

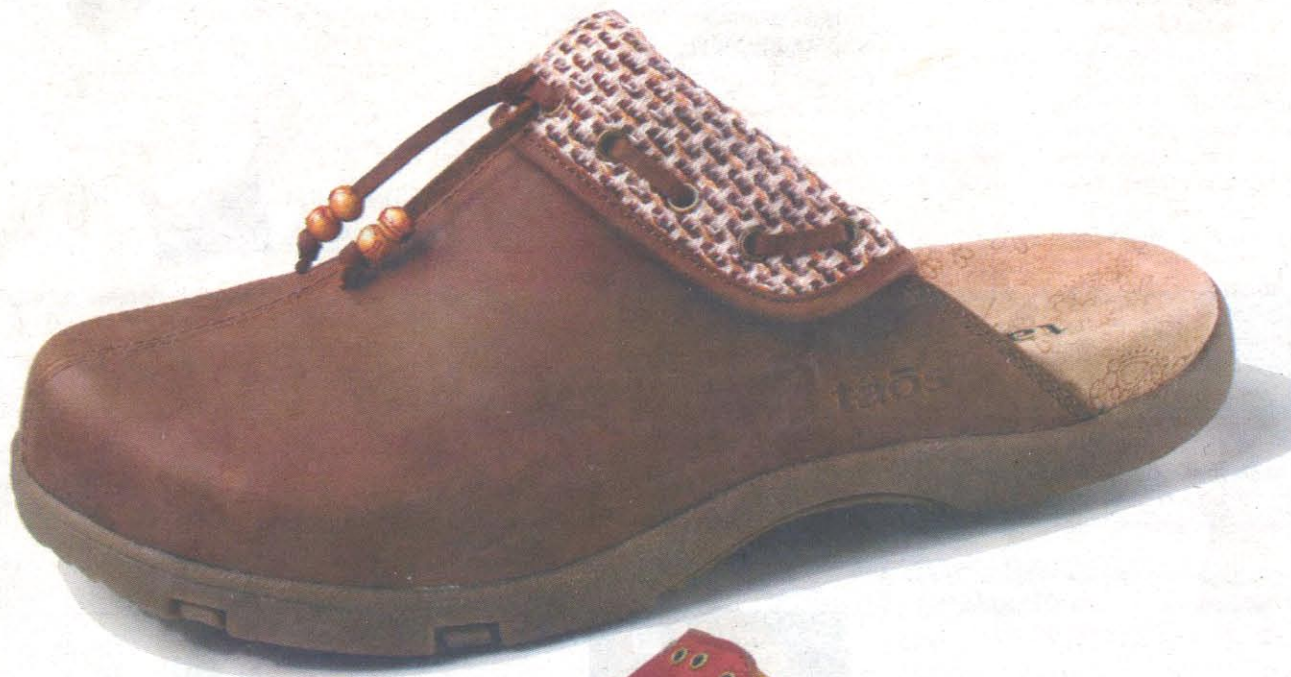
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Editor

Women love shoes. Ask any woman how many pairs of shoes she has. Probably the minimum answer you'll get is 30, with many more women admitting they have 50, 75, even over 100 pairs of shoes. Shoes are fun to buy, and it doesn't matter if you need to lose weight – you still need shoes and your shoe size won't change if you drop some pounds.

Taos is a new line of stylish, but not trendy, comfortable and very affordable (\$65-\$90) shoes. In fact, you could probably buy the entire fall line for less than the price of one pair of Manolo Blahnik or Jimmy Choo's. The shoes are a perfect fit with the casual, easygoing Southern California lifestyle. They are easy to slip on and, according to Bill Langrell, Director of Operations at Taos Footwear, "All shoes



Taos: Putting Your Best Foot Forward



work nicely with denim."

President Glen Barad has spent a lot of years working with other companies, helping them come up with shoe designs and acting as the liaison with the factories where the shoes were made. "Starting a brand is quite an undertaking, quite a competitive area in the industry," says Barad. "It took me years to figure out a name that was conducive to what we wanted to do and be."

The Taos line is inspired by, but not limited to, the colors and textures one would associate with the southwest. With Taos, there is a "serious commitment to delivering a shoe that is comfortable and stylish," says Langrell. The spring line features sandals with stones, which have a "natural earthiness" feel to them. The shoes will be equally at home on the streets of Berkeley or Hollywood.

The best-selling sweater clog shoe (unfortunately a favorite of this writer's puppy), is cozy enough to be a slipper, which is one of the recommended uses on the Taos website. Imagine how good it feels to be in a comfy sweater; now imagine how much your feet would appreciate the same. The sweater clog shoe makes it possible. It is a great fall shoe. The first shipment of the shoe was such a success that it sold out.

The people at Taos pride themselves on the little details, from the top quality stitching to the "anatomical design to make sure you can wear them for miles and miles." Available mostly in boutiques and independent shoe stores, one day Taos might be readily available on Zappos. For now, however, it's nice to know you can wear something that you're not going to see on everybody else's feet.

Locally, the Taos footwear line is sold at Lorin on the Third Street Promenade and Boca in the Palisades. For more information on the entire line, go to www.taos-footwear.com.