

Exhibit B

Int. Cl.: 25

Prior U.S. Cls.: 22 and 39

United States Patent and Trademark Office

Reg. No. 3,361,597

Registered Jan. 1, 2008

**TRADEMARK
PRINCIPAL REGISTER**



**CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN (FRANCE INDIVIDUAL)
24 RUE VICTOR MASSÉ
PARIS, FRANCE 75009**

**FOR: WOMEN'S HIGH FASHION DESIGNER
FOOTWEAR, IN CLASS 25 (U.S. CLS. 22 AND 39).**

FIRST USE 0-0-1992; IN COMMERCE 0-0-1992.

**THE COLOR(S) RED IS/ARE CLAIMED AS A
FEATURE OF THE MARK.**

**THE MARK CONSISTS OF A LACQUERED RED
SOLE ON FOOTWEAR. THE DOTTED LINES ARE
NOT PART OF THE MARK BUT ARE INTENDED
ONLY TO SHOW PLACEMENT OF THE MARK.**

SEC. 2(F).

SER. NO. 77-141,789, FILED 3-27-2007.

NORA BUCHANAN WILL, EXAMINING ATTORNEY



Side - 1



NOTICE OF PUBLICATION UNDER §12(a)
MAILING DATE: Jun 20, 2007
PUBLICATION DATE: Jul 10, 2007

The mark identified below will be published in the Official Gazette on Jul 10, 2007. Any party who believes they will be damaged by registration of the mark may oppose its registration by filing an opposition to registration or a request to extend the time to oppose within thirty (30) days from the publication date on this notice. If no opposition is filed within the time specified by law, the USPTO may issue a Certificate of Registration. To view the Official Gazette online or to order a paper copy, visit the USPTO website at <http://www.uspto.gov/web/trademarks/tmog/> any time within the five-week period after the date of publication. You may also order a printed version from the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov> or 202-512-1800. To check the status of your application, go to <http://tarr.uspto.gov/>.

SERIAL NUMBER: 77141789
MARK: Miscellaneous Design
OWNER: Christlan Louboutin

Side - 2

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
COMMISSIONER FOR TRADEMARKS
P.O. BOX 1451
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22313-1451

FIRST-CLASS
MAIL
U.S POSTAGE
PAID

SUSAN UPTON DOUGLASS
FROSS ZELNICK LEHRMAN & ZISSU, P.C.
866 UNITED NATIONS PLZ
NEW YORK, NY 10017-1822

Trademark Snap Shot Publication & Issue Review Stylesheet
(Table presents the data on Publication & Issue Review Complete)

OVERVIEW

SERIAL NUMBER	77141789	FILING DATE	03/27/2007
REG NUMBER	0000000	REG DATE	N/A
REGISTER	PRINCIPAL	MARK TYPE	TRADEMARK
INTL REG #	N/A	INTL REG DATE	N/A
TM ATTORNEY	BUCHANAN WILL, NORA	L.O. ASSIGNED	116

PUB INFORMATION

RUN DATE	06/08/2007		
PUB DATE	07/10/2007		
STATUS	681-PUBLICATION/ISSUE REVIEW COMPLETE		
STATUS DATE	06/07/2007		
LITERAL MARK ELEMENT			
DATE ABANDONED	N/A	DATE CANCELLED	N/A
SECTION 2F	YES	SECTION 2F IN PART	NO
SECTION 8	NO	SECTION 8 IN PART	NO
SECTION 15	NO	REPub 12C	N/A
RENEWAL FILED	NO	RENEWAL DATE	N/A
DATE AMEND REG	N/A		

FILING BASIS

FILED BASIS		CURRENT BASIS		AMENDED BASIS	
1 (a)	YES	1 (a)	YES	1 (a)	NO
1 (b)	NO	1 (b)	NO	1 (b)	NO
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44E	NO	44E	NO	44E	NO
66A	NO	66A	NO		
NO BASIS	NO	NO BASIS	NO		

MARK DATA

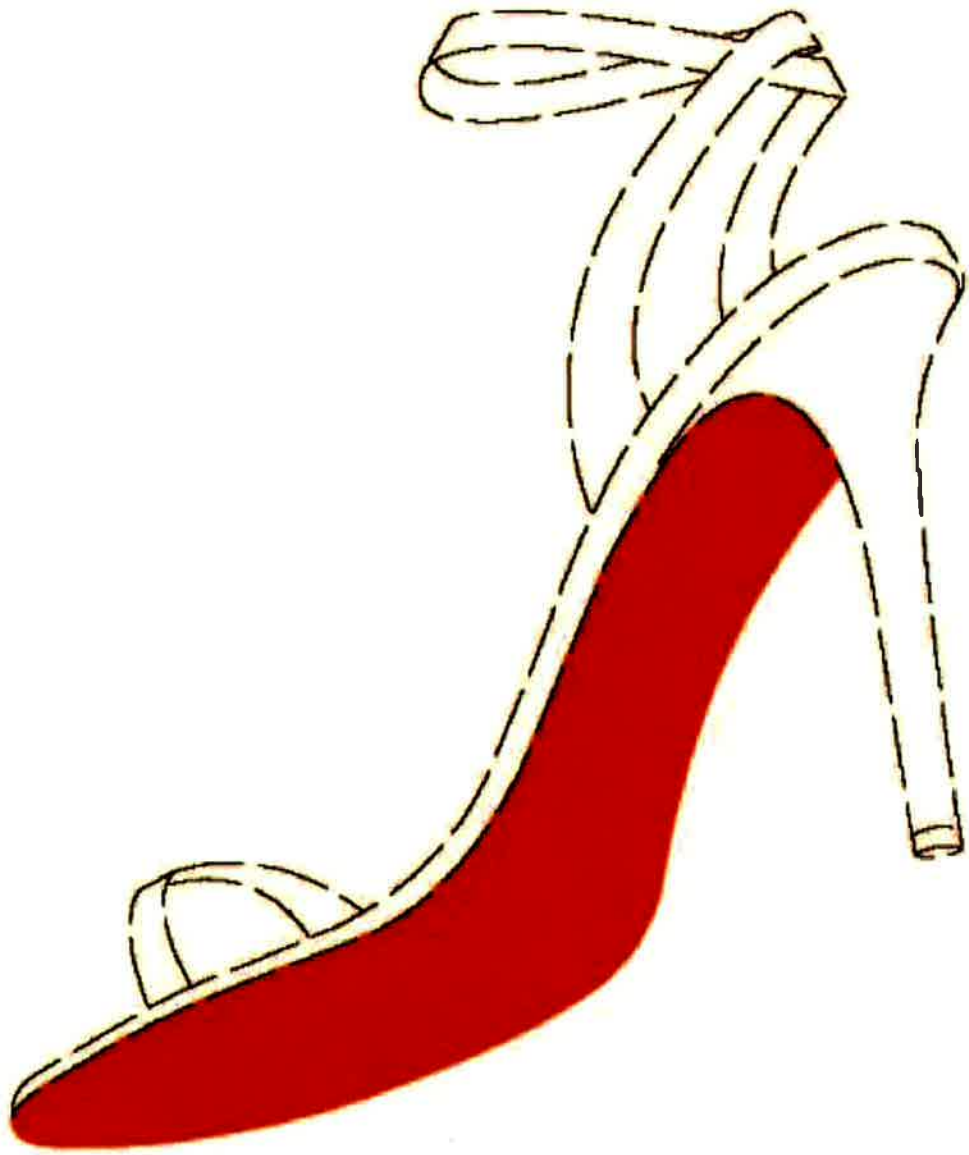
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STANDARD CHARACTER MARK	NO						
LITERAL MARK ELEMENT							
MARK DRAWING CODE	2-AN ILLUSTRATION DRAWING WITHOUT ANY WORD(S)/LETTER(S)/NUMBER(S)						
COLOR DRAWING FLAG	YES						
CURRENT OWNER INFORMATION							
PARTY TYPE	10-ORIGINAL APPLICANT						
NAME	Christian Louboutin						
ADDRESS	24 rue Victor Massé Paris, 75009						
ENTITY	01-INDIVIDUAL						
CITIZENSHIP	France						
GOODS AND SERVICES							
INTERNATIONAL CLASS	025						
DESCRIPTION TEXT	women's high fashion designer footwear						
GOODS AND SERVICES CLASSIFICATION							
INTERNATIONAL CLASS	025	FIRST USE DATE	00/00/1992	FIRST USE IN COMMERCE DATE	00/00/1992	CLASS STATUS	6-ACTIVE
MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION/STATEMENTS							
CHANGE IN REGISTRATION	NO						
COLORS CLAIMED STATEMENT	The color(s) red is/are claimed as a feature of the mark.						
DESCRIPTION OF MARK	The mark consists of a lacquered red sole on footwear. The dotted lines are not part of the mark but are intended only to show placement of the mark.						
PROSECUTION HISTORY							
DATE	ENT CD	ENT TYPE	DESCRIPTION				ENT NUM
06/07/2007	PREV	O	LAW OFFICE PUBLICATION REVIEW COMPLETED				011
06/06/2007	CNSA	O	APPROVED FOR PUB - PRINCIPAL REGISTER				010
06/06/2007	XAEC	I	EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT ENTERED				009

