

January 2007

**To Our Customers and Industry Friends:**

Welcome back! *PORON<sup>®</sup> Insider* is back with a new look—and a renewed mission to bring you industry insights, product news, and information you can use. In this issue, the focus will be on women's footwear. If you have a suggestion for a topic for a future issue, e-mail your idea to [solutions@rogerscorporation.com](mailto:solutions@rogerscorporation.com).

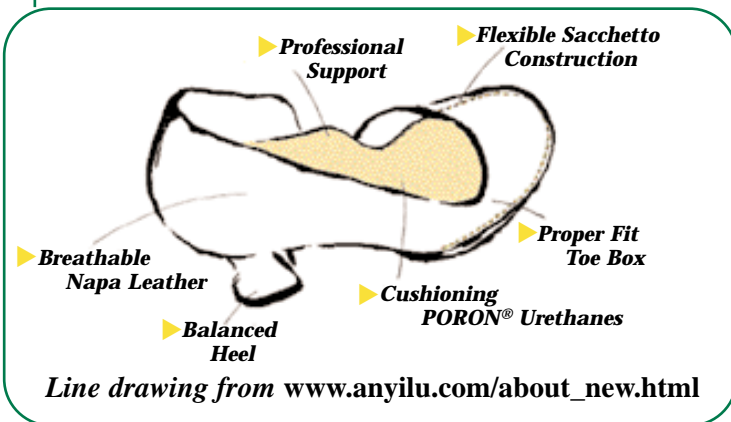
## Fashion and function: A perfect pair for Anyi Lu

As a competitive ballroom dancer with a background in chemical engineering, Anyi Lu didn't set out to be a shoe designer. It was a plea from a bride that inspired Anyi's mission. The bride, Anyi's sister, came to her with a request: She needed a comfortable pair of shoes to dance in at her wedding reception. Anyi came through, giving her sister a pair of her ballroom dance shoes to wear. *Why is it that women always need two different styles of shoes—one style for looking, and one style for doing?* Anyi asked herself. It seemed that looking great and feeling great were not an option. But, Anyi was about to change that dichotomy.

As a shoe designer, Anyi knew that women buy for style—and hope for comfort—from their shoes. Anyi's designs have been praised as “innovative” and “the perfect blend of comfort and fashion.” Her shoes are handmade from beautiful napa leather by Italian craftsmen. The key to Anyi Lu shoes' comfort is a combination of technique and material: *sacchetto* construction and PORON<sup>®</sup> urethanes.

*Sacchetto* is an Old World hand-sewn technique that

allows the shoe to mold to the foot. PORON urethane is Anyi's choice for cushioning in the insoles. Why PORON urethane? Among its benefits, PORON urethane



maintains resiliency for impact cushioning, distributes pressure evenly, and reduces foot fatigue. This provides a sensation of walking barefoot all day.

What started at a wedding is now a marriage of fashion and function: the perfect power shoe. ♦

## Cold feet, bold feat: A historical look at women's shoes through the ages

Her feet were cold. That's why Ice-Age Woman most likely started wearing the first shoes—crude coverings made from animal skins to protect her feet from the harsh elements.

Evidence as far back as 3300 B.C. shows the existence of rudimentary footwear filled with grass, which insulated feet from the cold. Early sandals were fashioned with leather soles and tied around the ankle with grass cords. They weren't what you'd call stylish, but they served their purpose of protecting feet.

In ancient Egypt, sandals were made of braided papyrus. Women decorated the insteps of their sandals



with jewels. In early Greek society, women's feet were worshipped. To attract the attention of men, women wore elevated sandals—perhaps the forerunner of today's stilettos. Often sandals' height and color denoted social class.

From walking like an Egyptian to rising to new heights, footwear took an upward turn. Chopines, platform shoes up to 24 inches (61 cm) high, were in vogue in sixteenth-century Italy. The extreme design necessitated the use of walking sticks. The fad was short-lived because the shoes were considered too dangerous and were banned after many women fell, sustaining injuries and miscarriages. But the style did

spark a medical interest in elevated footwear. Historical medical records note that the platform style noticeably changed the wearer's posture.

Worldwide, styles of women's shoes changed over centuries, evolving with the times and reflecting cultural influences. There were high heels, low heels, and narrow toes. Styles ranged from slippers to flats to mules to T-straps to sport shoes. They varied from clean cut and purely functional to highly ornamental, embellished with embroidery, pearls, and ribbons.

Women's footwear in the straitlaced Victorian era was indeed straitlaced. Foot-baring styles got the boot, literally—they got the ankle-covering boot. In an era where women's legs and feet were hidden under layers of crinolines and heavy long skirts, ankle boots afforded more coverage to keep ladies' "lower limbs" under cover. The word "limbs" was delicately used, because the word "legs" was thought to be too arousing.

