

The Shirt Saga!

Shirts are synonymous with men's apparel and today, there is a slew of brands offering shirts for all reasons and seasons. **Bindu Gopal Rao** gives you a low-down on six shirt brands that are making the shirt experience different.

and party shirts in 2015. To ensure that quality is maintained, they have a modern approach to manufacturing. The production plants have state-of-the-art machinery spread across 40,000 sq. ft. The company plans to foray into retailing these brands through exclusive company-owned brand outlets and e-commerce platforms. Frio shirts define a youthful spirit. Trendsetters in the category, these shirts complement every

manufacturing shirts for the past 13 years and in the last eight to nine years, we have used pure linen fabrics to manufacture our shirts. We are pioneers in the sub-category of fashionable linen shirts and we have started making customised shirts. In fact, the fit of our shirts is a major unique selling point. What sets our shirts apart is their quality and crafting. That makes us matchless, as compared to other brands. We are always trying



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ARMOURY INTERNATIONAL BRAND: FRIO

Founded in 1995, Armoury International has always ensured meticulous, exclusive and exquisite craftsmanship in every shirt they've manufactured. This has been the hallmark of all the brands under the Armoury International umbrella. In 2004, the company diversified its offering with two new labels, Frio and Fete, in the casual and after-hours segments. These brands of Armoury International personify style, attitude, eccentricity and comfort. Sensing the opportunity in the boys category for similar fashion, the company launched its first collection of boys' casual

occasion. The exclusive breathe-easy linen and Giza cotton fabrics have evolved in style, season after season.

MATCHLESS SHIRTS

Matchless Shirts offers innumerable clothing solutions for men. If you are bored of wearing the same designs and patterns of shirts, pants, *pathanis*, kurtas and the like, this is where your search ends. According to Nehul Vora, the proprietor of this brand, "We've been

to provide the best of products and services to our customers." Looking ahead, the company wants to focus on more premium products.

ADITYA SHIRTS

Established in 1996, Aditya Shirts Pvt Ltd manufactures and supplies a quality-approved range of formal, casual and party shirts for men. The superior shirt quality has earned the company many loyal clients across the nation. "The timely delivery of consignments and ethical



@Aditya Shirts



@Aditya Shirts



@Aditya Shirts

ESTABLISHED IN 1987 WITH A COMMITMENT TO ENSURE 'VALUE FOR MONEY', THE 1UP GROUP HAS LABELS ACROSS VARIOUS PRICE SEGMENTS.

business policies of the organisation help us in establishing a huge client base across markets," says Gopikanth L Choudhary, owner of Aditya Shirts. "Owing to the superior quality of the product range offered, we have carved a firm foothold in the domain. The products offered by us are in compliance with industrial standards and are sold at affordable prices. The professionals appointed by us invest their long working hours in manufacturing products as per client specifications to meet their exact requirements," he adds. Timely delivery, a high-quality range, a wide distribution network, vast industrial experience and a plethora of customisation options make the difference for this brand. They manufacture shirts under the brands Collars and Ciara.

JOHN NOBLE

Established in 1987 with a commitment to ensure 'value for money', the 1Up group has labels across various price segments. The group has three brands in the menswear space— John Noble, 1Up and JN Sports—which currently enjoy a pan-India presence and a rapidly expanding consumer base in India. The group also has an impressive manufacturing infrastructure base that not only caters to the group's brands, but also extends its expertise and capabilities to private brands of large Indian retailers. The brand caters to various categories of menswear based on the occasion, namely formals, semi-formals and casuals, available for both trousers and shirts. Committed to bring the latest in global fashion

trends to India, the brand focuses on providing quality fabrics with an impeccable and meticulous finish.

The seasonal collections have always been blends of the unique fashion tastes of India's masses with the global trends forecast in the fashion capitals of the world. John Noble is a menswear fashion brand born two decades ago to cater to the fashion-conscious and upwardly-mobile fashion connoisseur who yearns for a fashion label that he can flaunt. The brand's slogan, 'Surprisingly Indian!', defines its promise to be a fashion-forward Western menswear brand that places great importance on the value-for-money aspect of its clothing. The brand has recently introduced a casual wear menswear brand, 'JN Sports', which is a sister concern of John Noble. Impeccable quality, contemporary styling and an unmatched finish are hallmarks of John Noble formalwear. They also have a youthful collection with floral prints, dual-toned styling and bold bands for the sporty and fun-loving man.

