

# Porcelain perfect from Switzerland

Lladro has come up with the season's offering - the statue of Goddess Lakshmi. The limited edition piece follows the Ganeshas, Rama Sita, Radha Krishna, Lord Krishna, Sacred Cow and Nataraja in its Spirit of India collection, writes **SYEDA FARIDA**

Since ages, porcelain figurines have been a must-have piece in every collector's list. Exotic sculptures, vases and tableware are the centre of attraction in museums the world over and now this work of art finds its way into homes. Apart from adding colour to the ambience, the pieces can also be used to complete a theme for living room or dining hall.

Lladro, the Swiss porcelain brand, has come up with the season's offering - the statue of goddess Lakshmi.

The limited edition piece follows the Ganeshas, Rama Sita, Radha Krishna, Lord Krishna, Sacred Cow and Nataraja in its Spirit of India collection. The piece belongs to the high porcelain category and is a limited edition measuring 48 x 32 cm, crafted in a matte finish.

Costing a whopping Rs. 6.5 lakh, the sculpture has a real piece of jewellery - a diamond nose pin.

"We respect Indian tradition and work with experts to create them. The colour inputs and detailing came from Indian consultants. We try to create sculptures as they would have been created here," says Rosa Lladro, president Lladro and daughter of Juan Lladro, the eldest of the three brothers who founded the porcelain company in 1953.

There are many NRIs who are collectors of the Spirit of India collection, adds Nikhil Lamba, COO, Lladro India.

Early this year, noted sculptor from Lladro - Raul Rubio - visited the city for his

Ganesha series featuring Ganesha in 'Padmanabha' position, Ganesha with bansuri, mridangam and veena respectively.

"There is gold used in the sculpture for embellishment, especially made for ceramics that can go in the kiln," says Rosa.

Crafted in Tavernes Blanques, Valencia by Swiss sculptors, the pieces come in pastels and newer bright colours, as part of various themes such as Buddhism, motherhood, ballet, circus, flowers, angels and more. Salt and pepper holders, vases, cocktail goblets, bottle stoppers, lamps, chandeliers, fairy wall lamps, vanity mirrors, cuff links and earrings are some of the utility products in porcelain.

The re-deco chess sets and lithophane votive light in the new trends series are the contemporary designs.

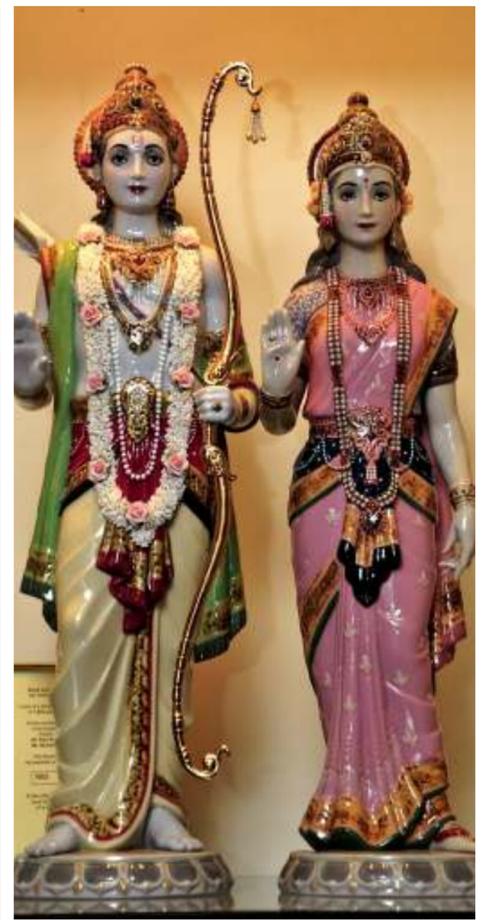
"The Queen of Spain, Presidents of governments and many other celebrities are fond collectors of Lladro sculptures. We have several country based collections," says Rosa who is impressed by the Grecian art at Falaknuma Palace and Charminar. Samurai and Hina dolls for Japan and Chinese Guardian Lions are some of the country specific offering.

So how does one differentiate between an original and fake piece?

"The procedure of making a piece is technically complex. Each piece comes with a logo and name. Copies are not as good as the original works," says Rosa.



