

## Nt fashion

A NOTTINGHAM-born designer has added another project to his portfolio with the intention to help people in India.

Ash Gangotra, well-known for his work on Liam Gallagher's brand Pretty Green, launched the first collection of new brand Ashoka Maurya last month, combining his love for fashion with a dedication to helping poor people in India.

The menswear range, that is made up of casual polo shirts and formal shirts, was created with a strong Indian influence in mind but from an English viewpoint.

"It's a classic Indian heritage brand but with a Western twist. There's hints at both worlds," says the 45-year-old from Sherwood Rise.

Ash has spent tens of thousands of pounds creating the new line that carries the signature colours of the Indian flag. Most obvious is the block-coloured polo shirt, which Ash says "will mostly be worn in India at sporting occasions for patriotism."

There is also the navy formal shirt that subtly hints at the colours through the stitching and buttonholes.

This way, he says: "The collection will appeal to Indian people as well as in the West."



Bosideng has more than 8,000 stores in China and a flagship store in London.

"The three signature colours of India are used in different ways through the collection."

Prices range from £45 to £80 with £3 from every sale going to the CRY UK charity. The first collection will be sold exclusively online.

Ash says: "I teamed up with CRY for the collection as they bring back funds into India."

"Every time I go back to India, I am touched by the community and the people. The range will help to give something back to the people that have nothing."

Even the name and logo hint back to the country, with the brand named after an Indian Emperor of the Maurya Dynasty who was born in 304BC. The logo is

Ash has designed for Liam Gallagher's Pretty Green label.

"I'm happy to keep a low profile and keep my head down in Nottingham," says fashion designer Ash Gangotra.



# Ash's best of both worlds

New label Ashoka Maurya is pushing the boundaries between Indian and Western style while raising money for charity. Lucy Budge talks to the local designer behind it all, Ash Gangotra



Polo shirts with the colours of the Indian flag and formal shirts with the same colours in the stitching feature in Ash's new Ashoka Maurya brand.



taken from the Indian flag.

This latest idea came while Ash was working in China with mega-brand Bosideng.

The designer has enjoyed a wealth of success in the fashion industry, with his first taste of style coming from his parents, who owned a factory in the Lace Market.

He says: "I'm born and bred in Nottingham and still live in Sherwood to this day. My parents owned a factory that made outerwear, which is what inspired my career choice."

His first venture came in the early 1990s with street and clubwear label Chameleon.

This was followed with a highly-successful collaboration with fellow Nottingham designer Nick Holland, where the duo became directors and designers of Pretty Green. They left the company in 2011.

The creative pair still work together to this day on fashion consultancy company Fashtex Ltd, which is based in Hucknall. But their most successful venture was in 2012 with Chinese brand Bosideng.

One of the largest brands in China, Bosideng boasts more than 8,000 stores. In 2012, the brand moved into the UK market for the first time, with Ash and Nick behind the wheel. The pair were asked to design an entire 500-item wardrobe for a £35m flagship store in London.

"They wanted to produce a high-level European brand and a full wardrobe with Chinese influence. I was travelling back and forth from China a lot," says the designer.

The range was a big success and attracted celebrity buyers including boy-band JLS and X Factor finalist Jahmene Douglas.

But despite great international achievement, Ash remains firmly rooted in Nottingham.

He says: "I'm happy to keep a low profile and keep my head down in Nottingham."

The first collection from Ashoka Maurya can be found at [www.ashokamaurya.com](http://www.ashokamaurya.com)

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