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Z I N E

TRAINERS
SNEAKERS
KICKS+WEBS
STRIDES+SOLES
CREPS+BEATERS
TRABS+TRAINEES

Whatever you call your footwear, there is a particular tribe who are obsessive about theirs.

volume 02 / restore
autumn 2020



We talk to a restoration specialist, the man that works his magic in a crowded subculture of trainer collectors, lovers and enthusiasts.



with
@refreshed.kicks



adidas NAPOLI

The NAPOLI was a classic training shoe, built with a racing toe and 'D' ring' quick lacing system and finished in navy blue suede with white and silver details.

Made in West Germany, 1985

Full restore, deep clean, replenishing suede without using dye and re-newed silver foiling.



adidas COLUMBIA

The COLUMBIA is a nubuk leather training shoe with a Ghilly lacing system and two-density polyurethane shock-absorbent sole.

Made in West Germany, 1985

This particular shoe had previously been covered in black boot polish which gave a high gloss shiny finish. The polish had also stained the silver stripes and mid-sole. The shoes were totally stripped back using acetone. The uppers were treated with restoration solution. The stripes and heel tabs were painted with a new silver finish and the mid-soles were repainted in an off white colour. Completed with the Columbia branding, new tongue labels and heel tab trefails.



adidas TRX

The TRX series began life in 1976 and has released several successful models since. It has the trademark racing toe and suede overlays across the side panels.

Made in West Germany, 1980

Jockey of Transalpino had acquired these on his travels hoping that they could be restored to their former glory. But a previous owner had used black dye on the stripes, heel tabs and soles, so there was little or no option other than to colour the whole shoe black with contrasting Tiffany blue accents.



adidas ATHEN

The ATHEN is aptly named after the spiritual home of the Olympic games. Part of the training and leisure models it has the familiar look of a GAZELLE, but is known to be part of the acclaimed city series. This recognisable silhouette is made from full suede and sports the new style heel patch.

Made in West Germany, 1978

This pair was featured at *The Fashion of Counter Culture* exhibition to highlight the restoration process. Only the left shoe was completed, the other was left hard and brittle in many patches. It was rejuvenated with a restoration solution, given a deep clean and had re-newed gold foiling. The sole was also repainted.



adidas SARATOGA SAND

The SARATOGA SAND similar to the Riviera leisure series shoe is a full suede leather trainer named after the Californian town. Today, many collectors consider these tone-on-tone three stripes to be the rarest of holy grails.

Made in France, 1981

When this pair arrived for restoration they were falling apart and in all honesty they looked ready for the bin! I sanded back the suede between deep cleans and then added restoration solution to rejuvenate the suede. The heel tabs were re-glued where they were coming away and then David Charlesworth @vintage_trainer_repairs68 re-glued the soles back on. These were then snapped up by a prolific adidas collector.



adidas MEXICANA

The MEXICANA celebrated the 1968 Mexico Olympic games. A number of full suede variants were released, all consisting from a palette of gold, yellow and brown hues that were linked to the rich Aztec culture. Gold of course being the winning medal.

Made in France, 1981

Full restore and deep clean with black custom finish to toe, sole and stripe, and re-newed gold foiling.

adidas collector.





Restoring an old classic... every shoe I touch has a story; that's what makes it so special to me and their owners... there is a whole new subculture devoted to saving these trabs from degradation.



Z I N E

The tools of the trade: What you need in this game is passion, patience and persistence



above: adidas Brüssel
made in West Germany, 1978

TO BACK TO LIFE

interview: Lee @refreshed.kicks with Kayla Owen @sole_magazine

Have you ever wanted to know more about restoring old trainers, but weren't sure where to start? We asked Lee to share his story..

Instagram:
@refreshed.kicks
Size:
10
First Pair:
Nike Air Force 1984
Latest Pair:
adidas Liverpool
Holy Grail:
adidas Questar / 1987

KO: Tell us a bit about you Lee, your background and what your current trainer life consists of, as a collector, restorer, customiser.

LB: All three. In a chaotic manner lol!

