A portrait of Ruby Kular, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a white blazer over a lace-trimmed top. She is sitting on a white sofa, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. Her left hand is resting on her lap, showing a gold bracelet and a ring. Her right hand is also visible, showing a ring.

SOUTH BARRINGTON RESIDENT
RUBY KULAR IS THE FOUNDER OF
NAZARR COSMETICS.

The COLORS of CONFIDENCE

NAZARR COSMETICS
FOUNDER RUBY KULAR
OFFERS A BEAUTY BRAND
ROOTED IN CULTURE,
DIVERSITY, AND KINDNESS

By Robin Ross | Photography by Linda M. Barrett
Skin Care Product Photography by Jim Prisching



WHEN A SHY CANADIAN COLLEGE STUDENT from a conservative Indian family started to experiment with makeup, she gained a confidence and joy that helped her find not only her identity but also a deeper pride in her South Asian heritage. From that revelation, Ruby Kular of South Barrington built an independent beauty brand that celebrates and supports multiculturalism and diversity in the cosmetics industry. Kular created her company to help foster a world that embraces our differences. “We were not born to fit in, we were born to stand out,” Kular said.

Kular is the founder of Nazarr Cosmetics, a makeup and skincare brand focused on beauty for women of olive to medium to darker skin tones. “We want everyone to feel comfortable in their own skin,” Kular said.

The brand combines Kular’s passion for makeup with advocacy for honoring diversity. Launched in 2019, Nazarr Cosmetics offers vegan and cruelty-free eyeshadow palettes, single eyeshadows, brushes, lipstick and lipgloss, and recently introduced a natural skin care line. The startup had a big boost in visibility when singer Cardi B was photographed wearing Nazarr eyeshadow and lipgloss.

Cosmetics were a catalyst for Kular’s self-discovery. She grew up as the oldest child in a Sikh home with strict rules and expectations. Once in college, she felt free to explore her more creative side. “I began to experiment with makeup, which was not allowed in my family home,” she explained. “I loved the way it made me feel. I was shy, and it gave me a level of confidence I had never had in my entire life. I felt more expressive; I felt more attractive. That’s why I felt so strongly about creating the brand.”



A GROUP OF SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL LOCAL WOMEN SHOWCASE NAZARR COSMETICS AND THE JOYFUL CAMARADERIE DRIVEN BY THE BRAND. IN FRONT, FROM LEFT: SERENE HEBERT (LIFE COACH); TEJAL MODI (MPAS, PA-C); AND JASMINE MAGO (SR. MGR./DELOITTE). IN BACK, FROM LEFT: PAROL PITRODA (M.D.); REBECCA ANN (MAKEUP ARTIST); AND SUPREET DHALIWAL (DPM).



THE CLASSIC PALETTE IS A MUST-HAVE COLLECTION OF EYESHADOWS.



MATTE LIQUID LIPSTICKS: CHUMMA, ISHK, ZIDKI, AND SWEETIE



Her Major Cultural Shift

She began with a career in human resources. She met her husband online, and at 25, relocated from Vancouver to Arlington Heights, Illinois. It was a culture shock. “I grew up watching Bollywood movies, and in some ways that fantasy world was embedded in my mind. You think that when you are so in love, everything will be perfect,” she said. Despite being a happy newlywed, she was overwhelmed by feelings of missing the family, friends, and culture she’d left behind.

For the first time in her life, Kular felt that she did not fit in. “In Canada, there was more acceptance of differences,” she said. “I love America. There’s so much opportunity here. I think with the idea of the melting pot, there can be a pressure to conform to American culture. It is understandable, but we can’t take away from the beauty of diversity. We need to celebrate that diversity instead of trying to conform.”

Her religion helped her cope. “Sikh religion taught me to live in the present moment,” she said. Kular worked hard to get out and start “doing things that allowed me to live in the now.” She went to temple, meditated, exercised, attended cultural events, and found a group of “amazing” friends. She also sought counseling. “Maybe this will help someone in the same situation. At first, I didn’t have a support system. I needed someone to talk to, and counseling really helped a lot,” she explained.

A Colorful Aha Moment

Kular had no experience in the beauty industry, but continued to perfect her makeup technique. “It wasn’t until my 40th birthday when a bunch of girlfriends asked me to do their makeup,” Kular said. “I was using, I think, four different palettes, and one of my girlfriends said, ‘Wow, is there not just one palette that has all of the perfect colors for our skin tone?’ And I looked at her and I said, ‘No, there isn’t.’ So that was kind of like my ‘aha’ moment.”

From there, Kular launched Nazarr Cosmetics with the “Classic Palette.” “I created this palette that has pretty much all of the essential colors you would need to do any type of look, whether it be a look that you want to create for that big, big Indian wedding, or a quick look to go to work, or to get dolled up for girls’ night out. I was passionate about all of these colors that give diverse women more options when creating their looks.”

