

WORLD FOOTWEAR®

JULY/AUGUST 2015 • VOLUME 29 No.4

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE GLOBAL SHOE INDUSTRY



Boring boots? Not at Sorrell
Footwear fasteners matter
Why some shoes mean pleasure and pain

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Image: Lisa Sorrell

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World Trades Publishing 2015.

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World Footwear is published 6 times per year by World Trades Publishing, 36 Crosby Road North, Liverpool L22 4QQ, England. Price UK £80 & ROW £135 per year (six issues). Credit cards will be charged in GB Pounds converted at the daily bank rate. Your credit card company may charge you for this service. Graphic origination by WTP. Printed by Bishops Printers, Walton Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 1TR, England. All rights reserved. ISSN 0894-3079.

World Trades Publishing 2015.

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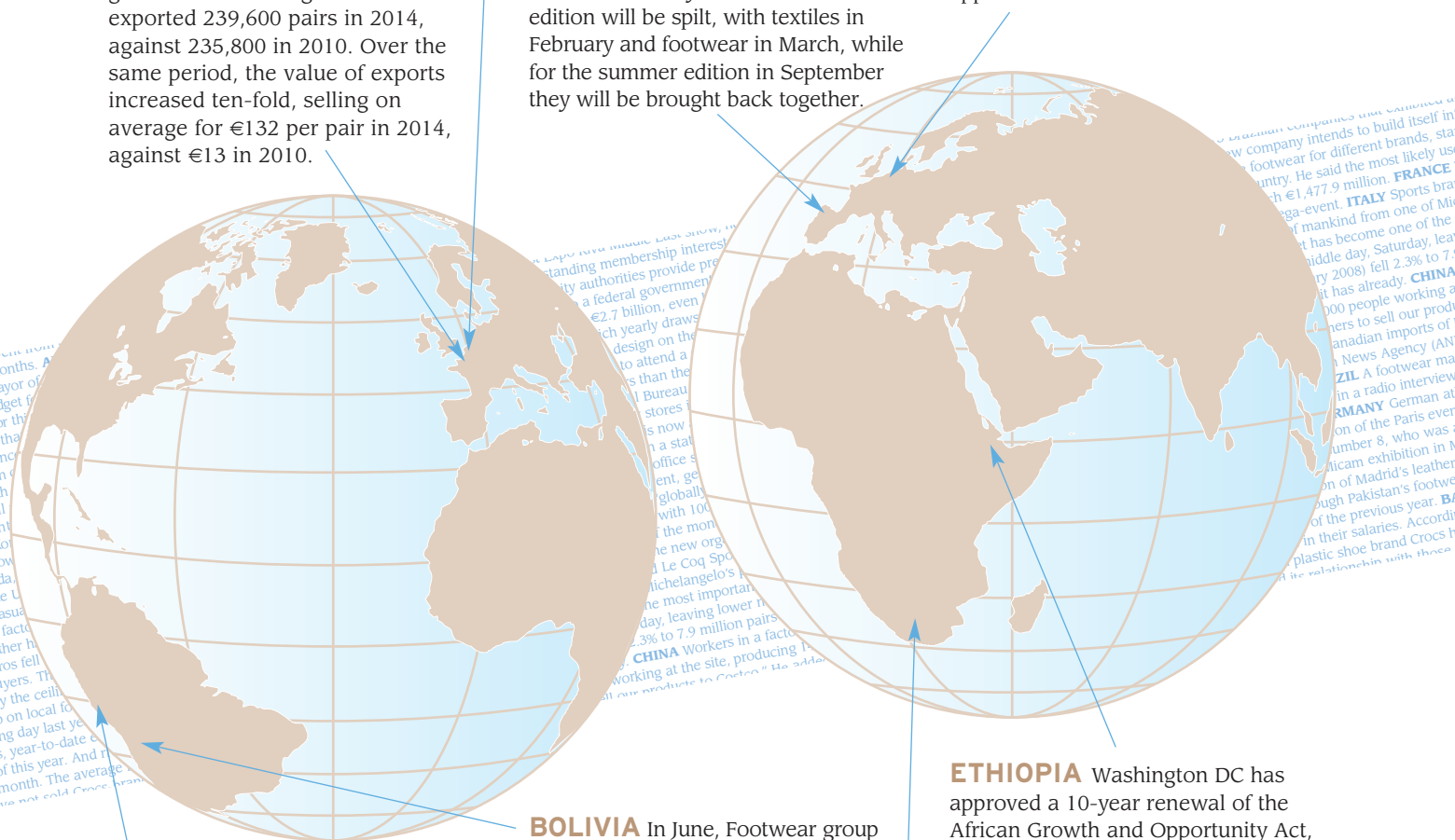
News

BELGIUM The second seminar in the programme 'A Future For European Leather' took place in Paris, co-hosted by the leather industry's representative body in the European Union, COTANCE. COTANCE president Jonathan Muirhead said in the leather and footwear sector in the EU, there is a contribution of €80,000 in turnover per employee each year. "The industry is made up of many small companies but we should not underestimate the importance to the European economy."

FRANCE The value of French shoe exports to Asia rose 15% in 2014 to €355.7 million, according to the French Leather Council (CNC), while export value to China grew an astonishing 89%. France exported 239,600 pairs in 2014, against 235,800 in 2010. Over the same period, the value of exports increased ten-fold, selling on average for €132 per pair in 2014, against €13 in 2010.

SPAIN Following on from the announcement that footwear will be given a dedicated hall at the September edition of Momad Metrópolis, organisers have announced a shift in dates from next year. The winter edition will be spilt, with textiles in February and footwear in March, while for the summer edition in September they will be brought back together.

GERMANY Italian footwear manufacturers association Assocalzaturifici has signed a five-year agreement for Munich-based trade show Moda Made In Italy. It said the German market is showing "signs of difficulty", despite growth in the past two years. Between January and November 2014, Italy exported 30.2 million pairs of shoes to Germany, worth €865 million. The average price rose 7.1%, which Assocal says shows high-end shoes are "still very much appreciated on the German market".



PERU Shoe production in Peru's principal leathersgoods cluster, El Porvenir, declined by 8 million pairs in 2014 to 30 million pairs, due to competition from Chinese imports. The president of the local shoe association, Vladimir de la Roca, said: "We have been asking the government to stop Peruvian leather leaving the country as easily as it does, but the government has done nothing about this."

BOLIVIA In June, Footwear group Bata celebrated the 75th anniversary of its arrival in Bolivia. "The Manaco factory came to have great importance in the history of Bolivia because of the quality of the shoes we have produced there, the jobs we have created and the support we have been able to give to Bolivia's development," said Bata's CEO in Bolivia, Mónica Mier.

ETHIOPIA Washington DC has approved a 10-year renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which provides duty-free access for products made in qualifying countries. Matt Priest, president of the Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America, said: "This legislation is critical to US footwear companies sourcing from Africa." In 2009, Ethiopian shoe manufacturers exported 10,000 pairs of shoes to the US. In 2014, the figure was 1.6 million pairs.

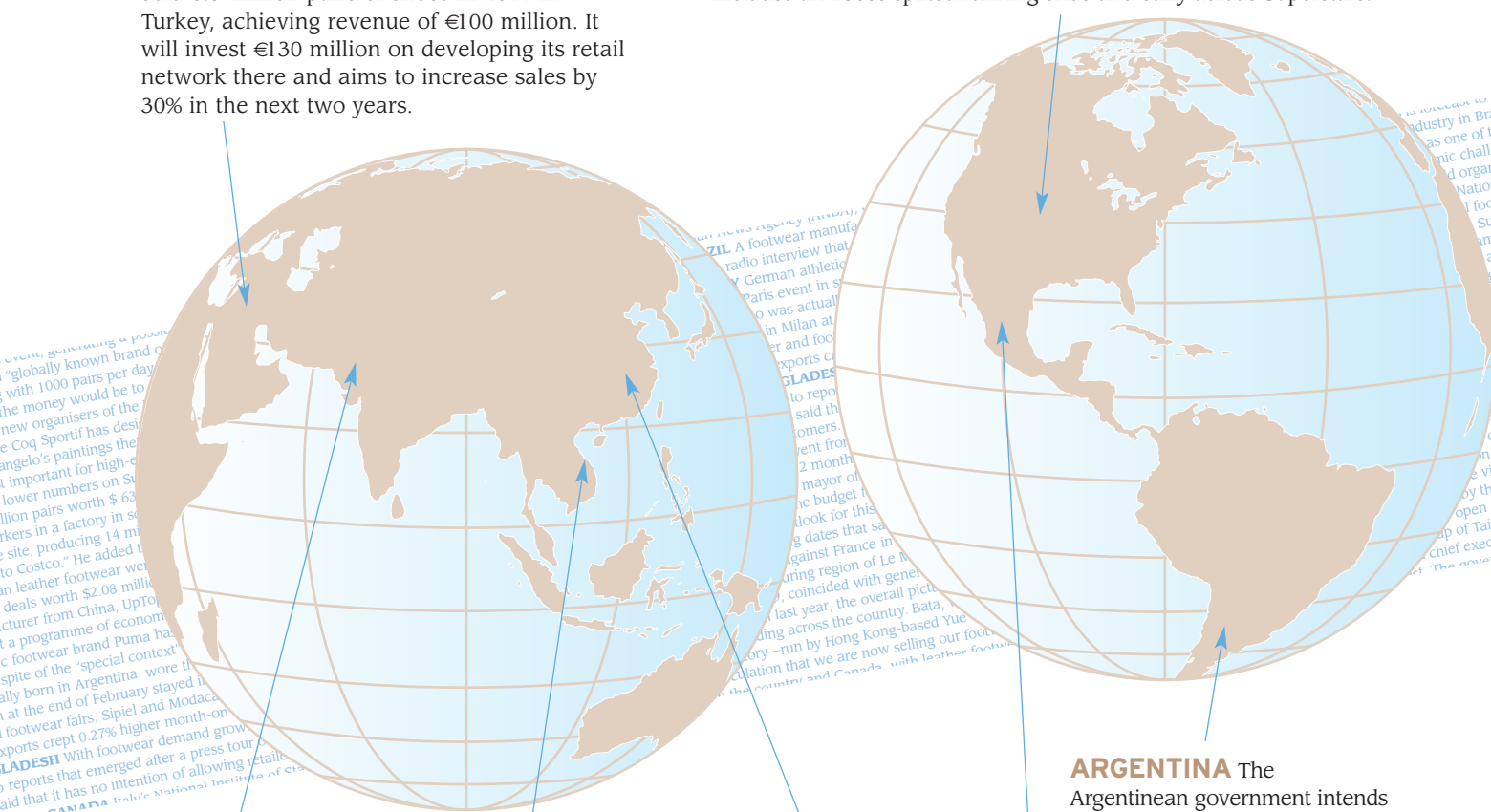
SOUTH AFRICA Footwear manufacturers from the provinces of Gauteng, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape have travelled to China to start a government-backed three-month training programme in shoe design and manufacture. South Africa's minister for trade and industry, Dr Rob Davies, said the aim is to increase the numbers of entrepreneurs, to save jobs and create new ones.

TURKEY A measure by the Turkish government to slow growth in imports of cheap shoes from Asia may have produced an unintended benefit. Barbaros Akyil, president of The Beta Shoe Company, said brands are seeking to get around the high import duties by starting production in Turkey. His firm is in negotiations with a potential partner from Austria.

● German footwear retail group Deichmann sold 6.5 million pairs of shoes in 2014 in Turkey, achieving revenue of €100 million. It will invest €130 million on developing its retail network there and aims to increase sales by 30% in the next two years.

US Nike topped the children's footwear charts in the year to the end of April, accounting for 19.5% of online purchases from US consumers, according to The NPD Group. Children's Place accounted for 5.4% of sales, followed by Crocs with 5.2%. The other brands in the top 10 were Stride Rite, New Balance, Converse, Toms, adidas, Puma and Skechers.

● The history of trainers and their cultural significance will be under the spotlight as part of an exhibition at the US-based Brooklyn Museum from July 10 until October. The Rise of Sneaker Culture includes an 1860s spiked running shoe and early adidas Superstars.



PAKISTAN Pakistan's total export earnings from the leather sector during the first 10 months of the financial year (July 2014 to April 2015) fell by almost 4% compared with the same period a year ago, reaching just over \$1 billion. Footwear exports fell 8.9% to 11.5 million pairs, but values were up, by 12.9%, to reach \$108.6 million.

CHINA China's biggest footwear retailer Belle International has reported a 9% rise in revenues for the year to the end of February to \$6.5 billion, but said rising labour costs and a slowing economy impacted profit. Belle stated: "With increasing participation in sports by Chinese consumers, there is a long term trend for increasing demand for sportswear products. Strong global sportswear brands such as Nike and adidas are well positioned to strengthen their competitive advantage and capture market share in China, on the back of strong brand equity, industry-leading R&D, broad product line and superior supply chain."

