

WHEN SHELLEY CHHABRA, A CAMBRIDGE DESIGNER OF INDIAN-INSPIRED WEDDING DRESSES, WANTS TO UNWIND, SHE TURNS TO BREAD PUDDING, PROJECT RUNWAY, AND A MAGICAL MASSAGE.

By ALISON LOBRON

# Hanging Loose

Shelley Chhabra's career has been as bold and inventive as the brightly colored wedding dresses in her North Cambridge boutique. A Worcester native, Chhabra studied electrical engineering at Tufts University, then spent seven years as a design engineer in the high-tech field. But her dreams were pulling her in a very different direction, one that would combine her entrepreneurial spirit and love of fashion with her Indian-American heritage.

In 2006, the Cambridge resident opened Shelley Chhabra Indian Clothing and Bridal Wear, offering dresses, accessories, and other items based on traditional Indian designs. She helps her customers choose patterns and colors and then contracts with a manufacturing company based in India – and founded by her husband's grandfather – to make each dress to order. When the 31-year-old is not in her studio, she's taking classes at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design or traveling to India to update her collection.

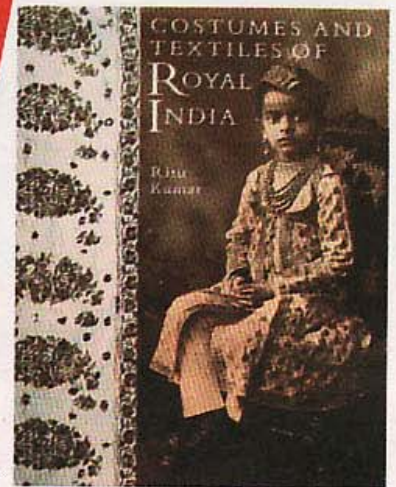


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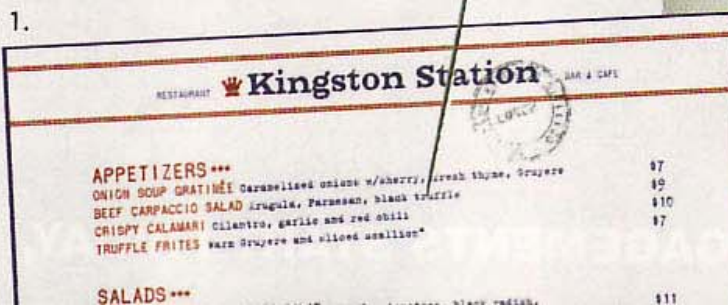


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## I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT...

- 1. Dinner** at Kingston Station in Downtown Crossing with Omelette Frites as my entree and bread pudding for dessert. It's a very satisfying meal.
- 2. Listening to** National Public Radio in my car.
- 3. My comfy Cole Haan** Air Bria slip-ons. They're leather with a flexible rubber sole and Nike Air technology.
- 4. The music** of Sarah McLachlan.
- 5. The Kathak dance class** at the Dance Complex in Cambridge. I'm an assistant instructor and a huge aficionado of this classical dance form from North India.
- 6. Watching** *Project Runway* and *The Office*.
- 7. The combination lunchbox** at Chocho's in Cambridge: California-style Korean bento box with salad, miso soup, brown rice, shumai, dumpling, and choice of main entree.
- 8. An ultrasonic facial** at Moksha Spa & Wellness Center in Methuen. It not only makes your face glow, but it cleans out your pores without painful extractions.
- 9. My favorite coffee-table book:** *Costumes and Textiles of Royal India* by Ritu Kumar.
- 10. Acupuncture** and a massage by Valerie Courville at the Japanese Acupuncture Center in Watertown. She has magic hands!

