

Oberalp takes over Velotex

Verticalization in the climbing skins industry: OBERALP GROUP acquires Velotex

Oberalp secures entire supply chain for ski mountaineering climbing skin production

On December 14th the Oberalp Group (Bozen, Italy), leader in the mountain equipment industry, and Pongs Velours GmbH & Co. KG (Wermelskirchen, Germany), leading manufacturer in high-end mohair velvet, signed an agreement where Pongs sold their skins-velvet division Velotex GmbH to the Italian group.

The main raw material of a skin is a specific technical textile called velours. This velvet is done with a highend yarn of wool, the mohair wool, and is woven with a precise face to face woven to make the skins glide in one sense and grip in the other. The market of ski mountaineering is growing very fast and the shortage of mohair yarn is becoming more and more critical. The fact of joining forced will allow for Oberalp to strength the supply chain and better source together this valuable raw material.

For many years Velotex has been the main supplier of velvet for the ski mountaineering climbing skins industry and was supplying almost 100% of the velvet for the Oberalp Group brand POMOCA. This long-lasting cooperation of POMOCA and Velotex convinced the Executive Board of the Oberalp Group to merge and join forces, generating with POMOCA the first ski mountaineering climbing skins manufacturer to verticalize from the yarn until the final consumer.

"Velotex was for us already a strategic partner, since we had an excellent relation and did several developments together. Merging is for me the wished natural step to be able to work even more together, plan common investment and think wildly into the future" said POMOCA's general manager Josep Castellet. POMOCA employs 50 people in Denges, Switzerland, and is today market leader and supplies to several ski brands, as Dynafit, K2, Blizzard or Black Crows.

Gunnar Pongs, the CEO of Pongs and Velotex is very satisfied with the deal: "For us this merge is a consolidation of work done

together and gives us the financial and commercial serenity we need to grow further together. The growth is pressive and the pressure on the mohair market remains very high. But together we are a lot stronger!". Velotex employs 12 people in a 3700m2 factory in Wermelskirchen, Germany.



POMOCA – Oberalp Group brand and the market leader for ski mountaineering climbing skins

For any decision in Oberalp, there is a strategy behind. "In a world where supply chain and production gains importance, as we have seen with the covid pandemic, verticalization is a pillar for Oberalp to ensure good quality products, competitive advantage and reliable deliveries. Oberalp will continue verticalizing for the next years as we believe that this will give us the strength we need for the next years" declared Christoph Engl, the CEO of Oberalp Group. POMOCA is currently the fastest growing brand (+100% compared to 2020) and also serves many well-known ski brands as a recognized "ingredient brand" for ski skins.

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The Oberalp Group is a family owned and management led company with headquarters in Bolzano, northern Italy. Heiner Oberrauch founded the company in 1981 and today the group employs roughly 700 people, runs 10 subsidiaries in Europe and the United States and serves 3,500 customers in over 60 countries worldwide. In addition to the development and production of mountain sports articles, the company also operates as distribution partner of sports-based brands. The formerly Munich-based SALEWA brand has been part of the Oberalp Group since 1990. Over the years, the group has acquired the brands DYNAFIT, POMOCA, WILD COUNTRY and EVOLV. In 2022, the group launched the new mountain brand by women for women LaMunt. The family business relies on the courage to break new ground, continuous innovation in products, processes and thinking. A conscious, sensible approach to the environment and resources and a passion for sport and mountains are the foundation of a living corporate culture. Since 2019, the Oberalp Group's sustainability report "Contribute" has been published simultaneously with the balance sheet figures. For the fifth time in succession, the company was the only enterprise in Italy to be awarded the „Leader Status“ of the NGO „Fair Wear Foundation“.