VIETNAM New figures from Vietnam's ministry of industry and trade show the value of footwear exports in the first five months of 2015 was more than \$4.6 billion, an increase of 19.5%. A survey by the General Statistics Office found that 55.7% of shoe manufacturers increased the number of their export customers in the second quarter of 2015.

ARGENTINA The Argentinean government intends to impose price-control mechanisms on leather, footwear and leathersgoods to "avoid distortions in the competition among companies". Part of the government's thinking is to stop tanners from exporting leather to buyers overseas. Industry minister Débora Giorgi issued a call to add as much value as possible to Argentinean raw material and to finished products.

MEXICO Footwear manufacturers in Guanajuato state exported 20 million pairs of shoes in 2014 with a total value of \$469 million, according to industry association CICEG - 82% of Mexico's footwear exports. The association said the average price per pair of \$23.36 is a sign the state's footwear makers were producing high quality shoes.



Footprints

FDRA CLAIMS 'HISTORIC WIN' IN TRADE BILL

Matt Priest, president of the Footwear Distributors and Retailer of America (FDRA), has praised the passage of the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) as "a historic win".

Agreed by a vote of 60 to 38, the bill now heads to President Obama for his signature. It will mean the 12 nations negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) can move quickly if and when they finalise remaining issues.

Mr Priest said: "After a long and challenging few weeks, the footwear industry is extremely excited about the final passage of Trade Promotion Authority and the road ahead to finalising the TPP.

"This was a team effort as the footwear industry rallied to the cause of economic expansion and job growth and I want to thank all involved for their efforts. This truly was a historic win for our industry."

The FDRA says footwear tariffs average 10% and reach upwards of 67.5%. Duties on leather loafers are 8.5% and 48% on most children's shoes. It estimates that the TPP would provide duty savings of \$500 million per year.

ESPRIT SHOULD DISTANCE ITSELF FROM PETA - GLCC

The Global Leather Coordinating Committee (GLCC) has sent an open letter to Esprit CEO **Jose Manuel Martínez Gutiérrez** urging him to distance his company from claims made by the People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) regarding the leather manufacturing industry.

Esprit has adopted PETA's Certified Vegan Leather mark on some of its footwear lines.

The GLCC notes that animal hides and skins are an inevitable by-product of global meat and dairy consumption, disputing allegations by the animal rights group that cattle, pigs and other food-producing animals are harvested for leather production.

It says: "PETA regularly, and wrongfully, claims the global leather industry slaughters animals solely for



OBAMA VISITS NIKE TO CAMPAIGN ON TPP

Nike's CEO, **Mark Parker**, said the company has intentions of developing "advanced manufacturing methods" and a domestic supply chain to support US-based manufacturing which would be helped by a Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal.

US President **Barack Obama** was at the group's headquarters in Oregon to deliver a speech on the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) and the TPP.

Nike says the footwear tariff relief would allow it to create 10,000 domestic jobs over the next decade.

Opposers to the TPP questioned the location for the speech, saying Nike has moved jobs to Asia, where 90% of its workforce is based.

Mr Parker countered: "We believe agreements that encourage free and fair trade allow Nike to do what we do best: innovate, expand and drive economic growth."

the purpose of leather production and that this involves universal cruelty to the animals. Animal hides and skins are a natural and inevitable by-product of meat and dairy consumption."

It adds that alternative materials, such as the polyurethanes used to produce plastics for synthetic footwear components, are fossil-fuel based derivatives produced from oil. Any claims regarding their "sustainability"

must also bear the accompanying burden of fossil-fuel extraction, refinement, transportation and associated environmental costs.

It continues: "The industry has established widely adopted processes and technologies for the production of leather under safe and sustainable conditions. The vast majority of global leather tanners have implemented these technologies using the right products and operating under safe condition for their workers.

"Of course, there are a small number of leather tanners in unregulated markets still operating below a minimum acceptable level of production standard. However, the industry is doing its utmost to change this unfortunate reality. PETA does not recognise any of this work, instead choosing to sensationalise and aggrandise isolated examples of objectionable and obscene behaviour."

The GLCC is made up of three leading leather industry organisations: The International Council of Hides, Skins and Leather Traders Association, the International Council of Tanners and the International Union of Leather Technologists and Chemists Societies. *[For the full facts about leather production, readers should read the essays at www.nothing-to-hide.org].*

SUSTAINABILITY EXPERT LEADS NEW ZDHC ENTITY

The Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals (ZDHC) Group has appointed its first executive director to lead the recently established legal entity, based in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Frank Michel previously worked as the director of regulation and sustainability management for IWorldSync, a product information network, and has worked in governmental affairs and NGO liaison for industry associations, similar to ZDHC, for more than 15 years.

ZDHC Group said the appointment will help expand the group's efforts in ramping up supplier training, developing industry standards for chemical management information capture and monitoring industry

compliance with the ZDHC Manufacturing Restricted Substances List (MRSL).

The ZDHC Group includes brand members adidas Group, Jack Wolfskin, Li Ning, New Balance, Nike, Puma and PVH, plus associate members including the Association of the German Sporting Goods Industry, the European Outdoor Group and the Stockholm International Water Institute.

VIBRAM PROMOTES FOR NEW MANAGEMENT ROLE

Soles maker Vibram has appointed long-time employee **Paolo Manuzzi** as general manager, reporting directly to CEO **Marco Bramani**.

Mr Mannuzzi joined in 1993 with responsibility for the Italian and Spanish markets before becoming sales director in 2001.

The Italian company says the creation of the role confirms its desire to “develop new strategies to strengthen brand reputation”.

CEC ELECTS CLETO SAGRIPANTI AS PRESIDENT

European footwear industry confederation CEC elected Italy's **Cleto Sagripanti** as its new president, replacing **Jean-Pierre Renaudin** of France, at its 2015 general assembly held in Istanbul on May 27.

Mr Sagripanti is already president of Europe's largest national footwear association, Assocalzaturifici. He said that during his presidency of CEC, which will last two years, he would focus on encouraging the European Commission to support re-shoring strategies and to promote “market access on a level playing field”. He said he also wanted to help bring about a better regulatory environment for small- and medium-sized companies in the footwear sector.

WOLVERINE PROMOTES FOR FINANCIAL ROLE

Outdoor footwear group Wolverine Worldwide has announced the appointment of **Michael Stornant** as its chief financial officer (CFO), succeeding **Donald Grimes**.

Mr Grimes has taken up the position of CFO at retail group **Neiman Marcus**. Mr Stornant will take up his new role on June 12.

Michael Stornant has worked for Wolverine Worldwide for the last 19 years, serving most recently as vice-president in charge of corporate finance, with global responsibility for the company's corporate accounting, financial planning, tax and credit functions

EU COUNCIL MEETING A 'GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT'

The European Union Competitiveness Council has failed to overcome a stalemate after a meeting in Brussels to address mandatory marking of origin for non-food goods sold in the European Union.

The long-running issue has disappointed footwear companies, such as those represented by Italian footwear manufacturers association Assocalzaturifici, which have been campaigning for the labelling to be compulsory. On the opposing side, big footwear brands with manufacturing locations in Asia have petitioned for the origin to remain undisclosed.

Cleto Sagripanti, former president of Assocalzaturifici, described the meeting as “disappointing” and “another opportunity wasted”.

He added: “It is truly disappointing to see Europe fail to agree yet again on the introduction of obligatory marking of origin, making it practically the only area in the world without consumer protection for goods traded in its territory, whereas our trade partners, primarily the United States, but also China, introduced obligatory marking of origin some time ago.

“Because of this political impasse, millions of European consumers still do not have clear information on the products they are purchasing and their traceability. The EU has missed another great opportunity to support its own manufacturing industry; it's becoming clear that all the talk about an ‘Industrial Renaissance’ in Europe is just hot air. We can't help being very disappointed for our businesses, many of which are small enterprises, and for the 250,000 or so workers employed in the European footwear industry”.

ASSOCAL ELECTS FIRST WOMAN PRESIDENT

Italian footwear manufacturers' association Assocalzaturifici (Assocal) has chosen **Annarita Pilotti**, co-founder

with her husband of high-end footwear brand Loriblu, as its new president.

She will head up the organisation for the next four years.

Before founding Loriblu with her husband in 1995, Ms Pilotti worked as a police officer.

MIZUNO AIMS FOR 'NEXT LEVEL' WITH BRAND HIRE

Mizuno USA has appointed **Mark O'Brien** as vice-president of brand marketing and management, reporting to **Bob Puccini**, director of Mizuno Corporation.

Mr O'Brien started his career in sports marketing with the Texas-Louisiana Professional Baseball League, Houston Rockets and GMR Marketing and has since worked for MillerCoors, Johnsonville Sausage, HoneyBaked and Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

Mr Puccini added: “Mark's consumer-centric approach, in addition to his personal and professional background in sports, will enable him to help lead Mizuno to the next level.”

POLITICIAN TO TAKE OVER AS PRESIDENT OF FICE

Spain's footwear manufacturers' association FICE has appointed a regional government minister as its executive president.

José Monzonís has been the vice-minister for industry and energy in Valencia's regional government since December 2012.

Mr Monzonís will take over the running of the organisation in the autumn, after spending the summer familiarising himself with the footwear industry. His appointment has to receive the formal approval of FICE's general assembly, but the organisation clearly believes this is a formality and has said it will employ him from July 1.

Acting president, **José Juan Sanchís**, said he wanted to concentrate on his own footwear business (he is the founder and creative director of high-end women's shoe brand Rebeca Sanver). He insisted Mr Monzonís has had plenty of contact with the footwear industry during his time in the regional government. “He has even represented us at a number of meetings in Brussels,” he said, “which is somewhere we really need to increase our profile.”

Products & Services



ISA TANTEC INAUGURATES MISSISSIPPI TANNERY

Tanning group ISA TanTec held an event to mark the official opening of its new tannery in Mississippi on May 29. The governor of the state of Mississippi, Phil Bryant, spoke at the event.

This formal opening comes just over a year after ISA TanTec announced it would open a tannery in the US, with Vicksburg, Mississippi, as the location.

It is a project that means an investment of more than \$10 million and will create more than 350 jobs. It comes at a time when government policies to source US-made shoes for use by the Department of Defense are driving footwear manufacturers to set up again or increase production on home soil. This change will potentially affect the manufacturing and sourcing policies of prominent ISA TanTec customers, including Wolverine, Deckers, New Balance, Keen, The North Face, Rockport, Timberland and many more.

ISA TanTec has award-winning tanneries in China and Vietnam. It has made a name for itself as a supplier of sustainably manufactured, premium-quality leather, taking its concept of LITE (Low Impact on the Environment) leather to the global shoe industry. Founder Thomas Schneider said he is confident setting up a tannery in the US will bring growth opportunities in the Americas.

PROJECT EXAMINES ANTIMALARIAL FOAMS

Research centres and a private sector partner in Spain are working to create new foam applications for footwear with antimalarial properties. They have said possible applications include special sandals or soling materials for other types of footwear that can help prevent the spread of malaria and other conditions such as Dengue fever, Chagas disease and Leishmaniasis.

Central to the idea, which is being developed by Valencia-based plastics institute Aimplas, a research team from the University of Zaragoza and specialist microencapsulation company Inesfly Corporation, is to encapsulate

insecticide substances into foam using microcapsules for footwear to act as a repellent against the insects that can spread each of these conditions.

The researchers have said they believe using microcapsules will prevent degradation of the insecticide substances during manufacture of the finished product and will make it easier to manage the release of the substances during wear. Their two-year project, called Inmaplesp, has secured funding from Spain's economy ministry.

LEÓN TANNERS DISCOVER WAY TO USE TILAPIA

León-based leather industry technology centre Ciatec says it has developed a

technique that will allow Mexican tanners to make use of tilapia skins the country's fish industry is throwing away.

Francisco Javier Castro, who is head of Ciatec's technology transfer department, has drawn comparisons between the appearance of a tanned tilapia skin and that of reptile leathers, saying the scales are similar. He said that if tanners adopt the new technique and make fish leather instead, it will help Mexico protect its reptile species, some of which are endangered.

Ciatec has calculated that the fish industry in three Mexican states alone, Chiapas, Jalisco and Zacatecas, is throwing away 20 tonnes of tilapia skins each month. It said this is enough to supply tanners with a combined total of 1.2 million skins per month, which could supply footwear manufacturers with enough finished leather to produce 54,000 pairs of boots.

STUDENT CREATES GLOW-IN-THE-DARK LEATHER

A footwear and accessories student at the UK's University of Northampton has created a glow-in-the-dark finish for leather, as part of his leathersgoods and footwear collection for Graduate Fashion Week.

