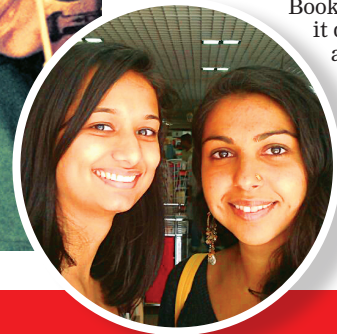




## the big cover story

### faces



(L) Ganeriwal and (R) Vaziralli

## Kitsch factor

**F**UNKY hairbands, cutesy footwear, and sumptuous cupcakes are only some of the things that pull people back to Kitsch Mandi, possibly why the Bangalore-based event has earned itself one of the top spots in the city's flea market calendar. Diva Ganeriwal and Laila Vaziralli, childhood friends and owners of Improper Expression (the group behind the flea market), came up with the idea about two years ago and have since hosted markets in Pune (under the name of Coco Bazaar), Ooty, Goa and Bangalore, as stand-alone events and as part of music festivals. Stalls, live music and art installations in open air lounge-bar Pebble give the event its characteristic, relaxed vibe.

"A platform like this is perfect for first-time vendors who can't afford to showcase their products in a store. And it's a chance to try their hand at something they're passionate about," says Ganeriwal. "Even for shoppers, there's so much more to do—like meet interesting people and see unusual products," she adds.

Look out for their upcoming book edition, aptly titled Kitsch Mandi — By the Book. "We always have a theme, to give people a reason to come back, so that it doesn't become monotonous. This time, it's a book-themed affair, so apart from the regular stalls, there's going to be a corner where people can swap old books. There's also a session called 'Tea for poems', where people can come in, write or read out a poem and enjoy a cup of tea for their effort," she explains. Look out for book-making workshops, storytelling sessions and most interestingly, meet an artist who will draw your very own comic strip if you give him the plot.

On February 10. At Palace Grounds. Details: 9741444130



trend

## Dash of spunk

**C**HENNAI is seen as very conservative—I'm hoping to change that perception," says Sarah Natasha. And her upcoming flea market-cum-carnival, Madras Market, with over 140 stalls, a barbecue pit, zorbing, bungee jumping, band performances and more, sees Natasha on the right track.

The Chennai-based lass is also the person behind the hugely popular Facebook group Chennai Shopping, now almost 30,000 members strong. "I dislike shopping in malls and knew of many people making handmade products across the city—this was a great way to discover them. In February, we had a garage sale for Chennai Shopping members. It was a huge success and I realised the potential," she recalls.

Encouragement from a colleague and funding from her company, where is the event held, have ensured that the two-day event is going to be a massive affair. February is the chosen month for the weather. However, its USP is the rotation system. "The flea stalls will change every three hours, so people have plenty of variety. We also have two bands coming down from Bangalore—Agam and Thermal And A Quarter. There's going to be a trampoline, a mechanical bull and workshops for kids," she reveals. And this works as a great business model since the city hasn't had its share of such events, feels Natasha. "People need a platform like this, not only to showcase their products, but also to have a good time. I want them to even bring their bean bags if they want," she tells us. Expect kitschy apparel, home decor, footwear, plus food stalls with a range of global cuisine. "I want people here to know that they don't have to travel to Pondicherry or Bangalore to have fun."

February 23 and 24. 11 am onwards. At Wesley School Grounds. Details: Facebook.com/MadrasMarket

## Truckload of fun

**T**IRE D of trudging to north Bangalore to get your share of fair? Fret not, Souk on the Move (SOTM) is all set to kick off in Koramangala next month. The newest kid on the city's flea market block sees the quintessential Indian truck as its logo. Organisers Deepika Khare and Brinda Gita Popurri chose the symbol for its quirk and because it's always on the move—something they intend for SOTM too. "It's decorated so well and it goes from city to city, so we thought, why not use elements from it for our market?" says Khare.

The two, who hold regular day jobs, share a common interest in kitschy handmade products. "We met when we were both trying to set up our own stores, and realised we didn't need a place, just a concept," smiles Khare. This was four months ago, and already, they have a mammoth event lined up, with 60 stalls, performances by bands Lagori and G2 Live and more. But there are challenges. "Many flea markets mushroom in Bangalore, some survive and some don't, so vendors have become wary. But it's not about money, it's about doing something on your own, and showcasing enterprising people who may not know how to market their products," she tells us. Student initiatives are big here—the National Institute for Fashion Technology will have apparel stalls. Look out for their truck photo booth, and their Truck Ka Formula contest on Facebook, where you can send in funny one-liners for Indian trucks that will find themselves on artwork at the market.

