

IndiaSpiration:

How India inspires luxury brands



Luxury is not only about status but also about provenance, as consumers seek products that tell stories, carry heritage, and align with sustainability values. In the global tapestry of fashion, music and cuisine, India is no longer a quiet thread in the background. It has become a visible motif in its own right, with influences surfacing across runways, playlists and menus. From lehenga-inspired silhouettes at international fashion shows, to Ed Sheeran's chart-topping track Sapphire that weaves Punjabi rhythms into its chorus, India is imprinting itself on mainstream culture in ways that are hard to ignore. Michelin-starred chef Vikas Khanna has transported Indian flavours into New York's competitive culinary scene, while designer Sabyasachi opened his first international maximalist store in the city, adding fuel to this cultural surge.

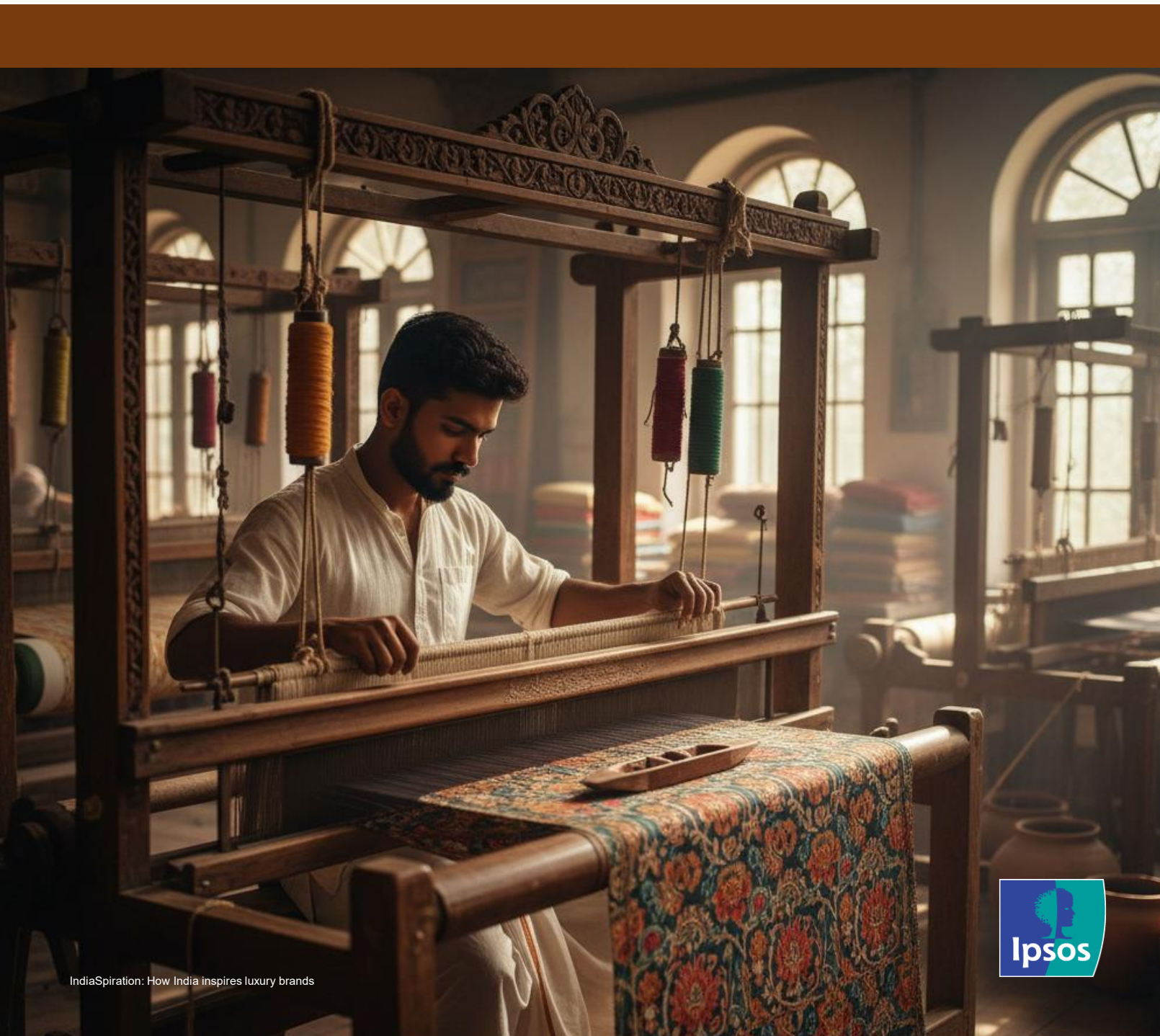
Collectively, these moments point to a dynamic 'Brand India': one that respects tradition while shaping a global identity fit for contemporary luxury.