Daniyal Khan said: "People tend to think that, because it's a traditional material, the only innovation you can bring to leather is through embossing or surface treatments, like painting, dying or patterns detail, but I strongly believe that it can be very interactive."

"It took me a long time to develop my chemicals and I was working around it throughout my final year. There were a lot of health and safety hazards to comply with and tests, but I eventually came up with the perfect solution!"

BASF INCREASE COULD AFFECT SUPPLY CHAIN

Chemicals manufacturer BASF has announced that it is increasing the price of its polyalcohol neopentylglycol (NPG), an intermediate used to produce polyester resins for coatings, unsaturated polyester resins, lubricants and plasticisers.

BASF said it was increasing its prices for NPG with immediate effect or "as existing contracts permit" by €80 per tonne.

MAERSK SHIPS INCREASE SHOE-CARRYING CAPACITY

Container shipping operator Maersk Line has revealed the number of pairs of shoes it can accommodate on one of its ships.

On announcing a deal with Korean manufacturer Daewoo to purchase 11 new ships with an option for six more, Maersk Line said each new vessel would have the capacity to carry 19,630 standard (20-foot) shipping containers. It explained that its aim is to "stay competitive" on Europe-to-Asia trade routes. It will take delivery of the new vessels in 2017 and 2018.

By way of comparison, it said the largest ships in its fleet at the moment, known as Triple Es, each have a capacity of 18,300 containers. And to illustrate what this means in terms of consumer products, it said this gives each ship the capacity to transport 114 million pairs of shoes at a time.

If each new ship has 7.25% more capacity, it suggests the volume of shoes Maersk Line could accommodate on one vessel would be more than 120 million pairs. Two journeys would be more than enough to ship the entire annual output of Europe's largest footwear producing country, Italy. In 2014, for the first time since 2009, Italy's footwear output dipped below 200 million pairs.

UK'S OUTDOOR SECTOR OUTLINED IN OIA REPORT

The UK-based Outdoor Industries Association (OIA) is publishing a report on the sector, 'Getting Active Outdoors: A study of demography, motivation, participation and provision in outdoor sport and recreation in England'.

OIA CEO Andrew Denton said: "This is a fundamental piece of research and will drive Sport England's insight into the outdoor sector, highlighting some of the opportunities for increasing outdoor recreation and understanding participants. I would urge any organisation that has an interest in the outdoor sector to engage with its findings and attend one of the free workshops."

OIA will present the data at workshops, taking place from June to

September in Manchester, London, Loughborough, Sheffield, Whitby, Ambleside, Cambridge, Maidenhead and Bristol.

WORLD CUP BOOTS BASED ON ARKEMA'S PEBAX

Chemical company Arkema has announced in its annual Sustainability Report that more than half of the players in the 2014 World Cup were equipped with Pebax-soled boots.

In 1981, the chemical industry faced a shortage of plasticising additives – molecules added to materials to improve performance – prompting Arkema's researchers to create Pebax, a thermoplastic elastomer.

Its properties – flexibility, elasticity

and energy return, resistance to fatigue, impact and tear resistance – can be modulated by altering the ratio between polyamide and polyether.

Nike, Puma, The North Face and Mizuno have adopted Pebax resin for soccer and rugby boots, running and tennis shoes and hiking boots.

Arkema said: "More than half of the players in the 2014 World Cup were equipped with Pebax-soled boots, celebrated for their combination of elasticity, lighter weight and strength. This polyvalent elastomer is also used in the manufacture of ski boot shells for brands like Scarpa, Dynafit, Scott and Fischer, where its properties are all the more appreciated because they remain unaffected by low temperatures." 



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Backtrack

World Footwear's publishing cycle and limitations on space make it impossible for us to run more than a carefully selected sample of news from across the industry.

However, we publish hundreds more stories on **www.footwearbiz.com**. The site is updated every day with news from every continent and every part of the industry, making footwearbiz.com one of the most

comprehensive archives of news anywhere on the web for the global footwear industry.

We list below just a few of the headlines that have appeared on the site in recent weeks —

www.footwearbiz.com allows you to read those you have missed.

23/06/2015

China's leather industry will overcome obstacles, says CLIA

22/06/2015

Nike elaborates on Flyweave technology

19/06/2015

Former Cordwainer Jimmy Choo presents UK's Footwear Student of the Year awards

Christian Lahoude redesigns Harrys of London flagship store

18/06/2015

Alberto Premi designs shoes for Mini capsule collection

17/06/2015

MADE-BY aims US seminar series at sustainability teams

Fire destroys Vietnamese footwear factory

UK footwear manufacturing sector grows 22% in two years

16/06/2015

Onitsuka Tiger selects husband-and-wife textile team for shoe collection

15/06/2015

Pikolinos pays to help football club pick up the pieces

Aokang sets its sights on global reach with online retailer tie-up

12/06/2015

India spies opportunity to supply leather to Vietnam

10/06/2015

Award-winning designer praises originality of Indonesia's footwear

Vietnam shipped shoes worth \$3.5 billion to the EU last year

05/06/2015

31% of factories 'accepted' in Timberland's CSR update

04/06/2015

K-Swiss on 'aggressive' acquisition trail

03/06/2015

Big rise in the value of Vietnamese footwear exports

Michael Kors to grow footwear as it reports 32% revenue leap

UITIC launches call for papers

02/06/2015

Diversifying UGG offering drives record sales at Deckers

01/06/2015

Growth for online sales of sporting goods in Europe

28/05/2015

Vulcabras Azaleia president praises SICC event

Turmoil at Chinese sportswear brand Exceed

27/05/2015

Record profits for Foot Locker in first quarter

22/05/2015

New Hi-Tec boots reflect rugged lifestyle

21/05/2015

The children's shoemaker in Italy who sometimes sleeps at his factory

20/05/2015

Ever-Glory succumbs to pressures with falling sales

VF's head of sourcing to speak at Leeds event

SCL produces new range of footwear for Goodyear

18/05/2015

Footlocker and Nike among FDRA winners

15/05/2015

Big-brand supplier reports another 10% rise

High-end footwear firm fails as French buyers ignore unknown brands

14/05/2015

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Legero says the material in its new "botanic" footwear collection will be 70%-80% Tencel.

ALL CREDITS: LENZING

Austrian fibre manufacturer Lenzing has worked with footwear brand Legero to put its renewable Tencel lyocell fibre into shoes for the first time.

Lenzing takes Tencel into shoes

Cellulosic fibre producer Lenzing has announced a new development with Austrian footwear brand Legero to incorporate its Tencel fibre into shoes. Tencel is of botanic origin since it is extracted from wood and Lenzing describes the closed-loop process it employs to produce the fibre as "extremely eco-friendly". The two companies announced the partnership and presented their "botanic" shoes concept at a joint press conference at the Techtextil exhibition in Frankfurt in May.

Lenzing's segment manager for footwear, Marina Crnoja-Cosic, says the move into footwear came about partly because her company needs "new applications for Tencel". She also explains that footwear companies, including Legero, came to Lenzing specifically to ask for Tencel to put into their shoes.

Its work with Legero has led to prototype shoes using high volumes of Tencel as part of the content, which the Graz-based footwear company is now preparing to introduce to the market under its Vios brand, a new brand under which it aims to sell only its most sustainable shoes.

Positive acceptance

Sustainable development and innovation manager for Legero, Stefanie Stoltzka, says her company is paying closer than ever attention to the raw materials that go into its shoes and launched a prototype using Tencel in 2014, selling the shoes, a small collection for children, in its outlet store. "The uppers are leather," Ms Stoltzka says, "skin-friendly, sustainable and chrome- and heavy metal-free. But the laces are 100% Tencel."

She says the initial collection has won positive acceptance from customers who have bought the shoes and that her company will launch a first commercial collection, for children, in 2016. She and Ms Crnoja-Cosic wore prototype summer canvas-style shoes for the presentation, with the uppers made from cotton and Tencel.

Well suited

It is Ms Crnoja-Cosic's opinion that cellulosic fibres are suited to footwear. They offer comfort, she says, because of their high levels of moisture management (50% better than cotton, she



Tencel allows footwear companies to offer compostable shoelaces and more sustainable footbeds.

says) and their ability to help footwear brands build up their sustainability credentials. But she admits that shoes are complex. "When we first looked at footwear, we found it very complicated," she explains, "with five or six different supply chains involved." Just in its work on prototypes of shoes and shoe components containing Tencel, Lenzing has worked with a wide range of partners, including soling and footbed technology providers Delta from Italy and Mucos from Austria, German company Carl Klostermann Söhne on laces and, on other materials, with Eurofoam, a Vienna-based foam technology provider. Test and research institute Pirmasens also played an important role in the development of the shoes with Tencel, as did the International Shoe Competence Centre at Pirmasens, and all of the prototypes were made there.

Multi-use

These examples perhaps serve to show how flexible Tencel can be. Lenzing supplied the fibre in powder form to Mucos, for example, which specialises in products from cork. The soling company blended the Tencel and cork together for use in a footbed. Its collaboration with Delta was to use Tencel and polyurethane (PU) together in an outsole application, while the appeal of Tencel to some partners was that Lenzing's fibre allows them to offer shoelaces that are 100% compostable. "We are very proud of the compostable shoelaces," Ms Crnoja-Cosic says. "They are available in nice, bright colours and, as well as being compostable, meet all standards for abrasion resistance, durability and so on."

She also anticipates further developments in upper materials. In addition to the canvas style she and Stefanie Stoltzka wore at Techtextil, she says footwear brands like the idea of developing uppers for summer shoes that have a mix of Tencel and linen on the outside and of Tencel and polyester on the inside.

Mutual support

According to Ms Stoltzka, Legero decided to work with Lenzing after 'looking at itself in the mirror' and deciding that, if,

in addition to having a "passion for shoes to be beautiful", it wants to make a selling point of producing its shoes in Europe, it ought to use materials produced in Europe too. "We had Lenzing on hand in Austria," she says, "and Lenzing had Tencel, which we know is a fantastic fibre because it's so sustainable, so we began talking to them. It's important that we in Europe support each other and work to keep our know-how here."

At the moment, Legero shoes are being manufactured in Romania using direct-injection PU soling; textile uppers will work well in that set-up, Ms Stoltzka insists. The uppers in the shoes in the new collection will have some cotton, but between 70% and 80% of the fabric in the shoes will be Tencel. "It will be a premium collection," she explains, "available through specialised retailers only. We want a high level of service to be available to the consumers who look at these shoes. We want retailers to tell customers the 'botanic' story of the shoe and to share some of the passion we have for it." 



Lenzing's segment manager for footwear, Marina Crnoja-Cosic (left), with sustainable development and innovation manager for Legero, Stefanie Stoltzka.



Huntsman's footwear technology centre in Belgium, where trials took place on the new soling materials Franco Leone has used.

CREDIT: HUNTSMAN

Huntsman develops soling material with Indian footwear maker

New Delhi-based footwear brand Franco Leone was searching for soling materials that would help its shoes endure the Indian climate and found the answer by working in partnership with chemicals manufacturer Huntsman. Franco Leone has a reputation for high-quality, formal men's shoes, which it sells online. To ensure that its footwear is suitable for Indian consumers, the shoes have to be lightweight, comfortable and able to withstand the hot and humid conditions that many regions of India experience in the course of the year. It has found that using a polyether-based polyurethane from Huntsman to create shoe soles has helped its latest menswear collection achieve this.

A move to bring production in house

In the past, the footwear firm may just have handed the problem of improving the performance of the soling in its

Polyurethane experts from Huntsman have announced details of an innovative project with India-based footwear manufacturer Franco Leone.

shoes to outsource manufacturing partners, but it took a decision some years ago to bring at least some of its production in-house. Franco Leone started working with Huntsman in 2012 and after several meetings, the two companies embarked on the creation of a bespoke soling solution based on Huntsman's polyether technology – a form of polyurethanes proven to perform well in hot humid climates, where other materials can fail. Using polyether-

based materials from the chemicals company's Daltoped range, the two partners developed a system that delivers a hardwearing outsole with a low-density cushioning mid-sole. The material can also be engineered to achieve eye-catching colour and finishing effects.

Following successful trials at Huntsman's footwear technology centres in India and Belgium, Franco Leone put the new material into production. So far, more than 100,000 Franco Leone shoes have been made using the Daltoped technology.

Vishal Bhambri, chief executive of Franco Leone, says of the development: "We are one of the fastest growing companies in the Indian footwear industry, manufacturing shoes that reflect international style trends and making them available to Indian consumers at a sensible price point. The decision to move aspects of our manufacturing in-house was a major step for our business and finding the right partner to support this shift was essential. Switching to a different soling material at the same time as changing our production set-up made sense and Huntsman helped us manage the transition, coming up with an innovative material, and providing expert, hands-on, technical support, on the ground in India."