06/06/2007	GNEA	F	EXAMINERS AMENDMENT E-MAILED	008
06/06/2007	CNEA	R	EXAMINERS AMENDMENT -WRITTEN	007
06/01/2007	DOCK	D	ASSIGNED TO EXAMINER	006
04/23/2007	AMPX	O	APPLICANT AMENDMENT PRIOR TO EXAMINATION - ENTERED	005
05/15/2007	ALIE	A	ASSIGNED TO LIE	004
04/23/2007	MAIL	I	PAPER RECEIVED	003
03/31/2007	MDSC	O	NOTICE OF DESIGN SEARCH CODE MAILED	002
03/30/2007	NWAP	I	NEW APPLICATION ENTERED IN TRAM	001

CURRENT CORRESPONDENCE INFORMATION

ATTORNEY	Susan Upton Douglass
CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS	SUSAN UPTON DOUGLASS FROSS ZELNICK LEHRMAN & ZISSU, P.C. 866 UNITED NATIONS PLZ NEW YORK, NY 10017-1822
DOMESTIC REPRESENTATIVE	Susan Upton Douglass



Trademark Snap Shot Amendment & Mail Processing Stylesheet
 (Table presents the data on Amendment & Mail Processing Complete)

OVERVIEW

SERIAL NUMBER	77141789	FILING DATE	03/27/2007
REG NUMBER	0000000	REG DATE	N/A
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INTL REG #	N/A	INTL REG DATE	N/A
TM ATTORNEY	BUCHANAN WILL, NORA	L.O. ASSIGNED	116

PUB INFORMATION

RUN DATE	06/07/2007		
PUB DATE	N/A		
STATUS	680-APPROVED FOR PUBLICATON		
STATUS DATE	06/06/2007		
LITERAL MARK ELEMENT			
DATE ABANDONED	N/A	DATE CANCELLED	N/A
SECTION 2F	YES	SECTION 2F IN PART	NO
SECTION 8	NO	SECTION 8 IN PART	NO
SECTION 15	NO	REPUB 12C	N/A
RENEWAL FILED	NO	RENEWAL DATE	N/A
DATE AMEND REG	N/A		

FILING BASIS

FILED BASIS		CURRENT BASIS		AMENDED BASIS	
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1 (b)	NO	1 (b)	NO	1 (b)	NO
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NO BASIS	NO	NO BASIS	NO		

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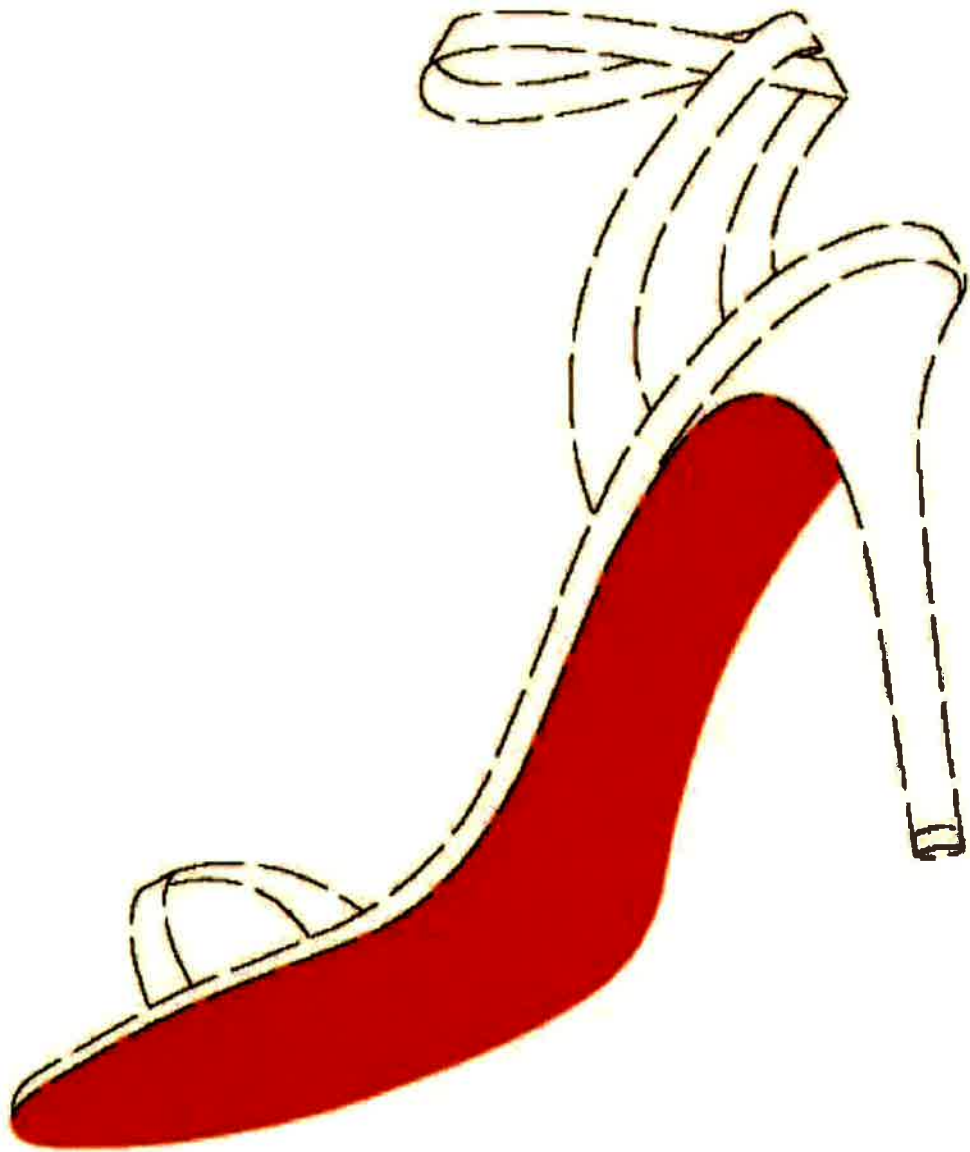
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STANDARD CHARACTER MARK	NO						
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DOMESTIC REPRESENTATIVE	Susan Upton Douglass



Trademark Snap Shot Publication Stylesheet
(Table presents the data on Publication Approval)

OVERVIEW

SERIAL NUMBER	77141789	FILING DATE	03/27/2007
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DATE AMEND REG	N/A		

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44E	NO	44E	NO	44E	NO
66A	NO	66A	NO		
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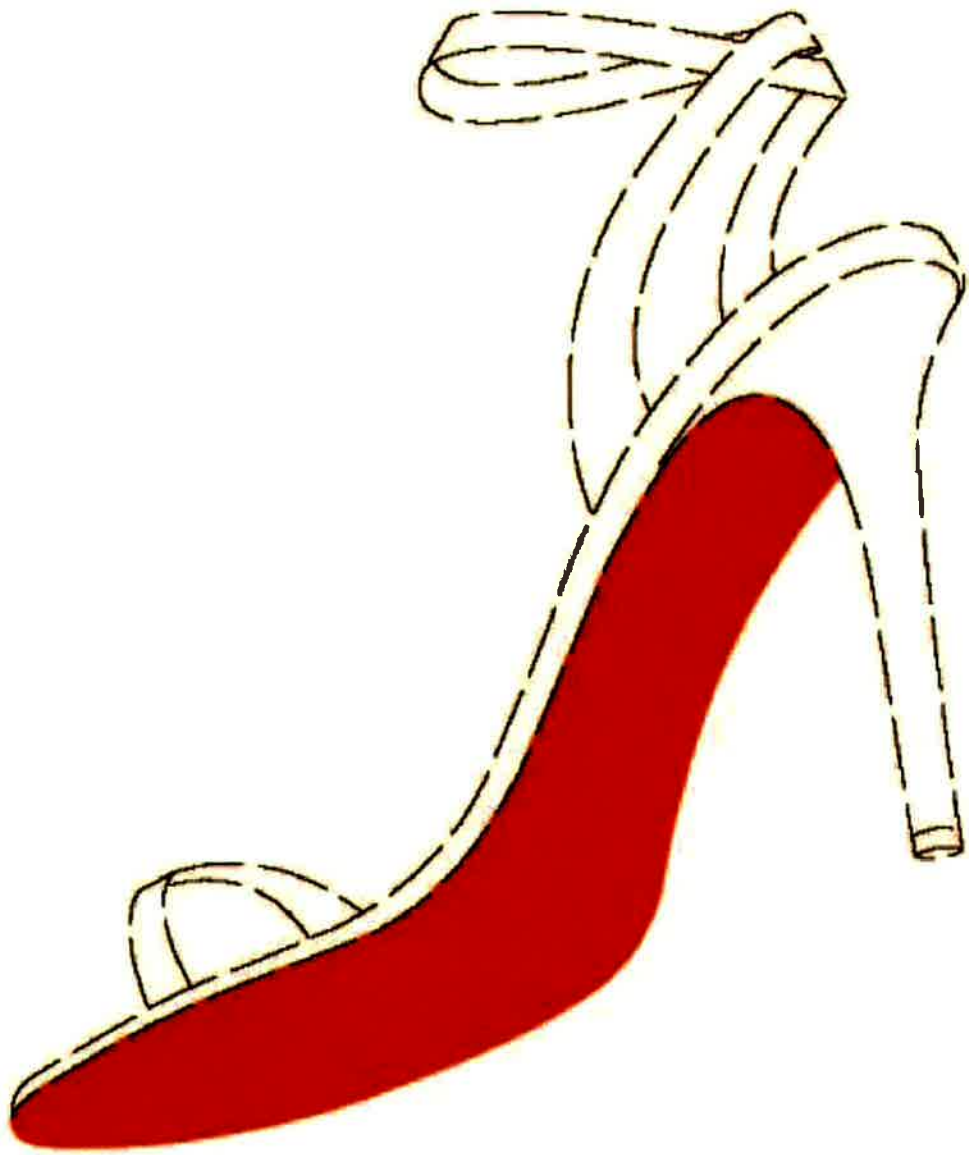
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DOMESTIC REPRESENTATIVE	Susan Upton Douglass



To: Christian Louboutin (sdouglass@frosszelnick.com)
Subject: TRADEMARK APPLICATION NO. 77141789 - CLOU 0609180
Sent: 6/6/2007 11:16:51 PM
Sent As: ECOM116@USPTO.GOV
Attachments:

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

SERIAL NO: 77/141789

APPLICANT: Christian Louboutin

77141789

CORRESPONDENT ADDRESS:

SUSAN UPTON DOUGLASS
FROSS ZELNICK LEHRMAN & ZISSU, P.C.
866 UNITED NATIONS PLZ
NEW YORK, NY 10017-1822

RETURN ADDRESS:

Commissioner for Trademarks
P.O. Box 1451
Alexandria, VA 22313-1451

If no fees are enclosed, the address should include the words "Box Responses - No Fee."