Heritage and Craft as Global Currency

India's artisanal skill is rooted in centuries of multigenerational expertise, from hand weaving and embroidery to jewellery-making traditions. Western luxury has long borrowed from this heritage. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Indian chintz fabrics became coveted across Europe. Later, Kashmir shawls inspired the paisley motif, which remains globally recognisable today. In the early 20th century, Cartier looked to India's royal jewels to design its now-iconic Tutti Frutti collection. More recently, Bvlgari's India-inspired creations such as the mangalsutra necklace and B.zero1 kada bracelet struck a chord with local buyers. These examples illustrate how craftsmanship paired with cultural storytelling can bridge continents.

They also highlight the challenge for luxury brands: to adapt Indian symbols without reducing them to mere decoration. The difference lies in cultural adaptation backed by authenticity.

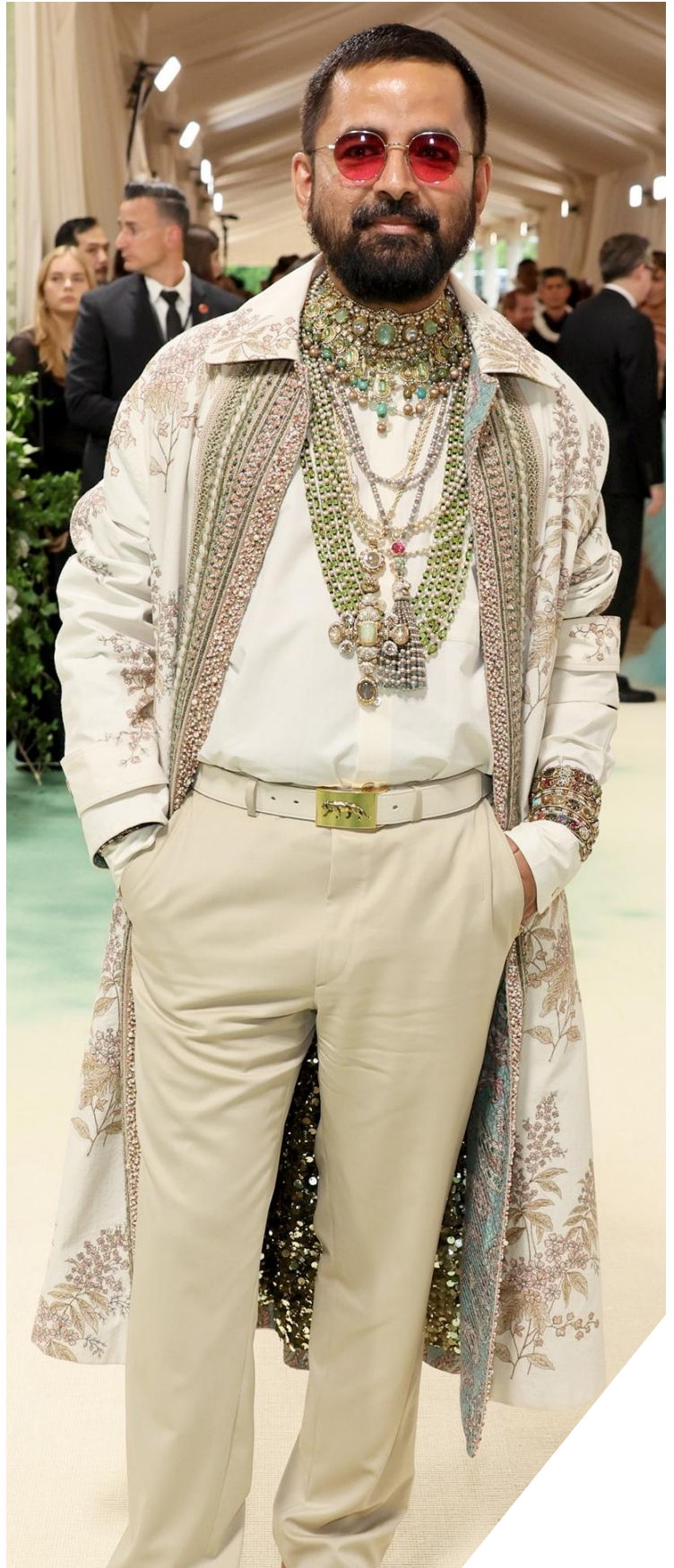


Storytelling, Inclusivity and Representation

Each Indian region carries its own narrative through textiles, jewellery or motifs, giving luxury brands a wellspring of material for storytelling. Incorporating these symbols into design is not just about aesthetic enrichment; it creates emotional connections, embedding brands more deeply into consumer identity. This is also why inclusivity has become a strategic choice. Brand ambassadors such as Deepika Padukone for Louis Vuitton and Cartier, Alia Bhatt for Gucci and L'Oréal Paris, or Priyanka Chopra for Bvlgari and Tiffany & Co., are not just endorsements—they are signals of global diversity. These reflect a broader consumer demand for representation in the products they buy and the campaigns they see.

