



Monte Carlo entered the organised ready-to-wear business in India at a time when the unorganised segment ruled supreme. 30 years after it launched the brand, Monte Carlo is a powerful name in the fashion garments industry. It straddles the ready-to-wear market with a range of year-long clothing for the young, fashion-conscious adult. In its studios are tomorrow's garments under development and on its floors the latest machines that will make them possible.

Market

The Indian clothing market is a complex medley. Its fabrics comprise everything from cottons and woollens to silks and rayons and their colours match the brush strokes of an eccentric master. From its northern outposts to its most southern tip, the landscape changes from towering mountains and windswept ice fields to forbidding deserts and lush green fields.

Not surprisingly, India is one of the world's most exciting ready-to-wear markets. Although small in size and nascent in reach, it is growing rapidly and offering professional marketers an opportunity to match wits with its idiosyncrasies. The markets, in the main, are mostly controlled by the unorganised sector whose influence is limited to the regions they operate in. However, in the



last decade and a half this supremacy has been challenged. First by home-grown companies and then by multinational brands who have come to India seeking their own rainbow and a pot of gold at the end of it.

Monte Carlo is the leading player in the premium woollen knitwear segment, commanding an impressive 50% share of the market (Source: DFUs Inside Fashion). But woollen knitwear is not only seasonal, in the south the market for it barely exists. Clearly in this narrow focus the brand was restricting itself and losing out on several opportunities. To remedy this, Monte Carlo developed a range of summer wear, comprising shirts, light casuals and trousers for both adults and tweens and evolved as an all-season brand.



Achievements

With a rounded offering Monte Carlo has pushed the envelope on high-fashion. No longer a brand limited to just the premium segment, Monte Carlo, despite its premium looks, has penetrated into the mass market. Along the way, the brand has gained the ISO 9001:2000 certification and has been felicitated by the International Wool Secretariat with the prestigious Best Exhibited Product award. It has also emerged as the number one brand in the menswear category in a survey conducted in the summer of 2009 by Images-ORG-MARG.

In 2000, Monte Carlo introduced Wonderhugs, a high-fashion range of whole garments. The whole garment technology is a revolutionary concept that allows the garment to be knitted in one piece. The no joints, rough edges or bulging seams has a remarkable impact on comfort, endowing the product with a better finish and silhouette, besides excellent draping properties and unmatched elegance.

Another development that set Monte Carlo apart was its launch of a new premium brand. Platine encapsulated some of the finest winter wear products ever presented in the Indian market. The top-end launch saw the introduction of a complete range of premium mercerised garments at par with the best international brands in India.

While Monte Carlo was busy introducing novel concepts and premium labels, its parent

company, Oswal Woollen Mills (OWM), was busy acquiring the coveted Woolmark license from the Wool Secretariat. This license qualifies the company to act as a quality-checking centre for other manufacturers.

History

Oswal Woollen Mills, the flagship company of the more than ₹5000 crore Nahar Group, began operations in 1949 as a small hosiery factory in Ludhiana. The Nahar Group is now an industrial conglomerate with a diversified portfolio that includes spinning, knitting, fabric processing, hosiery garments and knitwear, apart from infrastructure development and IT.

In its early years, it focused on hosiery and textile fabric. However, by 1972, it had become restless. Eyeing a huge business opportunity in the domestic market for readymade knitwear, it set up its wool-combing unit. It was not till 1984 that OWM launched its signature brand, Monte



Carlo. This was a significant step in the evolution of the branded garment industry in India, for it was the first time that someone had stood up and challenged the might of the deeply-entrenched unbranded and unorganised sectors.

In the first year of operation, the brands' turnover touched a small, but potentially explosive ₹2.50 crore and gave the company encouragement to believe that the market could be cracked.

Product

One of the most significant features of Monte Carlo products is its consistent positioning. From inception, it has always pegged itself as high-quality fashion winter wear made from pure Australian Merino and lambs' wool, certified

with the Woolmark logo. While sweaters have been its mainstay, the brand has striven to ensure that it is always in sync with international fashion and trends. It is this that has endeared it to its clients. However, at the beginning of this decade, Monte Carlo re-engineered itself, emerging from the makeover as a complete fashion brand. In 1999, the company forayed into the summer casual segment with the addition of T-shirts to its portfolio. Monte Carlo T-shirts are, today, available in several qualities of fine fabric including mercerised, Pima and Egyptian cotton for both men and women.

Some years back, Monte Carlo spotted another opportunity and forayed into the tweens wear segment launching a separate brand – Tweens Monte Carlo for 8-14 year aged boys and girls. The brand was designed to offer trendy clothes for the age-group and was imbued with the same characteristics as the parent brand.

The company's Spring/Summer collection consists of shirts, trousers, denims, Bermudas, lowers, hi-street fashion shirts, tops, dresses, jumpsuits, urban tunics, shrugs, shorts, capris, narrow pants, leggings, track suits and solid T-shirts. Monte Carlo's T-shirts come in both horizontal and vertical stripes alternating between colourful, heavy and fine lines, punched into a neutral ground.

