

Barcelona, where brands show off their 'street cred'

Exciting young street fashion is what "Bread and Butter" does best—there is a mix of clothing and accessories, and lots of shoes. All the trendy, more casual shoe brands are there. One nice thing about this fair is that the men's trends and collections are as strong, if not stronger, than the women's.

Bread and Butter, now very much at home in Barcelona, has speedily grown to be one of the leading young fashion fairs, enjoying phenomenal growth, with over 82,000 visitors in three days in January. It is not too big, it's well run (by its German organisers), well segmented and easy to get round. It is strictly edited to keep it manageable, and only companies with 'street credibility' get to exhibit.

For winter, men's shoes have cleaned up, with lots of natural looking leather, often emphasised by lighter, natural, heavy stitching. Work boots are still a strong macho story; the boots have solid welted bottoms and smooth, slightly antiqued, leather uppers; these boots look really made to last. Scratched and used leather is a bit cleaner than before—Firetrap's men's work boots in simple full grain scratch leather have a knitted collar and rubber heel counter overlay that runs down right over the stack leather and rubber heel.



Firetrap

ACROSS THE BOARD LABELS

Clothing label link-ups are being exploited wherever possible. G Star Raw (a cool Dutch jeans brand) has just launched a footwear brand for men and women, designed by Englishman Stephen Palmer who was responsible for launching CAT (Caterpillar boots) in Europe some years ago. The collection stands out for its authentic rough and monochrome feel. The colour palette consists of matt black, steel grey, dark brown and combat dirty khaki matt leather and white smooth leather with black soles. Designs are work boot and industrial inspired with plenty of details from jeans, such as chevron woven cotton stencilled tags on the topline and gunmetal logo rivets identical to those on the jeans. There's lots of vegetable tanned leather to



PF Flyers



El Naturalista





Converse

be seen. High-heeled boots in matt leather have matching chevron weave cotton shafts, brushed soles and stack heels. The whole collection keeps close to the feeling of the jeans brand—with higher prices to match.

Quick



White sports shoes are an all-year-round fashion staple, with lots of smooth full grain leather on simple rubber soles. Touch and close fastenings are an easy alternative to laces. There seems to be no end to revivals of defunct European sneaker brands—newest from Spain is Mates, which was founded in 1937. The company closed years ago, but has been bought up and the old shoes recreated. New versions of the old basic styles appear in a wide range of bright colours. Spalding in Europe has a different image from that which it enjoys in the USA. In Europe it is looked upon as an old, high level, true American brand. It is very traditional, old school and cool. Last winter, Spalding's Italian designers recreated authentic old looking leather baseball shoes from 1890, in rich full grain leather with equally old looking leather soles. Now the line is bigger, there are updates from several different famous decades for the brand—from the all leather running shoes, which won the Minnesota Olympic Games in 1904, to basketball boots of the 1970s in vivid colours and designs. Metallics aren't going away either; Alima has soft leather basket inspired fashion boots, with vivid sporty neon yellow trims. PF Flyers has taken a classic

retro basket boot, with the padded collar cut right down to the heel counter, 1970s style, and reinterpreted it in different materials including pewter metallic leather and imitation snake.

WOVEN LEATHER GETS TRENDY

Woven leather is a strong trend popularised by the Kim Jones for Umbro collection last summer. U by Umbro has the look in its own line, too—white leather and textile woven together in soft athletic inspired casuals. Interwoven leather has been picked up by many of the brands including Onitsuka Tiger from Japan, which has a nice soft sneaker in all-over full grain woven leather, and old English shoe company Bukta uses weaves too. Canvas sneakers are all-year-round wear as well, as are skate shoes. Tattoos, skull and crossbones and skeletons are standard fare for this sort of footwear. Skate shoes are modern classics, updated a little in black and white combinations with touches of neon orange. Personalised and graffiti painted all-over skater sneakers are more the norm than the exception today, very often in limited editions by some famous (but relatively unknown) street graffiti artists.

Flat vulcanised boots and shoes come in all guises, and are somewhere between winter and summer wear. Foxings are often dirtied or made antique looking by hand. Rock star images are popular; Iron Maiden shoes by Vans have Gothic images painted on the canvas. From Jump, there are leather winter vulcanised boots, nice natural waxy undyed leather spat boots on oval toes. Jump's men's patchwork leather shoes have a touch

Jump



U by Umbro



El Naturalista

of difference as they have a casual squared-off toe. Spingle Move makes simple calender sole leather men's shoes in Hiroshima, Japan. The company making the shoes is 75 years old, but the label has been around for only three or four years. The high quality calender sole men's shoes are made in all types of leather, from kangaroo to hand painted sheepskin, or traditional printed brocade-inspired designs on leather—and all the high quality materials are sourced from Japanese suppliers.