MARK:

CORRESPONDENT'S REFERENCE/DOCKET NO: CLOU
0609180

Please provide in all correspondence:

CORRESPONDENT EMAIL ADDRESS:
sdouglass@frosszelnick.com

1. Filing date, serial number, mark and applicant's name.
2. Date of this Office Action.
3. Examining Attorney's name and Law Office number.
4. Your telephone number and email address.

Serial Number 77/141789

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

OFFICE RECORDS SEARCH: The Office records have been searched and no similar registered or pending mark has been found that would bar registration under Trademark Act Section 2(d), 15 U.S.C. §1052(d). TMEP §704.02.

ADVISORY – AMENDMENTS TO GOODS/SERVICES If the identification of goods and/or services has been amended below, any future amendments must be in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §2.71(a)

and TMEP §1402.07(e).

The trademark examining attorney is amending the application as follows. No prior approval or authorization from applicant or applicant's attorney is required. TMEP §707.02.

The description of the mark is amended to add the following clarifying statement:

The dotted lines are not part of the mark but are intended only to show placement of the mark.

/Nora Buchanan Will/
Examining Attorney
Law Office 116
ph 571-272-9135
fax 571-273-9116

NOTICE OF NEW PROCEDURE FOR E-MAILED OFFICE ACTIONS: In late spring 2007, for any applicant who authorizes e-mail communication with the USPTO, the USPTO will no longer directly e-mail the actual Office action to the applicant. Instead, upon issuance of an Office action, the USPTO will e-mail the applicant a notice with a link/web address to access the Office action using Trademark Document Retrieval (TDR), which is located on the USPTO website at <http://portal.uspto.gov/external/portal/tow>. The Office action will not be attached to the e-mail notice. Upon receipt of the notice, the applicant can then view and print the actual Office action and any evidentiary attachments using the provided link/web address. TDR is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays and weekends. This new process is intended to eliminate problems associated with e-mailed Office actions that contain numerous attachments.

*** User:nbuchanan ***

#	Total Marks	Dead Marks	Live Viewed Docs	Live Viewed Images	Status/ Search Duration	Search
01	1	0	1	1	0:01	77141789[SN]
02	506	N/A	0	0	0:01	090706[dc]
03	142	74	8	68	0:01	290301[dc]
04	2670489	N/A	0	0	0:03	2 ot dead[ld]
05	186	80	57	57	0:02	sole[de]
06	258	0	9	9	0:03	2 not dead[ld]
07	474	N/A	0	0	0:02	shoe[de]
08	290	0	290	290	0:03	7 not dead[ld]

Session started 6/6/2007 9:42:33 PM

Session finished 6/6/2007 11:05:50 PM

Total search duration 0 minutes 16 seconds

Session duration 83 minutes 17 seconds

Default NEAR limit=1ADJ limit=1

Sent to TICRS as Serial Number: 77141789

Trademark Snap Shot Amendment & Mail Processing Stylesheet
 (Table presents the data on Amendment & Mail Processing Complete)

OVERVIEW

SERIAL NUMBER	77141789	FILING DATE	03/27/2007
REG NUMBER	0000000	REG DATE	N/A
REGISTER	PRINCIPAL	MARK TYPE	TRADEMARK
INTL REG #	N/A	INTL REG DATE	N/A
TM ATTORNEY	TM ATTORNEY NOT ASSIGNED	L.O. ASSIGNED	NONE

PUB INFORMATION

RUN DATE	05/16/2007		
PUB DATE	N/A		
STATUS	630-NEW APPLICATION - RECORD INITIALIZED NOT ASSIGNED TO EXAMINER		
STATUS DATE	03/30/2007		
LITERAL MARK ELEMENT			
DATE ABANDONED	N/A	DATE CANCELLED	N/A
SECTION 2F	YES	SECTION 2F IN PART	NO
SECTION 8	NO	SECTION 8 IN PART	NO
SECTION 15	NO	REPUB 12C	N/A
RENEWAL FILED	NO	RENEWAL DATE	N/A
DATE AMEND REG	N/A		

FILING BASIS

FILED BASIS		CURRENT BASIS		AMENDED BASIS	
1 (a)	YES	1 (a)	YES	1 (a)	NO
1 (b)	NO	1 (b)	NO	1 (b)	NO
44D	NO	44D	NO	44D	NO
44E	NO	44E	NO	44E	NO
66A	NO	66A	NO		
NO BASIS	NO	NO BASIS	NO		

MARK DATA

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DATE	ENT CD	ENT TYPE	DESCRIPTION				ENT NUM
04/23/2007	AMPX	O	APPLICANT AMENDMENT PRIOR TO EXAMINATION - ENTERED				005
05/15/2007	ALIE	A	ASSIGNED TO LIE				004
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CURRENT CORRESPONDENCE INFORMATION

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CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS	SUSAN UPTON DOUGLASS FROSS ZELNICK LEHRMAN & ZISSU, P.C. 866 UNITED NATIONS PLZ NEW YORK, NY 10017-1822
DOMESTIC REPRESENTATIVE	Susan Upton Douglass



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Christian Louboutin
Serial No.: 77/141,789
Filed: March 27, 2007
Mark: Red Soles Design
Our Ref: CLOU 0609180

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

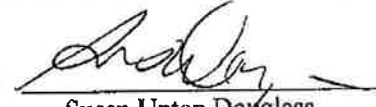
Commissioner for Trademarks
P.O. Box 1451
Alexandria, VA 22313-1451

Applicant filed the above-referenced application electronically, and was unable to attach the supporting documentation for the 2(f) Declaration because of size limitations on the eTeas site. Please make of record the enclosed signed 2(f) Declaration and supporting documents.

Dated: New York, New York
April 17, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

FROSS ZELNICK LEHRMAN & ZISSU, P.C.

By: 
Susan Upton Douglass
Attorneys for Applicant
866 United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017
(212) 813-5900



04-23-2007

U.S. Patent & TM Office Mail Report 01 #11

SUD/mld

{F0042703.1}

Certificate of First Class Mailing

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to the Commissioner for Trademarks, P.O. Box 1451, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1451 on:

April 17, 2007
(Date of Deposit)

Megan Dougherty
(Printed name of person mailing paper or fee)


(Signature)

April 17, 2007
(Date of Signature)

DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF ACQUIRED
DISTINCTIVENESS UNDER SECTION 2(f)

1. I, Christian Louboutin, a French citizen, make this declaration in support of my trademark application for my trademark comprising the shiny, red-lacquered sole for women's high-fashion designer footwear. I make this declaration based on my own knowledge and on information provided to me by my employees.

2. I am a footwear designer and launched the CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN brand in 1991 in France. I opened my first boutique in Paris in 1992. My shoes are luxury items and were immediately spotted by the fashion industry and the cognoscenti.

3. In 1992 I incorporated the red sole into the design of my shoes. This happened by accident as I felt that the shoes lacked energy so I applied red nail polish to the sole of a shoe. This was such a success that it became a permanent fixture. The red sole is not a by-product of the manufacturing process; adding red lacquer to the soles of the shoes is more expensive than producing lacquer-less soles. The shiny red color of the soles has no function other than to identify to the public that the shoes are mine. I selected the color red because it is engaging, flirtatious, memorable and the color of passion. It attracts men to the women who wear my shoes. The red-soled shoes were an immediate sensation, and clients specifically came in to my stores looking for my red-soled shoes. The red sole quickly became my signature. My footwear is instantly recognizable by the immaculately lacquered red soles; upon seeing the red sole of the shoe, because it is so well known, people know that the shoes are designed by me. All of my shoes have had my signature red soles since 1992, and have continuously featured this device since then.

{F0029971.1 }

4. My shoes are worn by many famous actresses, musicians and other celebrities including royalty. In the U.S., famous wearers of the CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN red-soled shoes include Madonna, Halle Berry, Salma Hayek, Kate Hudson, Jennifer Lopez, Sarah Jessica Parker, Mishca Barton, Jessica Simpson, Mary Kate Olsen, Cameron Diaz, Gwyneth Paltrow, Kirsten Dunst, Angelina Jolie, Gwen Stefani, Destiny's Child, Tina Turner and Janet Jackson. Other celebrities who wear the red-soled CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN shoes include Diane von Furstenberg, Nicole Kidman, Catherine Deneuve, Cate Blanchett and Princess Caroline of Monaco.

