



Godfather of sole

Designer Matt Horan tells **Julie Ferry** about his revolutionary footwear.

It's a well-known sight in Bristol city centre during the small hours of the morning: young ladies with their high heels off, ambling home. Well, thanks to a Bristol-based designer, bare feet at the end of a night out may be a thing of the past. Matt Horan's **Rollasole** flats can fit into your handbag ready to combat sore feet and look stylish to boot.

What was your inspiration for the product?

I was picking up some friends outside a nightclub and had parked outside. I was surprised to see the number of ladies coming out barefoot, clutching their heels or jockeying their boyfriend because their feet hurt so much. That's when I had a rare moment of inspiration.

What are Rollasoles?

Basically, I've designed a complete package for women with sore feet - comfortable yet fashionable slip-on ballerina pumps in a range of colours, a small sleek bag to chuck your painful heels in, and it all rolls up into a miniature shoe box. These boxes are then vended from machines in nightclubs for less than a packet of fags, so when your feet hurt at the end of the night, you can get home in comfort. Or if you're a forward-thinking type, you can buy them online at www.rollasole.com, and they will also be appearing in a few shops on the high street.

What is your background?

Slightly varied - I grew up in Hanham in Bristol, where I still live, and after leaving university with a degree in psychology, I worked for a small travel company. Then the whole team was made redundant and I've been working for Barnardo's children's charity in Bristol ever since. I started setting the Rollasole project up with a lot of help from friends, a decent bank loan - and my redundancy money came in handy.



Hopes for the future?

Nothing too concrete. I'll see where this takes me. It has already been an eye-opening journey getting it this far. I'm excited about being my own boss, but equally nervous about stepping into such uncharted territory.

What's the next step for the product?

I want to get more high street shops involved and also get the vending machines in more clubs, and maybe even airports, train stations, wedding venues, anywhere where women have sore feet, really. I'll also play around with lots of different designs for Rollasole - a friend from London Fashion College designed the pump so I hope she'll keep me at the cutting edge of footwear fashion.

Have you always been entrepreneurial?

I've always been interested in products that can solve problems; I often pitch ideas to friends about possible inventions. This idea went down well with everyone I spoke to, and after a lot of market research and product development, it's great to see the initial idea realised.

ROLLASOLES WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLINE AND IN OCEANA NIGHTCLUBS IN BRISTOL, SWANSEA, CARDIFF AND PLYMOUTH AT THE END OF MAY. PLEASE VISIT WWW.ROLLASOLE.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Top of the croppers

● South Bristol-based **Sui Generis Hairdressing** have been awarded the prestigious NVQ level 2 Star Salon of the Year award at the recent Reflections Training Academy MOTIV8 awards. With salons in Hotwells (Tel: 0117 925 3611) and North Street, Southville (Tel: 0117 966 9600), the hairdressers won the award in recognition of the support and training given to their stylists. This commitment to training and the highest standards in hairdressing has also led to a nomination for the Learning Skills Council Apprentice Employer of the Year.

FFI: VISIT WWW.SUI-GENERIS.ME.UK



Our telephone number is 08456 43 94 90 or out of office hours the mobile number is 07821 70 88 54

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