



Good news for tanners as 'slim the silhouette' obsession kicks in

Avid readers of our weekly electronic market research products will know that the appetite among young women for long boots, as opposed to shoes, has been a key component of the healthy year that the leather industry has enjoyed so far.

Just in case it isn't obvious, boots use

more leather than shoes.

According to Aldo Premoli, a trends consultant working closely with the Italian National Footwear Institute (ANCI), the demand for boots will continue into the spring-summer 2008 season. Yes, boots—including long boots—in summer. Whatever next?

Well, that's exactly what trends consultants are supposed to tell us. For Aldo Premoli, the boots bonanza will continue (tanners take note) because "the mood of the season" will reflect an obsession among women to "slim the silhouette".

During the summer of 2007, he explains, even the hottest parts of Europe, including his native Italy, have witnessed women wearing practically nothing anywhere else, but long leather boots on their legs.

This desire for a tall, long look will continue, defying all common sense according to Mr Premoli, next summer too. More of which in a moment.

In terms of colours, Mr Premoli says that blue will be important, with "Yves Klein" blues, (reflecting the work of the Nice-born painter who first mixed the deep blue hue that bears his name), playing an especially prominent role. Dark oranges, and pinks with a touch of blue, tending towards violet, are the other colour themes that merit a mention for him, at least where young fashion is concerned.

We've had fabric that purports to imitate leather for some time, but next spring and summer, the ANCI consultant insists, will be a good time to use leathers that imitate fabric. And open toes. He likes them too.

Long and slender

Length is the key, though, whatever the weather. "It's crazy," Aldo Premoli admits when pressed by *World Leather*. "It just seems unbelievable that these young women would want to wear long boots in the summer, but I've seen it all over Europe, and I'm sure it will happen again next summer."

He says it's not really a fashion trend, but something that, in this case, really is "coming up from the streets".

He continues: "The only explanation I can give is that the fashion for young women to bare a part of their abdomen has gone. ➤



Long boots will continue to be fashionable next summer, in spite of rising temperatures.
Photo: GDS

THE LOOK of LEATHER

That's finished. Now what they want is to present a longer, more slender form, and that means more emphasis on the legs."

Thighs: women want to show more thigh, he insists, and boots emphasise the effect. This is why we have seen, and will see, boots, even in summer.

"I don't particularly like the look myself," Mr Premoli admits, "but it does catch the attention; it is memorable to see a beautiful young woman wearing a flimsy top, hot pants, and long leather boots. And to be memorable is what women want most of all."

To go the length of wearing long boots in hot weather to be memorable is proof that beauty is pain. That's the view of Modesto Lomba, one of a small group of top Spanish designers who have worked with their country's national tanners' association, Acexpiel, to create a special fashion collection, in leather, to celebrate its (Acexpiel's) thirtieth anniversary next year.

As well as heading up a design team under his own name, the softly spoken, and appropriately named Modesto Lomba is the current president of the Association of Spanish Designers.

That's the same as saying he sees things mere mortals do not see.

Global warming

He believes boots in summer may be a reflection of a wider trend: because of global warming, traditional ideas of what we can wear when have gone out of the window. And even though temperatures are rising, what we used to wear in warm weather seems to be affected by this just as much as the clothes we used to wear to ward off the cold.

"I have seen the boots, even in the height of summer," he says, "and we have included some, long and short, in our latest collection. What can I tell you? It's that old idea we often talk about, that people are willing to suffer for the sake of fashion. It may not make sense, but that's the way it's always been."

This goes some way towards explaining the insistence among women of a certain social standing in all-but tropical climates, in places such as Miami, on wearing mink coats. And it explains why expensive restaurants there have the air conditioning at such ice-cold levels.

It's a funny thing with coats in general,



Boots boost the leather business. Former Miss World, Rosanna Davison, shows her appreciation at the GDS event in Düsseldorf in September. Photo: GDS

Modesto Lomba says. People, in Spain at least, go from their centrally heated homes to their warm cars, to air-conditioned offices, living in a temperature-controlled environment all the way.

"That means the coat, as a garment in general, has all but gone beyond usefulness for us the way we live our lives today," he explains. "And yet people still show a great deal of interest in coats. I don't know if the

main reason for this is nostalgia, but I can tell you that it's true."

While he acknowledges that "strange things are happening in fashion" he insists that his situation is different. As soon as boots for summer wear start appearing in the stores of the Inditex Group (parent company of Zara), he'll stop doing them, he says.

Fashion at that level, in his view, works in the same way as food-shopping does in the

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The fashion trend is for young women to show off more leg, and boots, long and short, help emphasise a long and slender form.
Photo: GDS



Design for Modesto Lomba is like the slow-food movement. Everything is prepared with great care and attention, and in keeping with ancient traditions.

huge retail multiples such as Wal-Mart and Carrefour; they are the places you go to if you want to buy a packet of pasta for 50 cents.

Modesto Lomba's creations, such as the flying jacket on the front cover of this issue, or the generously cut women's jacket in

lamb nappa on this page, bear a closer resemblance to the slow-food movement. In this, everything is carefully prepared with lots of love and attention to detail, and stays, very often, in keeping with ancient traditions.

"That's one of the reasons why I love leather," he concludes. 🌐