

Enjoiya:

Made for Independents – and Styled for Women to Enjoy in Comfort

MARY RUOFF

At a party a few years ago, Frank Cammarata mentioned his women's shoe company – industrial-sounding Camtrade, a play on his own name. The expression, or lack thereof, on the person he was chatting with spoke volumes. Soon the business had a new moniker, a play on the word “enjoy”: The Enjoiya Group, which debuted last summer, along with a new logo and website (enjoyiagroup.com). “Enjoiya” was tapped from the company's premium brand, launched in Fall 2019. “Enjoiya captures the very essence of who we want to be – stylish, exotic and fresh,” says Chief Executive Officer Cammarata, who founded the Boxborough, Mass., business in 2013.

Developed with “sit and fit” independent shoe retailers in mind, the name-sake line (\$59.95 to \$199.95) costs more than its two sister brands but also touts its “price-value.” Made in European sizes, the boots, booties, flats, pumps, sneakers, wedges and sandals

(from flats to strappy 2.25-inch heels) combine comfort features, top-notch materials and smart, “contemporary” style. “The brand has been very well received,” says Cammarata, Enjoiya Group's sole owner. “It's a terrific resource to independents because of its high fashion appeal, superb quality and fine craftsmanship.”

Styles Run the Gamut

Eye-catching slip-on sneakers with jute-wrapped soles come in styles like Valley, with fabric uppers in leopard, zebra and jungle, a leafy blue and green print; and mid-wedge Aria, so named for the airy perforated stretch leather uppers, available in six solid colors (pewter, gold, bronze, black, yellow and peach). Designed to transition from a 5K to dinner out, athleisure Val-Venosta's leather upper is accented with a snake pattern or a kaleidoscope cutout.

Back for Spring 2022, the slingback Comoda Criss-Cross Sandal has a square toe, a white moderate platform outsole with EXTRALIGHT technology for added

flexibility, a cushioned insole, and soft tubular leather straps that “will wrap your feet for the



ultimate gift of all-day comfort.” In this fall's lineup: Chelsea Lug Boot, with rivet laces and contrasting leather and fabric; Victoria Boot, a lace-up, mid-shaft leather boot with a geometric pattern at the ankle; and streamlined leather flats with a retro vibe.

The Enjoiya collection is designed by two in-house designers and their counterparts at an Italian factory that makes most of the footwear. “We've caught the eyes of retailers because our styles are good,” says Dick Hartman, Senior Vice President of Sales. “NSRA (member) stores we're contacting are interested in the brand and are back to some semblance of where they were (before the COVID-19 pandemic).”

Executive Experience

At 79 years old, Hartman, a former executive with Penobscot, Eastland and Dexter shoe companies, is one of a handful of footwear industry veterans Cammarata tapped for his executive team. Hartman says his boss is both “tenacious” and a “people person,” a winning combination in his view: “He's one of the nicest people I've ever worked with. He's dedicated. He's hon-



The Comoda Criss-Cross Slingback Sandal features an adjustable ankle strap.

est. You can go to the bank with what he says. That's why I'm still doing this."

Cammarata has 35 years of experience in the retail and footwear industries. He was a partner in KLAS shoes; president and owner of The Phoenix Sourcing Co., which imported home décor; and worked at The TJX Companies for 20 years as an assistant store manager, buyer and merchandise manager. Of his latest venture he says, "The goal was to build brands that would resonate with today's consumers."

While the company's Enjoiya brand uses fine leathers on many styles, its two others feature less costly materials like faux leather. Soft Comfort (\$39.99 to \$59.99) is "casual, sporty, stylish and extremely comfortable," while "city-chic, on-trend" Secret Celebrity (\$39.99 to \$79.99) has "more bling and an emphasis on heels." Both are made in American sizes and largely sold by chain retailers. "Through competitive segmentation

they can also be a good fit for independents," Cammarata points out.