Competitive edge

Huntsman introduced its Daltoped technology to the Indian market at the India International Leather Fair in Chennai in February this year. Its key message at the event was that "differentiated footwear technologies" can give footwear manufacturers and brands a real competitive edge.

The range includes Daltoped Lite, a system that uses polyether material as an "ultra-lightweight, cost-effective and

highly versatile alternative to ethyl vinyl acetate (EVA)" in soling, ideal for the production of soles for the kind of shoes Franco Leone wants to make and sell, the chemical company suggests, because soles made with this technology combine low density to help make shoes comfortable with high-level mechanical properties and ease-of-processing. Another product in the range is Daltoped Grip, which, as the name suggests, is especially for safety shoes.

Specialist knowledge

Neeraj Garg, Huntsman's commercial manager for footwear in the region, says that designing long-lasting shoe soles for the market there requires specialist knowledge. "You need a good grasp of the local market but also of the materials that will perform well in the climate that they'll be sold and ultimately worn in," he says. "For companies like Franco Leone, using a polyether solution like those available in our Daltoped range is a sensible option. We know from experience that polyether polyurethanes are extremely stable and offer good hydrolytic stability in tropical climates such as India. We are delighted to have worked on this project with the team at Franco Leone, who are helping to lead the way in fashionable footwear in India."

In general, the Indian footwear market is growing fast, Mr Garg says. He adds that it's "imperative" that manufacturers make the right material decisions. 📌

Footwear brand Franco Leone decided it needed special soling materials to make its shoes suitable for India's hot, humid climate.

CREDITS: FRANCO LEONE





Resistance to bursting is a critical factor with zippers.

The function of footwear fasteners

STEVE ROSE, SATRA

Current footwear styles use fasteners in two ways: firstly as a means of securing the shoe and, secondly, as fashionable design features. As a means of holding the shoe on the foot, the fastener should be considered a safety-critical component as the loss of a shoe could cause an accident and subsequent injury to the wearer. Aside from accidental injury, fastener failure may automatically make the footwear unwearable. Fasteners therefore need to provide satisfactory performance in use.

LACES AND LACE CARRIERS

For modern footwear styles, the most popular fastening system remains the

humble shoe lace. However, there are many different types of lace carrier including the traditional eyelet (in many forms), D-rings, ski-hooks and moulded plastic facings. Whether their use depends on fashion or function, the basic requirements remain the same. Neither the lace nor the carrier should fail prematurely. The latter must be securely attached to the upper and the lace should remain knotted once tied.

The main causes of lace breakage are due either to poor strength or poor abrasion resistance, particularly when wet. It is difficult to ascertain the true number of lace failures in wear as many failed items will be replaced by the wearer without the supplier ever

knowing. Supplying a second pair with the shoes will usually demonstrate good customer care, particularly if the colour of the laces is a design feature. However, lace replacement is no doubt annoying to the wearer and future repeat footwear sales may be lost to discerning customers. It is therefore important to ensure that a good quality shoe lace is supplied in the first place.

Laces which readily come undone are also likely to cause customer dissatisfaction, as also is detachment of the tags (the plastic or metal tubes applied to the ends of the lace). This can lead to fraying of the ends which looks unsightly and prevents rethreading of the lace.

Lace abrasion may occur where it rubs against either the carrier or another section of the lace. While this can be due to poor quality, faulty carriers are more common causes as any sharp edges will quickly abrade most textiles used. These faults are not limited to the less common types of carriers such as D-rings and ski-hooks. Eyelets can be just as troublesome if not properly clenched, which can be due to incorrect size as much as poor attachment.

The strength of the carrier and its attachment to the upper needs to be sufficient for the footwear application in which it is used. The lace/carrier assembly should always be tested as a unit in order to determine that even the weakest link performs to the required minimum standard. In addition, the mode of failure gives valuable information on where any improvement in construction may need to be made. A recent fashion trend is the use of clips or toggles to secure the lace rather than conventional tying into a bow. In this instance, the toggles must clamp the lace at least as securely as a bow in order to function correctly.



Laces should be tested for strength and resistance to abrasion.



It is always preferable to test the strength of the complete buckle and strap assembly.

ELASTICS

Elastics can have many functions in a shoe upper, ranging from conventional gussets as part of a buckle or strap assembly, through to complete elasticated uppers. Whatever their use, they must be able to stretch sufficiently to allow foot entry while retaining optimum tension to hold the shoe comfortably and securely on the foot.

Conventional elastics consist of fine rubber threads held in an extensible textile matrix. Excessive elongation will cause permanent damage to the textile component, resulting in unsightly wrinkling and loss of performance. However, a common cause of failure of elastics is degradation and rupture of the rubber threads due to fatigue which, if the rubber has a poor resistance to ageing, can occur early in wear. This leads to laddering, wrinkling and loss of tension. Another critical part of elastic component design is how they are attached to the upper. Any stitching must be sufficiently strong yet cause minimal damage to the rubber threads within the elastic.

Special ladder elastics are now commonly used as a means of attaching

buckles to straps. These types of elastic have an open mesh 'ladder' section down the centre which accommodates the buckle prong. In many cases, the extra extension this gives the strap/buckle construction allows the shoe to be donned without undoing the buckle. These ladder elastics may be a vulnerable point, so ensuring they meet minimum strength and extension criteria is essential to satisfactory performance in wear.

SLIDE FASTENERS (ZIPPERS)

Slide fasteners come in two basic forms, either with separate teeth (plastic or metal) or with continuous plastic spiral chains. Because of their complex construction and their availability in different weights and sizes, it is important to test all aspects of their performance in order to choose the correct slide fastener for the specific end use.

The attachment of all or part of the puller to the slider is often the weakest part of a zipper and the fashion for decorative multi-section pullers increases the risk of failure. It is worth

considering that the loss of the puller could lead to a product return even when it still is possible to open and close the zipper and its functioning is not affected once closed. Attachment of end stops is also important to ensure that the slider is not pulled completely off the teeth.

The security of the actual teeth (their ability to hold the zipper closed against a load across the teeth) is one of the more critical properties to performance in wear and the level of this resistance must match the application. In addition, the design of footwear containing zippers must allow for the extra stresses which could be applied to them in areas of flexing. These areas are best avoided, as are designs which require curvature of the zipper. Both curvature and flexing can lead to premature deterioration of slide fasteners in wear.

STRAPS AND BUCKLES

Buckles are a familiar feature on many consumer products including footwear. A wide variety of buckles has been developed over the years to cater for this diverse market, but the only type

that has been widely adopted within the footwear industry is the pronged form. Although most buckles used in footwear are made of metal, some injection-moulded plastics are employed, particularly where the colour or design of the buckle are important factors in footwear styling.

Pronged-buckle fastening systems usually provide a satisfactory means of securing the shoe on the foot, which is the key advantage they hold over other forms of buckle. Although they can be tested as independent units, it is always preferable to measure the strength of the complete buckle, strap and upper attachment assembly. As with lace/facing tests, this determines the weakest link and indicates where improvements may be required in materials or construction.

TOUCH-AND-CLOSE FASTENERS

Touch-and-close fasteners have been a popular choice of fastening for several years and are used in a wide range of applications including footwear, bags and clothing. The type generally used in footwear consists of two components, a tape with flexible crochet-type hooks and a tape with a soft velour-type fabric containing multiple loose loops. As the tapes are touched together, the hooks and loops become firmly intermeshed, hence they are also frequently called hook-and-loop fasteners.

Whatever the application, touch-and-close fasteners must provide a secure fastening which will not deteriorate below a critical level during the lifetime of the shoe. When footwear is being worn, the fastener must resist 'peeling' forces (one tape pulling away from the other) and 'shearing' forces (one tape sliding over the other) and remain functional after being closed and opened many times.

The closure strength of touch-and-close fasteners is closely linked to properties such as the density of the loops and hooks, their ability to interlock and to remain interlocked when under stress. However, peel strength in the final product will also depend on the width of the overlap of the tapes, while shear strength is dependent on the area of overlap. In other words, the strength is dependent not just on the inherent properties of

the tapes themselves but also on the way the shoemaker uses the fastener. A simple rule of thumb is the narrower the strap, the greater the risk of problems.

Some straps, however, are not the simple overlap type as they incorporate a loop-back construction where the strap passes through a slot and is then folded back on itself. Although this results in higher shear strength of the complete strap, the risk of peeling detachment remains the same as for a simple overlap construction. Therefore, it may be possible to achieve satisfactory shear strength using a smaller contact area on a loop-back strap than on a simple overlap strap.

PRESS STUDS

Press studs, also known as snap closures, are commonly used on clothing and leather goods. They cannot normally offer the same level of adjustment as straps and buckles or touch-and-close fasteners.

Although high attachment strengths are achievable with some larger press studs, most will not be able to achieve

sufficient strength levels for footwear and many are known to deteriorate in strength after a relatively few opening and closing cycles. In most cases they should not be used as a primary fastening system but can be used as a complementary fastener in conjunction with zippers, elastics or other components.

MAINTENANCE OF APPEARANCE

Fasteners are not only expected to function well during the lifetime of the footwear, but they should also maintain their appearance. This is especially important where the fastener has a high fashion element. Components that are painted or lacquered can suffer abrasion damage, while those with metal components carry a risk of tarnishing or corrosion.

Tarnishing is a surface effect, normally black or dark staining on shiny metals that can spoil the appearance of the footwear. It usually has no adverse effect on the performance of the fastener. Corrosion (rusting), in contrast, not only



Press studs are best used as a complementary fastener only.

adversely affects appearance but will also degrade the metal and lead to failure of the component itself or of associated materials (for example a lace where the carrier is metal). Any component at risk of deterioration should be assessed prior to shoemaking to establish the risk of such problems occurring under the expected wear conditions.

FASTENERS: SAFETY-CRITICAL

All fasteners must be safe in use. They must be securely attached and have no sharp edges or points that could cause cuts or other injuries. As mentioned, if the failure of a fastening leads directly or indirectly to the footwear coming loose or even being lost from the foot, then any resulting trips or slips may cause injury to the wearer. Fastening systems must therefore be considered safety-critical aspects of construction and given the attention they deserve.

The presence of toxic chemicals or allergens must also be considered in

this respect. The most widely encountered allergen in fasteners is nickel and a significant minority of wearers (particularly women) are likely to be affected by the presence of this metal, even at low concentrations in a component. Nickel is most commonly used as a plating on fasteners such as buckles, eyelets and zippers.

In many countries around the world, the presence of toxic chemicals and allergens in consumer products is controlled by law. Suppliers of footwear need to be aware of the local regulations within their target markets to ensure compliance. Product recalls due to breach of such safety regulations can be expensive in terms of both money and loss of reputation.

A further issue to take into account is whether the fasteners present a risk of becoming interlocked or entangled with the other shoe, causing the wearer to trip and fall. Problems of this sort have led to safety recalls in Europe and the US—for example zipper pullers that have interlocked in wear. A proper risk assessment at the product

development stage should ensure that this sort of problem is avoided.

Footwear for young children brings its own particular additional requirements. These are primarily related to the fact that if an object can be sucked, bitten or just placed in the mouth, young children are likely to do so. With this in mind, it is vital to ensure that fasteners on footwear for young children do not present a choking hazard (one of the most common causes of footwear safety recalls) and are also free from ingestible toxic materials. Fastener-related examples of choking hazards include zipper pullers that become loose, buckles that break under low loads and press studs that detach easily.

Choosing a fastener may seem a straightforward task, but there are many issues to take into account. The right choice of fastener can make an enormous difference to the appeal of a particular footwear style. The wrong choice can bring wear returns and safety recalls. 🚫



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Servitisation, a word first coined in the late 1980s, involves manufacturers, developing services and solutions to supplement their traditional product.

CREDIT: MICHAEL KOWALSKI/SHUTTERSTOCK



The road to servitisation

SERGIO DULIO

We are all familiar with the concept of multinational companies as being large conglomerates having their headquarters in one country with subsidiaries and branch offices all over the world and thousands of employees. Normally, when these companies enter a new market or open a new operational site in a particular country, they impose their own corporate rules, manner of doing business and dealing with both employees and customers. In other words, they simply replicate the mother company in a place with a different culture, different social habits and environment. Be it right or wrong, this approach has certainly proved successful for many of the major companies that we know today, selling products ranging from consumer goods to cars, from power plants to electronics.

