

It's going to be a warm winter next year



Feet are going to be warm and cozy next winter—GDS showed fur uppers and linings, wool tweed and even felt for shoes. The ongoing fashion trend for fur has really made its mark on shoe designers who have wholeheartedly taken all sorts of fur on board. There is real cow or pony hair, no longer trimmed and dyed but still shaggy and with the unevenness and natural colourings and patches on the fur. Long shaggy hair fills the shafts of winter boots, often combined with a suede foot on a functional natural crepe rubber sole. There are Yeti boots and moon boots with fur but the one leading trend remains the Mukluks, which seem set to be the replacement to the ever popular Ugg boots of the past year. Mukluks is a brand name—popular 20 years ago they have come back strongly with lots of imitators. They are real suede moccasins in the foot part with rabbit fur on the leg, and pompoms or tassel ties at the top. They have functional crepe soles and are hand-stitched by Native American Indians. Some even have beading decorations on the vamp. They are a natural progression from the current craze for all sorts of moccasins, loafers and driving shoes, which seem to be gradually proving an alternative to the ubiquitous trainers. Moccasins come in

loafer or fringed bootie styles, with beading, embroidery, cut outs and all sorts of decorations, in bright suedes often with heavy rope interlacing, Prada-inspired.

Clogs and cowboy-inspired boots

All types of suede boots with fur legs are going to be big for ladies and kids. Fur top collars on slim toed flat boots by Snipe in lime green on sporty soles still look ladylike. Knitted cuffs in stripes gave a warm feeling to Art's red leather stitchdown boots.

Long fitted boots are the big trend for next year, especially with a real leather look. Frye boots have become a standard cowboy look—these are the heavier, square-toed boots with block stack leather heel in natural tan leather, popular first in the 1970s. They're comfortable and wearable and have a unisex look. There are plenty of spin-offs from this trend. Brazilian 1970s type boots, with a slight cowboy inspiration and in soft natural tan or beige leather looked good when made in a more feminine version on a higher heel by Mexx. Newer are more glamorous cowboy inspired boots in soft leathers and suede slouch legs in muted colours like old rose. Both wedge and ►



Journey



Clarks



KangaROOS

cowboy heels are fashionable on boots, but the new bottoms are made of wood. This summer's clog bottoms are updated with appliqué flowers on the attaching studs. Interwoven leather vamps and suede with fur linings update simple clog styles from Bronx. Now there are colourful boot versions of clogs in bright suedes like lime and teal, or metallic faded leathers, but most popular in cow hair. The Ugg boot phenomenon is not going away—now they have openwork knitted foot and legs in brilliant cool cotton colours such as turquoise—just in time fashion from Bronx.

Fabric and leather combinations

Mixed materials are everywhere on the new boots, often with natural leather foot part and textile shaft—in canvas from Timberland on a long boot. In fact, all sorts of wool are good, with tweed leather combinations popular at all levels, even for classic Chanel pumps with little heels by German comfort brand Gabor. Bright Chanel type tweed is popular but newer are the more natural beige and brown mixes. Salt and pepper or herringbone are mixed with leather; Journey had a brown Prince of Wales check, long leg boot on a natural brown leather foot.

Rubber boots keep on going strong in masses of colours and prints, the newer ones are on pointed toes with small stiletto heels or even wedges, also in rubber. They can even be updated with overlaid cuffs turned down over the outside of the shaft with fur or rib knitting,

Sporty shoes and trainers are not going away in a hurry and these have been updated in rich natural leathers often with contrast heavier stitching details, some rivets and multiple touch-and-close fastenings, often in different directions. Multiple Velcro straps even appear on casual shoes from Clarks Privo collection, for example a green backless mule with three brown leather straps. Bright unusual colour combinations such as pink with brown caught the eye at KangaROOS. For winter they have winter white leather snow joggers with pale blue fur. Real matt rubber soles create a hybrid trainer look when they are moulded right up over the toe, Camper style by Palladium, with the uppers looking totally fresh in creamy, full grain leather, pre-crinkled and wrinkled. From Bronx, sporty Velcro shoes looked fresh in brilliant silver and pale gold metallic leathers, all over, but with a soft touch, wrinkling where they fold. The new soles remain very thin, like car racing driver soles.

