

# ELLE

MAY 2011  
₹ 150

ESHA  
GUPTA  
IN  
SUMMER'S  
SEXIEST  
SWIMWEAR

SUNNY  
SIDE UP  
No-sweat fitness  
DETOX DIETS  
SPF must-knows  
FRESH FRAGRANCES

WHY THE WORLD  
IS TALKING  
ABOUT  
AKHIL SHARMA

***hottie!***

RETRO > SURFER > TROPICAL > MONO

*What's your bikini style?*



*design matters*

## PETER D'ASCOLI

Meet the American designer whose  
TEXTILES reflect his fascination  
with TRADITIONAL arts and  
crafts from across the world

By NATASHA KHURANA

Photographer HORMIS ANTONY THARAKAN



*"True luxury is when we can create  
what we love, with true passion. And to  
have that passion come through in the  
product, that's what makes the product  
beautiful, and makes people desire it."*



*a* stray comment as we exchange customary greetings, is telling. About the party he attended the night before Peter D'Ascoli says, "I never drink spirits but when I do it's always tequila, for the nostalgia it inspires." That right there, nostalgia, is a recurrent theme in his work.

A look around his studio confirms this. There are paintings and hand-coloured photographs of Italian panoramas - intended souvenirs - from the 16th century tradition of the Grand Tour. Masks and boxes of taxidermied animals crowd the walls alongside a selection of tiles from Europe and the Middle East. Bookshelves





*“I want to live in an ENVIRONMENT that doesn't feel like it's just been created today. It should be a place where we indulge our IMAGINATION”*

are crammed tight with tomes on varied cultures and subjects. And the remaining space is lush with the result of these influences: His textiles. “I've always thought it'd be wonderful to live in a library or museum,” reveals D'Ascoli. So he's consciously styled his workspace in the manner of the Renaissance gentleman's Cabinet of Curiosities. “I want to live in an environment that doesn't feel like it's just been created today. It should be a place where we indulge our imagination. It's these references to cultures and the past that stimulate my mind, and comfort me.”

Trained formally as a textile designer at the Fashion Institute of Technology, in 1983, this New Yorker refuses to be put in a box. At his New Delhi-based Talianna Studio (set up in 2005), he works at his two-pronged approach to design – he collaborates on custom-made luxury textiles for the fashion trade and distributes Peter D'Ascoli fabrics to the interiors industry. The core of his work remains textile design though. In his prints you will see the mark of a consummate storyteller – they span everything from Mughal courts and the Ming dynasty to Parisi Gara embroideries. “I love the idea of provenance. We should think of a hundred stories when we see a fabric. It shouldn't be that you figure it out in a moment; it'd have no mystery.”

Among other influences, he also counts his five years as Diane von Furstenberg's studio director as “... my big education. If she sent me anywhere to travel for work, she'd assume I'd visit museums, country houses, or the likes, to get inspired. She taught me and promoted a holistic view towards work, one's education, and the link between your work and life. It's truly like a lifestyle. So if I'm prepared to create a lifestyle through my product, it's because all of the elements are informed by this constant research.” ■