5. Due to the success of the CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN brand, my shoes receive much editorial exposure. This often focuses on the red soles of my shoes being my trademark. As stated in the International Herald Tribune on December 20 2005, "*...the flash of scarlet sends out a subliminal message to shoe princesses everywhere: Christian Louboutin.*". As stated on DallasNews.com on November 29 2006, "*Attention Gents: When that beautiful woman walks by and the soles of her shoes are lipstick red, compliment her for wearing **Christian Louboutin shoes***". On www.californiastyle.blogspot.com on April 26 2006, it was stated that "*The 'IT' shoes are those designed by Christian Louboutin who is well known for his signature red soles*". My shoes were referred to as classic items of fashion in The Boston Globe on October 12 2006: "*Besides, anyone who truly knows fashion -- regardless of their income -- doesn't need a label or logo to spot a real classic -- whether it's an Hermes bag or the red sole of a Christian Louboutin heel*".

6. I own two stores in New York and one in Los Angeles, as well as flagship stores in Paris, London and Moscow. As well as being sold via my own stores, the CHRISTIAN

LOUBOUTIN red-soled shoe is sold internationally by many world-famous department stores. In the U.S., the red-soled shoes are stocked by Nieman Marcus, Barney's, Saks, Bergdorf-Goodman, Net-a-Porter, Diane von Furstenberg, Jeffrey (Georgia and New York), Amarees (California), Bob Ellis (South Carolina and North Carolina), Coco Paris (New Jersey), Coplon's (North Carolina and Virginia), Diane Fursten (Ohio), Elise Walker (California), Footcandy (California), Fred Segal Feet (California), Gerhard (California), Hirshleifer (New York), Imelda's (Colorado), Joseph (Tennessee), Janet Brown (New York), Joan Shepp (Pennsylvania), Marios (Washington), Nordstrom (California, New Jersey, Texas), Shari's Place (New York), Sebastian's (Texas), Stanley Korshak (Texas), Wilkes Bashford (California) and Wynn Resorts (Nevada).

7. At Exhibit A, I attach examples of U.S. press editorial comment dating from 1999 regarding my shoes, specifically mentioning the red soles or showing photographs of them. By way of example only, my shoes have been featured in the following publications: *The International Herald Tribune*, *DallasNews.com*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Sarasota-Herald Tribune*, *The Miami Herald*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*, *The Sunday Oregonian*, *The Washington Post*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Newhouse News Service*, *Plain Dealer (Cleveland)*, *Detroit Free Press*, *The New York Post*, *The Boston Herald*, *The Seattle Post-Intelligence* and *The Los Angeles Times*. I also attach examples of comments on websites including *www.footwearnews.com*, *www.glam.com*, *www.flare.com*, *www.bagsnob.com*, *www.footcandyshoes.com*, *www.californiastyle.blogspot.com*, *www.somelikeithaute.com*, and *www.shoebunny.com*. I also attach print-outs from the eBay website and the first page of a search conducted on the Google website for the terms "red soles" in conjunction with "Louboutin".

These all mention that my shoes all have red soles. In many cases, the red sole of the shoe is referred to as my trademark or my signature.

8. My company, Christian Louboutin S.A., contributes to advertising costs with department stores to promote my signature red-soled shoes. Per year, my company contributes up to Euros 203,000, which is approximately \$263,000, to the U.S. stores Nieman Marcus, Barney's, Saks and Bergdorf-Goodman.

9. At Exhibit B, I attach a breakdown of the annual sales of my shoes to the U.S. for the years 2004-2006, as shown in the attached spreadsheet attached as Exhibit B. "S/S" stands for "Spring/Summer" and "F/W" stands for "Fall/Winter". Figures are given in the Euros currency but a translation into Dollars at the current exchange rate is written alongside. These figures are wholesale value. In the year 2006, the value of exports of my shoes to the U.S. for retail amounted to almost Euros 15,000,000, which is approximately \$19,435,000.

10. My shoes cost in the range of \$400 to \$3,100. Thus, my customers are sophisticated, deliberately seeking out my red-soled shoes because of the cachet and instant recognition they bring to the wearer. Because of the high value of my shoes, consumers take care over their purchase. Buying a pair of shoes that generally costs in excess of \$1,000 would not be an impulse purchase.

11. At Exhibit C, I attach a statement of Roland Mouret, the famous French-born London-based women's wear designer. He showcases his collections only at New York Fashion Week. Roland Mouret and I have worked together in the past regarding shoes for his catwalk shows. The shoes were credited as being by CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN for Roland Mouret, and in all editorial coverage the shoes were referred to in this way. In his statement, Roland Mouret explains that the red soles of my shoes are my trademark and that he would not use red

on the soles of any shoes that he may produce in the future because red soles are my trademark.

12. At Exhibit D, I attach examples of my current stationery including business cards, note cards and envelopes. These business documents all feature the logo of a red sole as this is my trademark and an indication that the stationery originates from me.

13. I have used the red-soled shoe in commerce for the goods in this application since at least as early as early 1992. This use in commerce has been substantially exclusive and continuous.

14. The mark has become distinctive of my footwear through my substantially exclusive and continuous use in commerce for at least the five years immediately before the date of this statement.

15. Based on the prolonged use of this mark since 1992, enormous sales, extensive promotion, celebrity endorsements, significant and favorable editorial notice and global success of the signature red sole on women's high-fashion designer footwear, I believe that the red-soled shoe has become a well-known trademark to consumers of the shoes covered by this application and that such persons understand that it exclusively denotes me, Christian Louboutin, as the source of the shoes.

16. All statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true. Further, these statements have been made with the knowledge that willful false statements or the like are punishable by fine or imprisonment or both under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the above-identified application or any registration resulting therefrom.

Christian Louboutin

Signature: C/ouboutin

Dated: 03/14/2007

S.A. Christian LOUBOUTIN
au capital de 38125 €
19, rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau
75001 PARIS
Tél. : 01 42 36 05 31 - Fax : 01 42 36 08 56
Siret 380 742 650 0027

