

# Fashion

## Tête-à-tête with Style Guru Pernia Qureshi and Designer Masaba Gupta

Entrepreneur and style guru Pernia Qureshi successfully launched the Indian answer to the renowned US net-a-porter site. Born a mere two years ago, Perniaspopushop.com has since then grown into a mass global market site which now carries over 100 different designers, including her eponymous new collection. A well-established author as well, Pernia has launched a new book 'Be stylish' to raving reviews. Visiting with her was the youngest fashion designer to debut at Lakme Fashion Week and daughter of Neena Gupta and Vivian Richards, Masaba Gupta, who showcased her designs at the 'Night of Neon Festive Soiree' on Friday at the Montcalm Hotel. I was the lucky girl that got to catch up with these lovely fashionistas ahead of their show!

Pernia, wearing an on-trend grey skater skirt and matching sweater, was full of excitement and energy, launching into talking about the charities that they were supporting: Pratham UK, Indian Women's Association and Akshaya Patra. She said, "this is my first collaboration with these three charities. Inshallah if this goes well, we'll definitely be working with them in the future again or be linked to them on a more permanent

basis. I know they are quite prestigious and do good work."

Moving swiftly on to the concept of perniapop-upshop, Pernia explained, "Two years ago when I started the whole idea, there was nothing like this site in the market. I saw a huge gap for a really luxurious, beautiful online boutique that sells Indian designerwear to the world. Indian designers are one of the most talented in the world. Indian products are absolutely exquisite. Something everyone wants, whether they are Indian or not. I thought it would be a great platform for Indian designers to showcase what they can do. To be accessible to everybody in small towns to big cities."

Almost an overnight success, the carefully handpicked e-store offers an attractive array of India's well-known brands and emerging designers. It has become renowned as the only luxury e-commerce portal in India, stocking the likes of M a n i s h

Malhotra, Ritu Kumar, Sabyasachi and Rohit Bal. Switching to fashion, I

asked why she chose Masaba for her pop-up-show. She said, "The moment I was asked to do a fashion show, I figured from my list of designers on perniapop-upshop, Masaba is perhaps the most popular, especially in the UK."

The lovely Miss Gupta, sporting a hot pink sweater with equally hot pink lipstick reflecting the eclectic designer she is, cheerfully explained what makes her designs different from others. "When I started off, there was no one really in that space doing graphics and using print as a main design story. I think what makes my designs different is the way I use colour, the way I just mix and match things. The USP of the brand is that we use a lot of handlooms and lots of really organic fabrics but at the same time we also use a lot of modern Lycra."

Asking Pernia for her opinion on the Masaba Gupta collection, she launched into praises about Masaba's signature style. "Masaba has

literally come to be known as the queen of quirky prints. You know you're a success when from a mile away someone can spot your designs. This is what she has created for herself, this niche of really being the one to introduce the coolest, catchiest prints of the season. Ten years ago, sarees would just age a girl. But now, Masaba has revolutionised the role of sarees for all Indian women."

Both Masaba and Pernia have designed and styled for Bollywood 'it' girls, such as Sonam Kapoor. In some ways, having a Bollywood actress wear her saree was what made Masaba Gupta a hit. She explains, "In India, Bollywood and Cricket run the show. I used to do sarees long back, but they never sold. They said what's the point of an anarkali saree when you can buy a chiffon saree





for the same amount. Then I had Sonam wear one of my sarees and things literally changed overnight. It is the power of Bollywood that comes with the aspiration these

young girls have to look like their idols."

Masaba also revealed that she would love Michelle Obama to wear her sarees. "I know she wears a lot of Indian clothing and she loves prints so she would be perfect! I think she'd carry off print and colour very well, not least because she's a huge fashion icon."

Interviewing two expert fashionistas, I could not help cheekily asking whether they think there are any Bollywood actresses in dire need of a stylist. They defiantly responded, "There is nothing wrong with needing a stylist or not dressing according to what is meant to be 'stylish'. There are many actresses who do need stylists, they just need to be open to change, to listening to others."

For Pernia, who looks to herself as her role model, it does not stop with styling. She excitedly told me about her new collection which is up for sale on the site on Monday. "Pernia Quereshi is showcasing its first Indian collection which I'm super excited about. You'll see a very girly, feminine and quite classic collection from me. Nothing too much but very pretty, atleast in my opinion!"



**Masaba Gupta, Pernia Qureshi and Tanveer Mann**



**Vidhya Balan, Priyanka Chopra & Sonam Kapoor wearing Masaba**



**Masaba Gupta and Sonam Kapoor**