



RAVE^{SQ}
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By Gitu Ramani
Boutique photos courtesy of Wendy Moger-Boss
Nina Griscom photo courtesy of Carlo Dalla Chiesa

Far East Meets High Fashion

Nina Griscom's namesake boutiques combine her expertise in luxury goods with her love for South Asia.

Nina Griscom, whose name is synonymous with the phrase "classic chic," has stepped out of the style pages and used what she knows to start a mini empire in the form of luxury retail boutiques. When it came to naming her outlets of coveted treasures and objets d'art, this former model and TV personality used her biggest marketing tool of all—her name.

Griscom, who is the stepdaughter of the former ambassador to France, has traveled the world, and since her first journey to India ten years ago, she has made several trips back. "Any love affair with India is first through the visual and then it becomes personal," she says. "I was fortunate to meet so many incredible people who have become almost like family to me. It's one thing to go to India as a tourist and stay in hotels, and quite another to visit India as a guest in people's homes. Trust me when I tell you the gulf is immeasurable."

It was on one of Griscom's trips to Asia that the idea for her business struck her. "Given that I was one of the world's best consumers," she says, "one day it occurred to me that it might be time to stop consuming and make a business out of this. My life has been a laboratory for a retail venture."

Though Griscom has gone on buying trips to Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and the Philippines,

it's India that holds a special place in her heart. "There are so many exquisite products from India in the marketplace today that it's hard to choose," she says. "What makes me so happy is to see women in local villages who are being encouraged to carry on the local craft, which in turn allows them financial independence and a continuation of tradition."

Among the beautiful items available at the store are lobster and crab sculptures made of ivory; a full line of zebra-skin furniture including ottomans and stools; telephone tables made of sharkskin and stingray; fashion accessories including crocodile handbags; and Kenneth Jay Lane earrings. From India she carries textiles, hand-woven kurtas, hand-embroidered pillows and on-of-a-kind ruby and aquamarine earrings. "One of the greatest perks of my job is the fact that I personally hand pick each and every item that I sell," she says, "and as such I get to travel to wonderful places all around the world. And India is at the top of my list."

With all of her success what's next for Griscom? The avid entrepreneur and retail connoisseur plans to open more boutiques (in addition to the two she has in New York City and in South Hampton), and create her own line of furniture and home accessories. "I want to build a business here," she says. "This is a market that is growing fast and as a business woman, I think the Far East is a market that the West is looking at with a gimlet eye."