

WSATODAY UPDATE

What A Lovely Feeling

As a member of the Jebara family—makers of **Pepe Jeans London** and **Paco Jeans—Shoes for Lovely People** designer Patty Kerrigan is no stranger to the fashion industry. “My background is in apparel, but I always loved shoes and was looking for a new challenge,” Kerrigan tells *WSAToday*. Last February, she launched her debut shoe collection at **The Collections at WSA**, focusing on shoes that are whimsical and feminine, yet grounded in form and function. The collection retails from \$90 flats to \$250 leather boots. We recently sat down with the designer to ask her about her spring '09 collection and find out which celebrity she'd love to see in her shoes. —*Deanna Ting*

'60s but tried to give my shoes a “tough,” but still very feminine, look. We are working with all kinds of novelty materials, especially new, unique patents.

WHAT'S HOT RIGHT NOW IN WOMEN'S FOOTWEAR?

Any type of platform shoe with buckles. Also, flats are doing very well, too.

DO YOU THINK THE SLUMPING ECONOMY WILL HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON SHOE SALES?

I don't think so; women still want to look good no matter what.

WHAT'S THE NEXT BIG THING? Men's shoes made for women.

WHO IS THE SHOES FOR LOVELY PEOPLE CUSTOMER?

My customer wears high fashion effortlessly. She has an eye for good design and knows how to put herself together. She's creative in her dressing style; she's a confident achiever; and she does not need to wear \$500 shoes to feel



Patty Kerrigan

good about herself. My customer shops in **Barneys** [New York] and **H&M**. She looks for good pieces anywhere and buys them.

HOW DO YOU STRENGTHEN TIES WITH BUYERS AND RETAILERS?

We always stop in our boutiques and find out what is selling. We always take feedback well and, if a buyer needs something special for his or her store, I will make it happen for them. Last I heard, [they told me] that my color-block shoes were selling well.

WHOSE SENSE OF STYLE DO YOU ADMIRE MOST?

Victoria Beckham is probably the best-dressed woman today. I would love to see her in my shoes.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE SOMETHING ABOUT THE INDUSTRY, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Nothing. I enjoy it a lot.

→ **Want more? Read the rest of this interview on WSAToday.com!**

TELL US ABOUT YOUR SPRING '09 COLLECTION.

We have a really special update to the gladiator look that was so popular last year; it's called the Annabel. We also have beautiful fashion pumps made in all kinds of luxe materials and bright colors. I drew inspiration from the styles of the



Miriam

[THE GREEN SCENE]

ED HARDY GETS ECO HIP

The sneaker brand known for its rock 'n' roll edge shows a softer side for spring '09 with the introduction of **Ed Hardy Eco Shoes**. The environmentally conscious collection features organic, sustainable and recycled materials ranging from certified organic hemp canvas uppers to bamboo weave sock liners to recycled gum rubbers soles.

“I think the company is really trying to do its part,” says Amy Bailey, public relations coordi-

nator for Ed Hardy Shoes. “It's something new, it's something different, and not only is it different, but it's positive for our company.”

The line launches with three styles for men and women. The Organic Highrise is a greener version of the classic Ed Hardy hi-top, while the Organic Lowrise is an eco update of the signature lowrise. The Organic Hendrix is a new style that features exposed seams along the toe and an outsole wrapped with hemp tape.



“We're expected to be on the trends or heading the trends or setting the trends, so giving some sort of cutting-edge product for the eco-conscious person is just something that should come along with our development,” explains Tanita Gray, head designer of the line. “But the main point is that we care about something other than our bottom line.”

The retail range for Ed Hardy Eco Shoes is \$79 to \$89. —*Meaghan Kerins*

ASK THE EXPERT | Mercedes R. Gonzalez



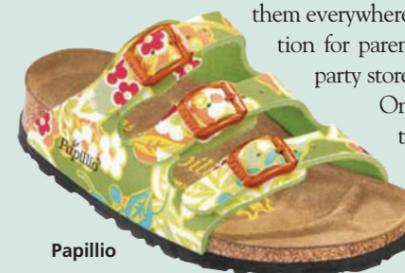
This month we introduce a new column, “Ask The Expert,” which invites retailers around the country to, yes, ask an expert any question. Whether they're wondering about next season's hot colors, marketing on a budget or just new ideas on how to sell, this is the place! We hope you enjoy this new addition to Update—and perhaps come up with some questions of your own!

“As the owner of a sit-and-fit children's store, what are some ways for me to compete with discounters and the Internet? It seems parents today don't really understand the importance of quality footwear for their children.”

—BRUCE KAMINSKY, BIG 'N LITTLE SHOES, CHICAGO

It's true that parents really don't understand the importance of purchasing not only quality shoes for their children, but shoes that fit and help with their overall development. So today's retailer needs to be not only a merchant, but an educator with a dash of excitement. The buzz word in the industry is “retail-tainment.” That can be anything from having a merry-go-round in your store (think about the Toys“R”Us in New York's Times Square) to screening “how-to” video presentations.

