



The independents

ShoFolk
Homemade chic that's fit for the street

Original and distinctive, it is immediately clear why this two season-old shoemaker has quickly gained popularity in both London and Japan. ShoFolk footwear is not only handmade, it looks decidedly so. From the large stitching to the simple silhouettes, these shoes deceptively look like you could have made them yourself in an A-level textiles class.

The creations are rarely made out of just one material in the same colour: often both leather and suede are used, or at the very least two leathers in different shades. Add to this the magpie mentality of the designers, which brings details such as hand-painted finishes, and no pair is exactly the same.

On a formal shoe, these design features would make a big statement, but on ShoFolk's five casual shapes the feel is understated. As Elbe Lealman (*opposite*), one half of the design team, says, the shoes "are easy to wear and so appeal to a stylish breed and yet also the more scruffy guy". And despite the quirky look, there is no preoccupation with design, as decoration simply evolves from practicality, and comfort is never compromised.

Well-made and individual, ShoFolk offers an alternative in the casual shoe market, something not lost on Lealman: "There is room for more good design and quality for a reasonable price." GF 020-7408 1861, www.shofolk.co.uk