SUD/mld

Exhibit A

PRICE \$4.50

'STUDIO 60' CELEBRATES ITSELF
BY TAD FRIEND

THE

SEPT. 25, 2006

NEW YORKER

THE STYLE ISSUE

THE RISE AND RISE OF DIANE VON FURSTENBERG

Lucy Mauck Farquhar

THE BAG BOOM

Andrea Lee

WHERE I FOUND MY LOOK

Calvin Trilhu

BACK-TO-SCHOOL COOL

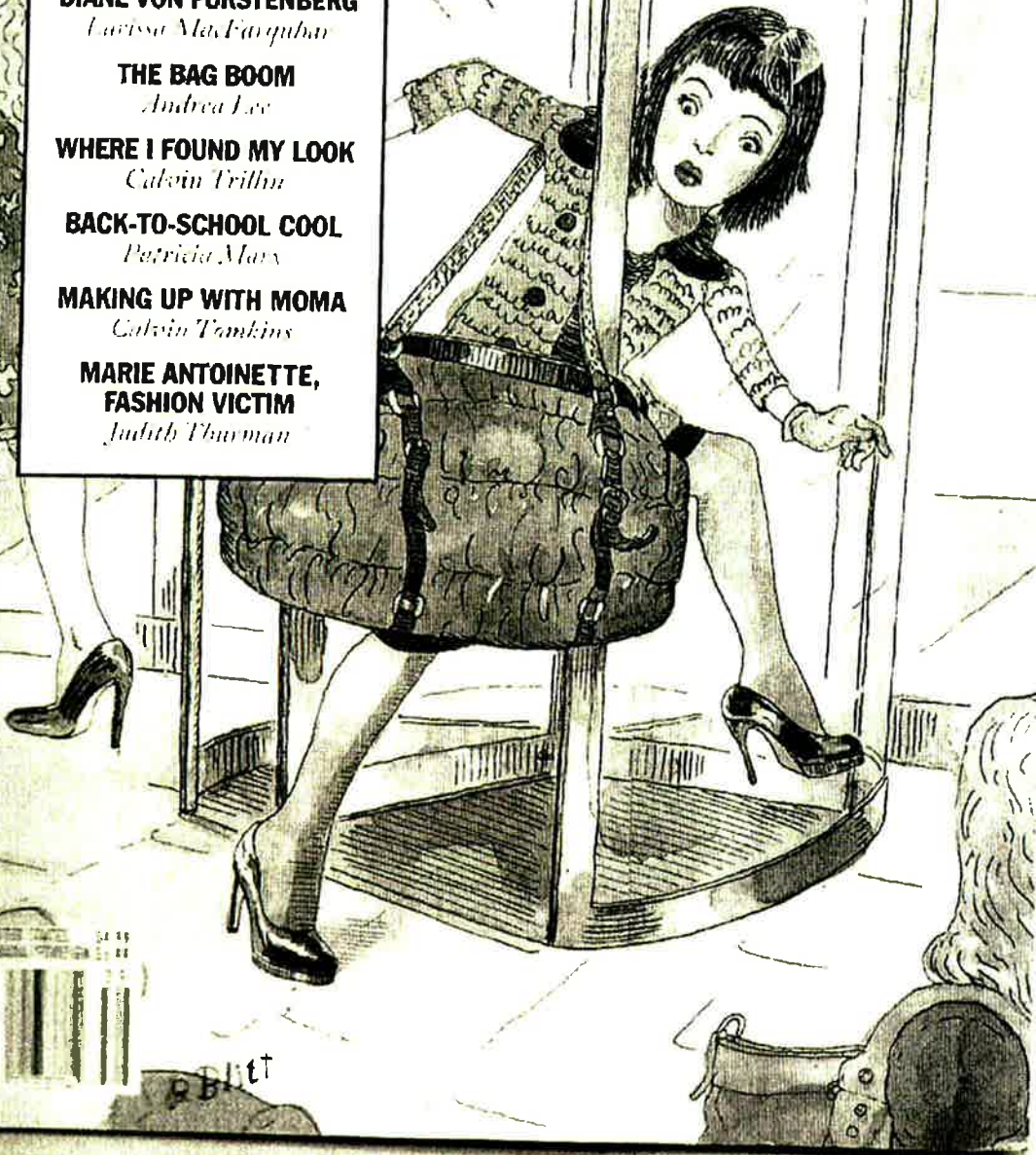
Patricia Marx

MAKING UP WITH MOMA

Calvin Tompkins

MARIE ANTOINETTE, FASHION VICTIM

Judith Thurman



PROFILES

THE HUNTRESS

How Diane von Furstenberg became the DVF woman

BY LARISSA MACFARQUHAR



There was a time in the nineteen-seventies when the American woman, never troubled by her wardrobe, tucked into a private wardrobe the soft fabric of her casual blouses against the rounded, all-American curves of her body. It was the time of a young Belgian designer, Diane von Furstenberg. The American woman had gone to a department store and found a small, bright space in the window. She had unbuttoned the dress, slipped it off her shoulders and then stepped to her underwear. She had wound herself into a supple, soft garment of lovely, supple fabric that felt smooth against her skin. It didn't seem to have any buttons or zippers or looks-anything—it was tied with a sash around the waist like a bathrobe. It was very comfortable—quite sensual, in fact, all right, but still clinging to her. It was

rather tight-fitting on the top, tighter than she was used to, and it was rather low-cut as well. Could she get away with it? She could see, twisting around, that the dress showed the curve of her bottom. It was suggestive, but it wasn't indecent, she decided—she could wear it to the office. And somehow, inexplicably, it was flattering.

The American woman knew of the Belgian who had designed this unusual garment, the wrap dress, from looking at photographs in the society pages and from reading about her in the press. The Belgian woman was, despite her American-sounding story (an astonishing entrepreneurial success, founding her dress business at twenty-three, working very hard, on the cover of *Vogue* at twenty-nine), alluringly, intimately foreign. She didn't look like an entrepreneur. Photographs showed her with long, loose dark hair (at all

times loose, never tied back) and Cleopatra eyes of lavishly painted color, looking boldly into the camera with a controlled half-smile, her legs conspicuous since she was always wearing dresses and always in heels. She said gnomic, French-sounding things to reporters ("Women are becoming too beautiful, too strong, but there's no other way to be. What do you want me to do? Go out to lunch? Find a lover? So what. What would it bring me?"). She was even—and it was this intimate detail that toppled her out of reality altogether—a princess: there were pictures of her husband, the prince of Austria, in the society pages, the federal-looking blond man with large, carnivorous teeth. Above all, she was feminine, in a way that was as alien and mysterious to the sensible American woman as being a princess—a femininity that promised intimacy and per-

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factor, and yet, in its over-the-top, almost mythical quality, seemed somehow impersonal, as though it were a kind of timeless spirit that possessed teenage infants (foreign ones), setting them off on a life course that led from bewitching nymphet to Madame Blavatsky and wrought all kinds of thrilling damage in between.

The American woman bought the wrap dress and took it home. She found that she was wearing it all the time and received many compliments on it, so she went back to the store and bought another one, in a different color and print. She noticed that many famous women were wearing wraps, too, such as Julie Nixon Eisenhower and Gloria Steinem. That was fun. A few months later, she bought a third. But then she observed that several of her friends owned the same dresses, which was embarrassing, and she began to see herself on the street coming and going, and some women looked quite bulgy and unattractive in their wraps, which scared her on the dress a little bit, and anyway three was enough, so she didn't buy any more Diane von Furstenbergs. She hardly noticed when, in 1978, the dresses were put on sale at clearance prices and, shortly afterward, the company collapsed. The name Diane von Furstenberg was jostled to the back of her memory, along with other scraps and remnants from that period in her life.

Twenty years later, the American woman's daughter came home from college wearing a wrap dress that she had bought in a vintage clothing shop for two hundred dollars. Two hundred dollars for somebody's old dress! That was so extraordinary that the American woman was not surprised to read in the newspaper that Diane von Furstenberg had started up her business once again.

One steamy afternoon this summer, Diane von Furstenberg, aged fifty-nine, climbed into the back seat of her car to be driven to the showroom of Christian Louboutin, the shoe designer. She was going to select the shoes for the models to wear at her fashion show in September. She was dressed easily in loose beige linen trousers, flat sandals, and a very large gold chain bracelet of her own design. (In public, she always

wears dresses and heels, but *en privé* she is casual.) On the way, she chatted on her phone (she speaks to each of her two children at least five times a day, and to her husband, Barry Diller, the media magnate, at least five times a day, and to her many close friends very frequently.)

Her hair was still long and loose, but curly—she has stopped straightening it—and a different color than it used to be, a rich henna rather than reddish-black. She was tanned a nineteen-seventies Brazil-nut shade of brown, from sitting outside at Cloudwalk, her estate in Connecticut, and from lying on her yacht. Her face was almost bare: she still loved the old gaudy paint, but women didn't wear that kind of makeup anymore and she preferred not to look ridiculous. She had considered cosmetic surgery but had so far decided to remain natural. Through yoga and hiking and eating carefully, she had maintained her figure. Her business the second time around was going even better than she had hoped—a hundred and twenty million dollars in wholesale this year, her clothes in Barneys and Harvey Nichols and Le Bon Marché, nine Diane von Furstenberg stores around the world. Soon she would open a new boutique in Saint-Tropez (and one in Tokyo in September), and the festival at Cannes, then sailing around Majorea in the yacht, then launching her jewelry line in London, then the Allen conference in Sun Valley. In August, she would visit her children at the hunting lodge in Austria that they had inherited from their father. She had three grandchildren. She felt wonderful.

Shoes, shoes, shoes. She and Christian Louboutin had become close friends a few years ago, and since then she had declined to wear any shoes but his, with their signature red soles. ("You are a prisoner of the red sole like I am a prisoner of the wrap," she liked to tell him. "On your grave there will be two little red soles.") Louboutin felt that they understood each other because she was so much a woman, and he, being the only boy in a family of four sisters, permitted in his childhood to overhear their female whisperings, understood women. "She is a *femme Orientale*," he says, meaning Orient in the old sense, the southern Mediterranean and the Middle East. "She plays with her hair, she

talks with her hands, with her neck. She is like a beautiful courtesan, you can find in the novels of the nineteenth century. She is like a fragment of someone from the Orient, which makes her the opposite of a perfume with a lot of notes." (Although she was born in Belgium, she is, in fact, somewhat Oriental in that sense: both her parents are Jewish, her mother was born in Salonika, in Greece, her father was born in Bessarabia and behaved like a Middle Eastern peasant—a loud singer of songs, a wearer of glasses.)

In Louboutin's studio, the shoes were perched in rows on glass shelves against a mirrored wall, most of them Marie Antoinette-ish in mood, with bows and dainty buckles, sling-backs, pumps, sandals, mules, kitten heels, stocky French wedge heels, stilettoes. Von Furstenberg (having kissed everybody hello) picked up a brown snakeskin peep-toe pump and examined it from several angles. She put it back. She mused over a beige sling-back with a mesh toe. She picked up a pink satin sandal with a kitten heel.

"This is very cute," she said. "I hate the heel, but I love the shoe." She couldn't stand kitten heels. Why make the effort to wobble around on a little spike an inch high? If you wanted to be comfortable, why not wear flats? And if you were going to wear heels, why not wear real heels that did something for your legs, not these stumpy little hoofs? There were several sorts of shoe she avoided on principle. Shoes with ankle straps, because of the unflattering way they bisected the leg, making the shin appear short and thick. Shoes with just a tiny scrap of fabric across the tip of the toe, which made a woman's foot into a pig's trotter. Worst of all were wedges. She was appalled by their ungainly, prosthetic appearance, yet she saw them everywhere—on the street, in stores, and even here, in Louboutin's studio, more wedges. What sort of woman would consent to such a graceless appendage?

Having collected a few shoes, she decided to try them on. The samples were all size 7 (it is thought that shoes look better in small sizes), and Louboutin employed a young assistant with size 7 feet who was available to model them, but von Furstenberg felt that she would



FN ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS 2005

French Class

Celebrating a new downtown New York boutique and a slew of new heel converts, Christian Louboutin mania hit a fever pitch this year.

By ELISA ANNIS



Christian Louboutin may be a veteran of the hurly-burly world of high fashion, but in recent months the number of glowing magazine articles devoted to the French designer's shoes would lead anyone outside the fashion cognoscenti to think he was new to the game.