In a fragmented global market, tapping into India's narratives allows luxury brands to project both inclusivity and aspiration. Luxury today is not only about status but also about provenance. Consumers seek products that tell stories, that carry heritage, and that align with sustainability values. India's traditional crafts—often eco-friendly by design—fit neatly into this shift.

The global shift towards ethical sourcing and fair trade has heightened interest in Indian craftsmanship, positioning it as both culturally rich and environmentally responsible. Yet this appeal comes with expectations. Brands must not only adopt Indian symbols but also ensure artisans are credited and supported.



From Inspiration to Integration

India's luxury market, valued at around \$18 billion, is growing faster than global averages. With international brands rushing to establish a footprint, the country is no longer just a source of inspiration but a vital market in itself. The number of high-net-worth individuals is increasing, and younger consumers are showing strong appetite for luxury that celebrates Indian heritage while projecting global sophistication. Grand Indian weddings amplify this trend, with demand for couture, jewellery, destinations and premium hospitality creating multi-billion-dollar opportunities. At the same time, the Indian diaspora, a wealthy and influential global community, leans towards luxury with India-inspired symbolism to stay connected to their roots. International consumers too, especially those who value craftsmanship and exclusivity, are finding resonance in India-inspired pieces that combine artistry with authenticity.

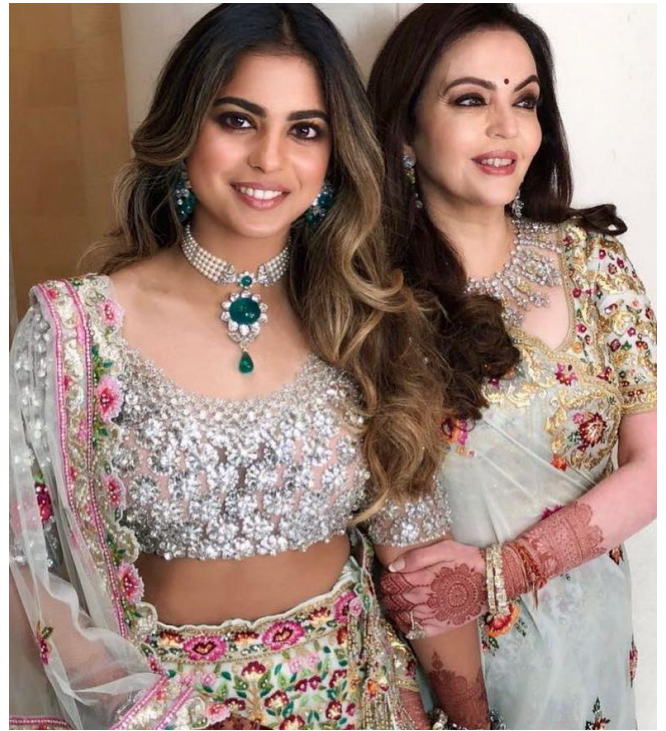


Photo Courtesy: Vogue

Luxury's engagement with India cannot stop at inspiration; it requires integration. Capsule collections such as Bvlgari's mangalsutra or Hermès' limited-edition saris are examples of how brands can weave Indian symbolism into their narrative without diluting it. Collaborations between Indian and global names—such as Christian Louboutin's 2016 tie-up with Sabyasachi Mukherjee—show how cross-cultural creativity can produce collections that feel both authentic and aspirational. Campaigns tailored to cultural moments, whether around wedding seasons or festivals, can further root global brands in local relevance. Tanishq's Rivaah collection with designer Tarun Tahiliani in 2023, which merged jewellery with the language of Indian textiles, was a case in point. Looking ahead, personalisation will be crucial, especially for Generation Alpha, who seek products that carry symbolic value while expressing individuality.

For this to be sustainable, however, crediting and empowering artisans must remain non-negotiable. Without recognition, the very heritage that drives inspiration risks being commodified. Governments, too, have a role to play in creating systems that protect and promote traditional crafts, ensuring that global adoption does not come at the cost of local erasure.

India's role in luxury is at an inflection point. The country is no longer just a source of motifs or an emerging consumer market; it is both a contributor to global design language and a driver of future growth. The opportunity lies not in short-lived appropriation but in building long-term frameworks that honour heritage, credit artisans and adapt narratives for global audiences. For luxury brands, the choice is clear. India can either remain a backdrop for occasional inspiration or become a central stage for authentic cultural collaboration. In an era where consumers prize meaning alongside beauty, the brands that embrace the latter path will not only capture attention but also earn enduring relevance.



Photo Courtesy: Businessoffashion.com

Our Luxury Experts can guide you on the best ways to bring you the insights needed to grow your business

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