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# STRETCHED FOR SUCCESS

Bindu Gopal Rao narrates the journey of one of the leading menswear brands in India, in context of their latest innovative launch – the 'Stretch Fabric'.

THE BRAND KNOWN FOR BESPOKE SUITS COMBINED WITH A RICH HISTORY OF 95 SUCCESSFUL YEARS, HAS TIME AND AGAIN ANSWERED THE NEED OF THE HOUR BY INTRODUCING THE LATEST IN MEN'S FASHION, SETTING AND DEFINING TRENDS IN THE COUNTRY.

P N Rao is a name that one immediately associates with men's suits. One of the country's most iconic and leading men's fashion brand that represents the changing landscape of men's fashion without compromising on the golden standards set years ago. The coveted brand at the beginning of its journey encouraged budding tailors to hone their tailoring skills in order to stay relevant to changing times and tastes of the customers. The brand known for bespoke suits combined with a rich history of 95 successful years, has time and again answered the need of the hour by introducing the latest in men's fashion, setting and defining trends in the country. The brand recently announced the launch of 'Stretch Fabric', a fabric made exclusively for suits.

**LOOKING BACK & LOOKING AHEAD**  
P N Rao, one of the oldest and biggest family led corporations in the suit industry, was founded in the year 1923 by Shri P N Rao in Bengaluru and was later joined; by his two sons; together, they managed to establish a formidable name in the suiting business in the following decades after the modest beginning. P N Rao is now led by the third generation entrepreneurs Naveen Pise, Partner, and Ketan Pise, Partner, at P N Rao who have, with changing times adopted a global sense of fashion and dressing into their portfolio. "In the year 1997, we became a suit centric store, and in 2006 we rebranded ourselves as 'P N Rao Fine Suits, Since 1923'. We have a wide range of ready to wear suits and fabrics backed by a world-

## FABRIC SPEAK

class tailoring facility. We believe in providing our customers with the complete look so we have experts in the field to assist our customers backed by trained fashion designers who help the customer put the look together. This year, we have launched our new campaign 'Create Your Own Legacy' that pays homage to the visionary P N Rao who founded the company and the many who followed suit to build the brand with their hard work, passion, and perfection to maintain the legacy that is P N Rao. The company through its new campaign wants to convey to its customers that they can also create their own legacy", says Naveen.

### MAKING DIFFERENCE

The brand continues to keep its focus on suits and aims to bring in some innovations in the suits category. "We had Metalica collection (metal element was included to give style and uniqueness to the suit), and we will be soon introducing Infusion collection. This collection will have a lot more bright colours, which will play an important role. We are known for bespoke tailoring since 1923, our tailoring unit with state-of-the-art machine and tools in Bengaluru ensures every little thing that goes into the making of a suit is accurate. Besides being one of the country's front-runners in term of suits for all occasions, we also hold expertise in wedding wear, Indo-western wear, and luxury suits. This is the space we have been growing in a healthy manner; our quality products and services have helped us grow. To complement

the above, we have in-house master tailors and trained stylists who guide customers with the fit and style. Additionally, our in-house tailoring facility can tailor the jacket in full canvas (a method of tailoring that allows the fabric to drape nicely) using a combination of world-class trims, craftsmanship and modern equipment", opines Naveen.

### THE STRETCH FABRIC

The company has a wide range of luxury fabrics starting from 100 counts going on to 180 counts in all the international brands like Ermenegildo Zegna, Loro Piana, Scabal, Dormeuil, Huddersfield, etc. For suits they offer, wool poly, wool silk, pure wool (100s to 240s) and for trousers they have pure wool and wool blends, cotton, and linen. For shirts they have cotton and in that it is mainly two-ply and linen. "With the advent of slim fits and with the current rage being Ultra slim we felt it necessary to introduce fabrics having an element of stretch so that it could add to the comfort. The stretch is provided by using 2-3 per cent lycra. Previously stretch fabric using lycra was available for women's clothing only", avers Naveen. With the launch of Stretch Fabric, P N Rao continues to introduce products that are internationally acclaimed and accepted by the global Indian male, which further strengthens its foothold in the men's fashion business. "This new fabric will cater to the need of a cosmopolitan male who prefers to be suited for various occasions, whether it is to dress up for corporate meetings, a casual day at work,



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social gatherings or globetrotting on work, and leisure. A well-tailored suit in the stretch fabric will put one at ease with an impeccable feel and finish that is on par with international standards. Stretch fabric is a recent addition to the world of fashion and will be a trendsetting development in the dressing behaviour of consumers. With the need of slimmer and sleeker fabrics rising in the market, the stretch fabric will be the perfect answer for snug-fit clothing,” explains Naveen. The company has suits and blazers both ready to wear and fabrics, wedding wear, shirts, and trousers as a part of its apparel offerings. “Both fabrics and ready to wear suits are doing well with us and our strategy of providing the complete look has enhanced the sale of accessories at our stores”, says Naveen.

### BEING EXCLUSIVE

Naturally, with a plethora of brands and options in the market, maintaining a tag of exclusivity is a challenge. “It is challenging, considering that we have to plan a year or year and a half in advance for a majority of our products. We conduct a trend analysis by visiting international fairs, we

compare this with our local trend analysis and bring out the best range that will suit our country. Sourcing fabrics is also a challenge especially considering that we are very finicky about quality and supply dates. Aligning our accessories collection along with that is also a huge challenge. We also constantly keep upgrading our tailoring by attending international tailoring events such as World Federation of Master Tailors and Federation of Asian Master Tailors”, explains Naveen.

### FUTURE PERFECT

Looking ahead, the brand is going to see a lot of action in the wool-silk blend for ceremonial wear in the near future, more in design rather than in fabric quality like stretch fabric. “We are looking to create a franchise concept and grow in the brick and mortar space until 2023. We are currently working on an omnichannel model but it is on hold due to new ERP implementation. The market is growing at a healthy pace; we are seeing a year on year growth of about 15-20 per cent. This year it slowed down slightly, demonetization could be one of the reasons”, says Naveen. The brand continues to be buoyant on suits and in addition, is looking to set up a bridge to luxury concept store starting with a floor dedicated to it at their M G Road store by March 2018. They are also keen to start a store in Hyderabad by April 2018. “So as an initiative, we have created a ‘luxury wall’ section at our Anna Nagar store in Chennai that houses some of the exquisite luxury collection of suits and accessories. And by December 2017, we are dedicating a floor at our M G Road store to act as a bridge to the luxury space”, adds Naveen. So get ready to be all suited up soon! ■

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