

Bursting at the seams

DIY Christmas ornaments at Mumbai's monster-sized haberdashery

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You don't have to be a sewing machine whiz or an expert hand-sewer to appreciate sewing machine manufacturer Usha's monster-sized haberdashery, The Hab, on Linking Road in Khar, Mumbai. Its walls glimmer like candy store display cabinets with neatly organized racks of tailoring tools, ready-made patterns, lace, ribbon, stones, beads, buttons, sequins, zippers and threads in every shape, size and colour imaginable. As long as you're willing to learn how to needle a thread, the store's in-house team of sewing instructors can even help you fashion the objects of your DIY fantasies on one of the four plush demo stations.

A psychedelic, neon-coloured, sewing machine installation by Manish Arora takes up the window display while the interiors feature spools of multicoloured threads in antique mason jars and a beautifully illustrated ceiling to floor stitch library with stitches like the zigzag, honeycomb, diamond and box on embroidery tambours. There's even a library on the first floor, stocked with rare, speciality art and craft books like *Layered*, *Tattered And Stitched*, a book on fabric art by multimedia artist Ruth Rae, and *One-*



Demo room: The Hab is spread over 3,000 sq. ft and two levels.

Yard Wonders by Rebecca Yaker and Patricia Hoskins on limiting your DIY projects to just a metre of fabric.

Strategically located close to fabric stores like Glanz, Saroj and Vandana, The Hab has transformed into a community centre for sewing enthusiasts since its launch in March last year. Besides complimentary in-store demos through the day—currently, you can learn to make Christmas tree ornaments and other festive decorations for free—the showroom also hosts regular introductory and advanced courses and even birthday parties on sewing, embroidery, crochet, macramé and knitting.

Depending on what you wish to create, the store staff will lead you to the basic stitching pod, the embroidery pod, the footer pod or the craft pod, all of which are equipped with the latest Usha Janome automatic and computerized sewing machines and kitted out

with a tray full of threads, sequins and buttons in rainbow colours. We highly recommend insisting on a demo of the Usha Janome Memory Craft 11000—the machine can embroider a variety of clip-art images and even photographs or designs uploaded on it using a USB flash drive at the click of a button.

At present, The Hab only has a flagship outlet in Mumbai but Chhaya Shriram, director at Usha International, says the haberdashery and experiential learning centres will expand to major metros next year.

The Hab by Usha, G-1, 444, Corporate Lounge, opposite Sahib Khatawara Darbar, Linking Road, Khar (West). Daily, 10am-9.30pm. Tools, threads, embellishments and borders priced at ₹4-216, DIY kits and ready-made patterns are from ₹750, and workshops from ₹400. For details, visit www.thehab.in or call 61274444.