**MASTER PIECES:** Rosa Lladro, president of Swiss porcelain brand, Lladro, unveiling the sculpture of Goddess Lakshmi at the outlet in the city. (Right) The sculpture of Lord Rama and Goddess Sita. - PHOTOS: G. KRISHNASWAMY



## In admiration of 'money-plant'

It is very unusual for leaves in a plant to attract the same amount of admiration as do the blossoms, due to their seemingly monochromatic appearance. It is quite another matter that foliage displays as much variation not only in colour, but also in shape, size and brightness. Pothos, widely known as 'money-plant', however, arrests the onlooker's attention solely by its leaves - bright, big, curvy and colourful.

Pothos, a favourite house plant worldwide, is one of the easy-to-care climbing shrubs with ornamental-foilage, native to Southeast Asia and belonging to the family Araceae. Its scientific name is *Epipremnum aureum* (Pothos aureus, *Scindapsus aureus*) though commonly called as Money Plant, Devil's Ivy and Golden Pothos.

Besides its ornamental value indoors, Pothos is one of the most effective plants that improve the indoor air quality by removing certain gaseous toxins like formaldehyde from the air.

### Features

Pothos is a vigorously growing tropical evergreen vine that can reach varying heights or spreads on ground rapidly and densely covering a wide area. It has aerial roots at internodes that can hook onto tree branches as it climbs. Colours, variegation and sizes of foliage are extremely variable depending on the cultivars, lighting conditions and other cultural factors.

Young plants feature bright, waxy, heart-shaped leaves (up to 4 inches long) where large mature vines display much bigger leaves (up to 3 feet long). Flowers and berries rarely appear on indoor plants. All parts of this plant are poisonous if ingested.

If grown in ground and unrestricted, this woody climber can grow quickly up the trunks of huge trees by attaching its aerial roots to their surfaces, reaching 50-60 feet tall, producing gigantic mature leaves. The higher it climbs, the larger the top leaves grow. However, as a container plant it has restrained growth.

Pothos is a multipurpose garden plant that can be easily grown in containers, as ground cover, as climbing vine in the landscape, in hanging baskets or in a jar or vase in water. It grows quickly up the tree trunks, lending a tropical effect to the land-



**PLEASANT TO THE EYE:** Pothos, a favourite house plant worldwide, is one of the easy-to-care climbing shrubs with ornamental-foilage, native to Southeast Asia and belonging to the family Araceae. - PHOTO: N. CHANDRAMOHAN REDDY

### GREEN MATTERS

#### POPULAR CULTIVARS OF POTHOS

Cultivar name	Foliage colour
'Golden Pothos'	Green waxy leaves, irregularly variegated with splashes and streaks of golden yellow and creamy white
'Golden Queen'	Yellow variegated leaves
'Hawaiian Pothos'	Bright yellow leaves
'Jade Pothos'	Green leaves without variegation
'Marble Queen'	White to creamy leaves, flecked and splashed with yellow, cream and green
'N' Joy'	Rippled leaf texture, with randomly mottled leaves in white and green
'Neon' ('Goldilocks')	yellow-green or lemon-green leaves without variegation, small and compact
'Tricolor'	Green leaves marbled with deep yellow, cream and pale green
'Wilcoxii'	Sharply-defined variegations of green and white

scape. When not allowed to climb, it rapidly conceals the ground with a dense cover of its bright foliage.

Because of its tolerance to low-light conditions, this easy-growing and hardy plant makes excellent indoor variety, used popularly for interiorscape in homes, offices, and public places, with cut foliage used in floral arrangement.

Outdoors, Pothos, with its sprawling habit, is most suitable as a groundcover in garden-beds and borders, or grown in above-ground planters or small to large containers raised on a pedestal for a cascading effect. It can also be trained as a climber on walls, trellis, poles, fences and trees.

### Care

Being robust and hardy, Pothos is one of the easiest plants to grow. It requires little care and withstands neglect. It grows best in humid or organic-enriched fertile potting-mix that holds mois-

ture, yet well-drained and well-aerated. It is not susceptible to diseases of major concern.

The plants require bright diffuse light or partially sunny locations with protection from afternoon sun. Under

bright light or filtered sunlight they attain the best leaf coloration and growth. They shall be regularly watered during dry periods. Keep soil consistently moist during the growing season, but reduce watering during winter. Fre-

quent trimming is required to control growth and maintain shape.

Feed with balanced fertilizer once in a month during the growing period.

Pothos can be propagated easily from the tip cuttings or stem cuttings which root easily in soil or water. Another method of propagation is layering which is done naturally too wherever the stems touch the soil.