She expanded to incorporate more products steeped in her culture. Kular’s eyes lit up as she explained how her Indian roots influence her products’ rich hues. “We’re very colorful!” she said. “We love color. In India there is an entire festival (Holi) that celebrates color.”

HONORING OUR GRANDMOTHERS AND GREAT-GRANDMOTHERS, JIVANI BY NAZARR OFFERS A UNIQUE LINE OF SKIN CARE PRODUCTS THAT ARE INFUSED WITH RICH AND ROYAL INGREDIENTS AND AGE-OLD REMEDIES FROM INDIA. ALL OUR PRODUCTS ARE ALL NATURAL AND 84% ORGANIC. THEY ALSO COME LABELED WITH EXPIRATION DATES TO ENSURE PEOPLE AREN'T HARMING THEIR SKIN WITH OLD OR EXPIRED INGREDIENTS. WE ARE SHARING THE SECRETS OF INDIAN BEAUTY. OUR PRODUCTS ARE ENRICHED WITH ANTI-INFLAMMATORY AND ANTIOXIDANTS PROPERTIES LIKE TROPICAL FRUIT TO HELP BRING LIFE BACK TO DULL SKIN. OUR CORE INGREDIENT IN MOST OF OUR PRODUCTS IS TURMERIC. TURMERIC IS SUPER FOOD USED BY SOUTHEAST ASIANS FOR CENTURIES TO HELP WITH ALMOST EVERY HEALTH ISSUE, SO WE'VE INCORPORATED IT IN OUR SKIN CARE PRODUCTS TO GIVE YOUR SKIN THE ABSOLUTE BEST CHANCE FOR A HEALTHY, RADIANT, AND YOUTHFUL GLOW. – RUBY KULAR, FOUNDER



ABOVE: Jade Gua Sha – While the industry is busy experimenting with chemicals and innovative battery powered tools, JIVANI by Nazarr is taking it back to the old school ways. All our products have natural and time-tested ingredients; skin care doesn't have to be so complicated. After months of extensive research, we decided to incorporate a Gua Sha, a jade crystal in our skin care regimen, a technique used by Ancient China. The stone is designed to encourage lymphatic flow, increase circulation, and smooth + lift the skin. Our stone is a certified jade crystal. We chose jade because it's naturally a cooling stone, helping relax overstressed and puffed skin, in addition it has a qi energy that gives it balancing properties.

ABOVE RIGHT: Vitamin C Cream – Enriched with organic coconut oil, this cream delivers high concentrations of valuable vitamin C esters directly to the skin on a daily basis, helping to support, balance, brighten, and revive dry, dull, listless skin.



Clarifying Exfoliator with Turmeric – Enriched with turmeric and papaya extracts, this exfoliator is absolutely perfect for all skin types. The gentle jojoba beads help uncover your gorgeous, clarified skin, thanks to an intensive assortment of alpha acids.



Rejuvenating Serum with CBD – Premium ingredients like jojoba oil and chia seeds combined with delicate jasmine absolute in this serum delivers a luxurious oil designed to pamper and deliver high doses of antioxidants, amino acids, CBD, and hydration.



Vitamin C Revitalize Serum – A must-have in any mature skin care regime. Featuring soothing organic aloe, omega 3 and 6-enriched rosehip oils with antioxidant-loaded organic cranberry, raspberry, and blueberry extracts and clarifying white willow bark. For an extra boost, we've added hyaluronic acid.

Starting a Conversation

Nazaar Cosmetics products are named in Indian languages. “People said it was too Indian. But I stuck with my gut and just went for it, and it’s one of the best decisions I’ve made,” Kular said. “I have people from different cultures ask me, ‘What does this mean? Or how do you say this?’ It just opened the dialogue to educate each other on our differences.”

Growing up, Kular said that she did not see women who looked like her in ads, television, or media. She hopes that her brand helps people of all skin tones feel beautiful and represented. “I want my daughter to grow up feeling proud of who she is. I want her to see a version of herself in the media.”

Kular’s father is the best friend she relies on for business advice. “I learned so much from my Dad,” Kular said. As an Indian immigrant to Canada, he found work in a lumber mill. However, when he was laid off, the family was on the verge of bankruptcy. “He literally went into a coffee shop and asked

the owner to allow him to clean it,” she said. “From that day he became an entrepreneur and his business grew exponentially. He now owns one of the largest building maintenance companies in Canada with more than 2,000 employees.”

“Of course, I didn’t listen to his cardinal rule, which was ‘Know the business that you’re entering,’” she said with a laugh. “He recommended that I work in the beauty business for a couple of years first, but I jumped right in.”

