

## Fashion

## Tiptoeing into summer



**Bernadette Morra**  
Fashion Notebook

You would think that if anyone would be sporting new spring shoes it's **Debra Anissimoff**.

The owner of Zola Shoes has access to the hottest, most rockin' footwear in town. But on Tuesday, Anissimoff was trotting around in year-old blue python Western boots.

"I always tend to wear last season," Anissimoff admits. "When you buy things this beautiful they don't date."

Good thing, since the Gianni Barbato boots retail for \$1,300. "Also, one time when I was wearing something current, a customer wanted the same shoe but I didn't have her size. So she looked down at my feet and said, 'What size are those?' Luckily, they weren't her size. Wearing last year's styles avoids those kinds of problems."

Anissimoff had called me from the new Zola, unofficially known as Zola south, at 45 Avenue Rd. Rather than duplicating the sister store north of Lawrence Ave., the spin-off will offer a whole new range to the shoe-crazed.

"There were brands that I loved and wanted to carry but I had run out of space," Anissimoff explains. In addition to Devi Kroell clutches and Anya Hindmarch handbags, expect to find polka dot linen slingbacks, \$750, by Az-zedine Alaïa, Laurence Dacade D'Orsay stilettos with black peau de soie bows, \$520, and deep purple python ballerina flats with Swarovski crystal buckles, \$566, by Miami-based Dusica Dusica.

Anybody else out there feeling like designer shoes shouldn't cost as much as a Maytag?

"Actually prices are a little gentler than last year, thanks to the strength of the dollar against the Euro," Anissimoff clarifies. "And the exotics like python, lizard, embroidery and laser cutting are going to be pricey — \$600-plus — because of the workmanship."

**MORE OR LESS:** Payless ShoeSource has been paying attention to the high cost of designer footwear. Its spring brochure, the first I ever recall getting in 20 years of fashion reporting, touts "on-trend styles" from the retailer "dedicated to democratizing fashion."

Well, sort of. The selection, with nothing higher than \$45, includes silver gladiator sandals that scream Alexander McQueen and slides with turquoise stones à la Michael Kors. But when we asked for photos to run with this story,



Retro-styled cone-heeled leather shoes with snap closures from the new Vert Femme collection, \$355, by Lacoste, available next month, call 1-866-711-6091 ext. 225.

we were told a number of the styles featured in the glossy colour book wouldn't be available here. Shipments to Canada will include trendy white gladiator flats, metallic thongs and green flower-trimmed wedgies. Still, it doesn't seem very democratic, does it?

**COMFORT ZONE:** Ron White, who has added his name to the banners on his Foot Shoppe stores, is tiptoeing into design with his own collection. The six women's styles feature leather uppers that are woven and hand-braided "on the loom" by master Italian craftsmen in a traditional method. Handmade shoes from the same factory sell upwards of \$500, White says. His pink slides, caramel thongs, and tan loafers run \$265 to \$295.

"I felt it was the perfect time to bring back woven leather, because of the Moroccan/Marrakesh feeling in fashion for spring," White says. "But I couldn't find anything that wasn't über high-

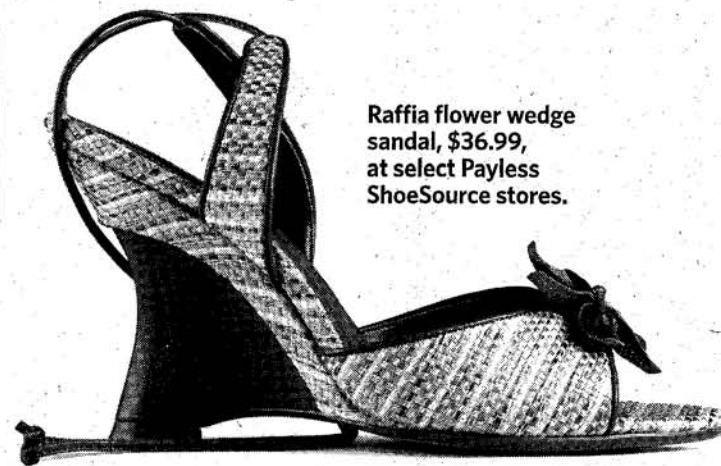
end — from \$500 to \$700." He also demands comfort details in all the shoes his stores carry, so the Ron White sandals have cushiony soles and contoured foot beds that support the arch and cup the heel.

"They give that cradling sensation that makes the difference between being able to stand all day or not," White says. "And the woven leather moulds and shapes to the foot within an hour after you wear them, so they are really comfortable."

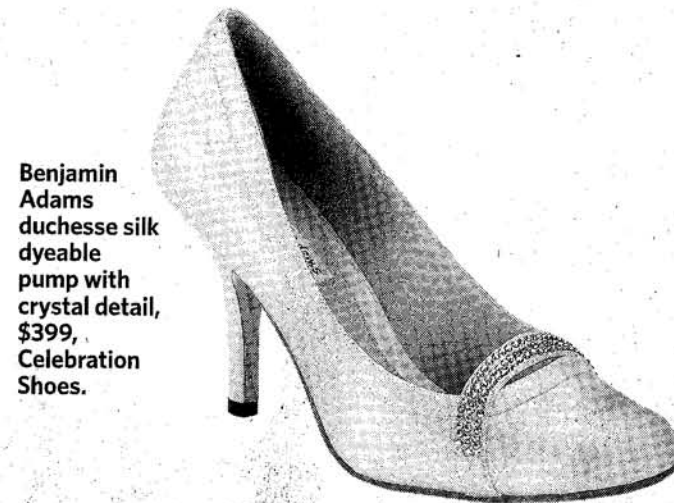
See [www.ronwhite.ca](http://www.ronwhite.ca).

**LACOSTE:** Is it a bowling shoe? A golf shoe? A spat? Lacoste's new Vert Femme collection of women's shoes harken back to the '20s when founder **Rene Lacoste** ruled the tennis courts. The distinctive leather loafers and T-straps with snap closures and short cone heels are \$355.

Call 1-866-711-6091 ext. 225 for availability, which the distributor expects to



Raffia flower wedge sandal, \$36.99, at select Payless ShoeSource stores.



Benjamin Adams duchesse silk dyeable pump with crystal detail, \$399, Celebration Shoes.



Ron White woven and braided leather thong, \$285, see [www.ronwhite.ca](http://www.ronwhite.ca) for stores.

nail down next week.

**CELEBRATION SHOES:** Celebration Shoes, at 106 Yorkville Ave., is selling off the last of its London Sole collection with the famous ballerina flats half-price, from \$122.50.

Owner **Carma Saunderson** has decided to focus on bridal and special occasion footwear. Newest styles include a round toe pump with rainbow of iridescent crystals across the toes from London-based Benjamin Adams. In ivory duchesse silk with leather lining it is priced at \$399, though Celebration has dyeables from \$90.

**Bernadette Morra** is the Star's fashion editor.

Alexandra Neel T-strap, with lizard, leather and hand embroidery, \$975, at Zola, 45 Avenue Rd.

