

WORLD FOOTWEAR



Golfstream

The PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando is still the world's most influential golf trade show. Shoes were a hot item this year with cutting-edge styling, biomechanical technology, colours and styling—particularly on the women's side of the market.

You can't keep a good show down

While established majors adidas, Nike and FootJoy chose to promote their ranges by press release rather than exhibit, there were new exhibitors of interest and other established brands with interesting products.

Golfstream—a third year entrant into golf footwear, showed a clever water-resistant Lycra upper with zipper closure, removable spikes for the sole, and a two-year warranty; an attractive and functional style.

Timing Group—the Arnold Palmer range featured smart fabric technology by Outlast for balanced temperature, waterproof upper leather and Champ 'Stinger' Q-lock spike systems. There were two new divisions, Bay Hill and Parasol. Bay Hill, a step up in styling, materials and components, introduced Elite Gel Cushioning, while Parasol is a line of ladies casual shoes.

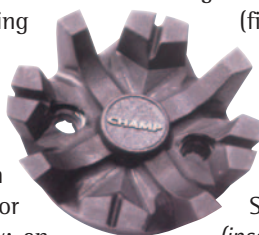
Softspikes—a decade after changing golf shoes with the innovation of plastic cleats, it has introduced Pulsar. This has reactive web geometry for enhanced energy return for comfort and stability, plus tangential flex 'knuckles' to add strength to individual legs for increased stability and overall cleat life.

Champ—MacNeill Engineering has expanded production to Japan and China, and continues to offer an amazing series of innovative removable golf spikes that include Q-Lok (fits Nike, Hi-Tec, Dexter, Cutter & Buck, Allen Edmonds, Puma, Wilson and Alpen), Tri-Lok (preferred by FootJoy, adidas and Callaway), Stinger, ScorpionSpikes (inset) and Trac Spike systems.

Q-Lok incorporates a patented design based on two interlocking triangles, which is non-rusting and can withstand the maximum torque needed to stay locked under any playing conditions. Tri-Lok has three threads and a one-piece locking ring to keep dirt and debris out of the sole-socket and allow easy spike changing. The Stinger has a 'wear indicator' for when it's time for a spike change.

Hi-Tec—the British based full-service brand is stepping up its image with the entry of the CDT Power model and demonstrated its biomechanical

improvement in driving power on an electronic force platform. The shoe features a stable outsole, medial roll bar, soft leather uppers with all-weather fabric lining, cleat wear indicator, adjustable directional cleats, lateral rubber swing dams, 45-degree impact traction lugs and interchangeable footbeds to adjust for medium and wide feet. Impressive for a brand known mainly as 'value for money.'



Custom Directional Traction (CDT) by Hi-Tec



Bite Biofit 1

FOOTWEAR FOCUS

Bite—introduced the golf sandal back in 1996 and continues to bring fashion and function to the greens with the Biofit, developed in conjunction with a podiatrist to offer

interchangeable footbeds (neutral and Pronation control). Golfers can choose a level of support based on foot type and specific needs. It has leather uppers and a two-year water-resistance warranty.

Etonic—has a formidable history and continues to represent (with FootJoy) state-of-the-art traditional golf shoes. It introduced biomechanics into golf footwear back in 1987 and is now putting most of its advertising muscle behind the new G SOK as the first 'non-cleated' performance golf shoe.

This features a light Goodyear outsole that is both comfortable and durable, and has multi-zone tri-directional pyramid turf grips with lateral and longitudinal stability bars and CIP (critical impact point). New additions for ladies were the 2005 Kaleidoscope Collection, DRI-XC and Lites Plus, while Stabilite Plus and Stabilite have both added casual and sporty styles to their ranges.

Ecco—its range included ten new models in twenty-seven colour combinations for women. With both traditional and sport styling, Ecco is the fastest growing brand at the high-end of the market. It promotes its superior shoemaking skills together with a Gore-Tex membrane, Fast Twist Spikes and a moisture-wicking Hydromax lining.



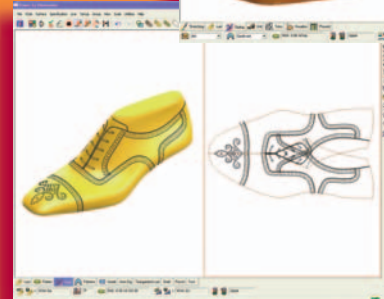
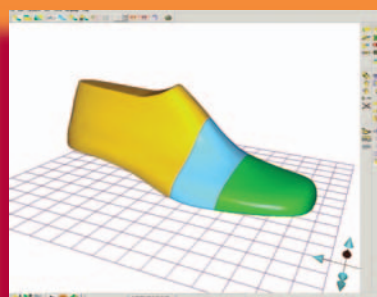
Callaway—this company has become a well-respected name since it entered the golf shoe market in 2000. With the E.R.C. Blue Label Collection leading the way at the luxury end of the market,

Callaway uses Italian calf and Pittard performance leathers, and Goodyear construction combined with high-tech technologies such as eVent Dry Inside and Comfortemp temperature balancing materials. Expanding the ladies' styling and colour selection this year, Holofiber Oxygen Energy Recovery has been added to existing technologies. (*Ladies' 'checker saddle' pictured*)

Finally, no golf show is complete without coaching and performance-aiding gadgets. This year saw Q-Quiet Feet, a below the knee body control device, which looks very much as if you have caught your legs and feet up in your golf bag carrying strap. It is said to prevent lower body movement by providing a solid foundation and allow consistent performance in putting and hitting the ball straighter and longer.

The other foot related device at the show was the 8Board, a plastic under-the-outsole device in a figure of eight shape with rotating discs at the heel and forepart. The idea here is to improve the golfer's balance, while allowing full hip rotation and upper body torque. The secret is to stay on it during the swing, which in itself must take some practice. 

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