

Herald Cafe



NOT SPICY, IT'S SWICY!
NEW FLAVOUR OBSESSION



TOFU OVER PANEER:
THE SMART SWAP

Gifting gets personal: How millennials and Gen Z are customising gifts

Gifting has long been a universal expression of joy, connection, and celebration. But for millennials and Gen Z, the act of giving has taken on a deeper, more personal meaning especially with the growing options for customisation

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In a world where meaningful connection matters more than ever, millennials and Gen Z are redefining the art of gifting. Recent surveys confirm that millennials and Gen Z are among the biggest gift givers and they now opt for emotionally resonant presents that reflect shared memories and individual tastes. Whether its bespoke candles, hand-drawn caricatures, photo collages, or resin keepsakes, it's all about giving something that truly means something, the trend of custom handmade gifts is clearly on the rise.



FLORAL GIFTS WITH A PERSONAL STORY

Gen Z herself, **Ispita Bhanja** from Calangute has been creating handmade satin and paper flower bouquets since her second semester of college and in just a year, her passion has turned into a small but growing business. Most of her customers are from her college, seniors, juniors, and classmates who know her work and trust her with their gifting needs. Whether it's for graduations, birthdays, weddings, or special occasions like farewells, her custom bouquets have become a popular choice. "Customers usually share their ideas, themes, and budget, and I work around that to make the perfect gift. I typically need 2 to 4 days' notice, but if it's an emergency and I have all the materials, and can even complete an order in just one day," says Ispita. Her designs are fun, creative, and personalised. One of her recent projects included Harry Potter-themed satin flower bouquets, while another featured Hot Wheels, specially made for a customer who wanted to gift something unique to a friend. Since making her Instagram account public, with her mother's permission, word has spread quickly among students, and orders have picked up.



PERSONALISED GIFTING WITH
A TOUCH OF WAX AND NATURE

Specialising in customised candles and soaps, Saligao-based **Emera Remedios** has built a unique gifting experience around people's personal tastes and passions. Whether it's succulents, desserts, music, or even a favourite colour theme, each product is thoughtfully made to suit the recipient's personality. "Most customers prefer personalised gifts over ready-made items, often giving detailed briefs, inspiration images, or theme ideas. Orders range from last-minute requests to well-planned ones, with bulk orders typically requiring a minimum of five days," says Emera. The customers are usually millennials and Gen Zs looking for fresh ideas that can be incalculated into meaningful gifts. "For plant lovers, one of the most requested items is the succulent collection including succulent-themed candles, tea light boxes, and mini pot sets. These are especially popular among those wanting to gift something green and meaningful. On special occasions like Mother's Day, clients often request candles in their mum's favourite colour, or colour-themed hampers," explains Emera.



CARTOONED KEEPSAKES WITH A CREATIVE TWIST

Vaibhav Salgaonkar, who has a passion for cartoons and caricatures, has found a unique niche in the world of customised gifting. His talent for turning everyday moments into playful, artistic illustrations has led to a growing interest in his work, especially as the demand for personalised gifts evolves. Vaibhav explains, "It is very much true that Gen Z are looking for more meaningful gifting choices. Traditional customised gifts like mugs have become less popular. Instead, the trend of gifting something more creative and personal, such as customised bags, fridge magnets, and framed caricatures are on a rise specially ones featuring a person's loved ones. These gifts stand out for their humour and art and is very much personal for the person gifting and the receiver."



Ciana Gonsalves, a third year college student recently started creating beautiful resin art. While she also dabbles in digital art, it's her resin pieces that have captured the most attention. Most of her customers are college students, especially those graduating, who wanted to give personalised gifts to friends as a way to be remembered. Her work focuses on preserving memories in a creative way. "Someone just got married, and wanted to save these memories. I took the actual flower petals from their wedding garland and turned them into a resin coaster. I have also done a range of customised pieces, including anime-themed coasters for birthdays and even keychains with names or messages in different languages. One special order included the word Ammi in Arabic script alongside a photo, designed for a customer wanting something deeply personal to give his mother for Mother's Day," says Ciana. A recent client who lost their pet requested a resin piece with the pet's paw print and name, as a way to hold onto the memory. She promotes her designs through her Instagram page, where people contact her with customisation requests. "Though I started only about a month ago, my orders have steadily increased. People are now looking for a unique way to hold onto their most cherished moments," says Ciana from Nagoa.



THE EMOTIONS
BEHIND EVERY GIFT

Sydel D'Souza from Colvale graduated last year and is now working as a marketing head, but even with a busy schedule, she enjoys thoughtful gifting. These days, it's easier to find small businesses on Instagram that make custom gifts, which helps a lot. "I'm a very artsy person and love doing DIY projects, so I prefer giving personalised gifts instead of random store-bought ones. Every gift I give has something unique or personal about it, especially when it's for someone close to me. I spend a lot of time thinking about the conversations I had with the person, their likes or favourites, and use that to choose the perfect gift," says Sydel. She further adds, "I also love buying organic skincare products like bath salts, colour-changing lip balms, and other natural items. For me, giving gifts is all about making people feel special by showing that I've really thought about what they'd like."



