



# Fancy leather from Italian tanners

**T**he latest Lineapelle was awash with bright, intricate and beautiful leathers from Italian tanners, with lots of work and decoration. In a tougher and more competitive climate, Italian tanners are looking to consolidate their hold on the de luxe leather and leather goods markets where they're the admitted world leaders. Italian manufacturers may be producing off shore and going into joint ventures with other countries but there were plenty of proud trim makers and tanners selling a totally Italian made product.

Rich baroque leathers with gold, silver and pewter washes



*Patent by Dolmen*

appeared on all sorts of leathers, even though for the summer 2006 season. The strength of fur and hair for winter has also carried though into summer with pony hair shaved, punched, and laser cut for sandals and bags. Pony cut and shaved in teal and white by Abip looked very summery. Cracked surfaces show contrast leathers underneath—as for winter but now softer and more matt. Hand painting, and printing that looks like hand painting, is more feminine and decorative than last year with lots of Monet type florals (leather by San Firenze ➤

## WORLD FOOTWEAR

and PU by Giardini), hibiscus (damask by Segre and Schiapatti) and splashy aquatic inspirations. Pre-decorated ballerina vamps from Immagine Piu were decorated with beaded sea horses. Fontana Arte Moda created sandal uppers with hanging coral and shell moldings, with some bright turquoise stones for a rich desert island look.

There are lots of blues, greens and teal colours, denser and rich but not lurid, and the same shades again as pastels. The newer pastels are softer and more natural, inspired by lingerie—pale neutrals and lacy cut outs. Galliano transforms soft leather to look almost like lace, with scalloped edges, laser cut in strips, then all gathered and elasticised onto a fine textile base—to be used for billowing sleeves, or even bags. Makers, a division of mainstream sporty leather tanner Vesta, makes large ranges of hand made,



*Sparco sporty shoes in dressy leathers from Madraspelli*

embroidered on to the uppers of leather, Indian style.

Madraspelli's dressy metallic crackled leathers were used on Sparco sneakers. Sportier leathers combine scratched and used looks together, with the fine grained nubuck leather surface scratched in several directions. For men, the whitened antique finishes continue from last season but are more subtle—like Vesta's Marrakech White with a slightly whitish tinge on the bovine full grain. Rino Mastrotto's Bounty for dressier men's and women's shoes has a similar whitish

looking croco/alligator embossing following the trend for oversized patterns. Part of the side leather has the heavy raised spine pattern, and the rest will be a smooth squarer pattern to resemble belly

leather—perfect for large bags where the raised pattern is centred. Colours are soft matt textiles, sometimes with soft tone on tone shading (Thule). More delicate surface cuts create either anaconda looks or almost feathery finishes onto matt, dry leathers.

### Technical leathers

Today's more hurried life style means that easy care treatments are popular for leathers too, so more tanners are offering machine washable leathers. Keeping feet odour free has always been a challenge. Sanitized products are used for garments, home textiles and shoes—and also in shoe linings where there can naturally be a lot of sweat. The Rebac Germ Balance System attacks athlete's foot and germ infections in the shoe, and claims to be non-allergenic and environmentally friendly. Its biophysical principles have now been applied to lining leathers for shoes to banish bacteria and fungus permanently. Through the increase of oscillation on the surfaces the ability of cell division of prokaryotic single cell organisms is destroyed.

Phase change materials (PCM) have been taken up by the military, police and fire services around Europe. Outlast Adaptive Comfort works using micro encapsulation. The capsules are so tiny that around 1,000 fit on the head of a pin (ca. 3 million per cm<sup>2</sup>). Inside its patented microcapsules, called Thermocules, substances similar to paraffin are stored, which are capable of phase change. Outlast says its footwear can reduce sweating by almost half. Baltes, German safety shoe maker, has added more models using Outlast to its collection for fire brigades, rescue services and emergency doctors. The styles have a special high-grade hydrophobic finish on leather, the Mondopoint sizing adjustment system and a binding-zipper system which is suitable for alarm starts. Thanks to a special technology the shoes are permanently antistatic and light weight.

*Jumbo pastel leather*



innovative soft dressy leathers every season. For summer 2006 there are raised embossed feathery patterns and florals, and scratched, cracked and antiqued pastel leathers in rose, teal, orange and purple with dark pewter metallic undertones. There are more aggressive metallic effects with heavy grain leather "Osso d'Argento" which has a rich silver or gold uneven surface on soft leather in vibrant shades such as red, violet, brandy and black. Small mirrors made of glass or flexible hologram plastic were

look but on smoother leather, with colours from rich coral to orange and green with beige and sand shades too.

