

No business like shoe business: Topsiders, medium heels popular

By JEFF GOODWIN

The shoes you're so proud of — those brand new puppies just out of the box — were fashionable a year or three ago, but have lost their shine on the coast, according to two salesmen at Lincoln shoe stores.

Scott Theobald, manager of the Kinney shoes store in the Centrum, said Nebraskans, and Midwesterners in general, tend to be more conservative in footwear than their counterparts on the East and West Coasts.

"We always will follow a trend," he said "but it takes longer."

Theobald said current trends in men's shoes include topsiders, jazz shoes (plain toes, small heels, and laces) velcro tennis shoes, and penny loafers.

The popularity of wingtips "comes and goes" Theobald said.

"It's a shoe that's generally more popular with older people," he said, "But I see a lot of younger businessmen wearing them."

Most men are influenced by what they see other men wearing, rather than what they see in a magazine or on television, he said.

Jazz shoes are popular because they can be used for everyday wear as well as for more formal occasions, he said.

Jazz shoes usually sell for about \$40 while topsiders and other more casual shoes sell for anywhere from \$30 to \$40, he said.

Most men don't really care about what socks they wear, Theobald said. But argyle socks are popular among men "because of penny loafers."

"As long as the colors match, most men don't care," he said.

Gayle DeBrie, a salesperson at the Wooden Nickel, said styles in women's footwear are determined by trends in New York which are in turn determined by trends in the European fashion capitals of Paris, London and Rome.

"We're probably a whole season behind them," DeBrie said. "Our spring shoes are the ones they had last year."

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