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FASHION

Why Luxury Is Learning To Speak Local

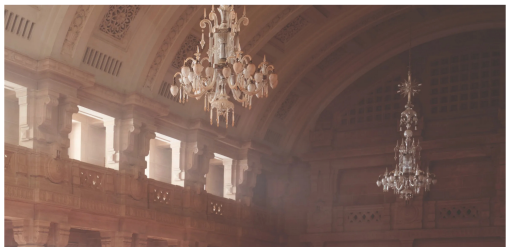
As younger consumers increasingly expect cultural relevance alongside global prestige, Bvlgari's evolving relationship with India offers an interesting case study in why localisation could become luxury's next big strategy.

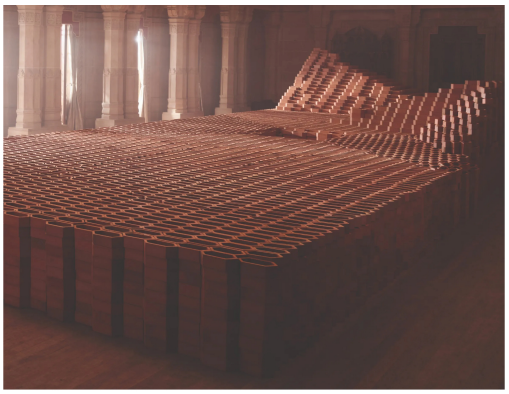
21 OCT 2026 | AINEE NIZAMI AHMEDI



For the longest time, the appeal of international luxury lay in its ability to transport consumers elsewhere. A little Parisian elegance, a touch of Italian glamour, the promise of belonging to a world beyond one's own. And why not? The formula worked exceptionally well. But as luxury consumers become increasingly discerning, the next big shift might not be about where a brand comes from, but how well it understands the places and people it is speaking to.

For international luxury houses, India has long represented an important market, with its growing luxury consumer base and deep relationship with jewellery, craftsmanship and design. But India's connection with global luxury has never simply been about consumption. Its gemstones, techniques, textiles and visual references have travelled through the luxury ecosystem for decades. What feels different now is the visibility of that relationship. Rather than remaining behind the scenes or appearing as occasional inspiration, Indian craftsmanship, traditions and cultural references are increasingly becoming part of the stories global houses choose to tell.





Photograph: (Bvlgari)

Bvlgari, the Roman jewellery house founded in 1884, has been making a particularly interesting case for this approach. In 2021, it introduced its first India-exclusive jewellery creation, a mangalsutra crafted in 18-carat yellow gold, black onyx and diamonds. With Priyanka Chopra Jonas fronting the launch, the piece brought together a deeply familiar Indian tradition and Bvlgari's recognisable design language.



Photograph: (Bvlgar

It wasn't an overnight decision. Mauro Di Roberto, then Managing Director of Bvlgari's Jewellery Business Unit, revealed that the house had spent several years developing its interpretation for the modern Indian woman. And the decision appears to have paid off. By March 2024, then CEO Jean-Christophe Babin was reporting that the mangalsutra had sold out quickly, with repeat production and waiting lists at stores. The B.zero1 Kada bracelet followed in January 2024, reimagining the traditional Indian bangle through the house's signature spiral design. With Ayushmann Khurrana associated with the launch, Bvlgari was once again taking something culturally familiar and giving it a distinctly Bvlgari vocabulary.

But the more interesting developments have been happening beyond the product.

In 2025, Bvlgari's Serpenti Infinito exhibition in Mumbai featured Indian artists including Bharti Kher, Baua Devi and Rithika Merchant, while the Aravani Art Project reinterpreted the house's signature serpent through original artworks. A separate collaboration with National Geographic Creative Works followed Chopra Jonas and jewellery creative director Lucia Silvestri through Jaipur's gemstone traditions, exploring a city that has long been important to the global jewellery industry.



Photograph: (Bvlgari)

This October, Bvlgari took that engagement further with Passing the Light, its first global Diwali campaign, centred on an installation by Indian artist Doyel Joshi. Comprising 4,500 hand-sculpted terracotta elements inspired by the diya and the scales of Bvlgari's

Serpenti, the work did something more interesting than simply place an international luxury house within a festive Indian setting. It allowed an Indian cultural reference to shape the visual language of a global campaign.

And that distinction matters.



Photograph: (Bvlgari)

For years, localisation in luxury could often feel like adaptation: a campaign released for a regional festival, a familiar celebrity face or a product created specifically for one market. What is beginning to emerge instead is something more integrated. The most convincing examples are not simply about changing the surface of a global brand for India, but allowing India to become part of how that brand tells its story.



Photograph: (Bvlgari)

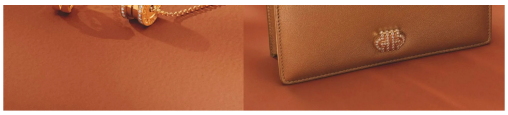
That shift also arrives at a moment when younger luxury consumers are asking more questions about the brands they buy into. Heritage still matters, but so do context, values, storytelling and cultural fluency. A globally recognisable name alone may no longer be enough. Consumers increasingly want to understand why a brand is speaking to them and whether that engagement feels considered rather than convenient.



Photograph: (Bvlgari)

For India, this creates an interesting inversion. The country is no longer simply being positioned as an emerging luxury market waiting to be courted by global houses. Its craftspeople, artists, traditions and visual languages are increasingly being foregrounded within the global luxury conversation itself.





Photograph: (Bvlgari)

Bvlgari is hardly the only house exploring this territory, nor did luxury's relationship with India begin with the mangalsutra. What makes its recent trajectory interesting is the consistency with which that relationship has moved from product to art, storytelling and cultural collaboration. And perhaps that is where luxury's next phase of localisation becomes most compelling. Not when a global house arrives in a market and learns how to sell there, but when it understands the culture well enough to let that market influence the way the brand speaks to the world.

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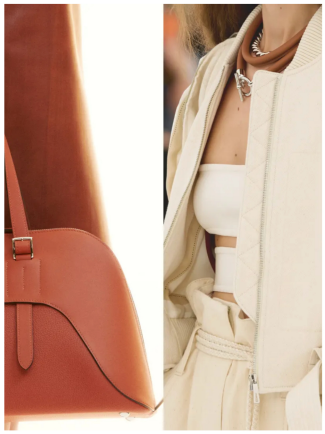
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