

LIFE & STYLE

'Made in Pondy' strikes a balance between the new and the old



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JANUARY 25, 2019 14:39 IST

UPDATED: JANUARY 25, 2019 19:28 IST

Scandinavian furniture, hand-printed fabrics and organic produce. The third edition of Made In Pondy is on till February 11

The chic façade of Puducherry has often stood testament to the rich heritage predating contemporary life in the coastal town. For Sunaina Mandeem, co-organiser of the ongoing Pondicherry Heritage Festival (until February 11), there still exist under explored threads to the coastal town's aesthetic fabric. "The continuing mix of cultures and people over a thousand

years or more is what makes Puducherry unique,” she says, setting the tone for the Festival’s Made in Pondy event that kicks off next week.

Staging its third outing this year, the week-long event aims at reeling in local talent and their products that range from handicraft to the newly-added organic produce category comprising couscous, ragi, oat and millet-based products. And what brings these artists together? The multitude of influences from within and outside the borders of the country that hone their creativity and entrepreneurship. For those planning to visit, look forward to handloom fabrics, organic cotton apparel, terracotta horses and kitchenware, leather bags and contemporary wooden furniture.

With the goal of showcasing enterprises that are reflective of the region's eclectic history and the consequent culture, like its previous editions, this year, Made in Pondy will be presenting a combination of both indigenous artisans as well as well-known brands. And this year, the team is joined by Bitasta Samantaray of LAL, the Puducherry-based brand that offers hand-printed garments, customised lifestyle accessories and home décor items. The event will also see live demonstrations, stalls and displays from Made in Pondy first-timers like French designer and cabinet maker Vincent Roy, who is putting up his Scandinavian-style, minimalistic wooden furniture, and veterans like LAL. Sustainable **fashion** brand, Naushad, whose handloom trench coats were a tribute to the Musiri weavers in Tiruchirapalli/Trichy at

LFW last year, is also on the list. “The town has a huge influence on our work. Be it our comfort wear or apparel that’s laid back yet stylish, we’ve noticed people instantly recognising the brand’s Puducherry roots,” says designer Naushad Ali, adding how it will be the brand’s first exhibition in its home town.

As tedious as the task of hunting out such indigenous talent is, for Mandeem, it all serves a larger purpose – of inspiring new enterprises. According to her, new additions to the organising team help in different ways. For instance, Samantaray’s addition who, in turn, roped in the likes of Roy. “We hope for people to be inspired by the fact that you can make a living out of creating beautiful products that aren’t really consumer oriented,” she adds.

From February 1 to 5, 10 30 am to 8 30 pm at Craft Bazaar, Gandhi Thidal Beach Road. For details, call 9443323324.

Printable version | Jan 30, 2019 12:28:37 AM | <https://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/the-annual-made-in-pondy-event-kicks-off-next-week/article26089089.ece>

