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STYLE

That '70s shoe

Canadian footwear designer Ron White revisits patchwork for fall

By Sophia Findlay

He invented the trademarked All Day Heels and is known for designing his shoes with a special cushioning of PORON, a material used by NASA that doesn't lose its impact-protection feature. He has a loyal celebrity following around the world, and the media refer to this 47-year-old Winnipeg native as "Canada's Shoeru."

Ron White, CEO and creative director of his eponymous shoe company, after all, comes with over 20 years of experience in the fashion industry and has a background in biomechanics and fashion footwear.

Federal Minister of Finance Bill Morneau wore a new pair of Ron White shoes ahead of tabling the Liberal government's first budget in March of this year and, according to White, *Sex and the City's* Kim Cattrall – who is starring in *Sensitive Skin*, the Canadian remake of the British series of the same title – demands that she wears only his shoe brand on set.

Reached by phone, White offers some fall/winter forecasts, which he says is influenced by the '70s. "The millennials and the next generation see it as brand-new, and baby boomers and other generations see it as revisiting happy times."



Ron White

Any particular inspiration for your fall women's shoe collection?

It's a harkening back to the '70s for sure, and it's definitely what I feel in my bones and what is happening in Europe – everything, from the design to the colour palette, and sometimes it's one or the other. If you think about it, for the last couple of seasons, there were tonnes of tassels and everything was fringe. Now there is patchwork, which is the new fringe. I'm doing a lot of it in pumps and ankle boots.

Could we interchange colour block with patchwork?

Yes, though colour block oftentimes has two colours, and patchwork usually implies more than two colours. One of my patchwork pumps looks like three colours, but it's four. The

fourth colour is actually in the inlay, between the patches, which is very difficult to make, as it has to be hand-stitched. But what's neat about patchwork is that when you are wearing it with [anything in] your wardrobe, it picks up any colour in the patchwork and then you can just tie in your outfit with that colour. So, it really gives you a great amount of versatility.

What other colours and texture can we expect?

What you'll see is a rich cognac colour that is happening in the fashion scene and definitely resonating in my collection. Other colours are slate grey and a lot of navy infused with black. There are many tuxedos with black lapels – we've seen it on the red carpet at awards shows with George Clooney. Black was never worn together with navy; it was almost taboo. It got introduced in the last season or so, and now it's sort of fresh, chic. [There's a] European look to it.

There is going to be a lot of velvet again. But in shoes it's primarily worn for more formal [occasions]. It is a beautiful way of showing texture; it has a richness to it.

What is the technology you use?

My big break was inventing the world's first All Day Heels using unique technology that makes you feel like you are wearing running shoes even if you are wearing dress shoes. I expanded the collection from where I started it nine years ago for that woman who was asking for everything in her wardrobe to have that technology.

What is your latest technology?

My entire collection will now be waterproofed – something Canadians will love.

Where are they made?

Everything I do is made in Italy – 100 per cent! •



Ron White's latest collection features waterproofed materials and a topnotch array of patchwork detailing. Laced-up casuals can be dressed up or down for day or night.