The first step is to become recognized as the industry expert in your area. You should write a story on back-to-school footwear and submit it to the local paper. You should also be sending out quarterly newsletters to your client base. The good news about these newsletters is that if parents find it to be educational and not just a “sales” newsletter, they will pass it on. Try using a company like www.constantcontact.com, which helps you track who opens your e-mails and the number of forwards. Postcards are also an excellent way of reaching out with a “fun fact” about children's shoes. Try www.vistaprint.com, which has excellent deals on printing and offers hundreds of templates. Don't just mail out your postcards, but leave them everywhere you think might be a good location for parents. Doctors' offices, schools and party stores are just a few ideas.



Papilio

Once you get them in, it's important to keep them coming. Training your staff, having enough staff to handle rush times and selling product geared to “life cycles,” such as when a child is

starting school or beginning to walk, are all important. Because you know kids are not going to need just one pair of shoes for school, you can up-sell them in a very customer service-oriented way by suggesting all the footwear that a child might need (i.e., sneakers for PE class, boots for snow and rain, everyday shoes, party shoes) and then offering layaway.

The trend in retail is to get away from the discount and mega-box retailers. Parents want to know what is best for their children and will spend money on it. Now, that doesn't mean that you don't have to work hard to be price competitive! You have to know what is happening in the market and demand from your vendors the same help and discounts they give the “big guys.” Have them give you postcards to mail out, or ask them to send you newsletter suggestions or even GWP (gift with purchase) items for special events. Also ask them to contact you at the end of the season if they have any off-price or closeout merchandise, as this is an excellent way to build margins. You need to play hardball to compete with the big guys, so create a Web site where you can sell a few key styles or special sizes when you have a sale... but most importantly, HAVE A SALE! Make it an event where people will line up to get inside your store.

Put these plans into action, and I think you are going to enjoy generations of children coming far and wide to visit you, knowing that your store is a family-oriented destination that offers value, skills and customer service. At heart, we all want history and community, which is something a discounter or the Internet will never offer.

Mercedes R. Gonzalez is the director of the Global Purchasing Companies, a full-service buying office that plans and implements retail strategies with specialties in new store planning and streamlining established businesses. Gonzalez has been a buyer in the garment industry since 1988. Learn more about the company's sales training workshops, retail check-ups, new store programs and more at www.globalpurchasinggroup.com.

→ **Do you have a question for the experts? Please e-mail your question to editor@wsatoday.com, along with your name, store, city and state. We look forward to hearing from you!**

MY BEST CUSTOMER | TAKING THE LEAP

Dedicated service and a savvy selection inspire this California shopper

It isn't always easy for gourmet fine food shop owner Gina Marcione to find the perfect shoes for her size 12 feet. But that never stops her from making frequent visits to—and purchases from—Leap Shoe Lounge in Calabasas, Calif. Whether or not Marcione makes a purchase, owner Dawn Spilman is always eager to invite her into her boutique. “She has a great eye, and she’s not afraid to try something a little adventurous, like the Cam handbag by Melissa,” she says. “What’s great about my clientele is they’re mostly bohemian chic with a touch of rock ‘n’ roll, and that’s just fun to buy for.” Here’s what Marcione says about her shopping habits, what she’s looking for and why she often finds it at Leap Shoe Lounge. —Liane Bonin

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR TODAY?

I’m always looking for comfortable flats in my size, because I can never find too many of those. But I like to keep my mind open, too. You never know what fun little item you might find here. Leap carries men’s shoes, jewelry, hats, belts, even a line of underwear [T Santiago], so I find a lot of gifts for other people here, too.

WHAT DID YOU BUY?

I put in a special order for a pair of Minnetonka tall, fringed lace-up boots. I think those will be great for fall. They’re really comfortable.

HOW MUCH DO YOU USUALLY BUY WHEN YOU COME HERE?

Two or three pairs of shoes, on average.

WHAT BRANDS DO YOU LIKE RIGHT NOW?

Obviously, I like Minnetonka. Dawn says new styles will be coming in in a few weeks, and I can’t wait. Plus, she’s carrying the matching leather hats, which I definitely want to see. I also like Velvet Angels. I think those are ultra sexy, especially the ones with a bullet in the back. There’s also a shoe I love by Melissa, a little ankle boot with a safety pin print on it, but it doesn’t come in my size.



Shopping for chic at Leap



Velvet Angels

WHAT TRENDS DO YOU THINK WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR FALL?

High boots. I’m not a fan of fashion magazines, but I know what I feel sexy in. And I always feel sexy in tall, over-the-knee boots.

WHAT TREND ARE YOU OVER?

I’m really tired of that classic sheepskin boot silhouette. Ugg has cuter styles now and some of them are really cool, but I don’t really understand the appeal of that original plain boot. It’s not flattering to the foot. And in my size, it looks like a big brick at the end of your leg. I know they’re really comfortable, but they just have no form. I don’t get it, and I never have.

WHAT ARE YOU STILL LOOKING FOR?

I wish Italian brands made shoes in my size. While it’s getting easier for me to find shoes from American brands, smaller-production European brands just don’t go above a size 10.

DO YOU PREFER SHOE STORES THAT CARRY ACCESSORIES?

