

Rag & Bone to Bow Namesake Footwear Line

By JOCELYN ANDERSON

NEW YORK — Apparel label Rag & Bone is

getting into the footwear game.

The New York-based company has partnered with Royal Elastics founder Tull

Price to introduce a collection for men and women, each with three styles in a variety of colorways. The men's category will in-

clude sneakers, oxfords and loafers, while the women's will feature oxfords, loafers and ballet flats. Price points range from \$350 to \$515 at retail.

"The clothing has always been inspired by what is timeless and well made, without being so fashion driven — season-less rather than trendy. The same thing goes for the shoes," said Marcus Wainwright, co-owner and designer of Rag & Bone.

Wainwright added that the company aims to attract young consumers looking for high-quality classics. The shoes are all made of leather, and most are hand finished in Europe or Asia. "Given what's going on [with the economy], [value is] probably a very good approach," he said. "Disposable is a bit of a luxury at this point."

The addition of footwear comes on the heels of a growth push at Rag & Bone. Founded in 2002 by Wainwright and David Neville, the company introduced accessories last year and a children's line this year. The duo also opened their first flagship store on Manhattan's Christopher Street in September. And just in time for Christmas, a second will bow next door, allowing it to merchandise men's and women's separately.

Rag & Bone previously ventured into shoes through two collaborations. Manolo Blahnik has made custom stilettos for the pair's runway shows (although the shoes are only offered for sale under the Manolo name). In fall '08, Rag & Bone licensed English men's shoe brand Grenson to make a series of work boots, sold for \$650, which will continue to be available going forward.

The new namesake collection will be offered at the flagship store and at New York boutique Odin. Barneys New York will carry the men's sneaker in the Madison Avenue store. As the line grows, the partners plan to expand to better footwear and department stores.

"We're going to build proper footwear lines and continuously work on it," said Price. "Every time we design something, we will make sure it has a life to it. We will continue to add and grow the line, so it will get bigger each year."