Louboutin's team is the first to admit that they aren't exactly pure: what kicked started it — besides the gorgeous, scarlet-soled shoes themselves, of course. No doubt the November 2004 opening of Louboutin's second New York store, in the city's vaunted Meatpacking District, has added to his hip factor. And the parade of red carpet appearances by stars including Nicole Kidman, Datin Blanchett, Angelina Jolie and Kirsten Dunst certainly adds cachet and mainstream familiarity. Then there was the article in FN sister publication Women's Wear Daily that christened Louboutin as the "it" designer — labeling Manolo Blahnik yesterday's news. (For the record,

Louboutin said he wants nothing to do with such catfiness: "Manolo is a wonderful designer and I don't feel pitted against him at all.")

No matter the reasons, one thing is clear: Louboutin is hot, hot, hot. But as far as the designer is concerned, his "sudden" popularity is simply a numbers game.

"I am getting more exposure because I am doing more shoes," he said matter-of-factly, speaking by phone from his Paris showroom. "The collection is bigger and the response from women just gets better and better, just like the collection."

Louboutin's fall '05 collection was particularly well received. The Yoyo Zappa prep-toe on a little platform (pictured bottom left), for example, has sold out and been reordered by several of Louboutin's wholesale customers, including Jeffrey New York and Barney's New York.

"Louboutin is the fastest growing business I have in my store," said Jeffrey Kalinsky, president and CEO of Jeffrey New York and Jeffrey Atlanta, and FN's 2005 Person of the Year. "I don't usually reorder, but I have with his shoes. Even the reorders aren't sufficient, as they usually sell out as soon as they hit the floor."

Kalinsky has long been a fan of Louboutin. "He's an amazingly creative man and he must have thousands of ideas in his sleep alone. Also, how many designers of his stature actually sit in on sales appointments like he does?" (Don't even get Kalinsky started on Louboutin's jet-setting ways: "If he would take me on a trip, I would drop everything and go in a heartbeat," he said, of his trips — and homes in Egypt and France's Vendée — Louboutin said, "traveling nourishes my work and every part of my life is linked.")

The recent explosion in Louboutin's popularity surprised Kalinsky. "Anyone who has just found Christian's shoes is very late in the game. He started out with an extremely sophisticated clientele and now I suppose he's attracting a broader audience."

Los Angeles-based celebrity stylist Jessica Lane has been a fan of the designer for over a decade. "I've dressed Cate Blanchett, Brittany Murphy and Diane Lane in Louboutin. In fact, every one of my clients loves him," Lane said. "Cate Blanchett said that he was the only shoe that she wanted to wear at the Oscars this year when she was nominated for 'The Aviator.' I love his shoes because they are super high, but just so comfortable."

Designer (and friend) Diane von Furstenberg is also an admirer of Louboutin's artistry. "Christian is the most talented shoe designer," Von Furstenberg told FN. "His eye, his creativity and his intelligence combined make him a true original."

In addition to three eponymous U.S. stores (the other is in Los Angeles), Louboutin has flagships in London, Moscow and his native Paris, where he has two stores, the first of which opened in 1992. The designer has a strong wholesale business in virtually all love department stores, as well as upscale specialty stores including Wilkes Bashford in San Francisco, Stanley Korshak in Dallas and Diane Fritson in Cincinnati.

However, he keeps a tight rein on distribution in his own country. For example, Jacqueline Segal of La Don Marché said she would love to get her hands on the designer's shoes, but that Louboutin won't sell them. "I refuse to sell in any place that isn't mine in France because these are my shoes and this is my country and I don't want to see my shoes on sale somewhere else," he said.

It's a different story in Dublin. Earlier this year, Louboutin made a personal appearance, flanked by two models dressed as showgirls, at a party to celebrate the opening of The Shoe Rooms at top Irish store Brown Thomas.

Said John Egan, managing director of London-based Shoe Studio Group, which operates Brown Thomas' shoe department, "His elegant shoes enchant shoe connoisseurs the world over."

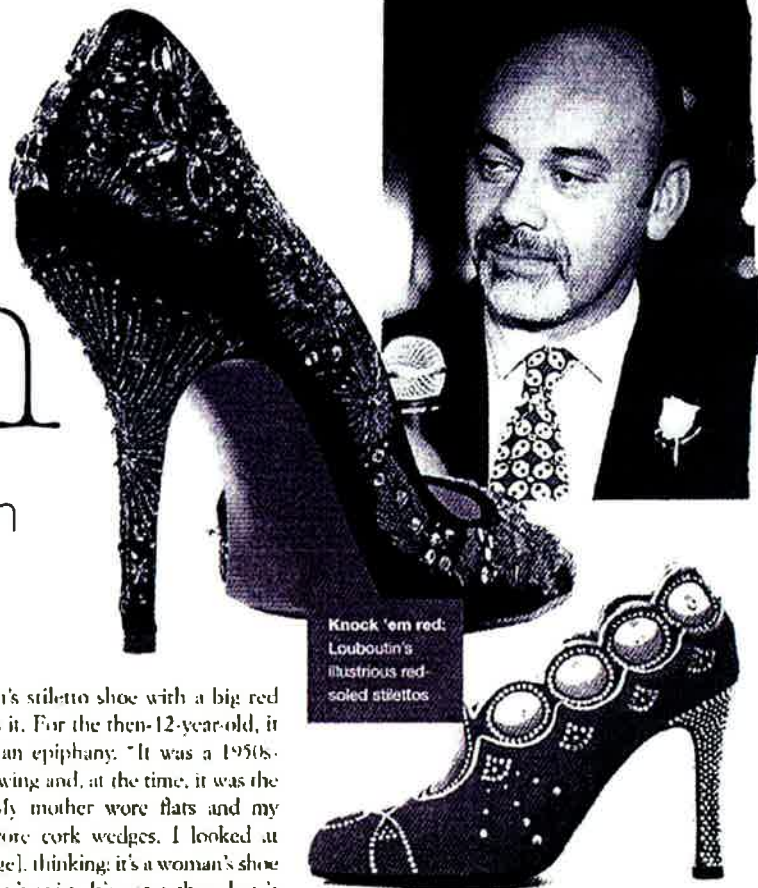
Above, Christian Louboutin and his showgirl muse Lela. The fall '05 black Cabernet and red Yoyo Zappa.

Photo: Justin S. Spector

FASHION

sole man

Haute on the heels of Christian Louboutin
By Yuki Hayashi



Knock 'em red: Louboutin's illustrious red-soled stilettos

SJ.P. Gwyneth, Madonna, Halle and Salma all worship the ground they walk on because of him. But that's because Christian Louboutin, the sharper-than-a-stiletto French shoe designer, knows his clientele well. Really well. And his design point of view reinforces this perfectly: "Women express themselves through their shoes."

We all know it's true. This 41-year-old shoe mogul's way of thinking has pleased the pumps out of the rich and tasteful and helped him create a brand of footwear that nips at the exalted heels of his contemporaries Manolo Blahnik and Jimmy Choo.

FLARE caught up with the shoe guru while he was in Toronto to kick off the Bata Shoe Museum's *Icons of Elegance: Influential Shoe Designers of the 20th Century* exhibit.

So how did his legacy begin? It was the stiletto, perhaps one of womankind's greatest weapons in the arsenal of seduction (and the occasional carfight), that caught Louboutin's imagination at a young age and never let go.

Portrait of the designer as a young lad: waiting to enter Paris's Museum of African and Oceanic Arts, young Christian saw a sign. It was the image of

a woman's stiletto shoe with a big red X across it. For the then-12-year-old, it sparked an epiphany: "It was a 1950s-style drawing and, at the time, it was the 1970s. My mother wore flats and my sisters wore cork wedges. I looked at [the image], thinking, it's a woman's shoe that doesn't exist. It's not a shoe, but it could be a shoe." He started sketching this ur-shoe obsessively: "I was always drawing the same shoe; I'd change just the top. It always had the same heel.

"High-heels oblige women to have a certain body language and attitude. I don't like a *laissez-faire* attitude. A consciousness of the body is good; that's why I like high-heels—you're less frumpy with them on." Which is ideal for today's uptown-meets-downtown, dress-me-up-dress-me-down masstige sensibility. From a pair of vintage Levi's to a D&G cocktail dress, you know you'll look *trop belle* as you blow your rent cheque in favour of Louboutin's sky-high peep-toe, brooch-bedecked satin d'Orsays.

Inspiration comes to the designer in the form of the cinema (he particularly loves the films of the '40s and '50s, and says that if he weren't a shoe designer he'd be a screenwriter); landscapes (he spent some time as a landscaper when, just before opening his first shop in 1992, he grew disenchanted with the trade); real people and, evidently, afternoon tea. "My eye is always drifting," he says, picking at a tray of sweets. He picks

up a biscuit. "This could be a buckle." Of a foil-wrapped conical chocolate. "It could be a heel.

"Everything is inspiring. Anything you look at could be a shoe colour. The attitude of a woman. A fabric." It all sparks his vivid creativity.

