Golden Needle: Handcrafted Exclusivity

Posted on



Cotton womenswear to suit any occasion and every individual style

A popular boutique for custom-made ethnic attire, Golden Needle is known for its personalised service and attention to detail.

Words Nadeera Jayasinghe
Photographs Geeth Viduranga

Hawwa Kareem Yaseen,
Owner

The sparkling personality of Hawwa Kareem Yaseen, Designer and Owner, shines through in the modest setting of Golden Needle on Havelock Road. It is reflected in the sunny yellow and gold interior, and in the vibrant colours of clothing that extend along the walls.

Generations of clientele frequent this establishment that is popular for its distinctive range of ethnic wear, made exclusively for women and young girls. Particular attention is paid to producing only unique, individualised items using the most comfortable of fabric, such as cotton, voile and linen.

A vibrant array of kurthas, long maxi dresses, gypsy skirts, crop tops are on offer at the boutique. Along with those are a variety of trousers including patiala, palazzo, harem and push-up pants. With a wave of her hand to indicate the entire range available at the store, she explained that no two garments were identical. Even if the same fabric were utilised, she would change the style and trimmings by using different piping, borders, lace, beads and buttons. Each unique piece of garment takes around two weeks to complete and timely delivery is a promise that is very keenly followed. The orders are designed and finished according to the patron’s requirements and the event to be attended. For example, if it is a wedding or mehendi ceremony, there could be an order made for ten outfits at the same time.

Committed to producing garments that fit any type of body and in which everyone will be comfortable, Golden Needle steers away from using synthetics on the basis that it is most unsuitable for prolonged wear in a hot and humid climate. “Some girls and young women leave home early in the morning, attend classes or go to work, and come back home in the evening. They need clothes that are comfortable on the body, are eco-friendly, and allow free movement,” stated Hawwa. “Even at my shows, I make sure that the clothes worn by the models can also be worn by others.” Testament to this is that clothing exhibited at her shows end up being bought by the audience at the conclusion of the event.

“I focus on cotton clothing with prints made out of vegetable extracts, such as indigo dye,” explained Hawwa. She applies screen printing and block printing to the fabric she sources from Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. While some of the indigo-dyed fabric are imported directly from Rajasthan in India, the others are dyed locally through home-industries that undertake fabric dying.



Pick from a wide range of vibrant shades

Golden Needle has come across talented artisans in the country who are not well known but are highly skilled. Keen to make use of their expertise, the boutique has assigned these skilled workers with producing batik and block printed fabric.

The owner of Golden Needle feels that the time has come to expand her boutique store to increase the collection of shawls and shoes, and to also introduce additional items such as sarees and costume jewellery. This she sees as a way of providing a more comprehensive service to her clientele. She also looks forward to introducing kurtas, tops and long shirts made of linen fabric.

The beginning of Golden Needle dates back to 1995 when it started operations from Hawwa’s home where her mother, who came from India, started the business. It was later moved to Havelock Town to better cater to its steadily growing clientele.

She draws from a rich heritage of dressmaking and remembers her grandmother who even in her old age was enthusiastically occupied with dressmaking and beadwork. The passion for clothing has pretty much spread throughout the family with Hawwa’s husband importing shirting material and son manufacturing linen shirts for clothing outlets. Now she is hopeful that her daughter, who is already

involved in some ways, would take over from her. “My aim was to study medicine,” said a smiling Hawwa, “but the family passion took over me”.

Opening hours:
Monday to Saturday: 10am to 6.30pm
Sunday: 10am to 2pm
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