



## The Buyer's View



*The Rock Star Baby by Birkenstock collection includes nine children's styles and 12 adult models.*

CREDIT: BIRKENSTOCK



# Tico Torres brings back the rock with Birkenstock

Trade fair organiser Igedo Company picked out a number of colour and style trends to be presented at German shoe and accessories fair GDS, held in September. The main themes were "light-hearted freshness" and contrasts, for example linking high-tech synthetic materials with natural leather. Colour trends included white, sand and cream tones with dark brown and black as contrasting accent colours. Materials were defined as soft and lightweight including supple lambskin nappa, soft patent leather and velvety nubuck. Again, contrasts were introduced, for example metallised leathers combined with smooth and suede leathers.

### Music meets art

These colour and contrast themes tied in well with a new collaborative shoe range from Bon Jovi drummer Tico Torres and German sandal brand Birkenstock Orthopädie. The Rock Star Baby by



*Tico Torres wanted to create children's models that fused comfort and style, and to show that "every baby is a star".*

CREDIT: BIRKENSTOCK

Birkenstock line, presented at GDS, offers eye-catching shoes for adults and children and is designed to marry the classic comfort of Birkenstock with the rock'n'roll "cool factor" that comes naturally to the well-known musician. The collection comprises 21 styles in total: nine children's styles and 12 adult models.

Sick of the traditional pinks and blues typically used in clothing for babies and children, Mr Torres decided to develop a collection that not only reflected that "every baby is a star", but that each baby can look like a star. The core colours for the new shoe line, both for children and adults, are black, silver and anthracite—a lustrous coal colour. Mr Torres explains his colour choices, which are in no way coincidental. "I love angles and colours and I try to keep the line really clean. That's why I use a lot of black and white," he explains. "The black leather was chosen to fit in with the 'rock' theme," adds Birkenstock spokesperson Frank Baur.



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*Rock and glamour are combined in the range's Gizeh models, which feature Swarovski Elements.*

CREDIT: BIRKENSTOCK



### Starting young

Mr Torres is certainly no stranger to the art scene, and he reveals that the link between music and art has, for him, always been a strong one. While music has really been his most significant inspiration in life, he claims to have been an artist since he was five. His artistic flair was shown in one version of the video for Bon Jovi's single *Who Says You Can't Go Home*. While fellow band members Jon Bon Jovi, David Bryan and Richie Sambora are filmed painting a wall inside a house in one solid block of colour, Mr Torres appears at the other end of the room creating a detailed picture of a house surrounded by a colourful heart. A self-taught painter, he has also worked with glass, ceramics and bronze during his artistic career.

Neither is the rock star a newcomer to fashion design scene, having started at a very young age. "All the clothes I used to wear in the '70s and '80s were made by my family and designed by me and my grandmother," he divulges. "I'd make up the patterns and she'd sew them." Mr Torres was also an upholsterer during his younger years. "So it wasn't that far removed that I got into this," he says, adding "I really find enjoyment in it." The Birkenstock shoe line is the most recent addition to the Rock My Baby collection, which features a wide range of items including clothing, furniture and accessories.

In terms of style, the musician points out that he has had friends in high places throughout his career. "Gianni Versace was a great friend of mine, we both loved music and art – and fashion, obviously,"

he says. He counts the great fashion designer as one of the subtle inspirations behind his work. Another inspiration was the latest addition to his family, four-year-old Hector, who shares Mr Torres' real name, as well as the musician's father's name. However, even before the birth of his son, Mr Torres became aware that, while adults had plenty of stylish apparel and footwear options available to them, fashion for children and babies was very limited.

### Foot foundation

Mr Torres explains the supreme importance of shoes, which for him spans far beyond looking stylish. "They are more than an accessory," he says. "They're actually a foundation of your wellbeing." This is why he felt 'Made in Germany' label Birkenstock would be the perfect partner for the collection. "Birkenstock is a company that's been around since the 1700s, basically," he says, explaining that the firm's experience in providing comfortable shoes was of the utmost importance. "If you feel comfortable, you're gonna feel good about yourself," he says, particularly "if you add a little bit of style to it." He adds: "The vanity's good as long as you have comfort."

All styles in the new shoe range feature the contoured Birkenstock footbed in order to promote foot comfort, and are made using quality leather. Mr Baur says: "For our leather models we use cow leather with a thickness of 2.8 to three millimetres only. As it is not split, all the valuable qualities such as the typical surface structure, toughness and durability of this

natural material are preserved." This type of leather is not always easy to obtain, however. "Leather of this thickness is not readily available everywhere," he explains. "Due to the particular breed and husbandry conditions of the cattle as well as the climatic conditions, only leather originating from Central Europe meets our criteria."

Not only is the company concerned with where the leather is sourced from, it is also particular about the way it is produced. "We only buy from tanneries which comply with the strictest environmental regulations," says Mr Baur. "Moreover, our strict quality controls ensure that only perfect pieces of leather without flaws are used. Leather with such blemishes that may be caused by insect bites, tick bites or thorn scratches are sorted out."

### Glam rock chic

The end result is an "individual lifestyle" look offering "high comfort", according to Mr Baur. The children's range includes styles such as "Stars", "Flowers" and "Angel Wings", all of which incorporate intricate details and designs to help younger wearers feel special and unique. More daring customers may be drawn to styles featuring silver skull patterns, while women looking for a touch of glamour may opt for the Gizeh models such as "Crystal Square" and "Outline". These shoes feature Swarovski Elements and the Rock Star Baby emblem for the ultimate glam rock look. "Now you can have comfort and style," concludes Mr Torres. 🌟