

Welcome to Our New Members



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Pretisha Patel & Kapil Jekishan



TREE STRIPES – A HOME AND LIFESTYLE BRAND EXEMPLIFYING ‘WHAT LOOKS GOOD, SHOULD ALSO DO GOOD’

Pretisha Patel & Kapil Jekishan shared a life-changing experience and an ambitious idea whilst in the middle of the Serengeti Plains, Tanzania, at Tarangire Tree Tops. The renowned lodge, centred around a thousand year-old baobab tree, promotes conservation and minimizing the environmental impact of its operations whilst maximizing community benefit. That ethos pervaded the minds and imagination of Pretisha and Kapil and led to the development of Tree Stripes, a range of authentic, on-trend products that are ethically handcrafted using recycled materials.

“Tarangire Tree Tops is truly in-sync with nature. We were in awe of the majesty of the surroundings and felt like we were merely guests of Mother Nature,” Pretisha explains.

“On the first morning of our stay, we went out from our treehouse accommodation and saw hundreds of zebras grazing right in front of us. We have never been able to forget that image, nor the emotion (still so vivid). Hence the name Tree Stripes and the motivation to create something environmentally and community conscious.

We both grew up in Fiji and the intersection of community, culture and nature played a vital role in everyday life. Both of us were also involved in the tourism sector in Fiji for three plus years, so we had the knowledge of working with established hotel chains and resorts on their interior design needs.

Something happened when we saw those zebras! It crystallised that we were going to create functional and beautiful items from something that has already served its purpose, and we wanted the production process to focus on a sense of community, environment and art.

The result of that experience is our timeless home collections including designer pots, vases, bowls and candle holders. They are all hand made from offcuts from the print and packaging industry, and sealed with natural latex from the rubber tree to make them fully waterproof.

Whilst travelling we stumbled upon a small artisan production partner in Sri Lanka that helped develop our prototypes. And we’re very proud to say that when you purchase from Tree Stripes, you’re improving the lives of over 200 Sri Lankan women and their families and contributing to the provision of fair wages, training, education, and access to community health.

We place equal importance on where and how we source our raw materials to create our collections and work with recycled materials only. Tree Stripes released its first collection in early 2020...about the same time COVID swept the country! Admittedly, not ideal, however we share a



belief with our customers, who can be classed as conscious consumers,” Pretisha affirms.

Both Kapil and Pretisha have educations and sector experiences that enable them to understand and interpret consumer trends. Kapil has a degree in Economics and Finance and over 10 years of experience in financial services where he was responsible for product development, research and sales strategies. Pretisha is qualified with a Bachelor in Business and a Masters in Marketing. Her experience working in the media industry and as an analyst with a research and insights team is invaluable in understanding Tree Stripes’ key market.

“Our customers want a sustainable option whether it is fashion or homewares, and are seeking transparency around how sustainable a brand is. Research is demonstrating that a large majority of consumers want brands and retailers to be more transparent about the origins and sustainability of products. Having a good-looking product is not enough in the retail landscape – which is why the people and materials play a pivotal role in why our brand is chosen”, Kapil explains. “By promoting sustainable design, we are reducing the environmental impact of our products, from the sourcing of raw materials to their manufacturing, transportation, and designs.

All of our products are made by hand. We’re 100% dependent on the human touch, not machines. From the molds to the motifs on them, it’s our artisans’ hands, their skills and stories that are at the forefront of everything we do. Our goal is to

continue to support the creativity, ingenuity and passion of our artisans while preserving their culture and traditions.

Our key items are made from recycled paper and we reuse all paper leftovers from our main production to create new paper pulp for the next run. This has helped eliminate the need to transport waste material and creates an entirely zero-waste production cycle,” confirms Kapil.

Tree Stripes also thinks outside of the shipping box, for when it comes to cartons received from their production partner, instead of discarding them, these are reused to pack orders. There is no plastic used, only 100% recyclable and reusable packaging. The packaging is also unbranded, so it can be reused, and continue the recycle cycle.

“Our initial distribution strategy was to launch our collection to the South Pacific tourism player but with travel ceasing, our plan had to adapt,” shares Pretisha

“So, we made a pivot and turned our focus to plant shops, garden centres, and lifestyle stores. We learnt that as a start-up that is part of the journey. You have to become comfortable with not knowing everything and that you will always be forced to make a decision without truly understanding the consequences (good or bad).

There was uncertainty about trying to enter a market with a new product made with materials the industry may not have been accustomed to. However the nursery and garden industry was welcoming and receptive to giving a new brand an opportunity.

With lockdown restrictions in place, we picked up the trusty



phone and utilised social media to reach new customers.

We focussed on educating industry retailers through our marketing material, conversations, and videos; and connected with key personnel in the horticulture industry to assist with strengthening our messaging,” outlines Pretisha.

“Plastic is ubiquitous in the nursery and garden industry. We see it with tubs of pots, trays and propagators. There was a time when clay and terracotta were at the forefront,” reflects Kapil.

“We understand plastic is cheap and water-resistant and a convenient option for nurseries however a real opportunity exists in the greenlife industry to offer a solution that doesn’t create more waste, but instead, allows us to create new products using discarded materials through the process of empowerment.

Tree Stripes offers wholesale pricing to nurseries, plant shops and lifestyle stores. We currently produce pots designed to fit standard nursery pots from 100mm up to 180mm and are developing a larger size to incorporate 200mm nursery pots.

As a business, we are keen to understand the different needs across operators within the nursery and garden industry. We want to learn what shapes, sizes and tones work for businesses and suit their end customer’s needs. Over the next 12 months, we will fine-tune our collection to ensure our products are in line with the standard nursery pot sizes and

also that our designs are favoured.

During the next five years, Tree Stripes will expand its product suite to offer complementary interior products and outdoor solutions, all sourced from artisanal focused production partners and made from recycled materials. Within the next decade we aim to expand our distribution across Australasia and the Pacific Islands. Many businesses want to offer sustainable options to their customers or use earth friendly reusable products to create their work of art. Tree Stripes is a business that wants to be part of the solution. We are here to provide this choice,” Kapil states.

“We’re on a mission to empower local artisans, preserve the environment and celebrate handmade imperfection. And whilst it’s definitely too early to claim success, we’re feeling the positivity towards our product and our customers resonate with our why. We’re looking forward to growing and enjoying the journey along the way. We thank our colleagues in the nursery and garden industry for their support and thank you for being a part of this journey with us!” expresses Pretisha.

Both Pretisha and Kapil affirm that Tree Stripes is not just about the interior products and it never has been. They feel privileged to be part of a sustainable social project which helps uplift the living standards of rural women and provide empowerment.