

Sona Mandhir: Exotic Elegance

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One of the unique saree designs

Upon entering Sona Mandhir, shades of breathtaking colours reminiscent of the hues cast by a gorgeous sunset atop the blue ocean with splashes of pink and purple, capture the eye beckoning visitors to explore the interior.

Words Chamindra Warusawithane and Krishani Peiris

Essentially feminine and refined, the atmosphere at Sona Mandhir is an oasis for those who are in search of designer sarees.

Sona Mandhir, which commenced as a hobby of Shamila Sathar, has since then flourished into an exuberant business due to the dedication that she has put forth. Shamila has a passion and an eye for beautiful clothes and she handpicks her sarees on her visits to Bangalore, Calcutta and Mumbai adding to the alluring ensemble at Sona Mandhir. As the

name 'Sona Mandhir' attests, the shop is all about Indian sarees. Explaining the concept Shamila said, "I wanted the name to have an Indian ring to it since I buy sarees for my collection from India." As she is equipped with a decade-long experience in clothing beautiful Sri Lankan women she has that extra edge when it comes to choosing the right designs and colours that suit her patrons.

Vibrant silks, gorgeous georgettes, delicate cottons, sleek chiffons, beautiful bridal sarees and à la mode kurtis fill the shelves at Sona Mandhir offering an array of choices for the patrons. Also designs inspired by various notable designers present an extensive range of elegant yet affordable choices. Speaking about her collection Shamila remarked, "I buy sarees from a young designer who does Sabe Sachi and Ritu Kumar inspired designs and I also have Manish Malhotra designs in my collection." The vast range of sarees adorned with intricate designs and embroidery bespeak the touch of elegance and the sophistication of these designers as well as the exquisite craftsmanship of India's saree industry.

Sona Mandhir's clientele comprise of people from different walks of life, which includes tourists who are looking to take home some exotic sarees, Sri Lankan expatriates, young girls and working women who are on a constant search for unparalleled fashions. Therefore as a response to her much cherished patrons, Shamila recently revamped her shop to better cater to all segments of her clientele.

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A distinctive feature of Sona Mandhir is the ethnic wear section, which offers a variety of exotic sarees, shalwars and kurtis. This section provide clients with an opportunity to 'Mix and Match' allowing them to buy several different tops that could be matched with just one pair of pants. The bridal selection at the shop consists of delicately worked, classical sarees in a variety of shades. The budgeted selection, the latest entry to Sona Mandhir abets the patrons to find sophisticated formal wear. The 2012 collection is available at Sona Mandhir and features a range of vibrant coloured sarees so that the new year is begun with much zeal. Moreover, Sona Mandhir's services go beyond merely selling sarees and include recommending tailors to providing its clients the chance to look their best.

Sona Mandhir is not just about buying sarees, an hour or so spent amidst the swirling colours, soothing fabrics and timeless designs of Sona Mandhir is an experience in itself.

7/13, Sinsapa Road, Orchard Complex, Colombo 6

Tel: (+94 11) 259 6355

sonamandhir@hotmail.com

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