Pandemic Challenges and Silver Linings

The executive chuckled as he recalled rolling out Enjoiya Group's newest brand "at the worst possible time" – just six months before the pandemic struck. As always, he relied on his sense of humor to get through tough times and looked on the bright side, even as sales plummeted. He's proud the company retained its workforce during the pandemic: a dozen or so employees, including three customer service representatives, as well as independent sales representatives.

"We learned a lot through this experience. We learned about our retailers. We learned a lot about product and factories and agents," says the CEO.



Fresh design elements take the Val-Venosta Sneaker to another level.

"A lot of people stepped up and came through in difficult times and came to work every day, whether it was remotely or working through Zoom. You grow and develop as a team, you gel!"



The Chelsea Lug Boot is new for Fall 2021.

Along with tackling a website and name redo during the deadly epidemic, the company responded to supply and production issues by diversifying where its footwear is made. Enjoiya is manufactured in Portugal, Vietnam and Mexico, as well as Italy; Secret Celebrity and Soft Comfort are produced in China and other Asian countries.

In the pandemic's wake, Enjoiya Group also cut way back on dress and dress casual styles and added slippers to Enjoiya and Soft Comfort as folks worked

Personal Glimpse

Frank Cammarata, CEO and founder of Enjoiya Group

SRT: What's one of the most recent books you've read?

Frank Cammarata: *John Lennon 1980: The Last Days in the Life* by Kenneth Womack

SRT: What's one of the most recent movies you've seen?

Cammarata: *The Marx Brothers' Duck Soup* (really!) These last 15 months have been pretty daunting, and these guys knew how to keep things in perspective.

SRT: If you could pick one person in the footwear industry to have dinner with, who would it be? Why?

Cammarata: Any "sit and fit" person that works in the town shoe store. The information, and learning about this person's daily experience, would be invaluable to me.

SRT: Do you have a "personal hero" from history?

Cammarata: My Father is my personal hero. But from history, I would say any person who served in WWII.

SRT: What's the one thing about you that would surprise most people?

Cammarata: I cry during touching father-and-daughter movies. Mine is getting married this year.



Frank Cammarata, Enjoiya Group CEO

continued on page 26

The Enjoiya Group
continued from page 25

from home and stayed put there. "We're a nimble company," says Cammarata. "We're quick to react. We're problem solvers." Now the business is eyeing the return of dressier styles. "We do believe that when dress comes back it will come back with a vengeance," says this entrepreneur. "I have the feeling that it's coming back strongly in the fall of 2022."

As the pandemic wanes, Enjoiya Group's sales representatives (two in-house and five independents) are getting back on the road. "There is nothing more effective," says Cammarata, "than face-to-face contact and viewing the shoe samples in person."

Retail Locator Coming Soon

Direct-to-consumer sales through the company's three e-commerce stores (*enjoiya.com*, *secretcelebrityshoes.com*, *softcomfortshoes.com*) helped offset losses as the coronavirus outbreak shuttered retailers, most temporarily but some for good. But for now at least, Enjoiya Group doesn't sell on Amazon.com or through online-only footwear retailers, except for occasional "flash" or closeout sales. Later this year, the company will add a retail locator to the corporate website.

Independent retailers can order special makeups (SMUs) from Enjoiya Group, adding, say, an extra strap so a style better fits their market, or getting a hot shoe in an "exclusive" color or material. They can even place SMUs for widths. Enjoiya Group added them on select

Soft Comfort styles as width sales took off industrywide, and it plans to do the same for Secret Celebrity and Enjoiya.

The company's lower-priced "value" brands have a 12-pair minimum on initial orders and six on reorders. Enjoiya is half that: six and three, respectively. Whatever they're buying, independent retailers are pleased to work with an in-stock company, especially after the pandemic disrupted supply chains. They also relate to a vendor who, like them, is an independently owned small business. "Independents are a huge priority for us," says Cammarata. "We don't offer the 'bedside manner' and the personalized touch and the camaraderie (at our e-commerce sites). To a large degree, there are consumers who want to enjoy the retail experience in a brick-and-mortar environment in a local downtown." ■