On February 10. At St John's Amphitheatre. Details: 9886245922



(L) Popurri and (R) Khare

# The bazaar business

It's not about tiny stalls with just quirky knick-knacks anymore. With live music, art installations, bungee jumping and online contests, against a vibrant backdrop of stalls, the flea market has arrived. By **Shelfali Rao**



Just three years ago, flea markets were one-off events around the city, or at the most, a mega Saturday night touristy event in Goa. Today, Bangalore's weekends are dotted with a dime a dozen of these bazaars. Next month, Madras Market launches in Chennai and it includes everything from world cuisine to zorbing, while Souk on the Move, a travelling version, kicks off here, around the same time. Most of these markets are bursting with elements of kitsch, with inherent 'Indian-ness' running through them. "Any civilisation is judged by its art and artefacts, and if each of us does a little towards encouraging India's art, it would go a long way," believes Asha Rao, the person behind Sunday Soul Sante, a platform that has done more than just 'a bit' for unsung crafts across the country. Rao, along with some of the other players in the flea market game, give us the scoop on why you should pencil these events into your calendar, arm yourself with shopping bags and make a whole day of it.



## Garage chic

**I**F we now know the Kannada word for market thanks to Sunday Soul Sante, then Mitali Parekh's project Swasta Ani Masta teaches us the Marathi term for 'cheap and good', literally. The name lends itself to Parekh's blog—where she offers services from personal shopping to 'wardrobe editing'—plus her frequent Mumbai-based garage sales. "I grew up in the Gulf, where it was very common to swing by local garage sales on the weekends," explains Parekh. The fact that everyone around her, herself included, seemed to have plenty of things they didn't really need, pushed her to hold her first garage sale in October 2009. And these sales have been providing an outlet for all things "barely used", ever since. Swasta Ani Masta shifts locations within Mumbai, but the basic premise stays constant—second hand products (less than ₹1,000, mostly) up for grabs, as Parekh insists the idea is to "purge". And since she usually holds it at a cafe or restaurant, it's a win-win situation. "It gives the



"Increasingly, people are becoming uncomfortable with the surplus we have."

"We also have regulars, like this lady who comes in every time to buy gifts for her household help," she says. "The best part is that since no one is doing it for the money, it becomes a relaxed, chatty affair, and a really nice way to spend an afternoon," she concludes.

On January 27. 12 noon to 4 pm. At Mocha, Churchgate, Mumbai. Details: swastanimasta.com



## Mark(et) this

### Go green

This Sunday, check out Second to None, a Bangalore-based flea market that takes the term "a new lease on life" very seriously indeed. You could either sell used or upcycled products, or go on a shopping spree, without harming the environment. Even the food stalls here stock only organic produce—think organic jaggedy-based cupcakes. And the best part? Low pricing is their USP. Details: secondtononemarket@gmail.com

## All day long

Niche products have yet another city-based launch pad in the form of Bombat Bazaar. While the 2012 edition saw a day-long event with food, music and stalls with plenty of jewellery, clothes, footwear and more, the organisers are yet to decide on a date for 2013. Details: facebook.com/bombatbazaar

## Quirk alert

Offbeat Mumbai-based design firm Yes Yes, Why Not? is holding a flea bazaar on February 9 and 10 to showcase some of their signature products. Think wooden bottle lamps, notebooks stickers and candy-striped laptop sleeves, all with an underlying element of Indian kitsch. At Versova. Details: 022 26312110

**Pics:** Nagesh Polali, A Raja Chidambaram, Vikas Hotwani, A Raja Chidambaram, Almeen Arif, Arok Chowriappa  
**Location courtesy:** Under The Mango Tree, Richmond Town - shelfalirao@newindianexpress.com



## Heart and soul

**I**F flea markets are a trend, then Asha Rao is the trendsetter. Meet her, and you're immediately struck by her energy and oomph. It spills into her venture, Sunday Soul Sante—probably why it is easily one of Bangalore's most popular flea markets (Sante means market in Kannada). Even after it moved Palace Grounds due to government regulations, all the way to Hebbal, the last edition saw thousands shopping, relaxing and just having a good time. "People told me not to be despondent about the new venue and I was prepared for the worst. Instead, the crowd increased by about 20-30 per cent," begins Rao, before telling us what pushed her to start this in the first place. "I am passionate about Indian art, craft and design," says the entrepreneur, who started organising markets in 1997. Plenty of designers and vendors have found it to be their ideal launchpad, including Julie Kagit and Jenny Pinto. "You're more than just a vendor to us, you become family," she says, simply. While there are live performances, the main focus, Rao asserts, is the market. "A flea market must have a flea feel to it," she says, adding, "You can't have kiosks and box people in. The whole point is to make friends, see contacts grow. I look at the future; how designers are going to merge." Ask her about the mushrooming festivals around and she replies, "I am happy that these non-conformist sellers have more exposure!" Besides vibrant stalls with everything from hand-painted footwear to caricatures, Sunday Soul Sante



offers free entry to children and senior citizens, a baby station and a pet-friendly venue. So why is Bangalore the hub for these events? "The energy is immense and the weather is lovely," she says, adding that Goa could be in the pipeline someday, where with the elements of her current project and the elements of the 'mother' of all flea markets, the Saturday Night Market at Goa, she could, perhaps, "create the best market in the world." Next edition in March. Details: 9742723648