The history of ATOM is somewhat different. Founded almost 70 years ago in Vigevano, Italy, the company has, over the years, produced some of the

most widely used families of machines for manufacturing footwear. Indeed, machines such as its cutting presses became so popular that in countries such as India, 'ATOM' became the generic term for this type of machine. However, if we consider the size of the company and the niche market (shoe machines) in which it operates, it is hard to regard it as being a true multinational. Nevertheless, with two main design and development sites in Italy, a well-established manufacturing facility in China and branch and sale offices all over Europe, Asia and the Americas, the ATOM Group is certainly a leading brand in its sector.

Although the company has its headquarters in the old shoe making centre of Vigevano, its boundaries are neither in the city, nor in Italy itself. Its true operational perimeter is the entire world or, perhaps more precisely, 'the world of cutting', meaning that wherever a cutting demand in the general industrial sense exists, that is where the company expands its range.

A company with no real borders but a perimeter that is progressively and flexibly defined by the market. By adopting this global scope and by entering a variety of different geographical and industrial markets over the years, the company actually absorbed all their individualities with a cross-fertilisation approach between sectors and technologies that has made it a meta-national.

META-NATIONAL

A meta-national structures its market projection strategy in three distinct phases. *Sensing*, which means identifying and accessing all the available new competences, knowledge and technologies of a given market. *Connecting* all this new knowledge to create new products and services. And then, *Exploiting* them to obtain large scale industrial efficiencies while, at the same time, retaining flexibility and a high level of financial control. So in time the goal of the company in terms of its international

strategy, shifted from simply penetrating a market to one of learning from the world in general and transferring this learning into products in which the local technological, operational and functional lessons became part of the DNA of the machine itself.

This evolution from small provincial enterprise into a modern meta-national was strongly favoured by its initial focus on the shoe manufacturing industry. The coming of globalisation in the late 1900s meant that ATOM had to adjust to this new situation and follow the migration of shoe production as it increasingly moved to lower cost countries in order to maintain contact with the market. This sounds like an obvious step, but not all companies in its sector fully understood this necessity and only a few managed to put in place the most appropriate strategies.

Globalisation was therefore the first driving force in the company evolution; the second was diversification. From its position as a specialist supplier with a strong background in developing cutting systems for all the diverse materials used in shoe making, from delicate high quality leathers to the strongest and most difficult synthetic materials, it was relatively easy to expand and generalise such solutions into other industrial applications.

This is what has happened and, today, it has machines capable of dealing with cutting problems that span a variety of sectors besides the classical

shoe and leather goods domain. These 'industrial' cutting machines in fact account for a large share of company revenue and have allowed ATOM to overcome and survive the periodic difficulties and downturns of the shoe business and its abrupt migration from its original domestic backyard in which the company grew up to today's world of global manufacturing.

INNOVATION

Although developing the best corporate strategies or addressing the right markets are necessary conditions, you must also have the right products with the best technologies. You must also be capable of modifying with fresh innovation continuously in order to keep up with evolving market demands. So innovation is a mandatory factor in the character of a modern company and one strongly embraced by ATOM. Starting with the simple clicking presses that are still regarded in many countries as the workhorses of shoe manufacturing, its machines evolved into complex NC-controlled die-cutters when the first high performance and economically viable electronic controllers became available.

When the die-less cutting revolution arrived, it was among the early exploiters of the new cutting approach that aimed at completely eliminating pre-formed steel strip-knives to allow an immediate transfer from the CAD pattern design to cutting the corresponding shapes in the desired

materials. We all know how a technology initially aimed at sample making and small production runs became one where these machines are now regarded not only as an ideal complement to traditional die cutting but, in many companies, the preferred technology. Building on its early involvement, ATOM now offers a wide range of machines covering every aspect of die-less cutting.

Industrial enterprises are not unlike living organisms; they must continually change and evolve if they want to survive and prosper. Strong in one area of footwear technology, ATOM realised it also had to widen its technology spread so, in 2009, it acquired Main Group which specialised in injection moulding systems for unit outsoles and direct bottoming constructions. A leader in technology and market share in its own right, it is now a relevant element in the Group's market strategy. It also marked a return to the past in the sense that ATOM actually started out in 1946 as a producer of vulcanising machines for the manufacture of rubber soles. It marked, too, a further diversification step in terms of expansion towards other phases of the shoe manufacturing process and a passage from simple machines to a more complete system offering.

ATOMLab

This evolution into a true meta-national took a further step in 2013 with the opening of ATOMLab, a



S125C cutting press of the type that made 'ATOM' the generic name for this type of machine.



1685B Flashcutter – ATOM now has machines for every aspect of die-less cutting.

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APP line for direct injection safety footwear typifies the new manufacturing concepts being worked on by ATOMLab.

Research and Innovation unit with the mission to work on the most leading edge technologies and develop and test new system concepts that the Group can then adopt. It has its own research facilities and it works in cooperation with the innovation teams of the Group's most important international clients as well as prestigious universities and research institutions in Italy and other countries.

The Lab has a set of very clear strategic goals the first of which is to maintain and increase technological leadership in the Group's existing cutting and injection moulding products. This requires constant attention to important technological trends, seeking out emerging ones and the ability to transfer innovations into the daily development flow of the company. As stated, involvement in two crucial phases of the shoe manufacturing process is forcing the Group to evolve more and more from a simple machine supplier to a process and efficiency supplier.

In order to succeed in that, knowledge gaps must be filled in those areas where the existing ATOM and MAIN Group R&D teams have no direct expertise. ATOMLab's mission is to fill those gaps by close collaboration with customers' advanced product and process concepts in a new form of innovation management partnership. This will act as a bridge between customers' research teams and Group R&D staff, expanding the horizon of intervention beyond the competence domains of the specific business units of the Group and

more towards applied research.

To achieve this, the appropriate staff is needed. ATOMLab has five dedicated researchers, all university graduates with specialisations in process automation and robotics, material science (polymers), electronics and computer science. These are supported by a mix of junior researchers and senior professionals to provide the best-balanced mix between updated knowledge and experience.

Besides the internal team, there is a supporting external ecosystem. This includes on the practical side a number of qualified partners including machine providers, last makers, mould makers and material suppliers that complete the value offering of the Group, with ATOMLab working as the hub. On the research side, the internal capabilities of the team are expanded and complemented by collaborations with universities such the University of Pavia (computer science and artificial vision) and the Polytechnic of Milan (RFID competence centre). This cooperation with academia is a funding block in ATOMLab's strategy as an effective cross-fertilisation approach between the two worlds of public and private research, formalised in different ways such as the issuing of research contracts on specific topics or the financing of PhD grants.

PROJECTS

At the moment ATOM is providing the budget for a three-year research by a PhD student on the interesting topic of human locomotion energy

harvesting. In its first two years of activity ATOMLab's team has been active in research in various domains. One is human robot interaction using the most recent generations of cooperative robots; others include computer vision, RFID tagging as the most advanced technology to track and monitor components in the manufacturing process, plus 3D printing and additive manufacturing, focusing on the disruptive potential they might have on products and their manufacturing processes.

More recently, new research lines were opened on energy harvesting and augmented reality as advanced and promising forms of man/machine interface. In February, the most important facility of all was announced; the APP (automated pilot plant). This features a complete, highly automated and robotised line for manufacturing direct injected safety footwear that incorporates a 24-station PU-PU injection carousel. Installed at the Lab's facilities in Vigevano, it is the archetypal implementation of the new manufacturing concepts being worked on and was officially opened and demonstrated during the last SIMAC exhibition. It will be used to consolidate and fine tune the most important enabling technologies of the future manufacturing solutions offered by the Group.

SERVITISATION

ATOMLab does not, however, only focus on technology and research, important though they clearly are. It is

also felt that the way in which technology providers approach customers is also changing. There is a need to establish new kinds of relationships, based on novel concepts such as the emerging servitisation paradigm. Servitisation is often viewed as the way in which firms provide an integrated package of both goods and services or add extra service components to their core offering. A differing interpretation, however, suggests that it is any strategy that changes the way product functionality is delivered. A still broader definition, is that servitisation is the innovation of an organisation's capabilities and processes to better create mutual value through a shift from selling products to selling product service systems.

For example, in the aerospace industry, engine manufacturer Rolls Royce no longer sells an engine to aircraft producers. Instead, it supplies a package of operating hours, performance monitoring and maintenance, so shifting the competitive challenge from pure price to long lasting relationships, quality and performance. Similarly in the automotive sector, the well known car manufacturer Mercedes Benz launched a service called Car2Go in which the company instead of just selling a car, offers a 'mobility service' in the form of a full package of attractive offers to its clients and supported by an APP to locate the nearest 'mobility device'. It effectively replaces the burden of property with a wealth of services that relieves the driver from the complications of ownership and that focus on the car's true function: mobility.

The transition of the traditional manufacturing culture to servitisation nevertheless poses enormous challenges at managerial, cultural and operational levels. From the classical transactional logic, companies must move to a new relational approach that aims at a stable relationship with the customer.

More specifically, in the footwear sector, machine producers have been accustomed to selling their products (machines) by talking to their customers about all the relevant features of their devices and their wonderful performance. In a servitisation scenario they listen to the message that comes from the client's manufacturing processes to offer them throughput rather than the hardware to obtain it and efficiency rather than the software to achieve it. In this scenario old-fashioned selling or maintenance contracts are superseded by SLAs (service level agreements) that replace an obligation on means with an obligation on results. A totally different scenario in which the mutual roles of machine users and providers are profoundly changed.

The world is changing at a bewildering speed, both socially and economically. Behind it all lie developments in modern technology which appear to have no limit. The way we create products and services bears no resemblance to 50 or even 25 years ago. And now, the traditional boundaries between these two are becoming blurred. Companies grew into multi-nationals, adapted further with globalisation to become meta-nationals and, some, are now developing a stage further to become servitiser. ATOMLab is in all respects the experimental facility that will eventually accomplish the ultimate evolution of the ATOM Group from national company, through meta-national to a servitiser for the footwear industry. 🌀

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Kangaroos and alligators

Lisa Sorrell makes probably the most striking cowboy boots that money can buy, yet this came about purely by chance. Raised in a highly conservative religious community in Missouri, her mother began teaching her to sew at the age of twelve and, by the time she

was fifteen, she was making dresses for other women in the community. Married at 20, she moved with her husband to Oklahoma, leaving the sewing behind her. However, she soon found that she missed it and so answered an advertisement in the local paper looking for someone to

stitch cowboy boot tops (uppers).

"I had no idea what that was but it sounded like sewing. The boot maker who'd placed the ad was a grumpy old alcoholic with a salty vocabulary and I'd never been around anyone who drank or swore. I immediately fell in love with the craft of boot making. I

was hired and began to learn how to create and stitch the intricate designs that decorate cowboy boots.

She left after 18 months, bought a sewing machine and began to stitch tops independently for boot makers across the US. The use of outworkers in general was an unfamiliar concept but, as most boot makers do not like stitching tops, they were happy to contract it out to someone else. People began to notice her work and ask their boot makers to have her produce the tops for their own boots.

Still not satisfied, she wanted to learn how to produce complete boots. This proved more difficult but she finally found someone willing to teach her, paid for two months of training and then spent a year and a half as an apprentice. "I paid my way by stitching all his tops. Since we don't typically have those divisions of labour in the US I had to learn how to make boots throughout and customise lasts in order to be able to start my own business which I did in 1996 with Sorrell Custom Boots."

Lisa has since become renowned for her very intricate and imaginative designs and has found kangaroo leather to be the best material to use as it is thin but strong and skives easily. This enables highly complex inlay and overlay effects to be achieved with the minimum of bulk. Both tops and vamps are lined with 2.0-2.5mm cow orthopaedic lining leather which gives the finished boot body and strength.

She mostly uses American alligator for the foot and prefers a matt finish as it is softer and a little heavier than when glazed. Vamps are crimped and also lasted wet which removes most of the glaze in any case, so starting out with a matt finish and adding the shine once the boot is complete makes sense. American alligator is in fact her favourite leather. "It looks good, crimps well and goes onto the last beautifully. Since the vamp is normally just one big piece of leather, stretch and strength are especially important qualities."

