

Wrapping gifts beautifully

Pics: Vaibhav Thombare

Surbhi Mehtani tells **Shalaka Nalawade** more about her joint venture **Wrapstar** and how she picked up the art of gift wrapping early in life



ALL NICE AND FANCY: Surbhi Mehtani showcases the gift wrapping options available at her recently-opened store in Baner



Gifting is an art and gift wrapping is equally creative if not more. A gift, which is neatly and thoughtfully packed, adds more value to it and sends out a message to the receiver that you care! Keeping this in mind, two sisters Surbhi Mehtani and Roohi Agnihotri floated their venture Wrapstar Inc.

"Wrapstar is all about bespoke gifting. We began by creating a buzz about our innovative gift wrapping options through exhibitions. For a year, we showcased our work at several luxury exhibitions during Diwali, Holi and other festivals," Surbhi informs.

Taking small steps at a time, Wrapstar charted its own growth path. "It's not just us, our associates have grown too. For example, the artist, who took care of our fabric needs,

has started his own fabric store and so on," she adds.

Recently, Wrapstar launched its store in Baner. If you walk into the place, you will come across all sorts of gifts wrapped and ready to be shipped. Be it weddings, baby showers, birthdays, Valentine's Day, corporate gifts — they have all kinds for every occasion. And there is a whole range of wrapping options to choose from — flamboyant, classic, opulent, intricate, desi, subtle, etc. "Our products are bespoke and everything is a compilation of ideas from Wrapstar and our clients. Hence every product is unique, because everyone has his or her own likings and preferences. Some are sober, some flashy, some quaint, some like it blingy. We make what best suits our client's needs and ideas," explains Surbhi.

Learning the art

It is a dream come true for the sisters. "We don't come from a business family. My mom's a gynaecologist and dad's a general physician. But as children, we grew up watching our mother take a lot of effort in wrapping gifts. Even the smallest of presents were wrapped with lots of love and care. My mom was always into craft and to embellish the packages, she would make flowers and leaves with ribbons," says Surbhi.

Having learnt the art at home, Surbhi and Roohi decided to pursue it further. "We saved money to start our own venture. Initially, others thought that this was just a hobby for us. We had to really convince them and show our capability," she adds.

However, it's never easy learning the tricks of the trade.

Surbhi and Roohi had their own share of teething troubles. "Our artists are mostly based in Delhi from where my sister operates the business. Initially, Roohi would send me the stuff in cartons, but by the time they reached Pune, a lot of them would be broken. We had to find a solution. Finally, we found people who specialised in gift dispatch and handling."

Narrating another incident, Surbhi says, "Once we were making invitation cards with shells for a wedding in Thailand. My sister dispatched the shells from Delhi and when they reached me the paint started peeling off from some of the shells. So I asked her to send me some paint to redo the shells. To expedite the process, she sent me spray paint, which didn't get customs clearance. I had to do everything from scratch all

in one night to complete the project and send the shipment to my client," shares Surbhi.

Now of course, things are in place. This mother of two says her business allows her a lot of flexibility to spend time with her family. "Even though my mom was a doctor she never ignored us. I too try to work out the balance between work and family. I only work till five everyday so that I can spend my evenings with my kids," says Surbhi adding, "I enjoy my work further because I get to run the business with my sister. It seems less a task and more fun because of our partnership."

So the next time you have a gift to wrap for that special someone, you know where to head!