

KIDS LIVE LIFE COMFORTABLY IN BEARPAW



-Linda Poetsch, TEN80 Design

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Now in its tenth year, Citrus Heights, CA-based footwear brand BEARPAW is known for comfort, quality and style at affordable prices. A trademark of Romeo & Juliette, Inc., founder Tom Romeo and his team have grown BEARPAW into a lifestyle, embraced by kids and adults throughout the U.S. and in 13 counties. "There's a scientific aspect to comfort inherent in the BEARPAW culture and design," the company explains on BEARPAWStyle.com, an online magazine-blog-site created specifically to fuel the mindset it represents. "BEARPAW has changed the game in footwear by using sheepskin, which regulates body temperature. Feet stay cooler and drier in warm weather, warmer in cold weather – it works for sheep, why not for people?"

Last year, BEARPAW began exploring new ways to use recycled and earth-friendly materials, pursuing green methods and practices from the factory to the final sale. Enter Linda Poetsch. Linda created the company's first

line of footwear for spring/summer, not only initiating its greening -the line is made from recycled materials, cork, bamboo, jute and hemp- but expanding BEARPAW into a year-round brand.

"In the past, I had worked with John Larkin at two different companies," Linda tells us during a recent trip to China. "We share a mutual respect for each other's abilities. He said that he felt that I could really help expand BEARPAW's appeal to consumers." After introducing her to Tom Romeo and his footwear team, Linda started working once more with John, now the company's EVP, international business development. "Once you have proven yourself, Tom pretty much gives you the autonomy and freedom to run your department the way you want."

Linda is an award winning designer and holds several patents. She started her own company, TEN80 Design, Inc. (TEN80Design.com) after working in-house for such

companies as Avila, adidas, Nike and Fila. "I wanted to contribute more in the areas I specialize in -Color, Trend and Design forecast and analysis- to more companies," she says. She is also an expert at guiding the entire development process, from creative use of color, innovative design and quality development, to delivering the very best product to market.

Currently, Linda is working on BEARPAW's new children's collection set to deliver for this year's Back-To-School season. The company offers a range of sizes for children: youth, toddler and infant. Linda says about half of the looks for this kids collection are take downs of the women's line and the other half are new styles just for kids. "What I love about the take downs is they are great looking styles for all ages." For example, a fun, African print story is told with printed suede zebra and cheetah looks. "The great thing about the kid-specific styles is they can be more fun, while keeping our brand commitment to comfort and price," Linda says. The faux vulcanized product includes a slip-on shoe, a short boot and a taller boot, both in fun colors along with the classic colors. "The kids boots are dressed up with a combination of materials, perforated accents, studded details, all used in a more youthful way, reflecting more freedom of expression," Linda explains. "Color and fun details know no bounds, and together can create a boot or shoe that becomes a child's favorite."

It's a particular joy for Linda to design children's shoes. "I love that kids are drawn to more color and are impacted by the fun and free spirited look and feel of these

designs," she says. "They know better than anyone how a happy, fun color makes you feel good. They are not tainted by society and what is deemed proper attire."

For BEARPAW, Linda's kids collection is just one more way the company gives the consumer lots of natural and comfortable styles to choose from, at prices sensible enough for them to afford several items each season. "For all children as well as adults, we know that bare feet love BEARPAW," she says. "What parent wouldn't want their kids to have the same benefits? Who doesn't want their kids to be comfortable, look stylish and pay a sensible price for that?"

Indeed. As they say, it's time to relax -for kids- BEARPAW Style.

-written by Janet Muniz 

