

Italian leather looks antique and natural

Real leathers looked really good at the recent Lineapelle. Fur too; there were fur collars and double face materials with shearling inside and a turn over at the top—Ugg boot style. Shoe sales are said to be generally relatively stable, but bags are now the vital accessory. Lineapelle was pure inspiration for bag designers.

Leather colours next winter are soft and muted, with lots of autumn inspiration such as browns, curry, brick and all sorts of soft greens. Even reds and blues are darker than before, tending to purple and wine. Sporty highlights are verdigris (old green copper) and various shades of acid green and yellow. Metallics are dark and antique—gold, bronze and pewter are splashed on top of leather. One 'new' looking leather is patent, back again, but still looking very natural with uneven finishes and wrinkles.

The 'aged' look is still very popular for all sorts of shoes and boots, for both men and women. Surfaces are scratched, painted, folded and wrinkled. Boots by Bikkembergs for example, are made in natural semi-finished leather Camerun, by Vesta and then go back to the tannery to be finished. After that they look old and used all over, like a relic from the World War I trenches. Arctic Old looks just like a nice waxy full grain ➤



Vivien Lee, leather by Dolmen



Leather by Zabri



Omnipel



Omnipel

WORLD FOOTWEAR

Bata



Omnipel



Dolmen

RCM



Pittards



Begonia

leather, but is totally transformed after washing—here the full boots are washed, and look pleasantly aged. White rub-offs are not just for summer; Mastrotto's Uranus in rich dark colours like red and blue lose a lot of the white when rubbed off to show a smooth glossy wintry leather beneath.

Laser cutting is very precise and means

that beautiful patterns can be made on the leather for ladies' bags and shoes—flowers are cut out, just on the surface of the leathers, to give a layered effect (Begonia by Iperpellami). More of a winter theme, are the laser cut

snowflakes by Santori on white and silver leather. Nappas are soft and quilted, with an almost silk touch. Quilted stitching is big and looks hand-made, creating floral or traditional damask type patterns (Bizzaro). Hand-interwoven leather by Zani Marcello had hand-embroidered, hand-painted paisley patterns, over decorated in wool. Textiles are used for parts of ladies' boots, especially old-fashioned looking damasks and tapestries (Frontoni and Omnipel). Felt is overlaid and embroidered with real wool, all part of the natural look. Asoltex used it to create a fun new look on moon boots appliquéd with multi-coloured wool



Morelli



Conceria Mastrotto



Pittards



Clarks



Morelli



Silga Gomma

crochet squares. Animal prints, especially leopard, are used on boots, and look good when mixed with real fur for the collars. Reptile prints are no longer simple embosses and often have a subtle colour change with one base colour and a different surface.

Not all colours are totally natural and Pittards glove leather comes in rainbow shaded stripes. PU in the synthetics hall was made into cabin baggage trolleys in pixelated psychedelic patterns by Limonta.

There is still a strong case for technical leather. Military research into night vision (infra-red) goggles has shown that even small parts of attire, such as boots and gloves where the surface is not broken up, can be seen. This means that Pittards successful temperate climate camouflage leather for army boots has now been expanded into soft gloving leather. Specifications on these leathers are very high as they must be stain resistant, colour fast and still retain breathability. The pattern is therefore 'fixed' into the glove; it is not just a simple transfer pattern. For hunting boots, Vesta has developed an attractive waxy 'mimetico' oily grain leather with a soft blurry camouflage print in three natural shades.

Feathers should also have been a fashion trend for winter, fitting in with fur, but now, since the Avian Flu crisis, they are pretty much out of fashion again. Fur of all sorts is in, but the more

natural looking the better. Real rabbit is interwoven with velvet and metallic lace. Imitation long hair fox in two-tone effects is used for boot collars and long-haired Mongolian lamb in creamy natural is used all over for bags.

Cowboy boots are trendy—again, especially with lots of antique metal studs (rivets) and buckles, on old fashioned looking brown soles and stack heels. Metal studs, eyelets and rivets are a common theme on all sorts of leather bags, looking good at Dolmen on a giant decorated leather bow. Sammi's new speed laces come in anodised colours, not new as such, but the colours are softer than before, with a deep red and silver blue. Stones and jewels on leathers tend to be irregular in shape and mixed in colour, with the natural turquoise Red Indian/Aztec style still popular. It is all part of the handmade look.

For kids, there are lots of functional looking crêpe rubber soles, with an antique two-tone finish which emphasises the rubber look. And for boys, soccer-inspired boots and shoes on studded soles go on and on. For ladies, even sole bottoms have the baroque look, as in the embossed rubber sheets at Caster.

There are a surprising number of summery textiles used for winter styles. Stonewash canvas for men's winter boots for example, with eyestays and strappings made of toning antique leather are still included. 