

25 YEARS IN STYLE

Starting out with footwear that hit the mark with Leeds' clubbers in 1991, Nicholas Deakins is all set to celebrate its 25th anniversary. With the brand's full apparel collection having grown just as big as its shoe business over the past five years, co-founder and managing director Craig Nicholas Tate tells Tom Bottomley there's plenty more to come.

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With a special logo commissioned, Nicholas Deakins is a brand that wants to shout about its 25th anniversary. There are even limited edition products, including an updated version of its famed boots that clubbers so loved in the early 90s, and a collaboration with outerwear company Peter Storm.

Co-founder and managing director Craig Nicholas Tate explains that they have worked with Leeds-based marketing company Space People to come up with a special logo, as opposed to just saying Nicholas Deakins '25'. "They've looked back at where and how we started out," says Tate. "It was intrinsically linked to night clubbing. Dave Beer was just opening Back to Basics in Leeds. That was a really well known club night, not just in Leeds, everyone knew about it, and it was the same time I first did the shoes. One of the big things was they wouldn't let people into the clubs in trainers, so our boots became the choice footwear for the lad about town. The backdrop to the new logo is all the different flyers of all the different club nights that were going on in Leeds 25 years ago." It will feature on swing tickets of all the new garments. The Nicholas Deakins shop, on Boar Lane in Leeds, will also have its walls wallpapered with the graphics.

The new a/w 16 look book for trade and press centres on a location shoot around Leeds where all the various club nights of the time were

happening, such as at The Warehouse and The Faversham, both venues which still exist. Needless to say they were shooting outside. "We used five different locations where club nights used to be happening," offers Tate.

The original boot didn't even have a name, just a code number, 7349. It was an elasticated square toe commando boot. "That was the first one, made at WJ Brookes in Northampton, the factory that later become famous for making fetish footwear, which is what the film Kinky Boots is all about." For the anniversary, the modern version of the 7349, made in Europe, is a higher end product. "It's quite a high boot with a round toe, more of an outdoor type boot," explains Tate. "It's got quite a fashion edge to it."

Nicholas Deakins has a full lifestyle range these days, with outerwear, denim, polos, T-shirts, hats, belts and even socks and underwear. "The clothing range is as big, if not bigger than the footwear range now," says Tate. "It's been a really big growth area for us. Our Yorkshire rose logo, which we've used since day one, becomes more prominent to people when it's on items of clothing, whether it's a chest badge on a jacket or a logoed T-shirt, and that helps to get the brand 'out there' more."

Another anniversary launch sees a new collaboration with rainwear specialists Peter Storm. Tate thought it was a good fit with Nicholas Deakins apparel because outerwear is an area

where they are particularly strong. The brand Peter Storm is owned by JD Sports nowadays (having formed part of its takeover of Blacks Leisure in 2012), as is Nicholas Deakins. "We've kept the original Peter Storm shape, as an overhead or a zip-through windcheater, but we've made it into a funnel neck. It's more about the materials and the details because we've made it more premium. It's a waterproof material and we've taped all the seams." There's also some water resistant footwear to tie in with the collaboration, which features some of the same materials that have been used on the jackets.

When it comes to the main Nicholas Deakins footwear range for a/w 16, which is the brand's 50th collection, there's an interesting array of materials including embossed leather, suede, cord, pull-up leathers and waterproof nylon. "We're also using a lot of shearling lining, which has proved really popular on our clothing," says Tate. All will be revealed at Jacket Required in February.

The distinctive rose logo of Nicholas Deakins will certainly be one for retailers to watch out for in 2016, whether you're from Leeds or not. Says Tate: "We were told years ago that we'd never sell anything in Manchester with a Yorkshire rose on it. But it just looks like a rose, we'd not actually picked out white or red. And, as it happens, Manchester has been one of our best places for business over the past 25 years."

