

WORLD FOOTWEAR

*Omnipel animal look.**Croco leather by Dolmen.**Croco leather by Dolmen.**Anaconda Brush PU by Giardini.*

L for leather, L for luxury

Luxury is the keyword for leathers for winter 2005. Soft grained leathers in rich deep colours, warm golden metallics and soft pile surfaces with lots of surface embellishment created a luxurious impression at the most recent Lineapelle.

The trend area was divided into three groups of colours. "Enchantment" was for pale and pastel colours, but with an antique faded and natural look. Very pale wintry neutrals like pale beige, lavender, grey and dusty pinks are perfect for sophisticated ladies dress shoes, but more unusually for sporty casuals. "Desire" was a range of deep rich colours, including warm browns and the increasingly popular red and violet tones including blackberry. "Amazement" included vivid brights, but still with a lot of depth in the colour; there are purples and bright pinks, reds, electric blue, red and rich green as well as the ubiquitous gold. These colours are more often used for highlights.

Fashion leathers today have lots of work in them—often embossed and overprinted with coloured surfaces frequently two tone to create greater depth and a more natural leather look. Anaconda and croco embosses are finished in more than one colour, embossed and often have an added brush off effect to be utilised on the finished footwear. These extra effects all enhance the natural look of the leathers. Metallic finishes are subtle, and the natural colour of the leather can be seen through them. Leathers and furs are woven together (AT&T), for luxurious big handbags. Domodossola had created a semi transparent bustier from black leather and string, interwoven. Broad soft pale tea rose and rich red velvet ribbons were woven in plain weave to create a new textile.

*Central Trend Area.*

Heavier leathers are in fashion, too, for men's casual and even dressier shoes and boots. Russell Savana by Vesta is embossed with a hessian weave print, which is over printed with a darker colour. The upper colour is then smudged in uneven wide streaks to reduce the geometric pattern to more natural looking leather. Heavy elephant and shark grain embosses have a soft handle, despite the depth of emboss, and the print is enhanced by different base and surface leather colours. These strongly designed grain leathers often have a slight pull up or rub off effect. In fact both dark and even chalky rub offs remain very strong for winter shoes and boots, especially in the more conservative male footwear market. The whitish rub offs work very well on casual shoes with off white heavy stitching and natural rubber coloured soles (which also often have two tone rub off effects too).

Fashion designers are increasingly using technical leathers for non-technical footwear. Pittards soccer leather is so beautifully soft it is being used for men's Italian smart casual shoes. The hard pebble grain surface camouflage printed leathers were originally made for the military in Britain and Canada—the same leathers are now available for other customers with slight variations on the print pattern.

Double face effects appear in leathers, too, with Vesta's new Husky Rovesciato offering smooth suede on the front and warm nubuck on the inside in four simple colours of brick red, dark brown, ink and graphite grey.

Non-leather

Woven textiles, like tweed and pleated satin, have proved popular for shoes this winter. And all sorts of woven textiles carry through to next winter. Imitation tweeds are a practical and cheaper alternative, removing the risk of fraying. Here modern technology has created practical look-alikes, with photo-prints from Crespi and Omnipel looking almost like the real thing. On velour, SOTECO has animal prints, and Panatex has Prince of Wales checks. Texpiel's tweed and brocades had hand embroidered sequins and gold embroidery threads on top.

Imitation fur is popular, but is now becoming more and more like the real thing. It often has a very soft handle and a different colour at the roots from the tips for extra depth. Real rabbit fur at Lineapelle was used for trims, and also woven with and decorating full grain leather.

Double faces are still strong in classic lambskin as by Icelandic Furs, or with wool felt by Italian Bigagli which can be laminated by the buyer in colours of choice, with interesting colour mixes like green/orange and brown/pink.

Soft metallics come in all shades from muted silver, pewter and bronze to rich antique gold, in leathers and synthetics. Natural nappa surfaces mean that the metallic PUs have a natural look and shine—as in Giardini's Bambi Lux soft PU. Spotty and rub off effects come on metallics, often with an uneven surface.

Components

Men and women will continue with driving soles with small rubber lugs for winter. The other strong theme for sporty shoes is the soccer or turf inspired bottom pattern with round or square lugs, more practical for winter wear in the Northern hemisphere than the smooth Formula 1 tyre soles that were seen everywhere. For boys, the soccer type lugs are ideal as →



Fur trim by Panatex.

Pittards soccer leather.

Rubber outsole by Silga.

Pleating by Omnipel.

Adele boot by Vibram.

WORLD FOOTWEAR

FASHION



they have a good function on winter shoes and boots.

Wedges are coming back into fashion, and there are even driving tyre sole versions with a flat bottom sole and an inserted EVA wedge in contrast colours giving a lift to the last from Colorplast. Unit soles are still very strong for sporty hybrid footwear, with rippled forepart rubber soles and moulded separate heels (Vibram). Vibram has refreshed its range, and is now making many more open moulds—previously most were made to order. This is no doubt since its China factory is now producing many soles for use in the Far East. The classic Vibram lug patterns are revived for use on fashion shoes by being made on very thin slabs with the lugs in a second very strong colour.

Double density soles are becoming more common in sporty shoes as the demand for light weight increases. SmartLite midsoles are 50% lighter than rubber. New on the Vibram technical soles are a two colour injected sole for sporty shoes, with the lugs on a textile base, for ultra light weight.

Pull up and colour change effects are available in a wide range for colours on sheet rubber from Davis and Prialpas, with



a 'natural' leather look. Caster's rubber sheeting is also available in a non-slip version called Brake—ideal for smarter looking shoes.

Dressy heels often have metal effects, with gold finishes subtly giving an added nuance to an opaque colored heel. Zanzani's heels were interlaid with twisted gold threads in scroll designs.

Trims are both luxurious and natural; silk woven tassels mix and match well with the brocade tapestry textiles and the art nouveau embossed designs on leathers. Natural horn and wood trims work well with weaves and natural leathers, to give a warm feeling. Fur and feathers create a feeling of opulence. Belt buckles and

button trims are large, often in antique gold finishes, finally taking over from silver, inlaid with coloured Swarovski crystals.

New safety toes from Hawaii, best known for technical and fashion speed laces, buckles and trims, are totally non-static. The toecaps are made from a polymer, and Hawaii says they are the first non-steel toecap to meet all EU safety requirements. The toe, which is slightly thicker than the traditional, is suitable for the electronics and electrical industries, and is also much lighter in weight than a normal steel toe. 