

Catering to the Middle East and a dash Rajasthani flavour

New Delhi

The [Wills Lifestyle India Fashion Week](#) took off with a showing of some of the best designers that are part of the industry today. For 27 year old [Pria Kataria Puri](#) just making a name in the domestic market was not sufficient, the Middle East is a major market for the Indian fashion designer. Speaking on the subject after her collection showing on the opening day of the Wills Lifestyle India Fashion Week, Pria candidly shared her hopes for the coming year, "...In the last two years, we've done extremely well in the Middle East and so I design primarily for the region". Her target is to double her business in the region this year, since as she puts it, "Sixty percent of the buyers here (at the fashion week) are from the Middle East and they do a lot of shopping for Ramadan, when they have to wear a new outfit every day for 40 days." For her collection this year Puri has drawn inspiration from Egyptian motifs to craft a range of evening wear with richly embroidered gowns, plenty of sequins and elaborate hairdos topped by the liberal use of artificial fur, painted feathers and tall hats. This she feels will definitely hold appeal for the Middle East market as they are looking for the unusual and unique, "...They are quite sick and tired of Italian and European designers because every woman there wants to feel like a queen. India has it in her to pander to this desire, with its rich array of fabrics. "Remember, it's a region that believes in opulence and so I add a lot of glitz and the glamour. The Middle East is a market that does not appreciate the simple outlook in fashion, they like embellishments. You cannot sell a plain t-shirt to them. Their t-shirts should have lots of embellishments, lots of Swarovskis and the like," Puri pointed out. There is nothing short in the collection, not in terms of ideas or literally speaking "length. It is the Middle East market Pria Kataria Puri is addressing. The bulk of her ensembles are ankle length and those that are knee-length are complimented with boots that go slightly higher than the hem. The chosen colours for her collection were turquoise, blue, lilac and purple. Her designs embodied versatility as, "every piece (could) be worn individually or in the manner the entire ensemble has been designed," she said, adding that this enhanced the costume flexibility. [Niki Mahajan](#) on the other hand, in her own style believes in promoting Indian talent. Her showing at the WILFW spoke clearly of her muse - Rajasthan's world-renowned Pushkar fair. Eclectic in its mix of colours and unusual block printing techniques, what was unique about the collection was the manner in which metal and stonework was incorporated into fabrics. The series of bejewelled and stylish ensembles brought alive the state's rich cultural traditions. "A scintillating spectacle unfolds during the Pushkar fair as the entire area becomes a melting pot of people from around the world. I have attempted to give a certain amount of permanency to this," Mahajan explained after the show. "Having extensively worked with craftspersons, I have been able to recreate and resurrect innumerable techniques and styles. Each creation is a fusion of ethnicity and modernism to bring forth a truly classic apparel," she went on to add. Fabrics used in the collection were silk, velvet, lycra and corduroy, with transparent nets and laces. But what was clearly visible in each ensemble was the designer's obsession with colour and detailed texturing. Gathers and flounces, layering and pleating, the collection conveyed charm and quirkiness, in the myriad skirts, blouses, quilted jackets, T-shirts and formal trousers that made up the show. With her attempt to create "timeless ensembles fit for today's royalty," Mahajan's ensembles find a market in Britain, the US, Japan and the Middle East too. In her words, "...This collection is an

ode to today's real women who are stylish and sexy. They are confident, have a sense of humour, with subtle elements of laughter and joy in their very beings.

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