If it’s done right, it means a lot to me. Dawn has a very concise, smart collection of items that help you complete a whole look. And it is nice to be able to pick up a gift on your way out. You wouldn’t buy shoes for someone else, but a bag or earrings, sure.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT THIS STORE THAT KEEPS YOU COMING BACK?

I feel like I have my own personal shopper when I come here. Dawn doesn’t mind special ordering shoes for me in my size, which is a huge plus. And there’s always a cute, new thing every time I walk in. I always want to come back to see what’s new.

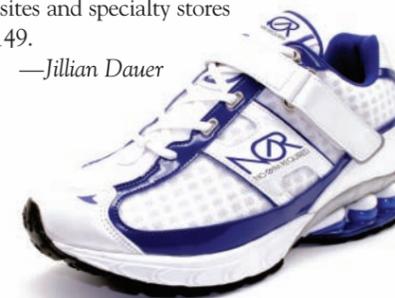
→ Do you have a best customer? Tell us all about him or her at editor@wsatoday.com! Please include your name and phone number.

Working Out Without Excuses

With a growing number of footwear brands offering shoes that make every step a fat-burner, traditional gym workouts may soon be obsolete. Eager to put her own twist on the calorie-torching footwear trend, fitness expert Jennifer Cohen is teaming up with Power Diet to launch the brand’s latest value-added footwear option. New for spring ‘09, the No Gym Required shoe, part of the No Gym Required brand, is a two-in-one fitness footwear system. “I’m really excited about having a wellness shoe that totally fits into my philosophy of anytime, anywhere and no excuses,” Cohen says. “This shoe looks great and burns calories while you wear it! To me, it’s a no brainer!” Each pair comes with regular and weighted midsoles offering consumers the ability to wear them as basic athletic shoes, or intensify their strides. The weighted midsoles provide the benefits of a resistance and cardio workout by strengthening the lower body muscles and core, firming and toning legs, hips and buttocks and increasing calorie burn by up to 50 percent, allowing wearers to work in a workout anywhere they go.

The new kicks will be cross-promoted with Cohen’s new book, *No Gym Required*, available in January. “NGR shoes will be targeted to individuals of all ages and fitness levels looking for simple, yet very effective ways to improve fitness and health,” says Mike Enns, marketing and brand development for NGR. “With the wellness and fitness category having so much success, we feel our unique, athletic styling will be widely accepted by consumers. Our brand provides fitness seekers with great function in its ability to provide a workout, but also confidence with an attractive look to the shoe.” NGR will be sold on online shoe retailing Web sites and specialty stores for \$149.

—Jillian Dauer



STYLE AT EVERY PRICE | WOVEN WEDGES

It’s all in the details for this summer trend

The trend in natural materials, whether it’s raffia, hemp or twisted twine, is gaining momentum at both ends of the fashion spectrum—and in every price range. Jeanne Jarvaise’s intricate suede straps on the Belinda take the trend into the realm of luxury. At a moderate price point, Bella Vita’s Floret adds flair with a peep toe and a playful flower detail. Pazzo’s Randy stands out with Mod stripes and a sleek, minimalist upper. Cuddly by Amanda tops off the look with a sweet bow, while Wanda by Dreams Footwear adds an urban edge with metal hardware and a saucy ankle strap. —Jillian Dauer

Jeanne Jarvaise
under \$600



Bella Vita
under \$100



Pazzo
under \$80



Amanda
under \$60



Dreams
under \$40



Power Of The Pen

MeyeWorld is hoping a new kids' craze for outlandish pens may soon translate into a passion for matching footwear. As Kooky Klickers, a line of pens decorated as individual characters, gathered steam as the latest collectibles trend, it didn't take long for an idea to click with the children's footwear company. "MeyeWorld is a young, hip company that was looking for a young, hip license," says founder Danny Kaminer. "We found Kooky when it was brand new in Long Island. We knew right away this was the license we had to have." The result is a collection of Kooky flip-flops (\$9.99) for spring '09 and slippers (\$14.99) for fall '08. Each style is decorated with flamboyant Kooky designs. Kaminer is hoping the on-trend footwear will be a must-have accessory for Kooky-crazy kids. "We've gotten to see first-hand how Kooky, as a brand, has exploded," he says. "It's been really, really exciting."

—Liane Bonin



Men's Styles Fall Into Line

With a strong foothold in women's footwear, Jeffrey Campbell is now expanding into styles for the traditionally less fashionable sex. First, a men's mini-collection, will hit stores in October with six styles to start. "The theme is classic shapes and go-to pieces—with a twist," explains Ty McBride, Jeffrey Campbell East Coast sales and branding representative (as well as linebuilder for the collection). "This first collection is largely based around my high school career. I graduated in 1996 from Ontario High School in Ontario, Ore. I don't want to give too much away, but I was raised on a cattle ranch, and now I live in NYC—get it?"

Taking things one step at a time, the future of the line is still up in the air. "We are always about the reaction of customers," adds McBride. "We are treating First like a date from Match.com. We have no expectations, but if the chemistry is right... who knows?"

Retail range for First shoes will be \$89 to \$150; boots \$180 to \$250.

—Meaghan Kerins



Bumper

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