

WELL-HEELED ADVICE

Ensure your shoes last as long as you do by following these tips:

› **PLANT A SHOE TREE**

They're the best thing to happen to shoes since laces (which, incidentally, didn't become popular until the 20th century). Cedar works best as it absorbs moisture, be it sweat or rain.



› **USE A HORN**

Yes, always. An astonishing number of people do not. And while a well-crafted metal horn feels great, the plastic one you nicked from the Sheraton will suffice.



› **CONDITION REGULARLY**

Failing to condition your leather during Canadian winters is shoe-icide. Apply a thin coat of conditioner and allow it to penetrate before wiping with a cloth.

› **USE REAL POLISH**

Silicone-based polishes can degrade leather. Instead, go for a carnauba-based polish such as this one. Using a horsehair brush, polish every three or four wearings. For a natural, military-style buff, nothing beats water or good old-fashioned spit.



› **OWN TWO PAIRS**

Nothing wears out a shoe faster than daily use. Your treads need time to dry out and regain their shape; buy a second set, and give them at least a day between wearings.

Shoe tree (\$35), horn (\$3), leather cleaner (\$13), brush (\$5) and polish (\$4). Available at www.moneysworth-best.com

Death from a brogue

Nothing inspires dread in your foes—and jealousy in your friends—like a pair of Barker Black shoes

In 2005, when Derrick and Kirk Miller launched Barker Black, a line of handmade shoes and accessories, friends were hardly surprised by the career move. Growing up in Minnesota, the boys observed on Sundays as their father selected a few of his 50-odd pairs of mostly British-made, bespoke shoes and shined them as he watched the Vikings game. (An eccentric dandy, Mr. Miller often changed his outfit three times a day, even though he worked from home.)

Now 33 and 28, Derrick and Kirk have surely made Papa proud. Their line of British-made shoes, as well as ties, pocket squares and suspenders, arrived in Canada this spring at Holt Renfrew. Each item is distinguished by the brand's rebellious icon: a skull and bones inspired by a swatch Derrick found in an old silk factory. The logo belonged to the 17th Lancer Division, a 19th-century English military regiment whose motto was "Or glory," the implicit alternative being death. "The regiment was known for its dress prowess, arrogance and a little bit of rebellion," says Derrick. "They stood for everything that we wanted our line to stand for."

The brand's historical connections are not merely aesthetic; the shoes are assembled at the Barker factory in Northamptonshire, England, a 127-year-old facility that affirms the notion that British shoes are still the world's best. The factory uses Goodyear welting, an ultra-durable method of bonding the uppers to the welt, rather than directly to the sole. The advantage: Unlike your Gucci loafers, resoling a pair of Barker Blacks



Barker Black Spectator brogue, \$925; www.holtrenfrew.com

is easy and eminently worthwhile (not that you'll need to for a decade or two).

With such a subversive take on a classic shoe, the brothers anticipated their clientele would be largely under 40, but Barker Blacks are resonating with an older crowd as well. This may be due, in part, to the price tag—they start at \$795—but it's also a testament to how subtly the distinctive detailing blends with the style, craftsmanship and historical affiliation of the brand. Rest assured, these shoes will definitely achieve glory well before death.

—Ben Leszcz

DOWN TO THE WELT

By stitching the leather upper to the welt, and not directly to the sole, Goodyear-welted shoes are arguably the most durable on the planet, and easiest to resole. And yes, the process was invented by the tire guy's son.

