



Designer Chat: Gabriele Strehle



GERMAN DESIGNER GABRIELE Strehle is a self-proclaimed working—and walking—woman. “I am aware of what it means to stand while you are working for long hours,” she notes. With the lines Strenesse Gabriele Strehle and Strenesse Blue, the designer aims to create feminine and timeless shoes that arc, above all else, comfortable.

Both footwear lines—which debuted in Germany in 1996—recently launched their women’s product Stateside in the wake of the brands’ U.S. apparel debut. (The company also produces men’s footwear, which remains exclusive to the brands’ flagship stores at this time.) Strehle revisits the U.S. woman differs from her German counterparts, and tries to fulfill the needs of both with her collections. “Americans primarily want products that amaze them and create a strong statement, while Germans want products that are mostly comfortable,” she explains. The designer says each of the brands embodies a distinct personality: Strenesse Gabriele Strehle (retailing from \$400 to \$950) takes “an emotional approach to fashion,” while she hopes to suggest “*joie de vivre*” with Strenesse Blue (\$300 to \$436).

Each collection has 27 styles for Fall '10. The Strenesse Gabriele Strehle collection was inspired by architectural icons including the Colosseum, Acropolis, Brandenburg Gate, Empire State Building and the Eiffel Tower. It includes an over-the-knee wedge boot, a ballerina flat with metal hardware, a black leather chukka, a pointy-toe wingtip and more. Strehle says Strenesse Blue was influenced by '80s fashion through the use of zippers, studs and clasps; highlights include a lug-sole motorcycle boot, hi-tops with ribbon laces, leather and wood slip-on wedge booties, platform lace-up booties, fur-covered boots and more.



Clockwise from left: Jimmy Kim boot; Tania Spinelli ankle-strap shoe; pump by Coye Nokes; Strenesse Gabriele Strehle oxford.

EDITOR'S PICKS

General Patent

A classic material adds a sophisticated sheen.

“They are both light and dynamic, strong and fragile, just like the woman I think of when I design: harmoniously contradictory,” Strehle says about both collections.

Who is the Strenesse consumer? A sophisticated woman who does not obsess over brands. Her idea of fashion is natural and unforced.

Where do you look for design inspiration? I find as much inspiration in tree bark as in a painting by Mark Rothko, as much in an old wall in Berlin as in a calla lily, as much in a Milan woman’s walk as in a film by Quentin Taran-

tino. Every day I feel so grateful to the world for supplying me with so many inspirations.

Who do you admire in the shoe world? Manolo Blahnik. His shoes are perfectly sculpted but still designed to allow women to make regal appearances.

Describe a shoe we’d never see in your line. One that is uncomfortable to stand or walk in.

What is your motto? I don’t have one. Mottos prevent your ability to see the unexpected.

—Melissa Kniffie