Spingle Move



GET REAL

Real authenticity, too, is very trendy—Helly Hansen's survival gear, for instance, attracted plenty of attention. The winter survival boots in regular black or industrial safety orange have removable felt liners that can be worn indoors as slippers. Quick's Spyker shoes are made for a newly sponsored Formula 1 car racing team, to full specifications such as fire resistance, etc. There are replicas in the line, too, and takedowns inspired by the car racing boots.

Textiles are big for next winter, especially warm and woolly ones, combined with leather. El Naturalista's full grain leather winter boots have matching woolly rib knitted tweed cuffs. There is plenty of real felt combined with suede or leather at Merrell, Sebago and Simple. From Goliath, winter vulcanised sneakers in herringbone tweed with grain leather eyestay and counter. New Balance and PF Flyers have Prince of Wales check or simple tweed combined with suede trims to add a winter feel to basically what were originally summer items. Camouflage is not going away. Digital camouflage textile is combined with supple goat skin on simple men's oxford shoes and booties from new

English men's Demigods and Delilah. Monta had street soccer shoes inspired by old Puma trainers from the 1970s in denim, or printed camouflage leather in bright red.

Although the feel is still casual, smarter looks are coming in for sporty girls. Golddigga (London based jeans brand for flashy girls) has patent sneakers with gold or silver rivets making up the big flying G logo, and other styles with all-over sequins. Girls' white leather sneakers have pretty pink laser cut patterns on them (Lacoste). Indoor house shoes, and furry slippers are trendy too; Golddigga's have metallic embroidery and sequins in black with gold or pink with silver.

More brands are showing off their environmental credentials, as well as their 'street cred'. Simple uses water based cements, no unnecessary paper in the boxes, organic cotton, recycled pulp for foot forms and boxes, recycled car tyres for soles, PET for laces, and bamboo fibre textile linings. Their winter boots look great in felt with a water resistant latex coated jute mudguard. For real eco freaks there is the 'Stitch It' moccasin which comes in a reusable paper drawstring sack, which just needs stitching together. Patagonia too has a self-assembly shoe, with premoulded footbed and sole that can just be slotted together. Patagonia's outdoor hiking boots have Vibram soles that are 30% reground and reclaimed rubber; this they claim is a first time for outdoor shoes. In addition the tannery has achieved ISO 14000. Even the lining is recycled PET. The EVA is also part recycled on the Vibram soled casual shoes. Comfy casual shoes from Patagonia come in natural coloured grey or beige wool felt. The sole is recycled EVA and even the elastics are vegetable-based. El Naturalista, which only uses natural materials—such as leather, wool, latex—has a collection inspired by frogs. It is claimed that some local frogs are likely to become extinct due to global warming and so there are frog-inspired patterns on the sole and applications on the leather uppers.

Casual looks with vegetable tanned leather bridge the gap between sporty and trendy. Last, designed in London and made in small specialist factories in Thailand, mixes bulky heels and chunky brick red micro bottoms on ballerina pumps, decorated with hand made leather flowers (and not a piece of metal in the entire collection). The company's motto is 'one foot in the past and one foot in the present'.

Real leather boots, above ankle or up to the knee, are just as

Golddigga





strong a fashion for next year as this year.

Toe shapes range from short-toed Turkish inspired turn ups (Firetrap), flat short points (Fly London) to elegant long ovals (G Star Raw). Many of the forepart soles are

thin platforms that imitate thicker stack leather soles. Wrinkled, folded and used leather is also popular for high-heeled fashion boots, in mid-height on mid-oval toes.

For women's fashion shoes, heels are higher than ever, but thicker and easier to balance on. They can be almost pedestal style (Golddigga) or a cross between a heel and a wedge. Extreme thick covered forepart platforms have been seen a lot at designer level but have not been picked up on so much by the street fashion brands at Bread and Butter. A more casual platform shoe by J Shoes has a high wedge and slim forepart platform all covered in matt leather, and you can see the shadow of the join so the shoes don't look so bulky. Generally materials were matt, with exotics such as snake and fish reappearing.

In Barcelona, there are always some interesting local designers, making small exclusive collections. Iris Morata's collection of women's shoes and boots is designed in Spain and made in small factories in Menorca. There are quirky material mixes such as red patent with brown ostrich, used in boots with back pleats showing contrasting materials. 

J Shoes