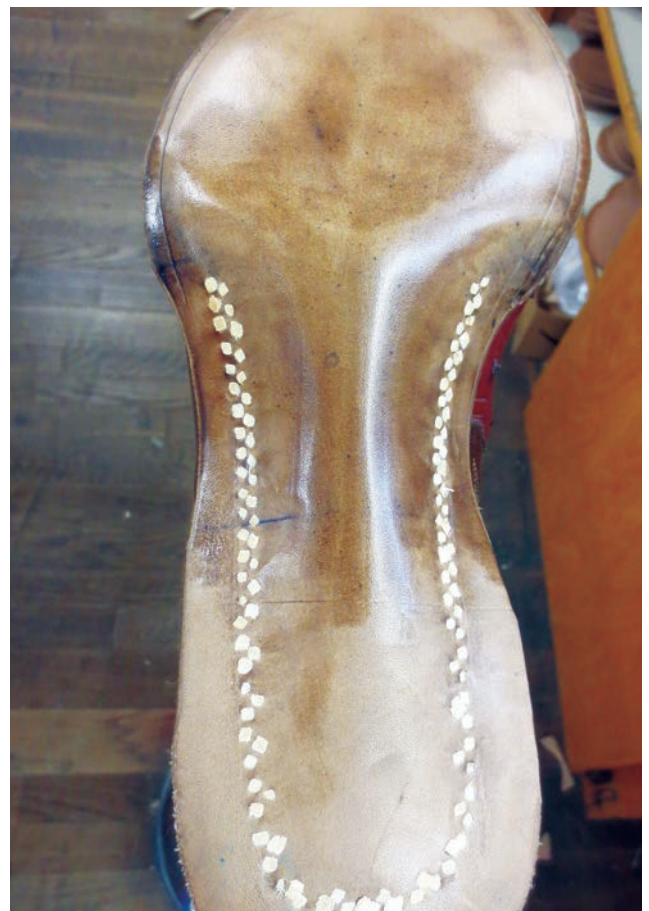
American alligator is apparently easy to source, whereas finding kangaroo in a wide range of colours is a constant challenge. "Most leather companies here in the US only want to carry basic colours such as black and brown. Because I work alone and all my boots are very intricate, I only make about 15 pairs a year. This means my quantities are not large enough to buy direct from tanneries so I have to shop around and am constantly on the lookout for anything I think I could use. I have in fact built up quite a stock over the years but, then again, I never know what colour combinations a client may want. I've recently started a second business supplying leather and materials to other boot makers and am looking for sources for kangaroo leather to sell through this second business."

The construction of a cowboy boot is unusual as only the forepart is welted with the sole attached through the waist and around the seat by pegging where fine wooden pegs are driven through the sole and insole. Lisa uses two rows at a spacing of six per inch to create a really strong and stiff shank area. Cowboy boots normally have 1.75in (3.80cm) heels so a strong steel shank is also used. This in turn is covered by a thick leather cover skived thin at the sides but left full thickness in the middle to create the distinctive rounded waist profile associated with these boots.

Lasts are bought in standard sizes and customised for



Each colour in a design is a separate piece of leather cut by hand, layered and then stitched.



A covered steel shank and wooden pegging creates the traditional rounded cowboy waist profile.



Examples of Lisa Sorrell's highly original and extremely complex designs.

each client as fit is all important both for comfort and for holding the boot firmly on the foot. She also likes to use old lasts from the 1940s, particularly those made by Western Last Company and Krentler Brothers as she considers them to be the best and most attractive. "I have many pairs from those two companies and had them copied so that I can continue to use those last models. I'm not trained or certified to

do any corrective work so I don't cater for problem feet. The primary fitting issues I see are large calves, narrow feet and high insteps. All of these are perfectly normal and common conditions but they do mean that buying factory-made boots is not an option."

Needless to say, with the incredible amount of work and detail involved, Lisa's boots are very expensive. Then

again, they are also works of art in their own right with no two ever the same and, as with other truly bespoke products, exclusivity still commands a premium even today. There is also no shortage of customers from around the world prepared to pay whatever it takes to own a pair of Sorrell boots, as in the case of the client who flew in from Australia to be measured for a pair of boots—in kangaroo and alligator. 🐾

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Strong growth is predicted for automotive leather for use in premium motor vehicles.

CREDIT: BMW

A future perspective

David Peters runs DLP, a specialist consultancy offering an advisory service for the leather industry. He has over 40 years experience including executive and management roles across the entire leather supply chain including GST, one of the largest automotive leather producers in the world. If anyone can forecast the future of the leather supply chain, he is surely well qualified.

At a conference entitled The Future of Automotive Leather, organised by sister magazine *World Leather* and cutting technology provider Lectra in Bordeaux

earlier this year, he suggested that by 2020, up to a billion extra square-feet of finished leather may be required to satisfy the increasing demand for leather upholstery in motor vehicles. Mike Tomkin, sustainability director of leather chemicals manufacturer Stahl, goes along with this and says that a major reason lies in the extra profit margin car manufacturers can make when an additional €200 or €300 manufacturing cost can yield around €2,000 extra on the selling price. Peters went on to say that this would inevitably have a negative affect the footwear industry.

STARTLING PREDICTIONS

He does however admit that this figure of one billion square feet is the maximum projection but, at the same time, points out that even if the true figure ends up being 50% of this, tanners in 2020 are going to have to find hundreds of millions more square-feet of finished leather for their automotive customers than they do today. And, crucially, this will be in the context of declining herd sizes and falling slaughter rates in many parts of the livestock and meat industry. Hence his suggestion that far fewer hides will be available in 2020 for shoe leather and

other applications.

Ronan Noizet, a Paris-based senior analyst at specialist automotive analyst firm IHS expects growth of 18% in the global automotive market between now and 2020, with manufacturers adding more than 15 million units to their collective total annual sales by then. He predicts that sales of premium vehicles, which currently account for 10% of the total market, will grow even more quickly and by as much as 32%. Looking even further ahead, IHS also believes this healthy overall growth will continue until at least 2025 as global incomes continue to rise.

FINITE RESOURCE

Herd sizes in important countries such as the US are at their lowest in decades for, mostly, economic reasons and Peters believes they they will stay there and that hide availability will therefore remain constant between now and 2020 at around 275 million per year. At the same time, animals are becoming bigger with the average live weight of US cattle up from 450kg in 1978 to 570kg in 2013 so hides are bigger, making it possible to produce more square-feet of finished leather per hide. He has statistics showing there are 44 tanning companies in the world currently producing automotive leather from 45 million hides per year giving an output of two billion square-feet of finished leather at an average of around 45 square-feet per hide.

Naturally, should this all come about, beef production will not be affected one iota. Hides are a by-product, the 'wrapper' that the meat comes in. An increase in demand for hides from any tanner or car manufacturer will not put a single extra cow in a field or feedlot anywhere on earth. Only an increase in demand for beef and favourable market conditions can put extra hooves on the land and in these uncertain times, these factors are but two of many.

NUMBER-CRUNCHING

If the IHS predictions prove to be accurate, Peters works out that overall growth and, in particular, even sharper growth in the premium segment, will lead to an increase in leather demand of 47% by 2020. This would mean automotive tanners consuming more than 66 million hides a year. He thinks

this is too much and that it might in fact be more like nine million and that the global automotive industry will consume 54 million hides or 400 million square feet per year. This is still an alarming amount to take out of a resource of raw material that is unlikely to grow by much, if at all. So, if this scenario does come about, where are automotive tanners to find it? Footwear would seem to be the obvious target.

Peters points out that many of the big athletic footwear brands are already replacing leather with synthetic substitutes, which are far more attractive because of the low oil price, or using more canvas or split leather. Plenty of manufacturers in other segments, however, continue to prefer leather as the main material for their shoe uppers. He suggests they consider using alternatives such as goatskin, sheepskin or pigskin which car manufacturers cannot.

NOT PRACTICAL

As any shoe manufacturer knows, this is not really practical for a number of reasons which is why bovine leathers have always been the material of choice over the centuries for the vast majority of footwear.

Goatskins are small in area making them uneconomic for cutting men's shoe uppers and although having a tight fibre structure are also very thin and so are generally only used in ladies shoes where they offer an alternative to calf. Sheepskins are again small and also have a loose fibre structure so that the finished leather has a much lower tear strength. Pigskin is very compact and strong but unfortunately has a unique fibre structure where the bristles go through the skin making it impossible to produce a plain smooth leather.

While these all have their places in footwear manufacture, they cannot replace bovine leather for the vast majority of everyday footwear for these simple reasons. Switching to these suggested alternatives would also create real problems for tanners who are used to processing bovine raw material. These smaller, lighter skins would need substantial investment in new machines to handle them and a retraining of staff to cope with the different techniques they require.

YES OR NO?

If the world economy continues to grow as hoped, then increased disposable incomes across the world could well lead to the sales predicted by IHS. Indeed, car manufacturers are extremely bullish about a long term growth in the premium sector well through the 2020s. Should this all come about, what effect would it actually have on the footwear industry?

Projections are always just that: projections. They are subject to so many uncertainties to be otherwise. Bearing this in mind, the world's total footwear production in 2020 could be around 28 billion pairs with a possible 12 billion of them featuring leather uppers. If we take Nozet's projected 47% increase in demand by the automotive industry, this equates to 21 million extra hides or, at 45 sq. ft per hide, 945 million sq. ft of finished leather. Peters' lower figure of 9% gives us nine million hides and 405 million sq ft respectively. Allowing an average cutting area including wastage of say 2.5 sq ft per pair and these two extremes represent 378 million and 162 million pairs respectively. Set against a global total of 12 billion pairs, even the worst case scenario represents only some 3%.

This is hardly a cause for serious alarm, more of a warning shot across the bows. The footwear industry needs to be aware of this possibility and to also bear in mind that there are other industries also pushing for a greater share of the world's leather supply. The demand for leather furniture will also grow with an increase in global affluence simply because leather is seen as a luxury material and the products made from it something of a status symbol as in the case of the premium car market.

We live in a very uncertain world and quite what will happen over the next five years is anybody's guess. Underlying trends will however continue and the long term outlook for footwear producers is likely to be that more and more shoes will have to be made from synthetics and, where leather continues to be used, prices will inevitably rise. As already noted, it is not yet a cause for alarm, more an indication as to what may well happen in a few years time. It would therefore be wise to keep an open mind as to future strategies. 🌀



UGG successfully teamed up with NFL superstar Tom Brady to launch its first men's marketing initiative.

CREDIT: UGG AUSTRALIA

We look at 20 eye-catching innovations in the last 20 years in athletic and sports footwear that have helped shape the performance industry of today.

Two decades of developments

Nike Shox

It was probably no shock at all that the Nike Shox cushioning system led to legal drama. Shox are columns that Nike incorporated into shoes to provide cushioning in the midsole and heel and to give a springy 'energy return' to the wearer. The technology first appeared at the turn of the century and, by 2006, was the subject of a legal complaint that Nike filed against its biggest rival, adidas, saying that their a3 cushioning system infringed its Shox patents. Nike's sport research lab set out to find midsole alternatives to EVA foam and Air bags to cushion loads generated by the body when running, while also helping "motion control". Fibreglass and carbon fibre were not durable enough, so the sports brand ended up using columns moulded in high-resilience foam. Nike still refers to Shox as one of its most successful technologies of the early 2000s.

UGG

Footwear group Deckers Corporation, when looking for ways to expand the appeal of the UGG Australia sheepskin boot at the end of the last decade, correctly identified the men's market as an untapped area. Who better to make the face of the 'UGG for men' campaign than one of the most famous quarterbacks in the history of American football, Tom Brady?

Most men thought UGG was a women's brand, apart from the occasional pair of sheepskin slippers, probably purchased by a woman anyway, Deckers said in 2014. Tom Brady changed that. His enthusiastic endorsement of UGG, including participating in product design, allowed it to become more masculine and boosted sales by 70% in those first four years.

Wolverine Worldwide

A quick glance at the results of Wolverine Worldwide ought to be enough to convince anyone that outdoor footwear is an important and potentially lucrative market. When it moved to acquire the performance and lifestyle brands that Collective Brands ran until 2012, Wolverine said it was creating a \$2.5 billion group. It added Sperry Top-Sider, Saucony, Stride Rite and Keds to its existing group: Hush Puppies, Chaco, Patagonia, Caterpillar, the Wolverine brand itself, Merrell, Sebago, Cushe, Harley-Davidson and, in the workwear sector, HyTest and Bates. In spite of terminating its licence agreement with Patagonia midway through the year, Wolverine grew this revenue figure in 2014 to \$2.75 billion. It said at the time of the acquisition that it saw "numerous opportunities for further growth" in outdoor footwear.

Heelys

Tacoma-born entrepreneur Roger Adams used an old pair of running shoes, a hot knife and some components from a skateboard to develop the first Heelys shoe, with wheels in the heels to allow the wearer to roll as well as walk or run. He launched Heelys formally in 2000 and the shoes soon became a phenomenon in Europe and Asia, as well as in North America. Now owned by New York-based Sequential Brands, Heelys has survived complaints about injuries and even bans in some towns and cities and is still going strong.

