



AISHWARYA IYER

34, FOUNDER AND CEO, BRIGHTLAND
 ♡ LOS ANGELES

"My aha moment was realising the importance of a standing desk at home," says Aishwarya Iyer with a laugh. Like many of us, she has rotated through her wardrobe of loungewear (from Loup and Merna Maita). Iyer, who has lived in the east (Massachusetts), the Midwest (Chicago) and the southwest (Texas), landed on the West Coast (Los Angeles) to launch Brightland after a professional epiphany. In 2014, while working at L'Oreal, she realised that supermarket brand olive oil was giving her partner and her consistent stomach pains. "I discovered that nearly 70 per cent of olive oil Americans consume is already rancid due to a fraud-ridden industry with little to no transparency. So I moved to Los Angeles to create a bold, elevated, and traceable solution." Brightland officially launched in 2018 to champion California-made extra virgin olive oil. "We partner with family farms that implement organic practices and pay fair wages." What also sets Brightland apart is its clean, minimal design. "Our bottles do not look like traditional olive oils," she says of the very Insta-friendly packaging that you've seen on the counter tops of any chef (home or otherwise) worth his or her salt. So, what does Iyer like to cook? "I have a major sweet tooth, but I also love simple meals with a lot of vegetables." Dressed with Brightland, of course.

SHEENA SOOD

36, TEXTILE DESIGNER AND
 FOUNDER, ABACAXI ♡ BROOKLYN

One of the most important skills for a business to survive the pandemic is its ability to pivot. But what do you do when your brand is just off the ground? Sheena Sood found out first-hand. "I planned the launch of abacaxi for Holi this year, but instead I had to change my focus to making fabric face masks from my home.

That decision led to a whole new project," she says, admitting that she's gone through the pandemic cycle of being depressed, worried, stressed and busy through these trying times. Her label, which emerged from a trip to Rajasthan in 2012, started with a brightly hued capsule collection that put together remnants of fabrics and embroidered textiles before soon developing into a full-fledged line. "As a textile designer, I'm a fabric snob who mostly wears natural fibres. I have an obsession with tie-dye that began during my childhood and it continues to be a favourite," says the Brown University graduate who would love to expand into jewellery and homeware in the near future. "True to my brand, I like to layer bright colours with touches of traditional silver jewellery. Many of my designs are either convertible or can be worn in several ways and the styles can fit a wide variety of sizes, which is actually more sustainable and creates less waste." >