Pretty and feminine is the watchword for dressy shoes, with a '30s party feel. Round toes and curvy heels, feminine spat buttons, floppy bows on boots, and cut outs on retro T-bars from Vagabond. Moccasins, both flat and on little kitten heels keep on going strong, in a choice of rainbow colours, often decorated with hand stitching and even multi-coloured diamantes at Bronx. Not only gold, but bright colours, ethnic features and metallic details made the shoes everything but "safe".

For men, there is fur too. Journey's men's leather vulcanised styles have fur lining, maybe a bit advanced but already ordered by directional London shoe chains like Office. Stay at home is a "sleeper" trend with more established companies like Camel Active showing slippers with a twist; theirs are made from pure felt, with trendy raw edges, stitched out on a square toe and flat sole—more a packable fashion statement than an

indoor shoe. White is on men's winter shoes too, on cracked leather loafers at Vagabond.

Elegant men's shoes have soft, natural looking leathers, like the lady boots. They have hand stitching details and blind seaming. Men want more interesting shoes today and bright coloured linings like the ones by Norberto Costa sell well in Scandinavia and the UK. The customers think that they are being wild by buying a bright lining, but since the inside of the shoe cannot be seen by others, they are also suitable for office wear.

Kids get more sophisticated

Kids shoes are getting more sophisticated. Little girls are still very "Barbie" minded and pink still rules but the more teenager My Scene type dolls are more popular now, and so are the little bit more grown-up shoes. However, Lelli Kelly's best selling boot is still in white leather with pretty pink hearts and Velcro straps. Little girl's shoes are now ballerinas with bars and lots of feminine details like multi-coloured hearts and flowers, hand embroidery and feminine details. Pink is still strong but fuchsia is now mixed with other colours such as lime and yellow, as at trend setting kid's shoe and clothes designer Agatha Ruiz de la Prada.

Since Elefanten closed, there has been a gap in the market that several companies are fighting each other to fill. Winter boots must have membranes like Gore-Tex and Sympatex to sell in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Scandinavia. But the new boots are much more exciting than they used to be. No more nylon unisex boots with suede or synthetic toe and heel caps with Velcro fastenings on injected soles. Traditional kids shoe companies have updated their offers. Richter has refreshed its waterproof winter boots for girls so that they are totally fashionable and functional, too. Bright fuchsia, suede boot combinations with pretty orange and pink floral overlays on trendy Italian made rubber soles made their boots very modern. All sorts of long boots are good, very pretty from Mexx for bigger girls with rubber dots and Velcro closures, with strong contrast colours. Mexx takes its best selling lady's fashion styles and scales them down directly into kids, in the same season.

Interesting 'niche' brands are what retailers are looking for today, everyone needs a point of difference so hand-made is trendy, and GDS had a more market-like atmosphere for young hand-made accessories from less well known designers—often from stock or one offs, and some very intricate and much worked items. Helena Angelique is a collaboration in Holland between an American concept/tattoo artist and a shoe designer, creating limited edition shoes and bags with cameo or tattoo rose motifs, very unusual and different. Leontine Hagoort's bag collection is Russian peasant inspired with hand embroidery, overlays in unusual colour combinations like brown leather, herringbone tweed with fuchsia and turquoise ethnic embroidery.

GDS is now struggling to maintain its market position; the overlap with MICAM means that the fair has lost many of its exhibitors, while many trendy sporty labels prefer to show earlier in the Bread and Butter mixed clothes and shoe fair in Berlin. Dates next time are 18-21 September but dates for next year are still under discussion and many think the present four days is too many and want it cut it back to three. 

