainability. Their collections pay homage to artisanal craftsmanship and take inspiration from nature. The brand's veritable range of lamps and lighting fixtures are made of waste like banana fibre, lokta fibre, stone quarry dust and waste cork. Jenny Pinto, founder and design director, Oorjaa Lighting Design says, "At Oorjaa, we go beyond just sustainable and natural materials, we actually use waste. Our signature material, the handmade paper, is made from agri waste, mainly banana fibre. It is an incredibly strong and silky fibre that gives us strong paper that looks beautiful when lit up, so they are perfect for lights. Then we also developed a new material using quarry dust combined with paper waste. It gives us this material that looks like concrete. It has been trending for a while. That is our *Wabi-Sabi* range. We also use waste cork from the cork industry and now lantana, which is our newest material."

Lantana is an invasive weed and threatens almost all wildlife reserves in Central and South India. It is very difficult to get rid of and impacts wildlife movement and availability of food. Because it is so tenacious, it is also a tough material and quite beautiful and versatile. Right now, it is Oorjaa's new passion project. "We just installed sculptures and lights at the new terminal in the Bengaluru airport. We also try to follow a zero waste policy. We recycle water, do not plastic, even in packaging, and do things as much as possible by hand, which saves energy and creates jobs," says Pinto.

Oorjaa, as a brand, is committed to continue the path of sustainability and is constantly looking for new waste materials that they can work with. "Lantana right now needs a lot of back-end work with supply chains, economies and linkages with tribal organisations because it is a material from forest / wildlife reserves. We're hoping things get a little less easier," says Pinto.

