



Now say hello to the £100,000 shoes

Luxury jewellery brand House of Borgezie has created a shoe made almost entirely from gold and diamonds that it plans to sell from £100,000 (\$156,000) per pair. The new shoes, the Eternal Borgezie Diamond Stiletto, come with a 1,000-year guarantee. Their creator, Christopher Michael Shellis, has explained that each shoe is first handcrafted by a goldsmith and then encrusted with more than 2,000 brilliant cut diamonds. Mr Shellis said he had spent three years developing the shoe, and that in doing so he felt he "quite literally had to reinvent the fundamental principle of classical stiletto construction". He said: "The result is not so much a shoe, but rather a fine piece of jewellery that can be miraculously yet practically worn as the ultimate feminine adornment."

High demand for high society

While out of most people's price range, the shoes are designed to be worn at high-profile events such as summer balls, society weddings, red carpet events, casino trips and yachting parties. (Stiletto heels, however, are not often welcomed for use on deck by yacht owners, no matter how wealthy.) According to House of Borgezie, the new luxury shoes have already attracted international orders from celebrity A-listers. Reports indicate that former first lady of the Philippines Imelda Marcos has been joined on the waiting list by American socialite Paris Hilton as well as UK popstars Victoria Beckham and Cheryl Cole, although the shoe's designer has not confirmed this. He simply said that some "very high profile" people were hoping to get their hands on a pair.

Everyone has heard of the million-dollar question, but few will have come into contact with the £100,000 pair of shoes.

Mr Shellis has won awards for several of the pieces of jewellery and watches he has designed. However, the stiletto is his first foray into footwear. Each pair takes four full weeks to create and is produced in the Jewellery Quarter of Birmingham, England, which dates back over 250 years and is still home to more than 400 jewellery businesses. Mr Shellis runs three shops in the Quarter.

One of the patent-pending design features of the Eternal Diamond Stiletto is the stamen fluted heel, which takes its inspiration from the elegant stamens of a lily. It aims to reflect the flawless symmetry that can only be found in the purity of nature. "I had the idea about five years ago. Shoes are something women find totally irresistible, and I wanted a way of showcasing my skills of goldsmithing, diamond-setting and design in a way that was really attractive," Mr Shellis told local paper *The Sunday Mercury*.

Built to wear and last

Looking at the shoe you could be forgiven for thinking it more ornamental than practical and that it might be rather uncomfortable to wear. But having made ten different prototypes before the design was finalised the creator disagrees. "The shoes have compression soles and special rubber under the heels and the balls of the feet, making them curve when you walk, giving them an orthopaedic

benefit," he says. "Models have worn them for 12-hour stretches and are amazed by how comfortable they are."

There would have been no point launching the shoe if it wasn't easy to wear; Mr Shellis says: "Things like the Fabergé egg are beautiful but they have no real use. I wanted something that was comfortable and practical." He claims that the way people react to the shoes when they see them has been really special. His partner recently wore them at an event in Dubai, which House of Borgezie believes will be an important market for the brand, and said women there were "like meerkats" when they spotted the jewel-encrusted shoes.

Added to this, he says they offer a longevity that few other pairs of shoes can. "Unlike some shoes which have diamonds sewn onto them, ours are soldered on so they cannot be destroyed," he explains. "I like archaeology and love the idea of them being found somewhere 1,000 years from now and recognised as an ancient treasure; and still as good as the day they were made."

Mr Shellis is now working with the Birmingham City University's School of Jewellery—which helped create the stiletto—to produce a matching clutch bag. The bag is expected to cost around £60,000. 🍷

The Eternal Borgezie Diamond Stiletto is handcrafted by a goldsmith before being adorned with more than 2,000 diamonds.

CREDITS: SIMON WINNALL/HOUSE OF BORGEZIE

