

JACKET REQUIRED BRAND TALK

New launches, relaunches, capsule anniversary collections and fresh products aplenty were all to be found at the latest edition of Jacket Required. Tom Bottomley did the rounds to get the details.



ASHLEY DEVERELL
MARKETING MANAGER UK &
IRELAND, K-SWISS

What's new for the brand's 50th anniversary?
We've remade the 'classic 66' all-leather white tennis shoe - the first product K-Swiss ever produced - in the USA, to the original specifications of the first ever shoe. It's a limited edition of 1,966 pairs, and it will be available in the UK exclusively at the top stores such as Oi Polloi, Hanon and size?. That sits at the top of our new product. There's also an additional seven styles, more modern takes on our traditional most popular styles, that we're launching as part of the anniversary.

What's the made in Portugal collection?

That will drop in stores in August, and it's the first time we've done a product range made in Portugal. It's about premium detailing and a bit more minimal branding. It looks back to our three-piece toe, with D-ring lace system - originally inspired by skiing boots.

What's the skiing boot connection to K-Swiss about?

The brand was founded by two Swiss brothers, who went to America to become tennis players. Being Swiss, skiing played a big part of their early lives, and they saw how the design of skiing boots aided lateral movement from left to right. So they implemented the same design in to their first tennis shoes back in 1966. The five stripes you see down the side of K-Swiss shoes actually stem from the binding that you see down the sides of skiing boots.



JAMES GREENLEES
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN,
GYMPHLEX

What's your family connection to the Gymphlex brand?

I'm actually the fourth generation of the family who owns Gymphlex. It was founded in 1906, predominantly making sportswear for universities and schools.

What's the made in Japan collection?

We used to manufacture in the UK, where we had three factories, but we started to move production out of Japan some 25 years ago now. We have a business worth about £15m in Japan at the moment, and we're in all the top stores there such as Edifice, Tomorrowland, SHIPS, Beams and Isetan. This is the first time we've opened up this collection to the UK market at wholesale. We're looking for some key partners to work with. There's some great heavy flannel check shirts in the line, including button-down and grandad shirt collar options.

Is there also a made in UK collection again?

Yes, we're launching it here now. It's all made in Leicester and Nottinghamshire. We're based in Leicester, and that's where the brand was originally founded. It's a very simple, clean collection, all made from looking at the archives. There's some subtle branding, and we're using great quality fabrics - all made in Leicester as well. There's some really strong heavy jersey pieces, and fine gauge jersey as well. The sweatshirts, jogging bottoms and shorts are key. We've also introduced striped cotton socks again, based on our rugby heritage. There's also the traditional rugby jerseys which we were so well known for.



PAUL BATISTA
HEAD OF SALES, YOGI SHOES

Is this the relaunch of the old Duffer of St George footwear brand from the mid 1990s?

Indeed it is. It originally referenced the Earth Shoes and Roots footwear worn by Soul Boys and Rastas in the mid to late 70s. They were Portuguese and Spanish-made negative heel, asymmetric shoes. Staying true to the brand's original ethos for the relaunch, we're also using a specialist moccasin factory in Portugal, as well as using premium materials. It's predominantly about hand-crafted, unlined moccasins, with either Vibram or crepe sole units.

Is the timing right to bring Yogi back?

That whole look is relevant again, with brands like Yuketen and Quoddy. But we're also offering something a little bit different in the form of a sneaker which is a little bit more crafted than a lot of other kind of Common Projects derivatives out there in the market at the moment. I think there's a gap in the market for that kind of product, but at a more accessible price point. We will be retailing at between £110-£140, depending on the style. It's still a fairly premium price point, but competitive at the same time. For instance, I can't find a Vibram sole boot in the market currently selling for less than £160.

Who's been showing interest in selling it?

All the premium retailers who remember the brand from the first time around, but also specialist retailers like size?. We can sit alongside brands such as Clarks Originals, G.H. Bass and Sperry, so it's an interesting development of that sneaker market in to 'brown shoe product'.



NICK KILLICK
FOOTWEAR SALES MANAGER,
BARBOUR

How long has Barbour footwear been available?

It's been in the market for about three years now. The reason it was introduced was because we wanted to be a 'head to toe' brand, across men's, women's and kids'. Footwear was the final piece in the jigsaw.

Does it reflect the Barbour outerwear?

We try to put all the DNA that you'd expect in the outerwear, into the footwear, such as the quilting, tartan linings and waxed cotton inserts in heel pieces. We're also using premium leathers, as well as some waterproof leathers - which all ties in to what the brand is about. The majority of the line is certainly weatherproof and water resistant, but the fully waterproof shoes are seam sealed.

What are the key areas?

The 'Lifestyle' range is the biggest area for us, as you'd expect. We're using the 'walking man' logo on the sole of the shoes, which stems from an original Barbour logo from the 1920s. We're also using a Commando outsole on the 'Country' range. Those boots are harder wearing, more rugged. They are heavily water resistant, seam sealed and feature hydrophobic leathers - water just beads off it, so it won't penetrate through the leather.

Is it the first time you've brought the collection to Jacket Required?

It is. We've done Moda before, and we got a good lifestyle customer basis there, but the brand has such a wide appeal - with a fashion customer as well as a country customer - so we want to target a higher profile, predominantly independent, account base with it too. We do already sell in the likes of Aspecto. And our accessories, particularly the bags, are performing strongly as well.



DEAN BATTY
SALES REPRESENTATIVE,
CHEFDEVILLE

Is this a relaunch of the Chefdeville jeans brand?

It is indeed. It's a Parisian brand that was last in the UK market about 10 years ago. In fact UK retailers had a really good time with it back then. The product was strong and the price points were good for them to make decent a decent margin. Ringing around the last few weeks, and speaking to some of the old retailers that carried Chefdeville previously, they remember it with affection. They always remember the things they didn't do well with, or the things that they did very well with.

Why was it taken off the market if they had such a successful time?

I think they lost their way. It went a bit 'glam' with pleated pockets and diamante! They followed the trends but I don't think they should have taken that route. It's now a lot cleaner and easier, with one main fit and four different interpretations with regard to detail. The creased denim looks good, with a tapered leg. There's also a selvedge jean that's made in Paris in their own factory. That's at the top of the price spectrum, wholesaling at £45, but the prices for Chefdeville jeans actually start at £22. Aside from denim, there's also canvas and cotton twill jeans. It's all bottoms, and that's all it needs to be. We're targeting independents with it, the usual crowd really. We're also showing my brand, Sock and Trotter, and McAlson underwear from Belgium. They've been making great boxer shorts for many years.



KESTIN HARE
MANAGING DIRECTOR, KESTIN
HARE

When did you launch your own brand?

We delivered the first collection for s/s 15. The old Common People brand was effectively rebranded as Kestin Hare. My former Japanese distributor came in to refinance everything, allowing us to take it forward and start the store roll-out. We've taken over the old women's Start store on Rivington Street in Shoreditch, which is 2,400 square feet with a showroom downstairs, where we also distribute brands from Japan, such as Haversack and Still by Hand in to the UK - also showing at Jacket Required. We also have 40 doors in Japan now with Kestin Hare, which is great, as well as 30 independents selling it in the UK.

Where are you opening other Kestin Hare stores in the UK?

We're about to open one in Glasgow, and we're going to have two in Edinburgh, as well as another shop in London, this time in Soho, set to open at the end of March. That will make a total of five stores, and we're really starting to bang on with the wholesale side too, with the likes of Harvey Nichols, The Content Store, W2, Psyche and ODE all on board.

How does the Kestin Hare offer differ from Common People?

It's much more sophisticated, and more of a 'label' as opposed to a 'brand' as such. It's a bit more grown up, and the appeal now is a real cross-section. Jackets are still a big focus, and we make everything in the UK where we can. In fact about 80 per cent of it is made here, with some jersey and shirting coming out of Portugal.