So I'm a trainer collector, fanatic - adidas. During my teenage years, late 80's early 90's I think I was mainly influenced by the U.S. hip hop scene.

- 90's -

I was wearing a lot of Nike, Patrick Ewing, things like that, there was a lot of hip hop based items. I can only recall a couple of adidas pairs along the way. There

was also a local thing, where we were wearing things like Arrow Astro Turf at one point, and I remember when I was about 12 which would have been '86 we all wanted this Astro Turf trainer that had been released by a company called Arrow. Goodness knows what happened to them.

- marathon -

I can completely recall how I got into this properly. I had a pair of Marathon 80 blue and yellow, absolutely loved them they would have been a 2009 pair released. Loved them and I didn't want to chuck them away. I remember they were kept under the stairs and I'd wear them in the garden to do the gardening and I used to clean them, but it was just a case of a wet rag under the hot tap, give them a wipe over, didn't know anything about cleaning products or anything like that at that stage and I was still a one or two pair person. I can recall buying K-Swiss and things like that in that period.

KO: How would you define trainer sub-culture in relation to your early years?

LB: For me growing up it was a case of, I want that pair first or I want that pair, they look good. I want them before anyone else gets them. For My Mersey Paradise (SoleZine Volume 1) the pair I picked was because my friend had the Marathon TR that I wanted and he got them first and there's that unwritten rule that two lads in the same gang can't have the same pair of trainers, because it's just weird. Which is daft, but that is what it was like when we were growing up.

- questar -

So I ended up with the (adidas) Questar and that has become a grail (the one pair that means the most) for me. Again growing up wishing I hadn't thrown them away. So for me it was always about wanting a pair that stood out, looked good, or I was the first to get them. A pair that people would comment on or ask where I got them. It is a fashion statement and looking at it now, because obviously I'm a collector now and I've got so many pairs, sometimes it can take me 20 minutes to get the right pair on and I'll have tried

three, or four, five pair on to make sure they go with what I've got on.

KO: Can you tell us a bit about your job and the restoration processes?

LB: It isn't my full time job, it is more of a hobby, doing a couple of pairs every couple of weeks, it is manageable and is a little bit of pocket money on the side. I started with re-dyes and deep cleaning. I did a lot of research and reading up on how to use these dyes. It's all about the prep. If I'm going to do it I'm going to do it properly.

- gold foiling -

One of the big things in my restoration process that no-one else could do was the lettering. You used to use gold paint and a cocktail stick and you'd literally dot them to paint over where the old lettering was. At this point I'd been testing different methods to do this lettering so I'd bought gold foil, gold leaf and applied glue over the lettering and then dabbed over and brushed it off, to leave the lettering. It still wasn't the ideal finish. I tried

stamping as well but the best method was the cocktail stick but it wasn't how it should be, and I knew that and that's the thing with me, if I want to do something and I think it can be done I will persist until it's done properly. I eventually cracked it with the cutter and the gold foil. Another well known customiser had also just developed the gold foil technique but was keeping his cards close to his chest.

KO: Where do you see the craft of restoration going next for you?

LB: I want to be doing things a bit more out there, next level. I want to be setting the bar. I am developing and producing reproduction insoles and I'm the only person doing them. I did 100 pairs six weeks ago and they sold out in an hour.

- showcase -

KO: Every crafts person has real affinity with what they create. To showcase your work, do you prefer it to be viewed online or in the flesh?

LB: Either/or, because I've done both. For The Fashion of

Counter Culture exhibition (2018) I showed an (adidas) Athen and restored only one of the shoes, but showed both side by side. I did a Candy Liverpool which was shown at Laces Out, so I do like the live stuff, where they're on show, especially if I'm there as well and I can talk to people about it. If it's good, it's just another angle 'cos not everyone's on Instagram. So you're looking at a different audience.

- liverpool -

There's no trickery involved either. There's no filter. There's loads you can do now, you can make things look way better, there's people out there doing it. I know for a fact there's people out there doing it on Instagram. So, by having it on show somewhere you see it in the flesh, and it is what it is.

KO: Thanks for chatting, it's been fascinating.

LB: Alright, good to speak to you.