

## GO INSIDER



Arvind The Shalwar by Sushar Talasila, indigo on paper. Right: Shalwar by Anna Harris, indigo concrete, plaster sand and steel

**"A GAITONDE OR TYEB SELLS FOR ₹25 CRORE. IT'S REWARDING, BUT CRAFT DOES NOT HAVE MILLIONAIRES. IT HAS BECOME WHAT IT HAS OVER GENERATIONS AND WILL BE LOST IF WE DON'T MAKE IT VIABLE"**

"I owned up to my mistakes," says Lalbhai, who joined Arvind in 1977 as a trainee. His voice booms in the sparsely decorated room that may have once been the family living room, its age written in the bronze sculptures that line its walls and shades of pink that seep through its century-old floor tiling. "My assumption had been completely wrong. Murphy's law also applied, in that denim profits went down. I personally invested ₹70 crore, mortgaged a lot and borrowed money... All that helped. And some luck. Always luck."

Arvind Ltd today has eight business verticals in apparel, real estate, engineering, environment solutions and telecom, among others. The next generation has also stepped in, with sons Punit and Kunal serving as executive directors in the company, allowing their father to step back a bit and follow up on an avalanche of personal interests – besides the museum, there's rock 'n' roll (in college, he was the drummer for a band called the Drifters), gardening, travel, food and, potentially, learning the guitar. There's a certain restlessness to Lalbhai's demeanour – he likes to get on with things, has casual, quick answers to all questions and a firm manner of speaking that breaks no nonsense.

"When I took over [the company as Managing Director in 1985], I was at the pinnacle of success, and then it collapsed. I faced a situation where



I would have lost everything," says Lalbhai, an alum of the Jai Prakash Bajaj Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai. To go through that, being treated differently by people you know well, it requires an ability to deal." He turned to spirituality and meditation in the mid-1990s, and now meditates for an hour everyday "to silence the mind".

While *Alchemy* is just a preview of larger things to come – a 20,000sqft permanent museum will open at the company headquarters in Naroda soon – Lalbhai, who's also the president of the Ahmedabad Education Society and Ahmedabad University, wants to focus on reviving craft. "I have to build an institution that teaches these children not to get out of the profession, but to make it more remunerative to continue in their fathers' footsteps," he says.

"We're losing craft in India because it's not financially rewarding. One *Gaitonde* or *Tyeb* sells for ₹25 crore. It's rewarding, but craft does not have millionaires. It has become what it has over generations and will be lost if we don't make it contemporary, relevant for the world audience, which is why we are calling this *Alchemy*."

His philosophy is simple: You have to be passionate about something, so that you put in as much time as needed to execute it. "My grandfather used to say, only a fool will work endlessly. Anything I do, I'm never going to see the result in my life. But I'm not bothered about outcomes." ☺

## THE PERFECT FIRST IMPRESSION

It is a truth, universally acknowledged that your clothes play a critical role when it comes to making the right statement. And Presso – world's leading dry cleaners – ensures just that

Whether it's a job interview or the first date, you want to look your best. Why? Because first impressions are usually the last. Stepping out in designer wear is one way to do it. But not if your ensemble isn't well taken care of. Basically, a regular pressed shirt would leave a better impression than a branded shirt with creases. Presso, internationally renowned for maintaining the integrity of couture, brings you key things to look for in a prized wardrobe, when making a statement of style

### CRISP SHIRT

A shirt which is pressed correctly gives you a better fit. While ironing, ensure that you're left with a straight collar, straight cuffs and a straight hem. The sleeves should be round-pressed to guarantee the absence of unwanted wrinkles. Smoothen the button-facings until creaseless.



### THE FOOTWEAR FIX

Do not ignore the one thing that completes your look – your shoes. Run-down shoes are distasteful. Fortunately, Presso Cobbler infuses a new personality to your old pairs and gives them a stylish update by replacing the soles entirely with brand new, coloured ones.



### SUITS IN SHAPE

A well-ironed jacket differentiates the dapper from the damp. The collars, the lapels and the pocket flaps should be wrinkle-free. So, should be the sleeve tips, underarms and the linings at the hem.



### PANTS DONE RIGHT

For a sharp, put-together look, the same principle applies to trousers. Start your way from the waistband by ironing the inside and the outside. The darts on the waistband should be flat, as should be the pocket edges. Then, pay attention to the pleats and make sure they are well-marked. Lastly, work your way down and even out the turn-ups on both legs.



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