

THE TASTEMAKERS

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THE X FACTOR

How brands are cultivating the ultimate retail experience

JOINT ACCOUNT

What happens when Manolo Blahnik meets Wales Bonner?

THE NEW CLASS

The young Hollywood stars designers are talking about



L.A.'s thriving fashion scene has never been more inspiring. Here, an inside look at the city's stylish habitués, starring Nicole Richie in Giannico's golden heels.



Trina Turk

HAVANA SIGHTS

Designer Trina Turk has collaborated with California-based sneaker label **SeaVees** on a limited-edition version of the brand's Baja slip-on style. The shoe's canvas upper features a colorful mosaic print inspired by Turk's visit to the Coppelia ice cream parlor in Havana. The sneaker will retail for \$78, exclusively on the brands' web-sites and in Trina Turk stores, starting in March.

WALK THIS WAY

Houston-based Sanita Footwear has added two brands to its offering and changed its name to **EuroWalking LLC**. The company has secured distributorship for men's and women's Spanish brands Sanosan and TUCS for the U.S. and Canada. Sanosan, a line of casual comfort shoes, will retail for \$59 to \$135 and arrive this month. TUCS, focused on fashion-comfort, retails for \$119 to \$150 and will deliver at-once. Distribution is aimed at comfort independents, big-box and department stores.

HAVE A HEART

Women's brand **Tamaris** is introducing the Heart & Sole collection of high heels for fall '17. Developed by innovation manager Ellen Haselaars with orthopedists, the line features elements to help ease ball-of-foot pain by supporting the arch and spreading body weight evenly across the heel. The collection of pumps and booties will retail for \$120 to \$180. It is set to deliver in July to boutiques and better department stores.

Tamaris Heart & Sole heel



The Albert in-store foot scanning system from Aetrex

HELLO, ALBERT

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Tech
Down-
load

Aetrex Worldwide's next-gen foot scanner could be a welcome game changer for shoe retailers.

By Jennie Bell

After two years of development, Aetrex Worldwide Inc. will unveil the latest update to its iStep foot scanner, and this new version represents a major leap in the technology.

The new scanning system, dubbed Albert, consists of a device that, like previous iterations, can measure pressure and sizing. It also conducts 3-D imaging, assesses pronation and has the ability to track gait.

According to the firm, other devices on the market might measure one or more of these things, but never so many in a single system. "This project has taken a long time for us to develop because we've created some-

thing that's never been done before," said Larry Schwartz, CEO of Teaneck, N.J.-based Aetrex.

The entire system was built in-house at Aetrex's technology division in Israel, by a team that consisted of three software developers, a hardware engineer, an optical specialist and a mathematician.

Their first step was to reinvent the scanning device itself. "The hard thing about developing hardware, compared with shoes, orthotics or even software, is when you're creating something new, there are a lot of challenges," said Schwartz. "But the mandate to the team was, we want to

capture everything."

The Albert scanner — a round device about 30 inches in diameter that sits on the floor of a retail store — is equipped with more than 5,000 gold-plated sensors, 1,000 infrared LED lights and receptors and 18 digital cameras.

When a shopper steps up to the machine, it will scan their feet separately and together, while a touchscreen video monitor and voice-over offers instructions. The entire process takes about a minute to complete. Afterward, the customer receives detailed information about their feet, such as pressure points, arch height and pronation, which the software uses to recommend an Aetrex orthotic.

By entering their email, customers can later access the data on the Aetrex-owned site Myfeet.com.

Schwartz, who said the company spent "millions" developing Albert, believes

it will boost the firm's orthotics sales. "Every time we've launched a new line of foot scanners, it's generated a lot of growth," he said, adding that the benefits for retailers are even more significant.

He estimated that by adding a scanning system to their stores, retailers could double their sales for high-margin insoles. And the Albert's data-capture functionality is another important advantage.

"Bigger retailers love the data capture," said Schwartz. "They can integrate [the emails and sizing information] into an e-commerce platform in a way that's very effective for their business and the consumer."

Aetrex will roll out 200 sets of the Albert this spring and summer, with plans to eventually place a couple thousand in the next few years. For retailers, the rental fee for the scanner is \$300 per month, but Schwartz said Aetrex works hard to minimize costs.

"If a store sells three pair a day, they get it for free — so 90 in a month," he explained. "At the end of the month they report how many they've sold, and based on that, the rental fee can be anywhere from \$0 to \$300. We have a lot of doors out there already doing 1,000-plus pair a year."

In today's difficult retail environment, Schwartz said the Albert is a timely resource. "People say, 'This is exactly what we need' — assets that can tie into the e-commerce program, enhance the retail experience and add on sales," he said.

And, Schwartz noted, the technology has even more room to grow. Currently the hardware is capturing more information than the software needs. "But when the software catches up, there are so many applications, like 3-D printing," he said. "There's so much data coming from this, and we want to use it all strategically."