



On the Cover: The new Sport Casual Mary Janes, designed by Susan Ryder of Aetrex, are made with sporty leather, suede and mesh uppers for breathability, adjustable strap closure for optimum fit, TPU heel counter reinforcement for added stability and soft jersey linings that wick moisture. The shoe also features a polyurethane midsole and rubber outsole for added cushioning and shock absorption, medial support pod to minimize pronation.

SPRING '09 TREND REPORT

IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT SHOE

SPRING AHEAD IS WHAT THEY SAY WHEN WE MOVE THE CLOCKS UP AN HOUR AND WINTER GIVES WAY TO THE SEASON OF HOPE.

For the coming spring season, shoe designers have turned the clocks ahead by way more than 60 minutes. If the future of footwear is about creating the perfect shoe, Spring '09 designs take a quantum leap in that direction.

The season's best shoes truly endeavor to have it all. Great styling, fresh colors, versatility and technology and engineering out the wazoo.

Let's start with color. We have not seen so many variations of primary colors since we received the box of Crayola 128s for our fifth birthday. And much like our artistic style back then, shoe designers are using improbable colors in unlikely places. Yellow running shoes, green sneakers, red chukka boots. We say bring it on. And this colors don't require any of those fancy fifty dollar names. Red is not burnt maple. It's red damnit and the greens are vivid and clear. The yellows are as bright as those raincoats we all wore as kids. Nothing fancy, just in your face feel good color.

As for silhouettes, now here's where the story gets really interesting. Road running has been the signature athletic look for much of the past five years and that is showing signs of change. Trail designs are coming on strong with a rugged sensibility that includes grippy rubber outsoles, mesh that appears simultaneously bulletproof and breathable and an attitude that further establishes this category as the new SUV of footwear. Who needs light hikers?

Another indicator of the movement away from the road running look is the emergence of tennis and basketball inspired silhouettes. The tennis looks are clean and casual,



Sport Casual Mary Janes from Aetrex feature suede and mesh uppers for breathability, adjustable strap closure for optimum fit, TPU heel counter reinforcement for added stability, and soft jersey linings that wick moisture.

basketball a little messy, but in that good street wise way.

Away from athletic, it's now quite evident that the Mary Jane is no longer a passing fancy, but the most intense iteration of low-profile fusion since the Puma Speed Cat. Casual footwear is a reflection of apparel trends, especially what's happening in denim, and footwear designers appear to be betting on slim cuts for men and capris for women.

Tough economic times usually bring out the inner preppy in us all, so boat shoes should be poised to continue their good run for Spring '09, as well.

In fact, boat shoes may come in handy for all of us. The business forecast calls for rough water and stormy seas, \$5 a gallon gas, a new president who will be seeking firm footing and a weak dollar. Some may call it a perfect storm. We say bring on the perfect shoes. — Mark Sullivan