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Taking the dead animal out of a killer pair of shoes

Sudo Shoes gives you a vegan option

By Gillian Rich
CORRESPONDENT

Newly opened Sudo Shoes in Cambridge has something for everyone: sky-high heels, flats, hiking boots and sneakers. There is even a line of baby shoes. One thing is missing, however: the smell of leather.

Sudo Shoes carries only vegan footwear. The shoes stocked by Sudo are made of microfibers that, unlike other synthetic fibers such as vinyl, wear like leather, can be made waterproof like leather, and are breathable and stretchable like leather. While Sudo's shelves are full of an array of shoes, finding true vegan shoes in a typical shoe store can be a daunting task for an individual consumer.

"We need to filter 'vegan' shoes to make sure the entire product is animal free right down to the



STAFF PHOTO BY KATE FLOCK

A selection of shoes at Sudo Shoes, a vegan shoe store on Mass. Ave. in Cambridge.

glues," explained Arlington resident Scot Fitzsimmons, 40, owner of Sudo Shoes. "Most of the time you need to investigate and talk to three or four reps which is virtually impossible for a consumer to do on their own. Just because a shoe is not made of leather doesn't

mean it is vegan."

Sudo carries 25 brands of shoes, from \$300 haute couture Cri de Coeur wedge heels to \$60 Saucony sneakers. Shoes for men, women and babies line the walls of the minimalist space. The shelving is made

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New Porter Square store sells vegan shoes

SUDO, from page 1

from sunflower seed hulls and recycled steel. Fitzsimmons didn't want to include anything that doesn't serve a purpose, so there is a lot of clutter free floor space allowing customers to try on shoes in the middle of the white walled store.

Since the store opened last month, Fitzsimmons estimates that over 50 percent of shoppers come in because they are in the neighborhood and didn't realize they are shopping at a vegan shoe store. Customers at Sudo will see many shoes found at conventional shoe stores, such as Madden Girl, that aren't typically marketed to the public as vegan.

"People don't even realize they are wearing vegan shoes," said Amy Carpenter, a Sudo employee. "It makes people comfortable to see the usual brands."

Like all employees at Sudo, Carpenter is a vegan. Fitzsimmons himself is a vegetarian and hasn't worn animal products in 12 years.

"Shoes are called vegan and not vegetarian because they don't make shoes out of eggs and milk," Fitzsimmons joked.

Fitzsimmons is a double bass player with the Boston Modern Orchestra. Sudo is his first venture into the business world. The idea for the store came from the



Scot Fitzsimmons, owner of Sudo Shoes, a vegan shoe store on Mass. Ave. in Cambridge.

lack of vegan shoes in the Boston metro area. Many vegans had to travel to New York City to get shoes that fit their lifestyle. Sudo has been in the works for over a year.

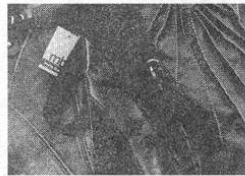
"We wanted to get Sudo open for the fall styles to come in," Fitzsimmons said. "It was more important to get the store open as soon as possible, opening in January is hard because people have already done their holiday shop-

ping."

Opening during a down economy hasn't hampered Sudo's success.

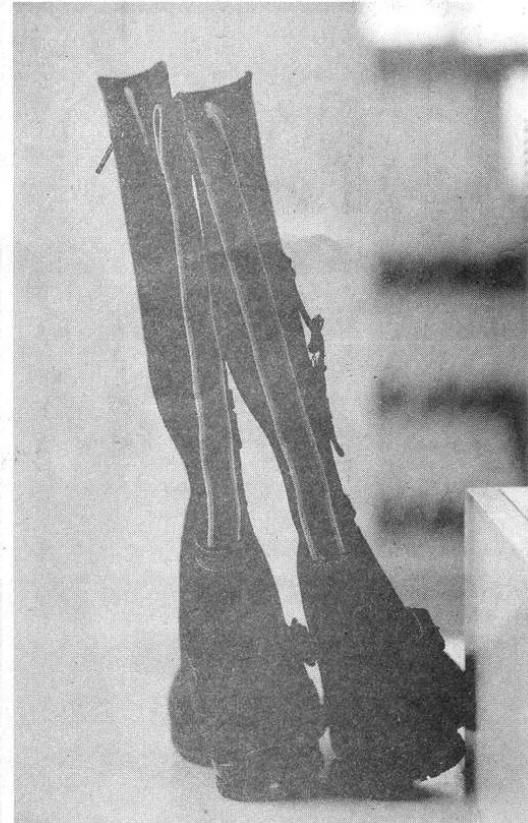
"Like alcohol, shoe sales don't suffer during recessions," Fitzsimmons said. "Although getting funding was more of a challenge."

Fitzsimmons and his employees are planning to fill up more space by including handbags and purses this spring.



A selection of handbags at Sudo Shoes. Right: A selection of shoes at Sudo Shoes.

"We have space so we are looking to expand, get more ap-



peal and bags. Men's bags are in of styles for next season," for the spring, we will have a lot Fitzsimmons said.