OFFICER SHIRTS

Established in 1990, Officer Shirts have come a long way to become one of the leading manufacturers of men's clothing in India. The company currently focuses on the mid-segment market for shirts in the price range of ₹695 – ₹1,295. "The reason for our progressive growth is ethical business principles, dedication towards work and a passion for excellence. We constantly work to ensure that we give our customers value for their money. We believe that through constant development and design, we can create products which will give us an added advantage over our competitors," says Asif Memon, Director.

The company has a pan-India presence across 2000 multi brand outlets (MBOs). Apart from shirts, the product range also includes formal trousers and casual shirts called Cotton Fever and Denims under the sub-brand Outlook Fashion. All the fabrics are sourced directly from the mills and the shirts are manufactured using a wide range



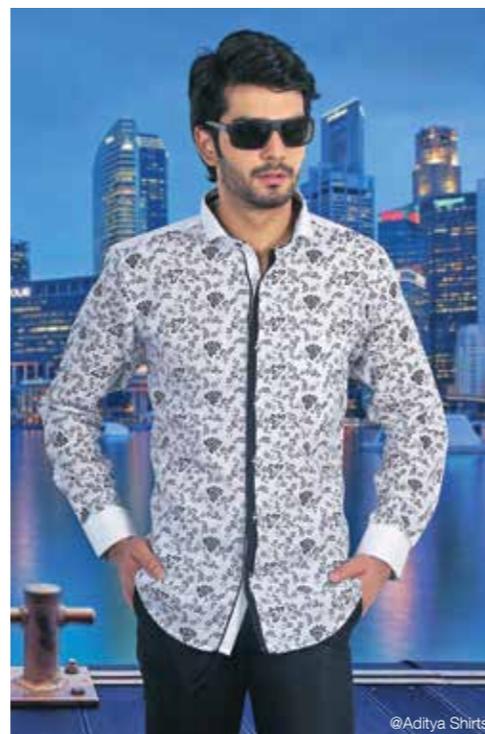
@John Noble



@Aditya Shirts



@Matchless Shirts



@Aditya Shirts

of fabrics including all kinds of cotton, mixed linens and linen blends among others. Major new launches happen twice a year during summers and winters. However, there are close to four new collections that are actually released every year. "What makes the difference is the trust factor, quality, value for money and a lot of industry experience. Also, we have an edge as far as pricing is concerned as our shirts are easily priced ₹200-₹300 lower than other brands. Also, we do our own manufacturing and stitching," adds Asif. The brand is looking to be present in 5000 MBOs over the next couple of years and also consolidate market presence through agents and distribution channels in Chhattisgarh, Bihar and West Bengal. They are also looking to expand through the online route.

ONE UP SHIRTS

All Seasons, established in 1986, has created a niche market for itself in terms of linens and premium formal shirts. It also manufactures Giza cotton shirts, printed shirts and kurtas for men. All Seasons apparel is popularly known for its fabric, fit and comfort. According to Utsav Gupta, owner, "We update the collection with new fabrics and create new designs every season while verifying that the shirts are made and checked with precision before they go to stores. It is of

utmost importance for our brand to match the taste of our customers. What we do differently is that we source the fabric from various vendors in the market. The company works extensively with linen, a fabric that has its own distinct and versatile nature. For the uninitiated, linen is stronger than cotton and also softens with every wash."

What sets these shirts apart is that the fabric used to make them costs way above ₹1000 per meter and is only available in special fabric stores. Selling shirts of the best quality has been the company's niche for the last three decades and their customers cannot find the same appeal from any other company. "We ensure that every minute detail is taken care of. We also use a lot of digital prints and come up with a new range once in two to three months. Our variety is vast and what sets us apart is that we have more than 1000 designs in linen apparel. We have 400 different solid colours and also have artificial and pure silk shirts in over 100 colours. We also use jacquards along with prints to give our valued customers more choice. We are currently focusing on the mandarin, semi-cutaway and Wembley collars," adds Utsav. The company hopes to expand through franchise opportunities, exports and a larger distribution network. ■