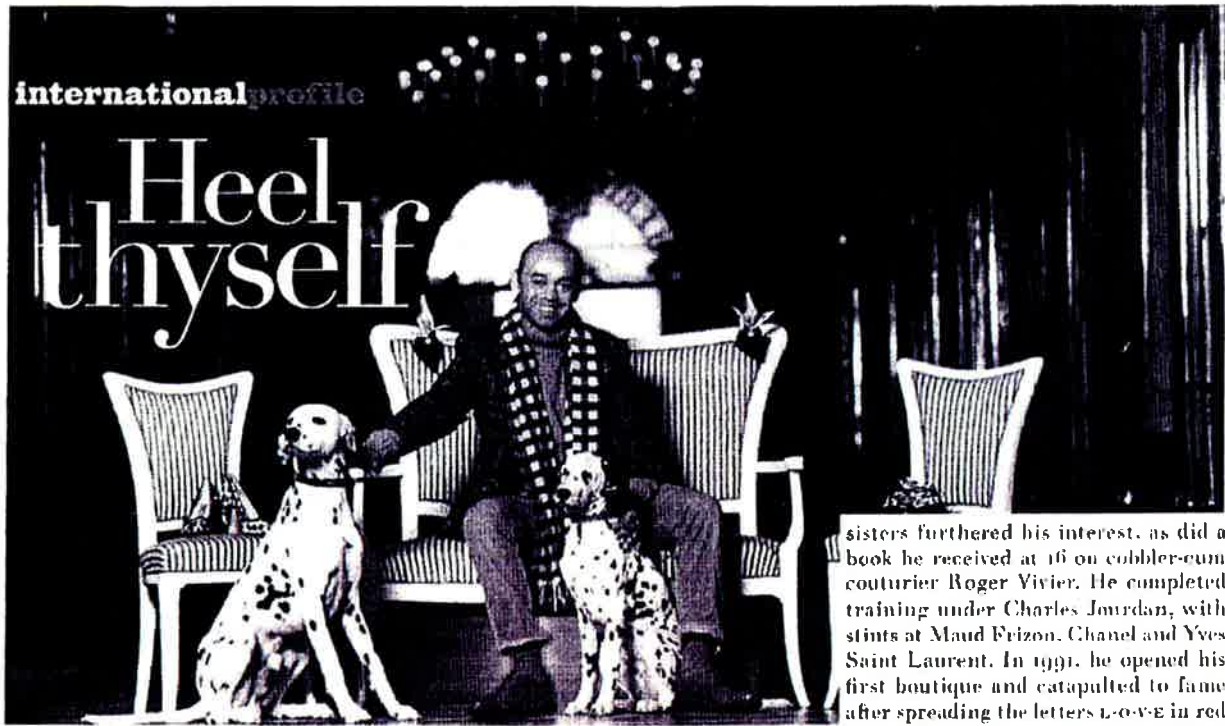
And, as if the stiletto heels weren't enough, what about the signature red soles that anoint the underside of his shoes? Another rearview enhancement. "If you look at a woman as she walks away from you, you see her attitude, the way she moves, her legs and her silhouette. The sole is not something you see if it's a poor part of the shoe. But it's something you remember when she walks in red. It had to be the one colour." ■

Sole Inspiration

Click onto www.flare.com/louboutin and get the inside scoop on a few of Christian Louboutin's most famous shoe designs, including his Lo/vo shoes and Yves Saint Laurent Couture sandals.

EDITOR: ILO ANIMACCI. PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN. SHOE: THE BATA SHOE MUSEUM. CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN

Heel thyself



As Amy Verner reports, Christian Louboutin is taking on the world one shoe at a time.

It's the first fall weekend of the year, and a cross-section of Toronto's well-heeled has gathered outside the Amber club in Yorkville to await the arrival of French footwear legend Christian Louboutin.

As *au courant* as the women may be—banded jet necklaces, Balenciaga handbags, cashmere cardi-wraps—no one, surprisingly, is wearing his shoes, which over the years have included Guinness beer can heels, and Lucite wedges encasing flowers. Luckily, near midnight a coterie of 12 ladies who have dined with Louboutin trickles in. Wearing his signature red soles, they stand out and above the crowd.

"He does such clean and classic lines," says Victoria Webster, 30, a former sitcom writer and member of this special stiletto set. "They're just so sexy."

Meanwhile, the famed designer hangs out under Amber's gazebo. From his prime perch, he steals glances downward as he greets his followers. When we met earlier that day at Holt Renfrew, this same tendency was unsettling, albeit expected. "You ascertain a certain type of person by a certain type of shoe they wear," he observes sagely.

As for what he is wearing: vera suede booties with striped Paul Smith socks, summery chartreuse slacks and a navy winter blazer. "I travel a lot, so the dream of my life would be to have an hour to do

my packing," he explains, defending his disparately seasonal separates.

This has been a whirlwind first trip to Toronto for the peripatetic Parisian: he has already made stops in Egypt, Milan and New York. He has been invited here for the Bata Shoe Museum's *Icons of Elegance* exhibit, which highlights his work as one of the 18 most influential shoe designers of the 20th century. "I think it's great and very well made," Louboutin says of the show. "The only thing I don't understand is that it featured two bad sandals of Jimmy Choo. If you pick 18 designers of the century, you can't pick Jimmy Choo—not that I have anything against them."

Those familiar with *Sex and the City* should know that Louboutins, Jimmy Choo and Manolo Blahniks are Carrie Bradshaw's obsession. But the small screen means little to Louboutin, who says he never even watched the show. The 41-year-old designer does, however, speak fondly of actress Sarah Jessica Parker ("She's *super sweet*"), who got married in a pair of his shoes.

Indeed, few people realize that his eponymous label is less than 15 years old. But Louboutin's infatuation with footwear has been a lifelong one, beginning at age 7 when he saw Janis Joplin in concert: "She had a dirty look but elegant shoes," he recalls. Growing up with four

sisters furthered his interest, as did a book he received at 16 on cobbler-cum-couturier Roger Vivier. He completed training under Charles Jourdan, with stints at Maud Frizon, Chanel and Yves Saint Laurent. In 1991, he opened his first boutique and catapulted to fame after spreading the letters L-O-U-V-E in red across the toe boxes of a pair of black suede flats. One year later, he applied nail polish to the soles of some sketches, and the rest—well, *c'est l'histoire*.

"I thought it would be very nice to have a red signal, which would be like a green light. It's engaging—definitely sticking in men's memories," he says. His strategy worked. "Clients came into the shop looking for the red sole: it was flirtatious. A woman said she met her husband because of them."

For this reason, he scoffs at heel haters. "The first year I had my shop, a woman tried on my heels and said she could not run in them," he recalls. "I think that if you run through life, you end up seeing nothing. And I think a high heel actually obliges women to be in the world."

Back at Amber, Holt Renfrew's fashion director, Barbara Atkin, has just arrived, and she's not running off anytime soon. In her sexy black Louboutin pumps, she says, "Women wearing them feel the passion within their souls," and begins to dance.



Shoe me

The Bata Shoe Museum's Icons of Elegance exhibit celebrates the great 20th-century shoemakers and their shoes. It's a history lesson for the sole-obsessed, writes **DEBORAH FULSANG**, and a primer for current trends all in one



“They're still an expression of status. High heels stress what you don't have to do

Elizabeth Semmelbach, curator of the Icons of Elegance exhibition.

A 2005 Christian Louboutin pump. The designer's signature is his flaming red sole.

Marilyn Monroe in flats — it just wouldn't be the same,” says Elizabeth Semmelbach, curator of the exhibit Icons of Elegance. The most influential shoe designers of the 20th Century, which opened this week at the Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto.

The take her point further. “Marilyn Monroe and the women I don't think you can divorce the two.” Indeed, however, whether girded, crinkled, patented, polished or sequenced, has integrated elegance — not to mention sex appeal — by hundreds of years. The exhibit illustrates how super sleek shoe style was once solely the domain of the elite.

It's not that's no longer the case, Semmelbach says. Thanks to mass production, which began about 1850, shoes that were once produced in the 19th century, say, are now accessible to all walks of life.

Icons of Elegance celebrates a century of legendary shoemakers and their shoes, but it can also be considered a primer for the current season. From the wedge to the stiletto, from the embellished to the crystal studded, the exhibit — which marks the museum's 10th anniversary — traces the origins of today's top footwear fads.

The Bata's exhibit could be better, given pop culture's ongoing fascination with footwear. Shoes are

an entire unto a designer's collection. They're like that accessible bottle of designer perfume, only better since you can actually see, feel and wear a pair of fancy heels.

Even the fanciest footwear is democratic these days. After all, unlike most other areas of fashion, shoe size truly doesn't matter. At least that's what her editor's letter to this month's issue, “You don't have to be Kate Winslet's white size to slip into her boots.”

“With the media and Sex and the City, now you can go to the middle of Canada and find people who know who Manolo Blahnik is,” Semmelbach says of the cobble made famous by Sarah Jessica Parker's Carrie Bradshaw.

Blahnik of course is represented at Icons of Elegance, along with Roger Vivier, the French designer who rose to fame as the footwear phenom at Christian Dior in the 1950s. There's no questioning Vivier's positioning in Semmelbach's list of “most influential” since he is credited as the inventor of the modern day stiletto.

