

# SOARING HIGH!

**Bindu Gopal Rao** engages in a conversation with Rishabh Oswal, Executive Director, Monte Carlo and Founder, Rock.It, who has taken the family brand a notch higher with his foresight and innovation.

The Oswal brand has an instant recall value in the apparel industry, courtesy of the fact that it has been around for several generations. Now a third-generation member of the Oswal family who has been successfully managing Monte Carlo since many years and has led it to become a highly renowned and established brand, Rishabh Oswal has made some new changes, giving the brand a new-age fill-up. The success story of the Oswal brand is being spearheaded by Rishabh, who has innovated and also launched his own sportswear line called 'Rock.It'. A new venture in the Indian athleisure fashion market, Rishabh is all set to make Rock.It a game changer in the apparel sector.



INNOVATION AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ARE RISHABH'S FOCUS AREAS THAT HAS HELPED MONTE CARLO CEMENT ITS REPUTATION IN THE APPAREL INDUSTRY.



Rishabh is the Director of Cotton County Retail Ltd and Oswal Woollen Mills Ltd, the parent company of the group and a top producer of woollen and acrylic yarns in India. Innovation and customer satisfaction are Rishabh's focus areas that has helped Monte Carlo cement its reputation in the apparel industry. Among one of the few fashion wear brands listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange, this company is making waves, thanks to its many innovations. Rishabh opines that people should look fashionable at all times, including when they are working out. This is why the Rock.It range addresses the dual needs of sportswear and fashion wear. What had been a dream has come to fruition with the launch of his athleisure brand and naturally, he is excited to see how the brand pans out in the future. He tells us more in this exclusive conversation.



**TELL US ABOUT YOUR EARLY DAYS AND EDUCATION.**

After completing my BA (Hons) in Management Studies from the University of Nottingham in the UK in the year of 2013, I pursued an Executive MBA from the prestigious Indian School of Business, Hyderabad.

**BEING FROM A FAMILY OF ENTREPRENEURS, WAS THE APPAREL INDUSTRY ALWAYS YOUR CALLING?**

Apparel came late in the picture, but business was undoubtedly my first calling. My entrepreneurial instincts were strong from my college days, which led to my campus venture that was started in 2012 (a frozen yogurt and gelato company) and has five outlets in Punjab today. After finishing my studies and managing my frozen yogurt company, joining the family business was a dream come true to me and the position I was offered demanded hard work. Then, my young mind was not afraid to do what it takes to be successful and today, I am handling several companies through my chair.

All images: @Monte Carlo

## ENTREPRENEUR SPEAK

### TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY TO-DAY WITH SOME KEY HIGHLIGHTS.

Monte Carlo is a premium quality fashion apparel brand and it is a legacy passed on to me. I am a third-generation member of the family and have helped rejuvenate the brand's position. My journey started as executive director of Monte Carlo and today, I have launched my own fitness clothing line, Rock.It. The journey was not smooth, but I tackled every difficulty using creativity. I can humbly say that my proactiveness has injected the company with the power to overcome any issues.

### WHAT ARE THE KINDS OF INNOVATIONS YOU BROUGHT INTO THE COMPANY AFTER YOU JOINED?

Monte Carlo is an established brand and our products keep trending among fashion lovers. However, with rapidly changing consumerism, the brand needed a unique and youthful positioning in the market. With a revamped logo and new clothing lines, I have given a new look to Monte Carlo.

### TELL US ABOUT YOUR DENIM LINE. ALSO TELL US ABOUT YOUR SPORTS-WEAR/ATHLEISURE BRAND, ROCK.IT.

The Monte Carlo denim line is especially crafted to give you a fashionably comfortable experience. Premium quality fabric, advanced technology and the newest cuts and patterns for both men and women make the Monte Carlo denim line popular among all age groups.

Rock.It apparel is designed keeping the requirements of sportswear and fashion wear in mind. A lot of attention is given to fashion trends, colour scheme, design and the right quality of fabrics so as to suit the needs of athletes and people active in sports. The fabrics used are of the highest quality, which make the clothes sweat-friendly, comfortable, airy, stylish, and easy to carry off at all times. Rock.It apparel is made of 100 per cent polyester, terry and fleece fabrics, especially imported from Korea, Taiwan and other Asian countries. The garments are sweat absorbent, super-flexible, breathable, anti-static, anti-microbial and absolutely easy to dry. Inspired from the most trending couture designs across





the world, the clothing range is elite, unique and gives a stylish edge to one's look. A limited number of 300 pieces of a design makes each piece from the line exclusive and simply worth the investment.

#### **WHAT ARE THE NEW-AGE TRENDS IN THE APPAREL SECTOR?**

Geometric necklines, different prints and quirky cuts on sleeves are trending. Breezy white dresses, strappy sandals, silky midi skirts, smocked tops, checked pants and asymmetric necklines are in fashion. Polka dots and feathers are making a comeback. Lilac is the new millennial pink for this season and red and pink is the combination to follow. The vintage puff shoulder has made a comeback this season. Ankle-length boots, white tank, metallic, rainbow prints are all options for women to follow this season. For men, coats, jackets, sweatshirts and quirky T-shirts, and jeans and trousers in light fabrics are in fashion. Wingtip boots, suede sneakers, and glasses can be used to accessorise the look.

#### **WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES YOU SEE IN THE APPAREL SECTOR?**

A skilled workforce has always been the biggest challenge in the apparel sector. Despite the abundance of human resources, lack of skilled

workers influences the productivity adversely. Lack of fibre neutrality, limited FTAs, duty drawback rates, lower efficiency, high costs of capital, infrastructure, a buyer-driven commodity chain are holding back the Indian apparel industry till date. With the expansion of a more organised industry, India can secure a significant position on the apparel atlas.

#### **HOW HAS GST IMPACTED BUSINESS? ALSO HOW ARE THE GOVERNMENT POLICIES TOWARDS THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY AFFECTING BUSINESS?**

The dust of the GST storm has settled, and the ease of doing business seems to be turning into a reality soon. E-way bills and the GSTN portal have made logistics much easier, and this will positively boost the business.

#### **WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS FOR YOUR BRAND?**

I will strengthen the brand value further, make our retail presence even stronger pan India and add more variety to our apparel range.

#### **TELL US ABOUT WHAT YOU DO IN YOUR FREE TIME.**

Horse riding, trekking, and adventure sports keep me busy during my free time. I spend my Sundays with my nieces and nephews in the house or with my friends. I love playing video games too. ■