Bright colours are still around, especially for simple suedes, or patent leathers as from Gaiera Giovanni in a wide range of colours, from floral peach pink and fuchsia through citrus lime, grass green and into spicy brick terracotta. All sorts of reptile and snake embossed leathers are now selling well at retail in Italy, so tanners have continued the theme, with natural



*Sporty high wedges are popular in Italy, here with diamantés made from Dolmen's leather*

Outlast is in shoes sold to the Spanish state security forces (police, military). Soldiers turn on the heating in the car in winter; they can remove jackets but not their shoes so they appreciate the comfort from temperature control.

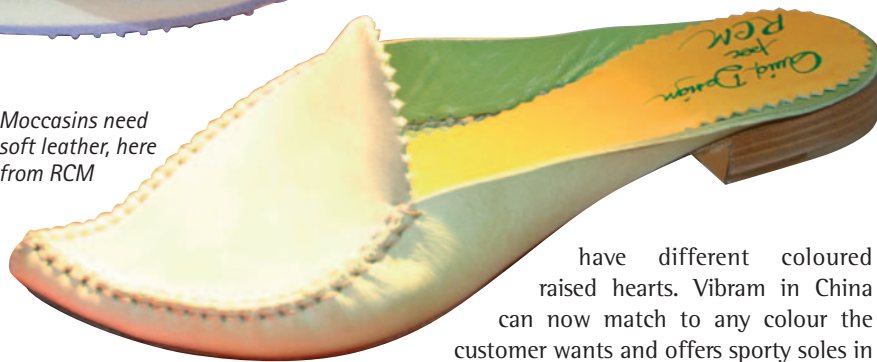
Keeping feet cool, especially in dark uniform shoes can be hard. The TFL cool system which reduces the warming effect on leather exposed to sun radiation. The TFL Cool System is based on the use of special dyes and pigments which gives a dark coloured leather that acts as pale colour leather when exposed to sunlight.

### Textiles

Embroidery appears everywhere, both on textiles and leathers. Chain stitch and heavy linear floral and squiggle patterns are more popular now than the filled-in satin stitch versions, and they have a more hand made authentic feel. Some embroidery is made in raffia or straw and raffia is also interlaced into machine punched or laser cut leathers. When not on leather the embroidery is often on sacking, calico or unbleached jute, more brownish and natural looking than the creamy colours we have seen in previous years. The natural look means not just jute, calico and canvas, but also faded



*Moccasins need soft leather, here from RCM*



and stone washed looking canvases, perfect for summery sports shoes combined with cracked leather. There are plenty of scientific looking botanical line drawings of flowers, and floral or coral designs on furnishing type summer damasks. Inspired by the Louis Vuitton cherry print bag in the shops now, many suppliers have gone for fruit prints, another trend for next summer. Colortex has pretty cherry prints on various bases, and Limonta has fruit photo prints on stretch elastic tapes for belts or shoes.

Technical looking materials are still popular though the high technology of materials was not such an overriding trend as at previous Lineapelle fairs. Net and mesh are big in textiles, with very open work fish net meshes from Omnipel looking almost like laddered stockings. All sorts of basket weave continue on the crest of the espadrille's popularity and look pretty in multi-coloured weaves (Mo.SO.Ca). There are even fully woven leather uppers for boots from Mallorca and Brazil. From Crespi, there are pretty woven textile stripes in subtle neutral shades.

### Bottoms

On solings, the main theme for men is influenced by designers such as Dirk

## FOOTWEAR FASHION: LINEAPELLE

Bikkembergs as well as Camper. Soccer lugs rule on casual shoes, whether astro-turf type small lugs or heavier screw-in stud type moldings. For sporty women's soles the low line sprinting influence is not going away (Gola style). From Silpa there are two part soles, with leather main sole forepart and a rugged heel with soccer type lugs.

Technology in moulded bottoms has meant more colours being possible for a reasonable price, so lots of kid's soles especially have multiple contrast colours; Da.Mi's pretty semi-transparent soles

have different coloured raised hearts. Vibram in China can now match to any colour the customer wants and offers sporty soles in five or six colours together which can again be combined with a contrast colour Phylon midsole. Even rubber sheetings are more fun today, with lots of pretty raised patterns such as flowers and stars. IPS created all-over flower printed units. Thunit soles come in six fashion rub off pastel colours (Davos). From Davos there is also Miracell, a microcellular rubber which has more insulation against moisture; it is a mix between compact and micro porous rubber, with more workability and a more leather like look. It comes also in a laser version which can be heat stamped to look like a leather sole.

Wedges are back in fashion again, so the PU sole makers are now offering faded brush-off pastel wedges in imitation bamboo look (Soteco), perfect with Coronet's new bamboo print on PU. The highly decorated look even led to big cork look units with multi coloured inserted large diamantes.

### Footnote

Luxury and wellness are increasingly commonly heard terms, and small special features can mean something to shoe purchasers; from Wood Milne there is lavender oil in sachets from French lavender fields to freshen up footwear.

Next Lineapelle 25-27 October 2005.