

Home > The Conscious Traveller > **Meet Daisy Tanwani, Whose Homegrown Brand Pinklay Takes Inspiration From Travel And Emphasises Sustainability**



THE CONSCIOUS TRAVELLER

Meet Daisy Tanwani, Whose Homegrown Brand Pinklay Takes Inspiration From Travel And Emphasises Sustainability

BY ANUSHKA GOEL
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Leaving a corporate job to start your own venture is a tough task, but [Pinklay](#) founder and CEO Daisy Tanwani believes in taking risks. She speaks to us

about how travelling inspired her company, and how [sustainability](#) and 'Made in India' remain close to her brand and heart. By Anushka Goel



T+L India: What is travel for you?



Photo Courtesy: Daisy Tanwani

Daisy Tanwani: It is finding myself each time. Every day we do a lot of things and become so full of ourselves that we can't see the bigger picture around us. It's about 'me,' 'I'm doing this, I'm achieving this.' But when you sit on an island, all by yourself looking at the endless [ocean](#), it dumbs you down, and you need that dumbing down so often.

Travel also gives you an opportunity to meet people who are way more than who you are. I have found in my life and in my [travel experiences](#) that people who have inspired me the most are those who have taken life the way it has come and made it something. It could be a balloon guy who says, "I refuse to beg. I refuse to do this." Or it could be a woman who says, "I was a retired teacher and had nothing to do and I didn't have the respect of my family. And here today I am earning more than my entire family put together."

I think travel dumbs you down in a way. It deflates your ego, and at the same time, it gives you a better perspective on a lot of things that we don't appreciate otherwise.

T+L India: How has travel played a role in shaping your brand?



Photo Courtesy: Daisy Tanwani

Daisy Tanwani: Even before Pinklay, I travelled a lot. When you travel, you're coming across a lot of cultures and ways of living, and your tastes evolve accordingly. So, we would collect things for our home and a lot of these things were actually made in [India](#). There was this constant need gap, and I was like, "Indians are making this but not for Indians. This needs to change because Indians are changing!"

At Pinklay, we tell stories through design, and I think a lot of it has to do with what we have seen and absorbed around. The third thing that [travel](#) does is it makes you a lot more accepting. It

makes you open to ideas and lets you take risks. It deconstructs what's there in the world for you to go and try. Pinklay is all about that, right from the fact that I left the cushioned job to the fact that we keep taking these dives on design and categories, it's all to do with what travel teaches you.



T+L India: Pinklay leans a lot towards sustainability, being a homegrown brand supporting local artisans. How did that happen?



Photo Courtesy: Daisy Tanwani

Daisy Tanwani: I started Pinklay because I love things. I love tapestry, hand block print, and here I see all of this being made in the nicest form, but it's being exported. So the entire premise was

that "Hey listen, either these guys don't know that there is a rising population that will appreciate this." It is about time that we start strengthening the local economy. So the business person in me said, "You know, we need to do that." The second thing you can do imports. But it'll be foolish to not use your local resources, which is way more [sustainable](#). That's one part, but then there is also a softer part of it, that you want to make your countrymen more empowered and your country richer.



T+L India: How do you find inspiration for new products, new patterns, and more?

Daisy Tanwani: Nature inspires a lot of what we do, so it could be Mughal Gardens, it could be Gulmarg, it could be Nuwara Eliya (in [Sri Lanka](#)) or it could be cherry blossoms in Tokyo. So nature is one of those, and then also culture. When you visit any place, be it Nathdwara in Rajasthan and you see Pichwai (an art form), or when you go to Turkey and see the mosque structures and architecture there, or for that matter when you go to Napa Valley and you see how their vineyards are. You take all of those things and you assimilate them. If you look at our collection, Mahtab, it is a mix of culture, with whirling Dervish spirituality, Iznik tile art, and all of that. A lot of these things, while they're picked up from a country, if they are very universal, like spirituality.

T+L India: What's that one Indian city or state that has deeply influenced your brand?



Photo Courtesy: Daisy Tanwani

Daisy Tanwani: Rajasthan! I am from [Jaipur](#). I've lived there for 17 years. We are really inspired by Pichwai, but that's just one part. We actually have an entire collection called Jaipur. My husband keeps saying that you guys are so obsessed with art *ki abb tum log walls hi paint karte rehte ho poori city mein* (you guys keep painting the walls in the city!). But that's true. We are obsessed with art. Jaipur is hands down the most beautiful city in the world, followed by Istanbul, Paris, and Salzburg.

T+L India: And which international city inspires you?

Daisy Tanwani: I love Istanbul. I love the confluence of cultures. [Turkey](#) has beautiful cars, the Cappadocia, you know, it's just beautiful. Uh, uh, and the confluence of cultures, you know, it actually is half Asian, half Europe. It's the best of both worlds. It's one country where you don't feel very culturally or religiously restrictive. I find Istanbul a lot like Mumbai or New York. It just lets you be.

T+L India: What would be the ideal city or country for you to set up a home office, and why?



Photo Courtesy: Daisy Tanwani

Daisy Tanwani: I would go to Kaş or Nuwara Eliya in Sri Lanka, or there's this beautiful village in [Prague](#). I spent four days there, and it's an Airbnb with a lush river running right behind you. There were like these beautiful florals and there was this little and room. Really little room with those heaters and stuff and a very old wooden table and a window. You know how they have those little European windows like that? And looking at the river and I'm like *bas, this is all I want in life! So that's one in Prague and then yeah, one is Austria.*

T+L India: Road trips or train journeys? What do you prefer and why?

Daisy Tanwani: Road trips! We've travelled the world on road. I hate trains.

T+L India: And what's your favourite travel destination apart from Turkey?

Daisy Tanwani: Sri Lanka and [Japan](#). I've gone to Sri Lanka at least four times. So yeah, I would love to visit Sri Lanka. And if I could I would just go and live in East Bali.

T+L India: Your top travel essentials.



Photo Courtesy: Daisy Tanwani

Daisy Tanwani: Passport, wallet, lip balm, and my phone. I can manage everything else. We travel light. We don't buy too much. I am also guilty about the fact that the carbon footprint of flights is way too much, and as somebody who loves the planet so much, I try to cut it down with things that are more sustainable. For example, in my last three trips, I travelled with a water bottle and kept refilling it. And because we go for long travel like 20 days, 15 days, I did the math and my husband and I saved about five bottles a day. I do these things on [sustainability](#), like something as small as telling the hotel to not change my linen for days.

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