

Henna queen is Bollywood stars' good luck charm

From Liz Hurley to Kajol and from Karisma Kapoor to Suzanne Khan, all had intricate designs drawn by henna queen Veena Nagda for them on their wedding day. She's even earned the sobriquet 'good luck' from the film fraternity.

'Bollywood families believe that I'm their good luck charm. I have applied henna to many Bollywood brides and all of them are living happily ever after. They feel I bring luck to brides who get henna done by me for their weddings,' Nagda told IANS on phone from Mumbai.

'Rani Mukerji, Kareena Kapoor and Preity Zinta have promised me that for their wedding, they will call on my services,' the 45-year-old Nagda said.

'Even Ranbir Kapoor has asked his girlfriend Deepika Padukone to get her henna done by me. Deepika was initially reluctant but eventually agreed,' she added.

This, however, is not to suggest that the duo has decided to tie the knot.

Nagda's family hails from Kutch in Gujarat, but she was born in Mumbai. The youngest of five sisters, she has been in this profession for the past 25 years and started applying henna when she was just 17.

'I didn't learn this art from anyone. I was initially into embroidery, but somehow got interested in henna. I picked up designs from my embroidery and it worked. Slowly, I realised that I have the knack for henna application and I shifted my focus to it. I enjoy this profession,' Nagda said.

Her Bollywood stint began in 1979 when she applied henna to actress Poonam Dhillon for a social function. Word of her prowess soon spread and she began climbing the ladder of success slowly but steadily.

In recent times, Nagda hogged the limelight when she was called for the Hrithik Roshan-Suzanne wedding. Her delicate Gujarati designs were a huge rage and made her instantly popular.

'I share a special bond with Hrithik because he believed in my henna designs. Today, I thank him for being my good luck charm,' she said.

In the last one decade, she has been at almost all big Bollywood weddings - of Kajol-Ajay Devgan, Twinkle-Akshay Kumar, Karisma-Sanjay Kapoor, Natasha-Fardeen Khan and many more.

She remembers every Bollywood marriage function vividly, but it is Twinkle's marriage that she remembers the best.

'I wasn't informed about the wedding. I was told on the phone that Twinkle's friend was getting married. But when I reached there, I was surprised to learn that it was Twinkle who was getting married,' she said.

'The exciting part was that the marriage was in the evening and I had to apply henna in the morning. We had to use every possible trick to get the perfect colour,' she added.

Apart from Bollywood stars, filmmakers like Karan Johar and Kunal Kohli too used Nagda's skills in their movies 'Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham' and 'Hum Tum' respectively.

Nagda has an equally impressive list of clients outside the film fraternity.

Her price list starts at Rs.50 for a simple design for two hands, and her bridal package starts at Rs.3,000.

The stars pay her much more but she'd rather not talk about that.

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