“I am very glad I listened to his second bit of advice, which was “Keep your overhead low.” She added. He advised her not to hire employees or lease space until she knew every side of operations. While launching the makeup line, she quickly learned every detail of starting a brand—including teaching herself to code to create her own website, marketing, and mastering social media. “I wear every single hat in this business, and I know every aspect of it.”



RUBY KULAR WITH HER MODELS WEARING NAZARR COSMETICS AT THE PHOTOSHOOT.

Starting Up in a Pandemic

Her father's advice proved even more prescient when the COVID-19 pandemic threw the industry into turmoil. Kular said that after a successful launch, she's adapting to the new retail environment. "I was not expecting COVID and did not know how to deal with that," she said. "It's been extremely challenging for a startup brand."

This fall, Nazarr Cosmetics introduced a new skin care line incorporating traditional Indian beauty secrets that Kular learned from her grandmother. The 100 percent natural line will offer serum, oil, cream, and an exfoliator, all infused with time-tested Indian ingredients, and also a jade gua sha stone. "They are all based on remedies that my grandma made for me," Kular said. "They incorporate ingredients that India is known for, like turmeric, coconuts, and mangoes. Skin care does not have to be complicated, and I want to take it back in time to the basics—not just with Indian elements, but also Japanese, African, and Korean beauty."

Celebrity Recognition

Social media has been an important driver of visibility and sales. In addition to Cardi B, Indian-Canadian actress Neeru Bajwa has been photographed in Nazarr makeup. Award-winning international makeup artist Harp Sohal, founder of Pink Orchid Studio said, "I've been in the industry for over a decade and when I came across the Classic Palette, I fell in love with it immediately. I love the colors; they are so authentic to the Indian culture, I can use every single color, and the pigment of the shadows is so intense. The packaging was really smart. I just thought the whole palette was thoughtfully done and I loved it right from day one."

"SKIN CARE DOES NOT HAVE TO BE COMPLICATED, AND I WANT TO TAKE IT BACK IN TIME TO THE BASICS—NOT JUST WITH INDIAN ELEMENTS, BUT ALSO JAPANESE, AFRICAN, AND KOREAN BEAUTY."

Other artists who've embraced the brand include Instagram's @Lashout-studio, who messaged "I liked that she chose Indian names for the brand and the eyeshadow, and didn't feel pressure to choose Western names to get into the market. She stayed true to her roots." Vancouver-based makeup artist @blossomsbypreet said, "I love Nazarr Cosmetics as it's a highly pigmented product and we don't need a whole lot to get the look. The formula is just amazing and goes on smoothly."

Success in Business and Life


Kular lives in South Barrington with her husband and two children—a 16-year-old son who attends Barrington High School and a 12-year-old daughter at Barrington Middle School Prairie Campus. She said, "I've learned to raise my kids to be proud of who they are, where they come from, and to raise them with equality." Coming from a strict home, Kular wants her children to have the freedom to express themselves, but she also works to instill the values of faith and hard work she learned as a child.

Her Sikh faith plays a vital role in her life. "The word Sikh means 'learner'," Kular explained. "So we learn not just about our religion, but also about ourselves and spirituality. It was one of the first Indian religions to embrace equality, not only for women, but for all humans." One of the largest religions in the world, Sikh is monotheistic and originated in India. The Nazarr Cosmetics website states, "Our brand is rooted in Sikhism's core values: Unity & Equality of all Humankind, Engage in Selfless Service, Strive for Justice, Earn an Honest Living."

The Kular family participates in the Sikh tradition of serving a free meal weekly. "I take my kids to the temple every Sunday so they can do this volunteer work, to keep them grounded, to keep them humble, to make them understand that they are not above or below any other human beings," Kular said. "Because it's really important for me to make sure that they understand that." Kular said that—partly due to her father's example—she's deeply committed to supporting women entrepreneurs. As her father's business grew, his strict views evolved and "He became a pillar of strength for women," she said. "That was inspiring to me." Kular also credits her husband for his emotional and financial support during the start-up process.

Ruby mentors other female entrepreneurs. "A couple of people reached out to me who applauded our brand embracing the culture, because they were so hesitant to do that. When they saw that I did it so unapologetically, it gave them the courage to do the same," Kular said.

As the female founder of a beauty brand, Kular believes that the industry will increasingly support inclusion for people of all skin types. "Since I launched, I'm seeing a lot of more brands popping up that proudly incorporate their culture in their marketing and branding. I am hopeful that it is

here to stay," she said. 

To learn more about Nazarr Cosmetics, visit online at nazarr.com. Follow on Instagram @[nazarrcosmetics](https://www.instagram.com/nazarrcosmetics) and on Facebook. Email to info@nazarr.com.

Robin Ross is a Barrington-based freelance writer.

