

Grand Jury

Designer Jury Artola enters the men's footwear market with a wide-ranging fall collection. << By Jocelyn Anderson



FN Photos by JOHN AQUINO.

After several designing gigs at big-name companies, Jury Artola is striking out on his own with an eponymous men's collection for fall.

"Now is the perfect time [to launch] because guys want something new," said Artola, who has worked for Steve Madden, Frye and Guess. "We've gone back to what shoemaking is all about: handcrafted, classic looks. The customer appreciates quality and artisan [products]."

His J.Artola line is composed of 17 styles, each available in two to three colors, and includes dress styles, casual looks and sportier shoes. Retail prices start at \$250 for sneakers and \$295 for dress and dress/casual styles, with Goodyear-welted boots costing \$375 and boots with Vibram bottoms set at \$395.

The brand — which is a self-funded collaboration with fellow Fashion Institute of Technology graduate Olga Grib on the business side — is made at a factory in Mexico using some eco-sensitive materials, such as cotton thread and natural dyes. Leather scraps are also composted and sold to local farmers.

Artola and Grib are targeting high-end retailers such as Bloomingdale's and independents and boutiques in urban areas. The customer, they say, will likely be fashion-forward men in their 20s to 40s.

"With every recession, things become safe and people are afraid to step out of their [comfort zones]," said Grib. "There comes a point when there needs to be a breakthrough, and this [product] stands out when it sits on the shelf."



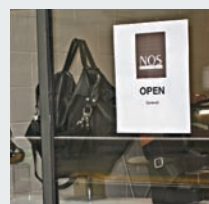
The Team

Jury Artola (near left) designed the line, and Olga Grib takes care of marketing and sales. Artola most recently worked for Guess footwear, and Grib is at Tommy Hilfiger.



The Inspiration

Manhattan in the 17th century, when the city was called New Amsterdam, provided the basic idea behind the first season's collection.



The First Account

Nos shoe boutique in Brooklyn, N.Y., picked up the line and is dedicating a shelf to the brand. "[The line] has a classic, contemporary flair, while being rugged at the same time," said owner Racquel Nosworthy. "It fits right in between looking distressed and looking clean."