From the ankle boots of the 1930s, inspired by Victorian fashion, to the sturdy platforms of the 1970s, inspired by 1940s fashion, women's shoes continue to be inspired by historical styles and updated

Sixty percent of women polled paid between \$50 and \$200 for a pair of shoes.

Source: *The American Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Society*



with new elements, says shoe designer Summer Walker. "Footwear trends evolve in tandem with what women need in a pair of shoes," says Summer, who designs shoes for the modern woman with an eye for vintage-inspired details. Summer says it's up to designers to "interpret styles in a fresh, new way that reflects a growth in vision,"—and it's up to the consumer to give feedback

about what works as a lasting style.

"History will always play a part in modern footwear as designers look back at what has worked so well in the past and get inspired to create new concepts for the future."◆

## In step with shoe designer Summer Walker

*Long before you see it in a magazine or shoe store window, a beautiful new shoe starts with a single idea, a vision. From an abstract concept to the shoe you slip on your foot, how does it all come together? New York City-based freelance shoe designer Summer Walker gives us a glimpse of the creative process—from a designer's personal perspective.*

I developed a love of footwear very early in life. I vividly remember urging my mother to purchase a new pair of shoes for me every few months. From the tender age of four, I began to form my vision of "the perfect shoe" in my mind's eye.

Today, I draw inspiration for my designs from just about anywhere. I live in New York City, so there is inspiration all around day and night. For one season, I might look to nature and fine art paintings for color inspiration while looking to the animal kingdom for textural inspiration. Right now I'm inspired by some new public art in my neighborhood, a recent Klimt exhibit, and my own garden. One of my favorite places to look for unexpected inspiration is the flea



More than 40 percent of women buy three to five pairs of shoes in an average year. More than 25 percent buy at least six pairs.

Source: *Mervyn's*

market. You never know what treasures lay in wait to spark your imagination!

When I design for a client, I like to look at the current market color and silhouette trends and narrow them down to what works for the

company vision. I then look at past seasons and get a feel for where I can inject some new styles and update what styles have performed well in the past. I refine these resources visually on concept boards and start the sketching and materials selection processes. This is the part where I let my imagination run wild within my concepts. It's so much fun!

After fleshing out cohesive groups, the designs are edited down into a tight new footwear line. These designs are then given to the appropriate production facility for prototyping. After a prototype is made there,

it goes through a strict approval process. The shoes must meet all quality and fit standards before they are approved to go into production. Only then is the final product prepared to sell in stores.

“I did not have three thousand pairs of shoes—I had one thousand and sixty.”

—Imelda Marcos

The anatomy of the foot is very delicate and it requires that consideration be given to matters of comfort. It is important not to disturb the health of the foot. Footwear design has many complicated elements to be weighed, the combinations of which depend on the type of shoes being designed. Since I design mostly women’s dress shoes, I have to take into account problems of balance as well as heel, ankle, and arch support. Every footwear designer has his or her own special combination of issues for which solutions must be found.

I think that podiatrists can give footwear designers vital insight into what works in the long run as far as how footwear engineering can affect the health of the foot. When I am designing a shoe for comfort, the

opinion and expertise of a podiatrist will certainly play into the design choices I make. I try to keep abreast of the recurring issues podiatrists handle so I can incorporate new technology into my designs to counteract those same problems. My aim is to make shoes that inspire confidence—not cause injury.

I design shoes for the woman on the go who wants to look remarkable—and feel comfortable. Today’s woman needs to get great wearability, versatility, and durability out of her footwear. I love shoes that have unique style while being comfortable enough to wear all day long. ♦

Fashionable footwear trends for '07 winter/spring seasons include...

- Long-legged boots
- Metallics: gold, bronze, silver, and pewter
- Red as an accent color
- Ballerina shoes
- Bootees and court shoes
- Clear-cut monks, loafers, and flats
- Bowties
- Ornate buttons, clasps, and buckles
- Tassels

## Foot Petals tip toes to success

As a special events and merchandising director for BCBG Max Azira, Tina Aldatz Norris was always on the go. Working in New York in the fashion industry, it was important to Tina to look stylish—head to toe. She wanted a comfortable shoe, but swapping her business chic heels for shabby sneakers was not an option. Tina sought her own comfort solution. She bought orthopedic insoles from the footcare aisle at the drug store, then she cut and glued the gel-filled pads to fit inside her high heels. The result was a bulky, unsightly, and less-than-satisfactory solution.

Those early attempts at cutting and gluing ultimately led to the creation of Tip Toes®, which are flower-shaped, ball-of-foot cushions that permanently adhere to the shoe insole. They are virtually invisible, even in open-toed shoes. Tip Toes keep your feet from sliding forward and help prevent blisters and calluses from forming.

Today Tina Aldatz Norris is founder and president of Foot Petals, the leader in women’s aftermarket footcare products.

What sets Foot Petals’ products apart from others? They are constructed from PORON® Urethane, chosen for its high performance and many advantages over gel.