### Growing in water

Instead of using soil-mix, Pothos plants can be grown in water. They root readily from cuttings placed in water and grow well as long as they are positioned in bright light. Addition of liquid fertilizer will boost the growth and health of the leaves.

Periodically the water shall be changed and the vase or jar shall be rinsed to remove the algae formation.

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## Hospitality market sluggish in the city

It has been a sluggish market for Hyderabad as far as hospitality sector is concerned and the blame for it squarely rests on local issues that keep cropping up here.

According to the report 'Indian Hospitality Story 2012 & Beyond' released by Cushman and Wakefield-CII during the 4<sup>th</sup> International CII Hospitality Fair, the occupancy levels experienced by hotels have been hovering around 53 per cent in the first half of 2012.

The report in its focus on the city says that Hyderabad has been a sluggish market for hotel performance as it has been gripped by some internal disturbances that keep arising in the region.

It goes on to add: the trend is likely to continue till the government stimulates a positive sentiment around for business and leisure visitors.

In the next five to six years, approximately 3,700

hotel rooms are expected to be added to the present availability.

This total expected supply, as per the report breakdown, could be 6 per cent catering the luxury segment, 25 per cent in upper upscale, 16 per cent in upscale, 33 per cent in mid-scale and 20 per cent in the budget segment.

### Report

Nationwide, the report looks at around 50,000 hotel rooms in next five years in the top six cities with NCR leading the chart (17,550) and followed by Mumbai (10,200) and Bangalore (9,400). This year alone is expected to see 14,800 fresh keys.

The report which evaluated the hospitality sector dynamics of top six cities and sought to come out with an overview on the performance, growth and outlook of the industry says that almost 2,000 new hotel rooms of this year's expect-

ed stock have already entered the market.

The country's hospitality sector has been witnessing interest from a variety of segments ranging from - MICE, Wellness Tourism, Spiritual and Pilgrimage Tourism, apart from the traditional business or leisure travel, says Akshay Kulkarni, Regional Director - Hospitality, South and South East Asia, Cushman & Wakefield.

"The demand has been strong from both foreign as well as domestic tourists. Given the rather diverse nature of demand, the hospitality industry is also looking at creating adequate products to service the varied tourist requirements", he adds.

At the same time, the add of new inventory is expected to be concentrated in the potential growth areas - specially around airports, commercial growth corridors, industrial corridors and SEZs.

## Time to do away with age-old G.O.

Our layout rules are obsolete. For our city planners and administrators, G.O. 1095 of August 1965 is the navigating tool for the development of urban areas

Landmarks in urban design are exciting places which attract the tourists. Some cities are known by their landmarks which have historical and architectural background.

For instance, Paris for Eiffel Tower, Agra for Taj Mahal, Mysore for Brindavan Gardens and Hyderabad for Charminar.

In Hyderabad, we had other landmarks like Lumbini Park, Necklace Road etc, but there are no such landmarks in Cyberabad area to attract tourists.

The same can be done by drawing inspiration from the town planning of San Francisco.

San Francisco is planned and grounded on top of number of hills in 19<sup>th</sup> century facing to a natural harbour with dozens of piers in the Pacific Ocean.

The roads were laid in grid-iron (chequered) pattern much against to the hilly topography.

Ignoring the topography of the area in town planning

led to innovations and landmarks in addition to the world popular engineering marvel, the Golden Gate Bridge. To avoid hardship in travelling in horse drawn coaches due to steep roads, cable cars were discovered.

The automobiles were not invented by that time. To negotiate different levels in roads, a crooked street named, Lambard Street was created. It is 400 metres in length and famous for having a steep one block section that consists of 8 hair pin turns, facing East and West.

The slope is covered with stepped colourful landscaping. At each turn, the costliest and beautiful Victorian mansions were owned by private persons. Now, it is a world famous tourist spot.

In Cyberabad area too, there is lot of scope for crooked streets which can be turned into town planning and landscape marvels. Our layout rules are obsolete. For our city plan-

ners and administrators, five decades old G.O. Ms. No. 1095 of August 1965 is the navigating tool for the development of urban areas in Andhra Pradesh.

During the last two decades, there is fast urban development in Cyberabad area. Wide roads were laid by blasting and crushing the hillocks and disturbing the natural landscapes. There is no place for creativity in urban planning because of outdated layout rules.

The Government should encourage potential builders to find out suitable locations to develop such crooked streets which can become landmarks of Cyberabad by making required amendments in the layout rules, if required.

**A.B. Reddy and Anoocha Balmoori**

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