PrimeAsia

If it's true that everything goes in circles, a return of manufacturing to more expensive locations such as Europe or North America may be part of the future or may even be happening already. However, in looking at the sports and outdoor footwear market over the last two decades, it's impossible not to record the enormous change that has occurred in most shoe brands' supply chains. Not only have most of them ceased to produce their own shoes, but they have placed huge proportions of their shoe-producing requirements in the hands of a small group of large, specialist, Asian outsource manufacturing partners, including the Pou Chen and Stella International groups. In turn, these groups' own supply chains have been transformed in the last 20 years, with key partners emerging in the tanning sector in particular. PrimeAsia is a prime example, proving that it's possible not just to make the volumes of high-quality American lifestyle leathers outdoor footwear brands demand their manufacturing partners use, but that it's possible to do so using the highest environmental and social standards in the global industry. PrimeAsia is a prominent member of multi-stakeholder organisation the Leather Working Group and its tannery in Huangjiang in southern China won the accolade of Global Tannery of the Year in 2013.

Puma Suede

First launched in the late 1960s, the soft and colourful Puma Suede shoe was something of an icon in 2012, when the German brand gained widespread publicity by comparing the Suede to a new shoe, the InCycle Basket. It claimed its new creation's environmental cost was one-third that of the more traditional shoe. However, the figures it used to make the comparison caused controversy, which led to a much lower-key commercial launch of InCycle Basket in early 2013. Today, a search for information about the InCycle Basket on Puma's official website returns the message 'no products were found'. The Suede is still available, in no fewer than 12 colours. Puma is even selling a Suede-themed phone case these days.

Timberland

It wasn't all about money and market share when VF Corporation acquired footwear brand Timberland in 2011. The group, whose other brands include The North Face and Vans, also said it wanted to bring on board Timberland's sustainability ethos. It said it was pleased with its own progress in this area, but acknowledged there were lessons for it to learn from the way Timberland, through projects such as its Earthkeepers range of footwear and its commitment to sharing information about the environmental impact of its footwear through its Green Index label initiative, had made sustainability a "driver for product innovation".

Icebug

Sometimes it can take a long time to win recognition in your own back yard. For specialist outdoor footwear brand Icebug, winning the award for best sporting goods brand in Sweden in 2013 was an important milestone, but it came fully 12 years after the company had won an ISPO Outdoor Award for the best innovation in footwear for BUGGrip. This traction technology's retractable spikes have "radically improved people's ability to be active outdoors all year round", Icebug has said, with runners able to take to the road or trail even when it's icy. It has continued to innovate, introducing other ideas such as RB9X, a new traction rubber that will allow runners to negotiate rocks in wet weather safely.



RB9X is a new traction rubber from Icebug.
CREDIT: ICEBUG

Crocs - from footwear fad to billion-dollar company.

CREDIT: CROCS



Crocs

Crocs was a 2002 creation, based on a proprietary closed-cell resin material that its founders were able to use to make clog-sandals that are colourful, lightweight, non-marking, slip- and odour-resistant and unusual looking. They quickly became popular for leisure and beachwear, as well as for boating, fishing and other water-based activities. Many observers assumed the footwear's popularity would prove short-lived, but by 2013 the company claimed to be the eighth biggest shoe brand in the world, having achieved sales the previous year of \$1.2 billion. The following year went less well, after an overestimation of demand in China, but it maintained its sales performance and has embarked on a far-reaching business review to establish profitability.

Reebok EasyTone

Sports brand Reebok was reported to be delighted with the initial response to its EasyTone toning shoes in 2010. An innovative sole design featuring "instability pads" increased activity in the leg and gluteus muscles, promising wearers an extra work-out while walking or running in the normal way. It said that by creating "micro-instabilities", the shoes would force the body to correct its posture by activating more muscle groups and in doing so provide a 28% increased work-out to the upper thighs and buttocks, and an 11% increase to the calves and hamstrings. Advertising campaigns emphasised the ease with which wearers of the EasyTone shoes would be able to attain "the perfect lower body" and "beautifully shaped legs". But 18 months later, the tone changed completely when Reebok agreed to pay \$25 million as compensation to consumers who felt their legs were not quite beautifully shaped enough after wearing the shoes. It said it disagreed with a

claim from the Federal Trade Commission in the US that its presentation of the product had been "deceptive" and was standing by its own claims for the shoes, but said it wanted to avoid a "protracted legal battle". EasyTone shoes are still for sale.

Ecco Golf

Many companies have long-lasting endorsement agreements with star athletes, but the one between former Masters champion Fred Couples and Danish footwear firm Ecco has endured longer than most. The arrangement started in 2006 and both parties agreed to renew it in 2013. Fred Couples has said that his preference previously was always to wear classic golf shoes, but that now he swears by models such as Ecco's Biom, saying that one of things he likes best, apart from the look, is that he can wear the spikeless shoes from home to tee. While Ecco was not the first footwear brand to bring spikeless golf shoes to market, its partnership with Fred Couples helped it spread the spikeless message across the game.



Fred Couples signature model of the Ecco Biom Hybrid.

CREDIT: ECCO

The Flyknit is Nike's lightest, fastest shoe yet.

CREDIT: NIKE



Nike Flyknit

Seasoned footwear industry commentators saw something special when, in 2012, Nike announced the launch of the Nike Flyknit, a new running shoe using new knitting techniques to create a one piece upper that it said was “virtually seamless” and creates the feeling of a second skin for runners. Nike holds a number of patents which cover the knitting of one-piece trainer uppers using both flat and circular knitting technologies. One early product, the Nike Flyknit Racer, had an upper and tongue weighing just 34 grammes, with a whole shoe weighing 160 grammes in a UK size 9. In presenting its version of the same idea, Primeknit, rival brand adidas argued that the knitting technique is far from innovative because the first constructions of this type were presented as early as 1940.

New Balance and 3D printing

Sports brand New Balance was one of the first to try its hand at 3D printing, developing a process to customise spiked running shoes in 2013. It used race-simulation technology, biomechanical data, in-shoe sensors and a motion-capture system to collect data, converting it into athlete-specific 3D-printed spike designs. It then used selective laser sintering (SLS) technology to transform materials in powder form into solid cross-sections, layer by layer. New Balance said at the time it believed the technology would be “the future of performance footwear”.

Gore Extended Comfort

Waterproof, breathable technology provider for footwear and textiles WL Gore claimed a major breakthrough in footwear in 2002 with the launch of its Extended Comfort membrane technology, which it designed to be incorporated underneath the upper material of a boot or shoe. It was 2014 before it followed this up with a new five-component system called Surround. And Surround includes a layer of Extended Comfort membrane technology as one of those components.

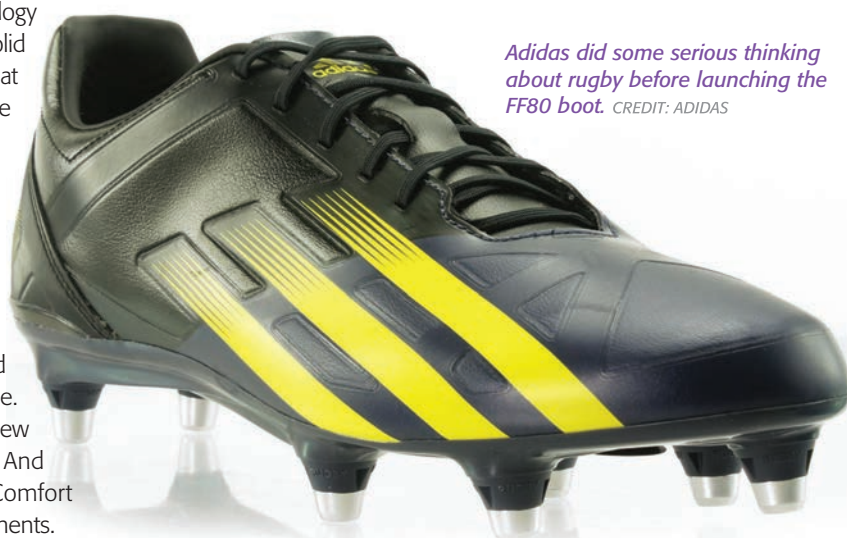
adidas FF80 rugby boot

Sports brand adidas announced a new rugby boot, the FF80, just before the 2013 Six Nations Championship. The new product displayed a substantial amount of rugby-specific thinking. With a 5x2 stud configuration, the boot is designed to cater for the “unique requirements” of specialist flankers and number 8 forwards, with every aspect designed to help increase traction in scrums, rucks and mauls. Years of research had shown that flankers use their feet differently from players in other positions on the field, spending a lot of time on the sides of their feet during scrums, on their toes during rucks, and often needing to change direction quickly to make tackles and reach breakdowns.

Outdry

Nextec Srl, the Italian company behind the OutDry laminated waterproofing technology for footwear, won an important legal victory over a rival, W.L. Gore, in 2008 after a four-year battle over patents. Nextec said that the long, painful (for a small company) process had ended up making its patent stronger. Years of scrutiny by lawyers and technical experts meant, by the court's decision, that the Nextec patent covers not just

Adidas did some serious thinking about rugby before launching the FF80 boot. CREDIT: ADIDAS



footwear but any application in which you can take a piece of leather and bond a membrane to it. Following the decision, Nextec spent two years listening to offers from much bigger companies and, in 2010, announced it had been acquired by Columbia Sportswear.

Desma

Footwear production automation specialist Desma was already responsible for one major shift in the outdoor and athletic footwear market (thanks to its development of direct injection soling, in which the rubber, polyurethane or thermoplastic polyurethane material a footwear brand chooses for its soles is injected directly, rather than stitched or stuck, onto the upper) when it promised further revolution in 2014. It presented Quadwrap, a concept athletic shoe it had made using four layers of polyurethane and a new version of its Amir machinery. The machine can make one pair every three minutes, but Desma's view is that the reduction Quadwrap promises in labour costs will make the biggest difference. It said the new system could help footwear firms reduce their labour needs by 90% and can make it viable for them to 're-shore', bringing production back from Asia to comparatively expensive locations in Europe or North America.

Vibram FiveFingers

Sole technology provider Vibram turned heads all over the world when it launched its FiveFingers minimalist glove-toed running shoe in 2007. It won a design award for the product in Milan the following year and, within three years, had been

forced to close down more than 100 websites selling counterfeit imitations. Enormously popular during the barefoot running craze, FiveFingers later faced criticism because of injuries that some wearers suffered and Vibram agreed in 2014 to pay compensation of up to \$95 per person affected. But it made no apology and has continued to develop the idea, introducing a washable version for mud runners in 2015.

OrthoLite Impressions

Performance insoles brand OrthoLite seemed to anticipate demand for footwear components sourced from bio-based raw material when, in 2011, it announced a customisable, moulded insole and lining foam called Impressions. The open-cell foam incorporates nearly 50% bio-oil in its formula and moulds to the shape of the foot to create a customised fit system inside the shoe. Castor oil is the source of the bio-oil that makes up 50% of the material mix in the foam. OrthoLite has pointed out that castor oil is a non-food plant source that shows "significant ecological advantages in terms of energy and resource consumption".

Cambrelle

Footwear lining manufacturer Camtex was quick to recognise the potential of silver-based antimicrobial fibres in footwear. It launched a new product in its Cambrelle range, Cambrelle with X-Static, in 2006, saying it was aiming to combine the abrasion resistance and wicking properties of Cambrelle with the anti-odour and antimicrobial functionality of Noble Biomaterials' silver-based X-Static. 📍

Picture taken May 1, 1893 - G. W. Caldwell
 Left to right:
 Dr. Y. C. Helm G. W. Caldwell (Dog Prince)
 Mr. Moore Oliver Gilbert Tom Price
 Mr. Hays Elsie Wilson Charles C.

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Well heeled. French actress and director Sophie Marceau at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival.

CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK

Beauty is still a pain

Outrage on social media was the result when a number of women reported they had been challenged by security staff at screenings and other plush events at the Cannes Film Festival for wearing flat shoes. Some even said they had been refused entry, with those guarding access telling them they should have worn heels.

The director of the Cannes Film Festival, Thierry Frémaux, denied the event has a policy of refusing entry to women wearing flat shoes. In an exchange on Twitter in the days that followed, Mr Frémaux insisted there were no grounds for rumours that the festival had made high-heeled shoes part of the dress-code for women. On seeing some of the reports in international media about women being refused admittance to events, film producer Marc Missionier asked the festival director if the rumours were true. Mr Frémaux responded: "Absolutely not. And suggestions that the festival is making it obligatory for women to wear high heels are without foundation."

Some journalists and commentators failed to take Mr Frémaux's word for it and the story stayed in the news for weeks. Much of the commentary was condemnatory of the alleged Cannes policy, saying it was old-fashioned and sexist to demand that women wear heeled shoes, no matter how much pain they have to endure as a result.