The current season sees a new range of slim-fit crews with striking graphics. To cater to denim fans, Monte Carlo offers a huge selection of basic denim in various tints and shades and includes accessories such as belts, metal buckles and co-ordinated rivets. Monte Carlo's range of shirts consists of comfortable linens and trendy casuals in checks and stripes and an innovative collection of washed formals.

2015 has been the year of huge innovation. Monte Carlo has introduced climate control denim where the temperature of the denim automatically increases or decreases depending upon the room temperature. In this way the denim will feel cool in summer and warm in winters. The brand has continued with its two other successful concepts: anti odour denim and water repellent denim. The former, as the name suggests, prevents bacteria from developing inside the denim weave while the water repellent denim resists water.

Monte Carlo's Autumn/Winter range includes shirts, denims, trousers, full sleeve T-shirts, rugby woollen T-shirts, sweat shirts, sweaters, pullovers, jackets, coats, Nehru jackets, track suits, legging sets, Indo-Western kurtis, woollen tops, boomerang- and velvet-lowers, cardigans, shawls, mufflers, hooded scarves, caps, capes, thermals etc. for men, women and tweens.



Recent Developments

In a move to strengthen its reach and presence, Monte Carlo has expanded its distribution network to almost every part of the country. It has chalked out a new marketing and distribution strategy that ensures its latest product range reaches consumers in the shortest possible time. This from-machine-to-consumer initiative has helped the brand to keep fully stocked more than 1300 retail outlets and more than 200 exclusive Monte Carlo stores across India. To reinforce its operations further, the company has chalked out an ambitious programme of increasing these to 275 by March 2016. The company's products are also available on its dedicated website and also on other leading ecommerce portals such as Jabong, Myntra, Snapdeal, Amazon etc.

Looking at the buoyancy of the market, Monte Carlo has created another sub brand – Cloak & Decker. The company expects that this will generate its own fan following and fashion a new trend.

To underscore the point that Monte Carlo is a brand in a hurry, it has set up a state-of-the-



art, fully automated knitting unit with specialised machines not available with any other company in the country. This 400,000 square foot facility has become fully operational.

Promotion

Monte Carlo advertising has always been under-stated but always chic, trendy and uncompromising. Year after year, it has sought to convey the feel-good and romance of wearing well-designed clothes.

With advertising restricted to select media vehicles, Monte Carlo has relied heavily on word-of-mouth. Its brand awareness and reputation has essentially been built this way – and through positive press coverage. Monte Carlo participates in fashion shows while exclusive product launches form a key plank of its marketing strategy.

Since its entry into the market, Monte Carlo has staunchly symbolised the magic of romance. The high point in most of its campaigns is the special moment when two people discover their unrequited love for each other. Whether as a tag line in print or a song accompanying a visual, the catch line – it's the way you make me

feel – captures the heady feeling of euphoria and exhilaration. The style and treatment of the campaigns distinguishes Monte Carlo from other brands.

Brand Values

Monte Carlo epitomises superior quality and international styling at affordable prices. Its popularity stems from the inherent warmth and comfort exuded by its clothing.

The personality and style are underpinned by the brand's core values: romance – the warmth, love and passion of wearing a top-of-the-line clothes range; joy – supreme happiness in living the good life and quality of design, fabric, cut and fit. Monte Carlo showcases a distinct image of its brand persona as young, cosmopolitan, cheerful, dynamic, loving and passionate – just the way its customers are.

Things you didn't know about MONTE CARLO

- ▶ Monte Carlo ads have been a stepping-stone for many leading models of today who straddle the world of fashion. They include Arjun Rampal, Rahul Dev, Aryan Vaid, Sushma Reddy, Himanshu Malik, Mallika Sehrawat, Shawar Ali, Nandana Sen, Neha Kapoor, Vipasha Aggarwal and Rajnesh Duggal, among others
- ▶ The company's Winter '14 and Summer '15 campaigns were based on the theme of Unhide Your Love. The campaign highlighted love in its purest form
- ▶ Monte Carlo was the clothing partner in several Bollywood blockbusters including Barfi, Student of the Year, Bhaag Milkha Bhaag and Mary Kom
- ▶ The brand's tag line – it's the way you make me feel – has been a constant factor in all its campaigns for more than a decade
- ▶ Monte Carlo is now an international brand with stores in the UAE and Nepal
- ▶ In 2013, the Chairman of the Group, Jawahar Lal Oswal, was honoured with the Life Time Achievement award for the Best Entrepreneur by the Ludhiana Management Association
- ▶ In 2014, Monte Carlo was honoured as one of Asia's Best Marketing Brands – Manufacturing Category – by World Consulting & Research Corporation (WCRC)
- ▶ Monte Carlo is listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange

