

If the shoe fits

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SHOW NEWS : While one shoemaker is collaborating with a goldsmith, another is designing shoes with an architectural bent – and, of course, high-street alternatives are cropping up left, right and very much centre, writes **DEIRDRE McQUILLAN**

Swashbuckling prints from Camper

Camper's latest engagement is with Swash, two London-based designers and former students of Central St Martins, Sarah Swash and Yoshio Tamanaka, known for their hand-printed illustrations. These ones, especially created for the footwear company, were based on 19th-century botanical prints and are used in Camper's "Twins" series, on cotton canvas with leather for four summer styles, flats, Mary Janes and sandals (€130-€150).

Mules – back for summer

Mules have come out of the boudoir into everyday city wear for spring, led by Miu Miu, with their cheeky, candy-striped mules. This mint number from BT2 is by Kurt Geiger, €195.

With a little black dress . . .

These kittenish black bows on this colourful Carven shoe in pink, yellow and beige (€555 from Brown Thomas) allow for an outfit in any of those colours. If you're still wearing black, this strappy black and white number from Buffalo is €110.

FACT

American women spent \$38.5 billion (nearly €30 billion) on shoes last year, according to the Wall Street Journal. More than half that amount was for heels over three inches high. The reason for the current popularity of platforms, according to the Wall Street Journal, is that they permit a shoe to be higher without requiring the foot to bend more, presenting modern shoemakers with quite a challenge, but giving their wearers the desired elevation.

Heels fit for Olympians

The ultra-glamorous Charlotte Dellal, founder and designer of Charlotte Olympia shoes, was in Dublin this week to launch a preview of her autumn/winter collection. Winner of the Accessories Designer of the Year at the British Fashion Awards last year, her ultra-feminine, ultra-high creations are counterpointed by her "cat" flats (evocative of those of the late footwear supremo Tokio Kumagai) that appeal to other kinds of felines. These two shoes from her current collection are modern uptakes on 1940s styles, very much her signature.

Greystones' new shoe boutique

Feeling blue? Then head to Azur, a new shoe boutique in Greystones, the brainchild of former publisher Brigid Whitehead, which opened at the end of February after six months of extensive product-research. "We wanted something a little bit different and something special for Greystones

with shoes, bags, scarves and accessories,” she says.

The big lure, however, is not solely the shoes (sorry!), but also the prices, which start at €18 for a range of Danish bangles, and go up to €185 for a pair of Marco Moreo shoes. Most of Azur’s footwear comes with €130-€140 price tags, and the shop is the only place in the Dublin region that stocks French Sole ballet flats (€115). Proving popular are bags by Mischa Barton and recycled vegan ones by Matt Nat from Canada.

A collaboration worth its weight in gold

This extraordinary shoe, designed by Andreia Chaves was made in Italy in collaboration with the celebrated Irish artist and silversmith Kevin O’Dwyer. Chaves, a graphic designer from Brazil who divides her time between Kinsale and Milan, trained in Florence as a shoemaker and has become known for her innovative visual approach to her craft.

Her creations have included an “invisible” shoe made from faceted mirrors that reflect surrounding surfaces. This new series, called Goldsculpt, in leather and gold-plated copper, took months of development in Italy working with metallic shoe accessory artisans alongside the shoemakers themselves. “I wanted to play with the static movement of the metal,” says Chaves. “It was a challenge for Kevin, but the shoe had to be wearable.” After its initial launch in Asia, Goldsculpt was shown in Milan in February to great success and will now go on sale in the Middle East, US and Brazil. Price on request. Chaves will also present them in Cannes during the film festival next month before she heads to Beijing and Sao Paolo. andreiachaves.com

Arnotts’ new Shoe Garden

Shoe fans, mark your cards. In September, Arnotts will finally open the Shoe Garden, a 10,000 sq ft space in the store filled with footwear, which will make it the biggest shoe shop in Ireland. A host of new brands such as Pretty Ballerina, Michael by Michael Kors and Vivienne Westwood Anglomania are already on the shelves. This one, called Gaslight by Carvela, is €180.

Save a pretty Penney

Budget- and fashion-conscious female shoe lovers will snap up some of Penneys summer offerings, such as this strap wedge, and flat neon snakeskin sandal, which make little demand on the pocket but a lot on the feet. Pedicures imperative. Nail colour? Choose carefully.

Spree vs steal: sapphire

Sapphire blue is not only a bright shade for spring, but will feature widely as a strong colour for next winter. This flirtatious blue ribboned satin ballerina pump (€765) is from the summer collection of Liam Fahy, the London-based shoe designer of Irish descent who now sells online from his website, liamfahy.com and on avenue32.com. The bracelet heeled sapphire suede and bronze alternative is €145 from Buffalo.

A virtual collection

The Virtual Shoe Museum (virtualshoemuseum.com) is a site that was created by graphic designer and shoe-aholic Liza Snook in 2005, after collecting shoes for more than 25 years. Her new version went live in February, listing more than 1,500 styles from over 300 designers. Its aim is to connect designers and shoe lovers, curate travelling exhibitions of virtual shoes and generally

keep abreast of exciting and innovative footwear design and developments worldwide. A must for all lovers of shoes, whether the latest Converse or the most unwearable items best worn without walking.

Architectural designs

Award winning London-based architect-turned-shoe designer Julian Hakes created a sensation with this “soleless” shoe, Mojito, which made its debut in London and Paris in February. It is designed entirely by computer using the engineering and architectural skills Hakes developed as a specialist in bridge-building. In an array of colours such as purple, green, red and blue as well as black, it’s now on sale in selected stores, from €180 to €280 depending on material finish. Hakes will be collaborating with Swarovski for his autumn/winter collection, with two glittering styles in black and white.

For a full list of stockists, visit [facebook.com/ julianhakeslondon](https://www.facebook.com/julianhakeslondon)

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