London-based fashion designer Zandra Rhodes took a

Social media went wild when guests at the Cannes Film Festival claimed they had been turned away for wearing flat shoes, coinciding with an exhibition at London's V&A examining 'ever higher heels and dramatic shapes'. These events have brought the perennial debate about why women wear high-heeled shoes back into vogue.

different view, telling the BBC: "I love high-heeled shoes; they look gorgeous. I think most women feel much better if they are in high heels. They feel elegant. If you are going to a special occasion, you feel good in heels. And at the moment there are so many exotic heels, and if someone wants to prove they are successful and wealthy, they can have all the right shoes to show off."

She acknowledged that walking in heels can become increasingly difficult for some women as they grow older and said flat shoes can also work "if they are covered in gems".



Shoes: Pleasure and Pain includes (bottom left) chopines made from punched kid leather over carved pine, Venice, Italy (c1600s) and (below) wedding toe-knob paduka, silver and gold over wood, India (c1800s).

CREDITS: VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON



Cultural significance

The concept is the subject of a new exhibition at London's Victoria & Albert Museum, *Shoes: Pleasure and Pain*, which will be on at the venue until the end of January 2016. It looks at the cultural significance of shoes throughout the ages, tapping into a passion for footwear that has been revived in recent years. "Shoes have become so much more important in the last decade – they are the fashion story of last 10 years," designer Rupert Sanderson tells us. "The explosion of interest in shoe design has been phenomenal."

Curator Helen Persson has sourced shoes that represent "transformation, status, seduction, creation and obsession" throughout the ages – from sandals from ancient Egypt dating to around 500BC to modern-day Cinderella shoes, football boots and celebrities' famous cast-offs. The older styles offer a glimpse into history, a window to what life was like for the wearer and the society they lived in. Many offered a way to "prove the wearer is successful and wealthy", as Ms Rhodes points out: Indian modari and paduka wedding sandals are embellished with gold leaf, silver bells and gilded copper; sequinned slippers from King Erik XIV of Sweden while Roger Vivier's 'Faberge of shoes' feature beaded silks and leathers.

With a collection of 3,000 pairs in the V&A, it took years to source and select the final 250. "It's almost an impossible task to curate something down to just that selection of shoes with such a bewildering spectrum of styles, designs, eras," says Mr Sanderson, who was invited to select one of his designs for display.

Although they span 2,000 years, some of the 'status' shoes look strikingly similar with the same type of embellishments, and the quest for height seemingly transcending fashion. Raised chopines of 1580 elevated Spanish ladies above the dirty streets, Indian brides stood on platforms to make them literally stand out from the crowd and Turkish clogs with a 28cm platform protected feet from the heated floor of the Hamman.

But pain is a constant bedfellow, with many designs eschewing the anatomy of the foot, creating shoes that are

pointed, curled or too small. This is not more apparent than in the 7.6cm silk shoes for bound feet, dating from 18th century China. Young children had their toes broken and feet wrapped tightly so they could not grow properly, causing deformed insteps, in-growing toenails and infection. The pain made them walk gingerly which, alongside the diminutive foot, was considered ladylike in the upper classes until it was outlawed in the early 20th century.

Shoe anatomy

On the upper floor of the exhibition, in a contrasting bright space to reflect the opposites of pleasure and pain, the shoes' anatomy is revealed – heels and uppers, counters and lasts. "It's the thing that makes us as shoe designers different," explains Mr Sanderson. "We are lone explorers but you need to be able to work with these often difficult-to-find specialists. We're like directors in a film: only as good as the cast and crew." Nearby, some of the most prominent 'directors' – Manolo Blahnik, Sandra Choi of Jimmy Choo, Caroline Groves, Marc Hare and Christian Louboutin – discuss inspirations on a screen amid a wall of shoe boxes.

Housed in a boudoir-esque velvet curtained area are the items that represent an alternate side to pleasure: sensuality. Leather riding boots, platform 'stripper' shoes and patent stilettos are paired with Christian Louboutin's 'unwearable' collection featuring almost vertical shanks.

In this area also resides the curator's favourite pair: Marilyn Monroe's white leather Salvatore Ferragamo pumps. Contrary to urban myth, both heels are the same height, debunking the idea that she wore one heel slightly higher than the other to accentuate her 'wiggle'.

The way heels affect movement is central to the exhibition, as well as to the idea of elegance. By 1890, higher heels were becoming fashionable for 'ladies about town', and they saw a resurgence in the 1950s with the stiletto as women favoured a more pronounced gait in reaction to the restrictions imposed

JIMMY CHOO PRESENTS FOOTWEAR STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The winners of the prestigious UK-based Footwear Student of the Year awards were presented with their certificates by Jimmy Choo at the V&A, held to coincide with museum's Pleasure & Pain exhibition and attended by some of the top players in the British shoe industry.

Three UK universities specialising in footwear – University of Northampton, De Montfort and London College of Fashion (LCF) – submitted work from their top five students to be judged by a panel made up of Pentland Brands' creative director Katie Greenyer, Guy West from Jeffery-West and designer Atalanta Weller.

The process "totally inspired" the judges, said Ms Greenyer. "It's a credit to the universities that they drive the students to become the best crop of footwear students globally. It's also healthy to understand competition, because when you get out in the real world, that's all it's about."

The winner was announced as Ganna Domnich from LCF, whose collection was "inspired by artists and so commercially viable", according to Ms Greenyer. Second prize and third prizes were also awarded to LCF students, Jack McMamara and Lauren Aileen Betourney. Commendations were awarded to Sam Walker and Bethany Roberts from de Montfort.

Mr Choo, who had flown over from Malaysia for the event, was joined by fellow ex-Cordwainer Rupert Sanderson, who won a comparative award in his year. "Winning the award allowed me to visit Italy for the first time," he said. "I spent a month visiting factories and tanneries, the trip turned my head and I didn't really come back."

He found work in Bologna with Sergio Rossi and Bruno Magli, as well as a factory prepared to work with him on his first collection,



Rupert Sanderson joins Jimmy Choo to celebrate new talent.

CREDIT: MARK WITTER PHOTOGRAPHY

launched in 2001 – a factory he now owns. "When you leave college and win an award, you go out into the wilderness and you tend to forget where you started, you're so consumed with making it work," he told *World Footwear*. "I suppose coming back is an elaborate way to say thank you."

This was the second student awards organised by the Worshipful Company of Cordwainers, following on from an event at the livery company's London base last May. As the biggest supplier of bursaries and scholarships to footwear students in Britain, Cordwainers was invited to support Pleasure & Pain. "They wanted us to support the exhibition because we represent heritage," explained the Cordwainers Clerk, John Miller. "Britain leads the world in footwear education and design, it's in our psyche, and the V&A is the world's leading museum for art and design, so it was logical to hold the footwear awards here, too."

during the Second World War. Twenty-first century Cinderella shoes by Jimmy Choo and his counterparts – feathered Manolo Blahniks and red-soled Louboutins made famous in the TV series *Sex and the City* – are all based on towering platforms.

In *World Footwear March/April 2013* we looked at a study from researchers at the UK's University of Portsmouth that concluded high-heeled shoes help a woman look attractive because of the effect they have on her body movement – which potentially feeds into the idea that women are more dressed up when wearing heels, harboured by the aforementioned security staff at Cannes. Trying to clear up the confusion, the film festival offered the statement: "Regarding the dress code for the red carpet screenings, rules have not changed throughout the years

and there is no specific mention about the height of the women's heels, or men's. Thus, in order to make sure that this rule is respected, the festival's hosts and hostesses have been reminded of it."

Now that even Barbie has been designed with rotating ankles to enable her to wear 'flat shoes', the Cannes team will have to concede elegance is not exclusive to the heel. The argument in France wasn't really about height, but about choice, and about the freedom for women to decide what they felt most comfortable in. However, if *Shoes: Pleasure and Pain* tells us anything, it is that our obsession with high heels – platform, floating or skyscraper – has been ingrained for hundreds of years, and shows little sign of abating. 🍷

To make its shoes suitable for the wet streets of London, Harrys of London worked with Vibram to develop the Windsurf sole.

ALL CREDITS: HARRYS OF LONDON

For the wet streets of London

The first half of 2015 was a busy time for luxury men's footwear company Harrys of London. It completed a project with French designer Christian Lahoude to come up with a new concept for its flagship London store, saying it plans to roll out the new design across all its stores at a later date.

In October 2014, private equity firm Palladin Consumer Retail Partners acquired a controlling stake in Harrys to fund future growth. The footwear brand was founded in 2005 and now has three London stores as well as franchise partnerships in Dubai, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia and global distribution through an e-commerce platform. The brand's shoes and accessories are also available from department stores in more than 20 countries. Its flagship store in the Burlington Arcade in the West End of London, unveiled its new look on July 9.

In the past, Christian Lahoude has worked on architectural

With new materials, new ideas, a redesigned flagship store, new investors and experienced industry professionals at the helm, Harrys of London is confident it can provide stylish shoes that function well in all conditions.

design projects for Alexander Wang, Jimmy Choo, Tiffany and Gucci and, on this latest project, worked collaboratively with Harrys of London creative director, Kevin Martel. Mr Martel was appointed as Harrys of London's creative director in 2005, bringing with him over 20 years' experience



All Harrys of London shoes are handmade in Tuscany and, even with extensive global expansion now, the company has no plans to change its approach.

designing men's accessories and footwear for well known brands. He started his career in 1993 when he joined the Cole Haan design team and stayed until he moved to Ralph Lauren in 1998 as the design director for men's footwear. Two years later he joined Giorgio Armani as design director for men's accessories, leaving in 2005 to help set up Harrys of London.

Like a library

On announcing the redesign project, Mr Martel said: "As Harrys of London expands internationally, I wanted to evolve our original Mayfair 'library' concept into something that reflects our combination of craftsmanship and innovation. Christian Lahoude has exceptional taste and understands luxury retail for a global audience." For his part, Mr Lahoude said he had begun his work on the project by examining in detail the design of historic London libraries. He said the end result was "London design made relevant for a global audience".

Only weeks before this, the commercial director of leathergoods brand Mulberry, Steven Newey, left that company to take up the position of chief executive at Harrys of London. Prior to Mulberry, Mr Newey held positions at Berluti, Loro Piana, Alfred Dunhill, Tommy Hilfiger and Hermès. He took up his new position on June 1, saying: "I am joining this business at an extraordinary time of expansion and global growth and I'm delighted to be working alongside an experienced team. The next six months promise to be exciting and challenging as we take Harrys of London to new territories and new audiences."

Imagination

Its shoes are all handmade in Tuscany and the company insists that it has no plans to change this during the expansion it is going through at the moment but, from launch, Harrys of London said its aim was to "re-imagine traditional men's shoe designs with the use of technically advanced materials". This led to the creation of a

number of lines, including two that it says have become "iconic", the Downing and Basel loafers. The first uses mostly calfskin tanned in Italy, but the material of choice for the Basel is kudu suede.

In some models, the company also uses a signature outsole called Windsurf, which it developed with soling technology specialist Vibram. Based on a design used in performance windsurfing shoes, the two partners adapted the idea for the wet streets of London, providing Harrys shoes with flexibility, traction and high levels of abrasion resistance. In collaboration with another technical partner, Technogel, Harrys of London has also developed a gel innersole that it says provides a soft, stable and pleasant feeling for the foot.

Quality raw material

Mention of the special soling materials helping the shoes work well on the wet streets of London may spark questions in the minds of some readers about the advisability of using suede in the uppers. Supplier of the special kudu suede, Leeds-based tanning company CF Stead, argues that, although there is a common perception that split suede is "less effective" in applications such as shoe uppers in temperate climates like the UK's, this is not necessarily accurate. "There is a difference between suede split and a sueded antelope skin, and we supply both," explains David Bailey, the company's sales director. "If you buy good-quality, degreased suede split, you can still get a superlative product. It's all about the quality of the raw material, how it's been prepared and how it's been tanned."

His interpretation is that Harrys of London was looking for something unique for shoes such as the Basel loafer collection and certainly found it with the kudu suede. It's from a game antelope and the buffing technique used to make the grain side into a nubuck serves only to enhance its interesting and unusual natural characteristics, while the reverse side makes suede. For the Basel, Harrys of London has opted to have the nubuck side next to the foot and the suede side on display. There are, of course, different finishes that a tanner can apply to make the suede more water-resistant, but Mr Bailey is of the opinion that most of these are likely to take something away from the natural material, which he refers to as "the nicest, softest, most lustrous suede you can imagine". 🌀



For the Basel, the brand uses kudu suede, tanned by CF Stead in Leeds. The leather producer says the material provides the softest, most lustrous suede imaginable.

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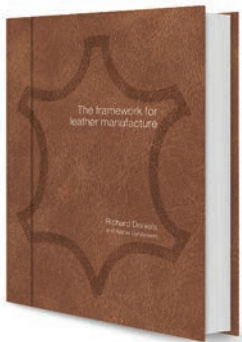
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World Footwear July/August 2015

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