CHOCOLATE BOUQUETS
AND SWEET GESTURES

Shimoga-based **Shanya D'Souza** is about to begin her first year of college this term, and she already runs a small creative business. She makes handmade flower and chocolate bouquets, which are especially popular for occasions like Valentine's Day, Chocolate Day, and farewells. She started her business in February, just in time for Valentine's season. Her first big project was a farewell gift she made for a friend and after that, more people began reaching out. "Most of my customers are classmates or older students, and they usually come to me with inspiration pictures, either from Instagram, Pinterest, or their own ideas. Sometimes, I also suggests creative ideas for bouquet designs. I usually take orders a week in advance. If I have free time, I can complete a bouquet in just two days, even for last-minute orders," says Shanya. Each bouquet isn't just flowers and chocolate—it's a piece of art. She carefully includes photos and decorative elements that match the customer's request.



Jafar Panahi Wins Coveted Top Prize at Cannes

Iranian filmmaker and dissident Jafar Panahi has been awarded the Palme d'Or for Best Film at the 78th Cannes International Film Festival for 'It Was Just an Accident'

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Just a few years after being imprisoned in Tehran and placed under a 20-year ban on travel and filmmaking, Panahi made a powerful return to Cannes. He received his award from the jury president, and an ardent admirer of his work, Juliette Binoche. The festival also offered a long-standing ovation to Panahi. "Art mobilises the creative energy of the most precious, most alive part of us. A force that transforms darkness into forgiveness, hope, and new life," said Juliette Binoche. The 64-year-old director, who hadn't attended the festival in person since 2003, dedicated his award to



all Iranians, emphasising that the most important thing is Iran and its freedom. He said, "Let us join forces. No one should tell us what kind of clothes we should wear, or what we should or shouldn't do."

Triple Victory for Panahi

With his victory at Cannes, Jafar Panahi has achieved the rare feat of winning the top prize at all three major European film festivals. This follows his Golden Lion win at Venice for 'The Circle' (2000) and the Golden Bear at Berlin for 'Taxi' (2015). Panahi is only the fourth director, after Henri-Georges Clouzot, Michelangelo Antonioni, and Robert Altman, to secure this prestigious triple crown.



Top Honours and Awards

A total of twenty-two films competed for the top honor at the 78th Cannes Film Festival, with notable entries from celebrated directors such as Richard Linklater, Wes Anderson, and Ari Aster. The Grand Prix, the festival's second-highest award after the Palme d'Or, went to 'Sentimental Value', directed by the acclaimed Joachim Trier. The Jury Prize was shared between two films: 'Sound of Falling', an intergenerational family drama by German filmmaker Mascha Schilinski, and 'Sirat', a story about a father and son journeying into the Moroccan desert, directed by French-Spanish filmmaker Oliver Laxe. Brazil's 'The Secret Agent' earned two major honors—Best Actor for Wagner Moura and Best Director for Kleber Mendonça Filho. Nadia Melliti, a newcomer, won Best Actress for her role in 'The Little Sister', a queer coming-of-age tale. Belgian filmmakers, the Dardenne brothers, previously awarded the Palme d'Or twice, received the Best Screenplay award for their latest film, 'Young Mothers'. Denzel Washington, who made only a brief visit to the festival, was honored with a surprise Palme d'Or on Monday night. Robert De Niro received the same honorary award, which had been announced ahead of time, during the opening ceremony on May 13.

Blackout Didn't Stop Cannes

The festival took a dramatic turn early Saturday when a regional power outage cut electricity to Cannes and much of the surrounding area. Believed to be the result of intentional sabotage to the electrical infrastructure, the blackout disrupted early morning screenings and forced the closure of hotels, shops, and cafes across the city. Despite this, the festival itself remained largely unaffected. The Palais, where the closing ceremony is held, switched to emergency power and continued as planned.

SWIPE RIGHT

Demi Lovato marries Jordan Lutes in California

Demi Lovato has tied the knot with longtime partner **Jordan 'Jutes' Lutes** in a romantic and private ceremony held in California. The 32-year-old singer stunned in a custom pearl-white Vivienne Westwood gown featuring a structured corset bodice and a dramatic cathedral-length tulle veil. For the reception, she changed into another Vivienne Westwood creation: an elegant ivory silk satin column gown adorned with a trail of broken pearls. The wedding comes over a year after their engagement in December 2023, when Jutes proposed to Demi with an original song as he got down on one knee. He presented her with a pear-shaped, solitaire diamond engagement ring created by the jewelry boutique Material Good.



Malvika Raaj, widely recognised for her childhood role as young Poo in Karan Johar's film 'Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham', is expecting her first child with husband and entrepreneur Pranav Bagga. The actress shared the exciting news on Instagram with a joyful post announcing their growing family.