



TO YOU... WITH LOVE



Customizing your love on balloons is a unique way of expressing your love, says *Nisha S. Mane*

Earlier balloons were simply meant for children to play with. However now, customized balloons have become a new medium for expression. People spend a lot of money to make their occasion special by gifting different kinds of balloons or even an entire balloon bouquet.

So, what exactly are customized balloons or for that matter a balloon bouquet? A balloon bouquet or balloon basket contains balloons of various colours, shapes and sizes for almost every occasion, like birthday, kids' functions and anniversaries. They even have birthday balloons that play songs. The balloons that are personalized are known as customized balloons. Customizing a balloon means putting your or your loved ones' pictures on the balloons of your choice. You can also record a song and strap it to the balloons and dedicate it to your loved ones.

Elaborating on this trend, Shivani Patodia and Jayshree R, who own 'Balloon Basket' a unique balloon-customization boutique in Mumbai say, "When we returned to India after a stint in the US, we realized that balloons were only used by children for playing. That is when we thought of exploiting the concept of a balloon bouquet. Since flowers are common, we realized that balloons could become the new bouquet idea as it appeals to everyone." Pioneers of this concept in India, the

duo, in barely four years, have successfully established their prominence across the city, with their clientele hailing from Nariman Point to Navi Mumbai.



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The material used for making customized balloons is imported and cannot be reused. The balloons can remain floating for four to five days without

getting damaged. Jayshree explains, "Shivani gets the material from the US, while I manage the operations in Mumbai. We both are always finding innovative ways to present the basket to the customer. For e.g., we have come up with personalized baskets, where you can put your photo on the balloon. "The balloons need to grab the customers' attention and thus the onus lies on us to keep making designs that are innovative and appealing because people get tired of the same old things."

While Jayshree and Shivani started with a very small clientele, they now cater to celebrities, industrialists and even a couple of MLAs. They decorate the leading 5-star hotels every Valentine's Day and during Christmas and New Year. Jayshree and Shivani do not use hydrogen as it is used in regular balloons. They use helium gas instead. Initially, it was very difficult for them to find proper helium gas as it is totally non-inflatable and very expensive, escalating the cost of the balloons – a concept which people would not understand until the recent past. However, today, people are more aware about the concept and orders keep pouring in. Given this and the innovative range they offer, customized balloons are sure to fly higher and higher.

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