



## Designer Chat: Ron White



**KATE MIDDLETON'S WEDDING** gown and the polka-dot dress worn by Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*—unforgettable fashion moments in pop culture—may sneak into designer Ron White's creative consciousness, but like a true retailer, White allows his designs to be guided by the clientele he's amassed since opening his first luxury comfort footwear store in 1993. "I've taken my customers' wish-lists into consideration," White says of his Spring '12 Signature Collection, his year-old line of red carpet-worthy shoes. "They've asked for thinner and higher heels and have given me the confidence to really push further with my designs."

The Toronto-based designer has pushed the technology envelope too, incorporating 5.5 millimeters of Poron cushioning into every style and adding a Vibram outsole for the first time this season. With suggested retail prices between \$550 and \$850, White says he wants his customers to feel good about investing in a pair of comfortable and wearable shoes. —*Angela Velasquez*

**What's new for spring?** I was inspired by the '70s. The shoes have a retro feel—like Sonny and Cher—with a lot of metallic, shades of burnt orange, chocolate brown and color blocking. You'll see a mix of materials like chiffon, patent, silks and organza. I'm also using a cashmere printed suede that looks like crackle pottery, lizard and snake.

## Pinkalicious

Bubblegum shades add a pop of color for Spring '12.

From left: **Lovely People** cut-out sandal; **Klub Nico** peep toe stiletto; woven color by **Dirty Laundry**; **Blonde Ambition** architectural wedge.



### EDITOR'S PICKS

**What are key silhouettes for the season?** It's important to have a range from elegant red carpet-ready dress sandals to more tailored peep-toes and slingbacks. There will also be a more aggressive grouping. It sounds like an oxymoron, coming from a luxury comfort brand, but I'm introducing my first spike heel.

**Who is the Signature Collection customer?** She's a socialite with disposable income. Even so, she wants to be able to wear her shoes to a gala or pair them with skinny jeans.

**What inspires you?** I keep notes in a file to keep track of all the things that inspire me from day to day. The seats of a vintage

convertible at a car show inspired a ballet flat. A retailer used the phrase "tears of joy," and I later looped thin pieces of leather into a chain link of teardrops on one of my sandals.

**Which footwear designer do you most admire?** The original king of footwear, Roger Vivier. His designs were inventive and special.

**If you could dress anyone, who would it be?** Oprah. She's over 50 and wants to look stylish. But she has very particular needs for her feet. On her show, she was known for walking out in ultra-high heels, but would kick them off once she sat down. She was barefoot for part of her final show. I would want to solve that problem.

