

The materials the Portuguese company has used include snakeskin-effect bovine leather.

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Desert inspiration for Portuguese brand

The spring-summer 2010 collection from Portuguese label Atelier do Sapato turned heads when it went on show at the GDS exhibition in Dusseldorf, with the fashion and trends experts there applauding the inspiration the company had taken from Bedouin culture. Styles in the current collection, for women only, include hand-worked flat and high sandals with cork platforms and desert boots with crepe soles. The colour scheme features black, midnight blue, dark olive, denim nuances, different shades of sand and ivory.

The GDS commentators liked the layering, pleating and gathers used as details in the shoes and boots, and said

North African inspiration has helped Atelier do Sapato to earn plaudits at GDS in Dusseldorf. Now it hopes for further international expansion with an entry into the UK market.

the multi-layered and welt-sewn soles “look brushed by a desert storm”, before adding that the calfskin suede that predominates “is super-soft like finest sand while imitation matt snakeskin looks sun-bleached”.

The Dutch designer behind the Bedouin idea, Rense Hekstra, says the inspiration was the “romantic image” of this hardy people living in the desert wrapped in woollen clothes, sleeping in sturdy tents and crafting “beautifully adorned copper plates and lamps”. Copper and brass have made their way into the footwear collection as trims and the echo of the many layers of Bedouin clothing can be seen in many of the uppers. “There is a layered feeling in most of the styles. In one, the leather is bunched together with belts, creating wrinkles. In another there is a loose collar wrapped around a court shoe.” Other desert touches are clear in a pair of crepe-soled desert boots, various styles of sandal and a pair of riding boots that Atelier do Sapato believes would be ideal for wearing on the back of a camel.

Atelier do Sapato, part of the Macosmi company, enjoyed the GDS experience and is now aiming to build on its sales in France, Scandinavia and Belgium by attracting partners and buyers in Germany and the UK. To support its move into the UK market, and in an attempt to build partnerships there, the brand has decided to exhibit at the Pure London event at the start of August for the first time this summer.

The company will have its autumn-winter 2010–2011 collection on show in London, along with strong sellers from previous seasons. Layering is again in evidence, continuing a ‘boot-in-boot’ idea that Atelier do Sapato tried out last autumn-winter. Sometimes the layering is



There are overlapping panels on the uppers and combinations of rubber, leather and crepe in the outsoles.

completely obvious, such as when there are overlapping panels of leather on the uppers, creating “armour-like effects”. At other times it is more subtle, with extra material at zip and seam areas to give added volume. There is also layering of leather, rubber and crepe in the soles giving extra chunkiness, although heels remain “elegant, yet firm” according to the company.

It has used soft calf suede, washed full grain bovine leather, snakeskin-effect bovine leather, smooth calfskin and even some goatskin as the materials for its latest collection and has focused on darker colours such as deep navy blue, anthracite, dark petrol and black, with a burnished camel colour it calls sigaro and an intense rust offering a bit of contrast.

“I feel that shoes are becoming more important again in a woman’s wardrobe,” Rense Hekstra says, “like centrepieces. Without over-designing the shoes, I wanted to explore the concept of layering in outsoles and uppers. It has been an interesting puzzle, asking the maximum of the people in the factory. I think customers will appreciate the many little secrets we have put into the collection; these give the shoes true character.”



Atelier do Sapato has repeated its experiments with layering in its autumn-winter 2010–2011 collection.



The collection’s designer, Rense Hekstra, says shoes are gaining greater importance as the centrepiece in a woman’s wardrobe.