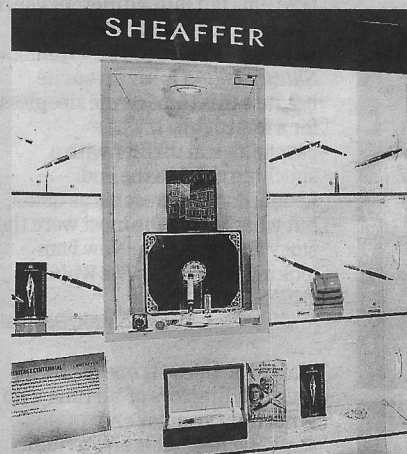


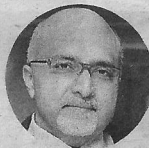
FROM LAPIS BARD TO SHEAFFER — FIND YOUR FAVOURITE PEN BRAND AT WILLIAM PENN AT QUEST MALL. PLUS, A PEN COLLECTOR'S FINDS!



The 26th William Penn outlet, and Calcutta's first, opened doors on January 18 on the third floor of Quest. "This is our first store in Calcutta. We were looking for the right location. Quest mall provides the right opportunity and location for us to be here. This store is a destination for writing instruments, limited editions and some accessories for men," said Nikhil Ranjan, founder and CEO, William Penn. Spread across 425sq ft, the store houses pens and some mens' accessories from international brands like Lapis Bard, Dalvey, Francesco Rubinato, Sheaffer and Lamy.

Pictures: Anindya Shankar Ray

Calcutta boy **Anuj Poddar** has been collecting pens since he was nine. "When I was in school, I would go to Lindsay Street... there used to be a shop called Fountain Pen Hospital," recalled the 50-year-old. Today, Anuj is the Los Angeles-based founder and CEO of AP Limited Editions. A t2 chat with the avid pen collector whose story started right here in his hometown.



How did your passion for fountain pens begin?

It started in Calcutta, when I was a student of La Martiniere for Boys. The very first pen that inspired me was a Parker 51, gifted by my mother, who lives on Middleton Street. I still remember it was a blue pen with a turquoise blue barrel with a sterling silver cap that had gold accents on it. That was my very first fine-writing instrument and ever since I do not write with anything but fountain pens!

How many pens do you have in your collection?

I have around 350 pens which include Maki-e pens (an ancient form of art in Japan), one pen from each collection of AP Limited Editions, several Sailor pens, Mont Blanc pens and old Parker pens from the 1950s and '60s.

How did you collect these pens?

Some, I acquired through auctions at Bonhams and Christie's. Others I bought from antique dealers all over the world, from pen stores in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and London!

What's the story behind the design of AP Limited Editions?

We travel all over the world and pick up ideas — inspired by visits to museums, galleries and artists or original paintings we've acquired. For example, we did a pen called Jamawar and *jamawar* is a shawl woven in Kashmir. It was an antique Jamawar shawl that we've had in the family for over 100 years that inspired that particular pen. I just found it absolutely beautiful and spoke to an artist to do a rendition of the shawl in different colours.

A pen you want to possess...

Namiki's Double Dragon pen that I missed out in an auction several years ago. I would like to own it someday!

Finally, how often do you actually write in today's world of QWERTY keypads?

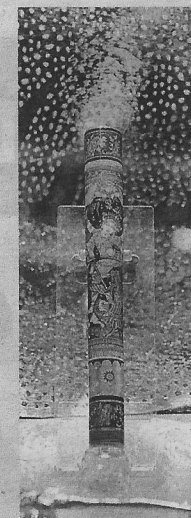
I write a lot... I like to write handwritten notes to people every time I wish to thank them. Or a note on a wedding or anniversary, instead of a printed card. And in my free time, I write a lot about life, about philosophy and my own views on religion and culture.

Text: Shweta Keshri

A FEW OF HIS FAVOURITE PENS

From his personal collection:

- A pen made in Japan by one of our best artists Kogaku. We were not able to launch the pen as an AP Limited Editions product because it was very expensive to make. But it's absolutely stunning, it's got over 600 pieces of abalone shell and real coral.



- A rose gold Mont Blanc Pope Julius II. It's beautifully made with metal and glass with crystals.



- One that I picked up in America from artist Paul Rossi. It's sterling silver with plastic and acrylic but it's beautifully done and has captured a scene of the Arizona desert.

"My absolute favourite right now is Nine Nights from AP Limited Editions. I love this pen! It was inspired by an artist I visited in Odisha and through his painting I was inspired to make a pen. I think it's phenomenal because of the Japanese Maki-e art depicting Goddess Durga and her battle with Mahisasura and the kind of detailing," says Anuj. The pocket pinch? Rs 12,60,000!

- Namiki Goldfish is also one of my favourites. There's nothing so special about the theme of the pen but the actual Maki-e work on it is absolutely stunning and very detailed.

- Another favourite is a Maki-e pen from AP Limited Editions called Wisdom and Power. It's got Goddess Durga, who represents power, and Ganesha, who represents wisdom.

