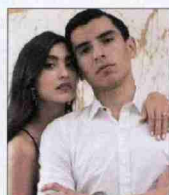


DESIGNER CHAT
 STIVALI



FOUNDED IN 1998, Stivali takes its inspiration from the sophistication of New York, European design and the pre-Spanish history of Colombia. The shoes are handmade in Colombia, the native country of co-creators, Louis and Lina Guarin, who are now based in New York. In 2016, the married couple took the reins from Louis' father, Eduardo Guarin, beginning a rebranding process for a larger audience, all while carefully preserving its rich back story.

"My father was in the footwear business in Bogota and I literally grew up in the business," says Louis. "I was always either learning, helping or playing at my family's atelier, the stores, trade shows, business meetings...there was always someone from the industry happy to share their experience with this curious kid. All though childhood, college and after graduation, I worked and learned the ins and outs of the footwear art from my father and mentor."

Stivali's Colombian heritage shines throughout the collection. The handcrafted styles incorporate signature design elements and even cultural mythology into the mix. The Stivali moon-shaped logo on all shoes is inspired by the gold jewelry worn by indigenous Colombian tribes, while Stivali's signature riding boot, the Zipa, ties back to Colombian lore plus Louis' family's history working with cattle. "Legend tells of a Muisca king, the Zipa, who would cover himself in gold dust during sacred festivals, an important component of the legend of El Dorado," note Louis and Lina, who covered models in gold paint in a recent look book.

Stivali's mix of shoes, booties and boots range from classic to modern and retail from \$150-\$300. Silhouettes include casual sneakers, Chelsea boots, Western booties, riding boots and over-the-knee styles, with many tall boots featuring elastic or adjustable buckles for varied calf widths. Currently in 100 specialty boutiques across the country, Stivali is expanding into Canada and was recently awarded a spot in the mini-MBA **FIT** Designer Entrepreneur competition, along with 25 designers and brands from around the world. The young couple, however, cites its most meaningful accomplishment as the opportunity to support families in Colombia with its factory. "We are living our life with purpose," say the Guarins. —*Lauren Parker*

What makes Stivali unique? Love! Love for what we do, love for making handcrafted shoes, love for the families of our employees that we help in Colombia every day, love for our families, love for our traditions, love for our country...there's a beautiful love story behind Stivali and it shows in our brand. We believe that love transcends to each detail of our shoes too, and our clients feel that.