Also on display at the Bata show are examples of footwear from the legendary Bahadour Terragans. The curator offers up the Italian “Terribile Sandal,” wedge style of 1947 as well as platform 19th-century Icono Pompano's ballet flat, another modern-day fad, originally designed for Audrey Hep-

NEW YORK TOP 10 RUNWAY



1 THE MIX
Junkie in Beccia's over a subtle dress at Vera Stefanis L.A.M.B.



2 RESTRAINT
Even in yellow, this Oscar de la Renta is the overly plain.



3 EYELET AND LACE
Michelle Koro makes a curvaceous fabric convertible.



4 COUTURE DETAILS
It's elaborate, but it's not. Zac Posen's dress is it.



5 CREAM AND BEIGE
Calvin Klein, king of neutrals, leads the way in muted colours.



JEANNE BEKER IN NEW YORK PART TWO

While the fashion park is still on the trail of the international, yellow-sun — London, Milan, Paris and Toronto shows all the coming weeks — more solid trends have emerged from New York's recent crop of livings. The good news is that falls fashion story will continue, so there will be lots of time to get used to these new concepts of industry, volume and play with proportion.

Despite all the celebrity hoopla of the New York collections, with everyone from the trendy Hilton sisters to the regal Catherine Zeta Jones — wearing, by Bryant Tiller's, there is restraint in the air. Spring has a subdued romance that

will see flash and bling fall by the wayside, in favour of a more modest, realistic dress code, and lots of wearable fashion. Here is my top 10 list of the trends we can look forward to next spring.

1. The mix. This is the age of the mix, everybody's opportunity to put things together in unexpected and interesting ways, thereby making their own personal statements. Next spring, team a simple tank top with a laboukan evening skirt, a leather jacket with casual jeans. Legs like nobody's business and if you go the vintage route, mix those strappy babydoll skirts with a little more, and a little imagination. Thank Christ Stefanis's L.A.M.B. collection, a true

marriage of times and places, from Paris to Kingston, Jamaica.

2. Restraint. If ever there were a time to pull yourself together, next season is it. Be dramatic, ladylike, and subtly romantic. That is, in your face glamour and king, y'know, by it is over. And while that's not to say that drama is dead, it's just a little more controlled. Sweet fabrics, like black chiffon, are being lined with made to give them a softer, more reserved look. And higher necklines, and longer, more relaxed clothing is going to say that you don't have to reveal your assets quite so blatantly. Even bathing suits are going to be bigger, with built-in bottoms down-right modest. Sorry boys. But hip

inches seem that it all makes for a more statement in the red — and certainly wears a whole lot more in the imagination.

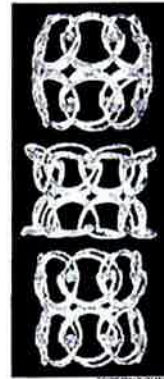
3. Eyelet lace, ruffles and duchesse satin. While sewing chiffon will definitely be plentiful next spring, it's these weightier fabrics that are coming on strong. D&B's Max Azria teamed voluminous tail-feta tops with little hot pants. Michael Kors riffed on prairie romance with a long eyelet skirt and Kai Miller came up with white with duchesse satin ruffled trousers. There's an inherent romance, but intimacy to these fabrics, which seems to speak of delicate structure. Lace will be huge too — but with more of



Vivienne Westwood offered this worky mac-croc ultra-platform in her 1995 collection.

This braided "Manah" sandal by Mamolo Blahnik from 1997 was inspired by Africa.

Nady Gurdan had this platform of cork covered in made custom-made by Ferragamo.



The 2,248-jewel mandala bracelet.

Even, also takes its rightful place in the lineup. Despite his reputation for high heels and shoe delectation, designer Christian Louboutin admits to being a fan of flats. "It is as difficult to walk well in flats as it is to walk well in heels. It is, in fact, a less-misunderstood than most expect, but it gives a gracefulness to the silhouette."

The reality shows that designer footwear is more affordable now than it was at the beginning of the 20th century, but it's all relative since most women, no matter how style obsessed, still find an \$800 pair of Gucci loafers less than a hard hit on the pocketbook. What Manolo Blahnik was to the 1980s through now, Andre Perugia was to the 1920s and 1930s. Imagine Josephine Baker and her leggy cohorts can dancing in five-inch-heel, flat-footed mules.

One can easily imagine Baker et al in the footprints of the modern poetry designers on view at the exhibit: towering and slender boots by Jeremy Scott, head-to-toe black and orange lace-up Manolo Blahnik sandals, and the scandalously high-heeled Christian Louboutin pumps made even easier with their signature red soles. Great shoes transcended class.

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This Ferragamo platform was made in the 1930s for a film or theatrical production. The slip sole in the rear is a baroque style from 500 years ago.



A pair of Doves the Ferragamo flats has been considered in the style of the previous century.

YTRENDS



6 THE DRESS
As a fashionista she Forties with her Betty dress.



7 GOLD AND SILVER
A tallie treat at Narciso Rodriguez hits a big spring trend.



8 FLAT SHOES
Practical doesn't have to be ugly: low heels at BCBG Max Azria.



9 CINCHED WAISTS
All a matter is on the middle, as shown at BCBG Max Azria.



10 TIERS
Michael Kors does silk georgette in wedding cake tiers.

a contemporary feel. (Ditto for tulle.)
4. **Couture detailing.** The level of sophistication in detailing these days is pretty eye-popping. Fashion houses are collecting special-wedding robes from the way some people collect art, building on personal clothing collections with precious, precious pieces that are a joy to behold. From fancy bedspreads to intricate embroidery and hand stitching, it's all about detail these days. Vera Wang had some exceptional handwork in her collection, as did the amazing Ralph Ricci and the remarkable Oscar de la Renta. Wooden beads and coral lends an art deco note, while Zac Posen's "cutaway" treatments were breath-

taking.
5. **Grigio.** When it comes to color, everybody seems to be leaning toward ivory, beige, taupe and cream will be everywhere, with tons of white, especially at Calvin Klein and lovely doses of soft, new black. Chocolate brown also promises to be big. But that's not to say that (a) it's not overdone and (b) cream-colored will be counterpoint. Green, tan, and black, and brown was the with basic colors (yellow, green and orange). Vera Wang showed indigo, purple and mustard, and Ralph Ricci presented a red "raincoat" that was divine.
6. **The dress.** Maybe it's because one piece dominates, but such a n-

gram trend in the Narciso Rodriguez show to Jeremy Scott could be the highlight of the season. Mac Azria also showed laser for spring, and Oscar de la Renta's sheer lace cocktail dress was sublime.
8. **Flat shoes.** Personally, I'm still stuck on stilettos, but at the rate, I might have to give in. For the second season in a row, the flat shoe flat sandals will be and but next spring—even worn with evening gown Oscar de la Renta, who was one of the first to advocate the flat shoe, did his flats in fabrics that matched his outfits.
9. **Higher waists.** In an ode to

LUXE LUST CHANEL BRACELET

The cool thing about this bracelet is not just its stunning carat weight of 33.10 (it takes 2,248 diamonds to fit the number). Part of the Chanel Fine Jewelry 2003 collection, the mandala bracelet can be arranged in an "infinite" number of ways. After all, when you are worth a staggering \$300,000, you get to be called "a jewelry piece of transformations."

The mandala is an ancient symbol. In Tibetan Buddhism, the circle represents community and connection, and is usually situated as a place with four gates facing the four corners of the Earth; in the center is an eight-petaled lotus blossom on a bed of green. The symbols are used for focus in meditation.

You may know the mandala better from its role as child psychology. Educators stress early versions of the intricate circles for little hands to collapse and expand, the goals of a hand-drawn exercise. They come with pretty glass beads and will set you back \$10.

It is the universal concept that Chanel is playing on. The collection is called *Hermetis Celestial*. And the women lucky enough to sport this beauty will not only have the best jewelry with this piece (don't even qualify as jewelry), she will be making cosmic merchandise.
—Lamara Delap

Graffiti Artist



NEW YORK — To some, the idea might seem a little strange. Go to Barneys New York, spend \$600 on a new pair of summer sandals and have them graffitied along the sides with magic markers.

But when the shoes are Christian Louboutin's, and it is the shoe god himself doing the custom artwork, the people will come and the lines will snake around the corner.

"K-U-M-I-K-O," said a young Japanese woman with a Balenciaga handbag as she directed the designer, who was



Christian Louboutin

drawing lots of flowers and hearts along the sole of her shoes.

"Frida," said the next, who had big hoop earrings, painted white nails and seemed to take her fashion inspiration from Drea de Matteo circa her "Sopranos" run.

"Oh, no," said the woman directly behind her, annoyed that Frida had decided to buy not one but four pairs of shoes. "I have a plane to catch."

And she had reason to be worried: Monsieur Louboutin was happy to doodle on as many shoes as a woman's credit card could possibly handle. "This is nothing," he said, when asked a few minutes later if he was

getting tired. "When I draw, I go for hours." Marking up his shoes was an idea long in the making, he explained. "I like Pop Art," he said. "The red sole," the Louboutin trademark, "came from looking at Andy Warhol's prints."

Among the women in the crowd were a Japanese flute instructor named Hae Choi, who bought a pair of espadrilles with polkadots; a blonde opera singer named Suzanne Woods ("under 40, but not by much") and Liliana Marchena, a 21-year-old senior at Pace University, who wore big Chanel sunglasses and had perfectly ironed black hair.

"Louboutins are very chic," Marchena said. "I like the chicness."

When she gets out of school, she said, she'd like to work at Vogue.

And her new patent leather stilettos would be just perfect there. In black magic marker, Louboutin had inscribed them with a sentence that pretty much sums up the life philosophy of young fashion editors everywhere: "Ain't No High Heel High Enough."

— **Jacob Bernstein**