Foot Petals Tip Toes®  
www.footpetals.com

Gel is an energy-returning, non-breathable material that traps foot perspiration, which in turn creates instability.

In contrast, the breathable, open cell construction of PORON foam allows air to escape, keeping feet cool and dry. It is available in a wide color palette. On average, Foot Petals’ PORON cushions are three times lighter and thinner than gel.

In addition to Tip Toes, Foot Petals has launched Heavenly Heelz®, which keeps your heels in place and helps prevent stiff shoes from cutting into the sensitive heel area, creating blisters. Foot Petals is sold by over 10,000 retailers worldwide. Over the past three years, sales from year to year have jumped more than 200 percent. ♦

Women who experience pain from uncomfortable shoes commonly report these seven problems:

Blisters	36%
Pain in the ball of the foot	35%
Corns and calluses	29%
Pain in the arches	26%
Heel pain	23%
Ingrown toenails	16%
Bunions	15%

Source: American Podiatric Medical Association

**The Sale Made Me Do It...**

What influences a woman's decision to shop for shoes?

- Shoe sale 37%
- Friends 31%
- Fashion magazines 27%

*Source: Mervyn's*

**Nest Egg in a Shoe Box**

Fifty-four percent of single, thirty-something women surveyed said they were likely to accumulate 30 pairs of shoes before accumulating \$30,000 in retirement savings.

*Source: soundinvesting.org*

**Whose Shoes Would You Choose?**

In a recent poll women were asked in which celebrity's shoes they'd most like to be. The most popular response was Katie Couric, evening news anchor (42%), followed by Sarah Jessica Parker, *Sex and the City's* Carrie Bradshaw (32%).

*APMA poll, www.apma.org*

**High Heels Can Heighten Your Risk**

High heels (more than 2 inches) contribute to

- knee and back problems
- shortened calf muscles
- injuries from falls
- unnatural gait
- changes to feet that impair proper function

*Source: American Podiatric Medical Association*

**A doctor's Rx for healthy feet**

More than 70 percent of American women suffer from foot problems related to their shoes, according to a survey conducted by the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA). That's no surprise to Dr. Harold Glickman, a podiatrist in Washington, D.C., and the immediate past president of the APMA. He says he sees a number of female patients with a variety of aches, pains and injuries as a result of the shoes they wear. This past summer in particular, Dr. Glickman saw women of all ages suffering from foot problems caused by their shoes, especially flip-flops, sandals, and open-toed styles.

According to an APMA poll, 34 percent of women regularly visit salons or spas for pedicures. After spending money on pedicures, women show off their pampered feet by wearing open-toe shoes more frequently. Sandals and flip-flop-type styles are commonplace and acceptable even in some workplaces. As a result, women spend more time in shoes that don't provide adequate arch support, shock absorption, or protection for the foot.

Shoe's cushioning is one very important factor relating to foot function and health, says Dr.

Glickman. "That's why PORON® Urethane has the APMA Seal of Acceptance. A safe foot 'bed' will protect the foot from injury," he says. Dr. Glickman says he wants to

**Fifty-one percent of people who wear shoe inserts, insoles, or orthotic devices purchase them as prescriptions from their podiatrists. Thirty-two percent purchase insoles/inserts from the pharmacy's foot care aisle.**

*Source: APMA poll, www.apma.org*

see women's shoes with sturdier, less flexible soles that offer more protection.

Dr. Glickman cites common design flaws that contribute to women's foot problems: "Narrow and pointed-toe shoes that have extremely soft, thin and flexible soles are not good for the human foot."

What about high heels? "Heel height is definitely a factor," says Dr. Glickman. The higher the heel, the more unstable and likely to lead to injury it is—sometimes the injury can be severe, and include broken bones. How high is too high? "Two-inch heels are acceptable, especially those heels that are broad and platform-like," says Dr. Glickman, "but stiletto heels are a big no-no!" ♦

**Trade Show Footnotes**

**Visit Rogers Corporation at:**

**Outdoor Retailer**  
January 27–30, 2007  
Salt Lake City, UT

**World Shoe Association (WSA)**  
February 1–4, 2007  
Las Vegas, NV

**Northwest Apparel**  
March 7–8, 2007  
Portland, OR

**Northeast Apparel**  
March 1, 2007  
Danvers, MA

**World Shoe Association (WSA)**  
July 30–August 2, 2007  
Las Vegas, NV

**World Class Performance** Rogers Corporation (NYSE:ROG), headquartered in Rogers, CT, is a global technology leader in the development and manufacture of high performance, specialty-material-based products for a variety of applications in diverse markets including: portable communications, communications infrastructure, computer and office equipment, consumer products, ground transportation, aerospace and defense. In an ever-changing world, where product design and manufacturing often take place on different sides of the planet, Rogers has the global reach to meet customer needs. Rogers provides the convenience of a worldwide presence and a true understanding of global markets. The world runs better with Rogers.™—www.rogerscorporation.com.

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