

Appeal guaranteed at **GDS**

Choose Italy for funky fashion, choose Germany for sensible sellers. That was the clear message after the GDS and MICAM fairs. Winter shoes and boots were comfortable, in nice, rich leathers, with the essential touches to keep them fashionable and up-to-date at GDS in Germany. For women, long semi-fitted riding boots or mid-high heel slouchy leather boots on moderate, round and, sometimes turned up toes, were the main trends whilst for evenings sequins and glitz in pewter and soft metallics were also often presented on moderate heels.

Whilst the towering platforms on display were aimed at niche youth markets or fashion-led UK retailers, for the more adventurous there were hybrid wedge heels, which resemble a heavy heel with a wedge scoop. Halfway between a wedge and a heel, they are very comfortable to walk in and not as heavy looking as a full wedge. Heel heights at GDS were commercial and comfortable, and even trend-led companies such as Mexx had toned down their platforms for the commercial mainstream market.

BOOTS STILL BIG

Boots remain very much in the mainstream again next year, both casual and dressy. Long shaft, low-heeled walking boots in classic designs in natural leathers are set to stick around for at least another winter, whilst short semi-fitted bootees are still popular for younger consumers. In between these two styles, semi-casual boots in soft suedes have an informal feel with fall down shafts that create wrinkles at the ankles in fashion colours such as cobalt blue and dark green, as well as some plum and bordeaux. High-heeled fashion boots are often adorned with metal studs and buckles, usually in antique bronze or a gunmetal finish. Mexx's were hand spray-painted to create a more natural 'used' look.

METALLIC MIXES

For shoes, even though natural leathers remain important, there is also a wealth of metallics from pewter to silver and gold, in both dark and light shades, often enhanced with diamantés or studs. However, metallics are not just for fancy shoes, they are





just as popular for sporty casuals and trainers. For fancy shoes, there is all over glitter, with both large and small metallic particles. All over sequins and beading have lost their handmade, multi-coloured Chinese look and have become simpler, with all over coverage in silver and gold. Dressy shoes on stiletto heels are classic in black or grey, often with just the lining in a bright or metallic shade to add that extra touch. Replay's collection featured skull and crossbones embroidery, mixing street and dressy fashion to create a new look.

ANTIQUE FOR MEN

For men, real leather with a real antique look, sometimes combined with rather wintry textiles such as woven tweed (T Shoes), remains a winning formula. Vagabond created tweed looking desert boots in soft printed leathers, with a broad natural crêpe foxing tape. Soles are brush-painted leather, or worn and natural looking rubber, often with a two-tone antique finish. Winter boots for men have a strong military feel with mixes of heavy leather and canvas or nylon, trimmed with big roller buckles on exaggerated toe spring lasts (G Star and Replay).

GROWN UP KIDS

Kids want to look like grown ups at an ever-younger age. Although the smallest size shoes for girls are still in cute pinks and fuchsias with sequins and floral applications, once kids grow a bit bigger they want to look like their brothers and sisters and scaled down versions of adults shoes are therefore very much the trend. Camper's kids collection emulates the Camper adult classics in the same materials, only sometimes with inside zips on the long boots or Velcro strapping on the shorter ones. Replay and Sons, the 'cool kids' version of the jeans brand, created collections for boys and girls with lots of embroidered aggressive racer and biker patches all over the uppers.

WATERPROOF WINNERS

Winters are getting warmer (with the cold and inclement weather arriving much later) in most of Europe. Therefore although sales of membrane boots have not been as good as had been hoped for, waterproof is still a big selling point. Kamik's PVC injected boots were freshened up with a co-ordinating colourful polar fleece sock turned over at the top.

WORKS OF ART

The White Cubes area at GDS is exclusively reserved for high fashion brands, and created a great deal of interest. Jan Jansen displayed his typical 'works of art' with each handmade individual shoe a masterpiece, with those special details that make them instant classics. Some of his designs from the past several years have just been sold at a Christie's auction, causing huge interest in the Dutch shoemaker's handiwork. His newest style is a jagged moccasin seam with a leafy edge, mixing smooth and distressed leather, with the added touch of a bright red lining—a true work of art for the feet.



Kamik



As anyone who has tried trekking long distance with a regular membrane in bad conditions will know, although your feet don't get wet, the boots do get much heavier as they begin to fill with water. In response to this Kamik has launched a new OutDry collection of footwear. As the membrane is laminated directly to the upper material the water does not soak into the upper or fill up inside the shoe, meaning that however much the shoes are worn in wet conditions they do not become heavier. 🌍